



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Children scramble to collect candy Saturday, Sept. 11, 2021, during the Main Street Cowboys' Dress-Up Parade in downtown Pendleton.

Parade:

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The Dress-Up Parade launched with a canon blast at 10 a.m. near Pendleton City Hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave., headed east to the Umatilla County Courthouse, 216 S.E. Fourth St., before looping around to roll west on Southwest Court Avenue to the Pendleton Round-Up Grounds.

Hundreds gathered all along the nearly 2-mile-long parade route, but the crowd was sparser than in previous years. Main Street Cowboys, clad in neon green and purple attire, zipped up and down on ATVs. Parade-goers listened to the Pendleton Mounted Band, cheered at the Round-Up Board of Directors in their black cowboy hats and watched as a giant, pink, inflatable piggy bank rolled by.

"It's about just having fun before Round-Up," said Johnny Blagg, the president of the Main Street Cowboys, "and getting out on a Saturday morning."

The Main Streeters reported more than 70 parade participants — about 30 fewer than in years prior — but the decrease wasn't overly surprising, Blagg said, and they still had a great parade.

Memorial for local man

With the parade falling on the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the Main Street Cowboys also held a tribute and moment of silence for Lt. Col. Mike "Fuzzy" Selves, a 1965 Pendleton High School graduate who lost his life at the Pentagon in the terrorist attacks on 9/11. They honored all who lost their lives that day and the following days.

David Boatwright and Larry Koehne, members of the Main Street Cowboys, were exceptionally close friends with Selves growing up and graduated from Pendleton High together. Boatwright recollected the days he spent riding bicy-



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Runners sprint Saturday, Sept. 11, 2021, down Southwest Court Avenue in Pendleton for the Kyle Burnside Dress-Up Parade Fun Run in advance of the Main Street Cowboys' Dress-Up Parade.

cles with Selves through town in the 1950s and memories of the Lone Ranger.

"Him and I were great buddies," Boatwright said.

This year felt different from others, he said, and it was stronger after 20 years had passed. Boatwright mentioned Selves was supposed to celebrate his birthday five days after the attacks — a couple of days after his own birthday.

Koehne, who led the crowd in the moment of silence, bit back tears as he spoke about his friend, who had just bought a house in Florida and was about to retire to spend his days playing golf with his wife before the attack.

"Let's just take a moment of silence, please," Koehne said, "think about our heritage in America. Think about how lucky we are. Think about those lives we lost and all the families that are still grieving from that terrible time. Never forget, folks."

Running for fun and scholarships

Just before the parade, the Pendleton

High School cross-country team hosted its annual dress-up fun run for the Kyle Burnside Memorial Scholarship. Spectators egged on runners dressed as fairies, mobsters, 2021 Olympic marathon bronze-medal-winner Molly Seidel and ... a banana.

The cross-country coaches participated too, dressed as Toy Story characters with head coach Ben Bradley as Little Bo-Peep, coach Maddy Naughton as Buzz Lightyear and coach Nicole Stewart as Woody.

"I smiled the whole way," Stewart said. "Huge smiles the whole way and everybody was so excited."

The run helped fund two \$500 scholarships for Pendleton High School track and field or cross-country athletes. The scholarship started after Kyle Burnside, a former Pendleton High School cross-country and track athlete, died in a car accident in 2010.

Burnside and his family were involved in Happy Canyon, "and it just made sense to dress up in his honor and do a raffle to fund the scholarship," Stewart said.

Arrests:

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"Were you aware of that indictment, sir?" Johnson asked Wendelin.

"I was, as of yesterday," Wendelin answered via webcam from the Walla Walla County Jail.

After waiving extradition, Wendelin waded to the courtroom and said, "Judge, if I may? I don't think I'll get a chance to otherwise, so I just want to say I love my fiancée more than life itself."

Jail staff then led Wendelin away to begin his journey to Griffin, Georgia.

