

EAST OREGONIAN

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2021

145th Year, No. 144

WINNER OF 16 ONPA AWARDS IN 2021

\$1.50

THE WRIGHT MAN

Record-setting season continues for Stetson Wright with 3 titles at Pendleton Round-Up

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — There's one thing you'll find out about Stetson Wright if you spend more than 10 minutes with him — he does not brag. He lets his riding do the talking for him.

The 22-year-old cowboy from Milford, Utah, who comes from a family steeped in rodeo history, won the saddle bronc and bull riding titles on Saturday, Sept. 18, for his first Pendleton Round-Up titles.

With those titles at the 111th Round-Up came the coveted all-around title — an honor won a record seven times by Trevor Brazile.

Wright respects Brazile, who's won 26 world titles, but said he is nothing like the legendary cowboy.

"I'd like to think of myself as being the next Stetson Wright," he said. "I am totally different than they are, I go about things differently, and I am in totally different events."

Wright, who won the world all-around titles in 2019 and 2020, and the bull riding title in 2020, broke Brazile's record for all-around money earned heading into the NFR. To date, Wright has earned \$308,906.

Brazile held the record of \$218,852 in the regular season in 2015.

Wright's \$22,476 all-around money at Pendleton also broke Trevor Brazile's 2012 record of \$20,205.

Wright is the first cowboy to win three Pendleton titles in one year since Lewis Feild won the bareback, saddle bronc and all-round in 1989 — well before Wright was born.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Stetson Wright, of Milford, Utah, poses for a portrait with the East Oregonian trophy after winning All-Around Cowboy on Saturday, Sept. 18, 2021, at the Pendleton Round-Up.

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A lifetime of making the crowds laugh

'Pinky' Christopher reflects on career as a rodeo clown

By NICK ROSENBERGER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Gerald "Pinky" Christopher has spent his life making others laugh. With fritzzy eyebrows and wire-rimmed glasses peeking out from under his cowboy hat and a mischievous grin crowned by a white horseshoe mustache, Christopher is the definition of old school cowboy.

From his red kerchief to his cowboy boots, the soon-to-be 87-year-old's life as a rodeo clown is etched into him. His youthful energy goes against a lifetime spent helping build the foundations of Oregon rodeo.

Born in Kansas in 1934, Christopher wasn't even a year old when he and his mom, dad, two brothers, and uncle piled into a Model-A truck and moved across the country to Oregon, where they settled in the Willamette Valley. Outside of Eugene, his father owned a ranch that ran up against the nearby logging camps during World War II, but sold it and moved to Redmond after the war ended.

"On Friday I was going to high school in Elmira, Oregon, and Monday I was going to Redmond, Oregon," Christopher said, "and so I finished high school in Redmond."

It was as a senior in high school when Christopher truly began a lifetime in rodeo. When visiting Tygh Valley for a rodeo, he drew War Paint — the famous saddle bronc who won the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association Bucking Horse of the Year Award in 1956, 1957 and 1958 and is preserved at the Pendleton Round-Up Hall of Fame.

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Kellie Ridenour/Contributed Photo

Retired rodeo clown Gerald "Pinky" Christopher, 87, poses with tribal members on Thursday, Sept. 16, 2021, at the Pendleton Round-Up.

Police patrol quiet Friday night of Round-Up week



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Calvin Meade, left, a detective with the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office, Riley Studebaker, a Hermiston Police patrol corporal, and Joshua Paullus, a parole and probation officer for Umatilla County Corrections, patrol Crabby's Underground Saloon on the evening of Friday, Sept. 17, 2021. The three officers, members of the Pendleton Police Department's emphasis team, were among several groups patrolling bars and the downtown area during the Pendleton Round-Up.

Pendleton Police Department relies on emphasis team to quell problems before they begin

By BRYCE DOLE
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — It was a relatively quiet night policing the crowds that flocked to downtown Pendleton on Friday, Sept. 17.

Teams of law enforcement officials from at least 10 agencies patrolled the streets through the evening. They were the emphasis teams, the

patrol units that for the past several years have worked to stop crimes before they happen as crowds fill the bars at the end of the Pendleton Round-Up week.

By increasing police presence and keeping in touch with local bars and restaurants, the e-teams, in the parlance of the Pendleton Police Department, are an effort to take the burden off local police and keep things calm as the party rages on.

"It's morphed into a great example of collaboration," said Rick Jackson, detective sergeant with Pendleton police.

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Umatilla man experiences breakthrough case of COVID-19



Erick Peterson/East Oregonian

Andrew Morris, of Umatilla, takes a rare step out of doors Monday, Sept. 20, 2021. He has been sick for two weeks with a breakthrough case of COVID-19.

Approx. 49 of 50 hospitalizations in Umatilla County this year were unvaccinated

By ERICK PETERSON
East Oregonian

UMATILLA — Two weeks after contracting COVID-19, Umatilla resident Andrew Morris is sick and feeling more than a little frustrated. He said he did everything right, including getting vaccinated, and he still became ill.

Morris is one of the unlucky

few breakthrough cases, people who were vaccinated but came down with COVID-19 anyway.

"This is worse than any flu I've had," Morris said.

He had trouble recalling a comparable illness. After some thought, he compared it to Epstein-Barr virus infection, which also was painful.

With COVID-19, Morris' body aches. He cannot taste his food, he cannot smell and his throat is sore. He spends most of his days and nights in bed, as even walking to the bathroom is difficult.

Bedridden, he continuously questions himself: "What did I do wrong?"

Joe Fiumara, Umatilla County Public Health direc-

tor, said roughly 1 out of every 50 people hospitalized with COVID-19 since January in the county were vaccinated against COVID-19, or approximately 49 of 50 hospitalizations in the county this year were unvaccinated.

Morris received his first shot of the Moderna vaccine in March, when it was first available to him, then followed up with his second jab in April. Even after the final shot, he continued to wear masks most of the time, he washed his hands frequently and made regular use of hand wipes.

"Possibly, I let down my guard," he said.

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