Wendelin and Montgomery each face charges of aggravated assault, aggravated battery and three counts of violating the Street Gang Terrorism and Prevention Act of Georgia, according to a Walla Walla County Sheriff's Office press release.

Officials with the sheriff's office called the arrests "the first step in a joint investigation" into the West Coast Pagan's club. Additional charges are pending.

Boedigheimer said the case began with an assault investigation the Spalding County Sheriff's Office in Georgia conducted along with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. He said those two agencies eventually traced the two men to Walla Walla County and recruited the help of the Walla Walla County Sheriff's Office.

The investigation began to take shape locally when a training was held in Walla Walla regarding gang enforcement, specifically surrounding the Pagan's MC, including discussion of a chapter that was operating inside the city limits of Milton-Freewater.

A Milton-Freewater police detective began working with the Georgia-based officials on the investigation. In the meantime, Wendelin was on local law enforcement's radar.

"A separate, local criminal investigation had been opened ... involving Wendelin," Boedigheimer said.

The case allowed the detective to write up search warrants and further investigate Wendelin's property for the Georgia case, too.

The investigators then worked with a Umatilla County deputy district attorney on the complicated legal process in executing a multi-state warrant on three properties in and around Milton-Freewater, Boedigheimer said.

On Sept. 8, about 30 law enforcement officials — including the deputy attorney and members of the FBI and ATF — held a briefing to discuss the operation.

The next morning, just after 5 a.m., the officials sprang into action by first arresting Wendelin at the state penitentiary in Walla Walla. After 7 a.m., the three search warrants in Milton-Freewater were served. After 8 a.m., Montgomery was arrested.

"Numerous items of evidence were found and seized pursuant to the search warrants," Boedigheimer said.

The police chief said the Oregon Department of Human Services was called to assist any children involved.

Boedigheimer called the operation a "prime example" of a collaborative effort in the criminal justice system.

"Every agency and entity (involved) contributed in a positive way to this mission, which met a positive end," Boedigheimer said.

Also involved in the investigation and arrests of the two men were: the Georgia Bureau of Investigation; Drug Enforcement Administration; DOC Special Investigations Service; Washington State Patrol; Oregon State Police; Umatilla Tribal Police Department; Morrow County Sheriff's Office; and police departments in Hermiston, Boardman, Pendleton, Portland, Seattle and Spokane.

Fishing:

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At the event, Jon Cox of Western States Equipment Company said supporting veterans is important both for him and his company. Western States provided bait for Fish'n.

"They give us the freedom to do what we do and live in the nation we live in," Cox said of our veterans.

Rick Henderson, a veteran from Moscow, Idaho, was in the Navy from 1990 to 1994. Saturday was the first time he had been to this event. He went because a friend suggested it to him. He had not fished in a long time, he said, and he has rarely gone to veterans' events. As he prepared for his day on the river, he was excited.

"It's nice to have people recognize the service that we signed up for," he said. "It sends a good message to the young right now that it's worth joining our military and taking on that sacrifice."

Dave Winters, veteran, served at the "tail end" of Vietnam. From Heppner, he said he was happy to make the trip from his home to Umatilla. It was his first time at the event, as his friends encouraged him to attend. He said he was happy to commune with his friends and possibly make new friends.

His brother was in the Vietnam War, as were many other people he has known. People spit on those veterans upon their return state-side, Winters said. Finally, those former servicemen and women, as well as other veter-

ans, are getting the respect they deserve.

"It's really nice that people are taking the time to recognize the sacrifice these men and women made," he said.

Dan Seimer, Irrigon, said it also was his first appearance at Fish'n. A veteran, he described himself as an "anxious fisherman," as getting on the water, and being the subject of so much attention, made him feel a little overwhelmed.

"These guys are putting on a real fine deal for us vets," he said. He participates in American Legion, and he likes gathering with people who share his military experience.

Bill Jennings, Hermiston, also is a veteran, having served 1969-70. When events like this one occur, he said, it shows people are looking after veterans. This makes him feel good, and he appreciates the efforts.

Not a veteran, Lisa Reardon was one of the few women at the event. A Hermiston resident, she was a volunteer deckhand at Fish'n. As she has two sons who serve, she said she is proud of the people who have fought and continue to fight for America. Wearing a United States Marine Corps sweater, she described herself as a patriot. Several members of her family have served, she said, adding "service is a big deal."

"I think any way that you can honor people who served, have served, is the right thing to do," Reardon said.

Mark Ribbich, Umatilla Chamber of Commerce executive director, is not a veteran, though he said being at Fish'n the Brave means a lot to him. "I get a little choked up



Erick Peterson/East Oregonian

From left, Randy Hurley, Danny Jacobson, Shaley Larson, Travis Larson, Chris Hurley and Mike Larson were among the participants and volunteers Saturday, Sept. 11, 2021, on the Columbia River near Umatilla for the annual Fish'n the Brave.

about that," he said. His oldest brother was wounded in the Vietnam War, and he did not survive his injuries. This gave him an affinity for those that did return from that war and all the U.S. wars which followed.

"We've got millions of out there in the country, and they need to be supported in various ways," he said. Any chance he gets to be at veteran events to support, he said, he is "all in" in participating.

The chamber has been supporting Fish'n as a sponsor for four years. Ribbich called it the "signature event" for Umatilla. There are other events in Umatilla, but this one is extra special. Several organizations and local businesses also helped, he said. Operating Engineers Local 280, Ranch & Home, the city of Hermiston, Hagerman Inc. and the city of Umatilla are just a few other groups that made this event possible.

"This is a marvelous event," Salud Campos,

said, and he feels satisfied to see smiles on their faces. As a serving member of the National Guard, he said he likes veterans' events such as this one. It kind of gives him a look at his future, he said. He said he likes to hear their stories, too.

Darla Huxel, Umatilla chief of police, is a member of the American Legion Auxiliary. Not a veteran herself, she is appreciative of those who served. She also is proud of her town and all the volunteers who helped.

Being that Fish'n was on Sept. 11, the day of remembrance for terrorist attacks in 2001, this event has deeper reason for extra thought, she said. She said she remembers the people who were lost on Sept. 11 and the soldiers who took up arms in defense of the country after the attacks.

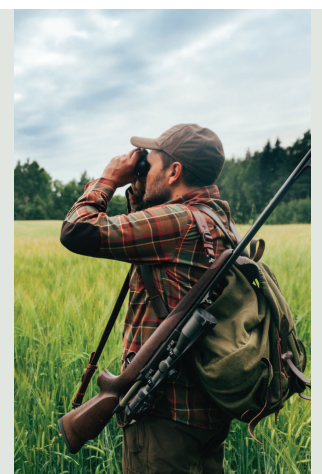
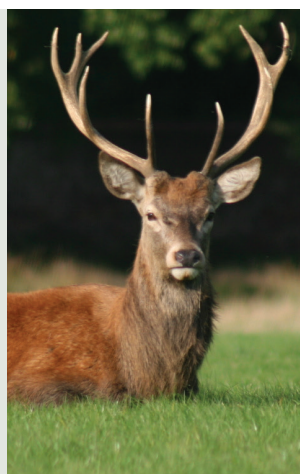
The Umatilla Police Offi-

cers Association was among the groups that donated items to be raffled for the event.

As he was preparing his boat to take veterans fishing, Larson Travis said he is glad to give veterans a good time. In addition to helping others, he also is able to enjoy the experiences himself, as he likes listening to the stories told.

Cathy Stolz, Hermiston resident and president of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 37 of Hermiston, was another one of the volunteers and said she had been encouraging veterans to participate because Fish'n participation is limited. Participants need to sign up prior to the event. They can do so at fisherscatchoutfitters.com/fishn-the-brave.

This year was full, and next year looks to be the same.



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