

# Artist an ‘Overnight success’ of 14,600 nights and counting

Former Stanfield man builds love of animation into a creative career

By ERICK PETERSON  
East Oregonian

STANFIELD — Since leaving his hometown, former Stanfield resident Richard Florence has been gaining fame as a cartoonist and illustrator. Most recently, he has achieved extra notoriety for his work on the new NBC game show, “Family Game Fight!”

Now living in Westminster, Colorado, the Stanfield High School graduate said he has good memories of his time in the area. He worked on farms, played with dirt and stayed out until curfew every night. He did not have cable, but he did not need it. He had plenty of friends, and there were even people who would prove influential in his future career.

His grandfather was one such person who left an impact. Florence remembers his grandfather having given him the newspaper every day. The young Florence would turn excitedly to the comics pages after receiving them from his grandfather. Alley Oop was his favorite comic strip, and Florence would learn to draw by tracing the comics.

He was drawing comics before he could even read

Another influential family member was his “crazy aunt,” who was a nude model in Portland in the 1930s.

“She was wild,” he said, but she did communicate her free spirit to him, as well as her love of art. She had a big box of comics that she would share with him. Pogo, Katzenjammer Kids and Dick Tracy were some of his favorites.

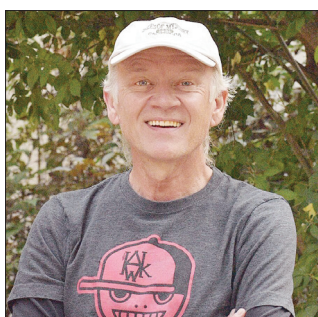
He also remembered long car trips with his family, in which he would read Archie comics.

In those early days, he fell in love with the sort of storytelling an artist could do with cartooning. He said there is no way to do cartooning wrong. It is not the sort of realistic work done by classical painters. The difference is good because he did not think he had the ability to be the next Michelangelo. Making cartoons, he could be himself.

In school, instead of



Richard Florence/Contributed Photo  
**Artist Richard Florence’s work includes “Hap Hazard.” It has a special place in his heart, he said.**



Ryan Florence/Contributed Photo  
**Richard Florence of Westminster, Colorado, graduated from Stanfield High School and went on to do exciting work in the world of animation.**

paying attention to classroom lessons, he drew. He drew dinosaurs, then spies, then Batman.

When he was young, he met a boarder who rented a room from his mother. The man shared his comics, underground comics — sometimes strange works from independent artists.

“It was eye-opening,” he said. When he read them, he realized he could say anything in a comic.

When he got a little older, he painted murals and signs around Stanfield. He met his wife, Ginger Florence, at the Umatilla County Fair in 1980. In 1981, he left town for the Art Institute of Colorado.

He published his first comic, “Hap Hazard,” in 1987. It is the story of a bumbling detective, and he still is doing it.

Then he started drawing manga for a Tokyo studio. He drew a 209-page-long story at the pace of 25 pages a month about his poodle and followed it up with a 179-page story on American life.

The Japanese were interested in his stories for a look into a different culture. When, for instance, he drew a drive-in, people thought it was interesting and foreign.

His work life was not all art, though. He worked for a phone company and made money. Art was a side project.

Then, he found a second life in animation. He learned flash animation, and realized that a one-man shop could make an entire show. It was like magic to him.

He started doing commercials for Papa Johns, the Chicago Tribune and other companies. He even saw some of his work in a Super Bowl ad.

“I was over the moon,” he said of his Super Bowl ad. He had made the animation for a video game, but it was repurposed for this other ad. Four million people saw his work, he said, and he could not be happier.

“My overnight success was 14,600 nights,” he said.

Ironically, his biggest professional success came after his massive heart attack 16 years ago. Since then, he has gotten great jobs and awards.

His work for the NBC show “Family Game Fight!” a show produced by Ellen DeGeneres, is his latest achievement. He has not met DeGeneres, but he does speak on Zoom with people who work for her, and that is just fine with him.

In addition to his animation work for the show, he is drawing a book based on his travels in Germany, where he was born. That work will be around 200 pages.

# Hermiston market continues past closure

By ERICK PETERSON  
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Local farms on Thursday, Sept. 16, tried to make up for a farmers market that did not happen in Hermiston. They intend to attract others for a bigger market in following weeks.

The Maxwell Event Center & Pavilion in Hermiston is home on Thursdays to an afternoon market, which can attract a dozen to 20 farm booths selling local produce.

But lack of staff led to the cancellation of the remaining two markets of the 2021 season. A Facebook post for the Maxwell Market states, “Hope to see you for the 2022 season!”

Still, a couple of local farms were undeterred by the market’s closure. They got together and set up their own market in McKenzie Park, outside and across the street from the event center. With only two vendors, it was not as large as the planned Maxwell Market, but the participants were glad to have a place to sell their produce, honey and baked goods.

Kraig Mueller, 3rd Gen Farms owner, grows cucumbers, lettuce, melons and other row crops. A Hermiston resident, he said he has four fields on nine acres spread out in all corners of Hermiston.

“We’re market farmers, market gardeners,” he said.



Erick Peterson/East Oregonian  
**Kraig Mueller, of 3rd Gen Farms, plays with his son, Kolton Mueller, on Sept. 16, 2021, at a farmers market in Hermiston.**

“We’re farmers, this is our income.”

He was disappointed when he heard the Maxwell Market would be closed. Its closure was uncommon, as he regularly brought his vegetables there every week during the season. Other markets close on occasion, especially for special events, but this one was a surprise.

He also knew that it would be a surprise to his customers. He made promises he would be in Hermiston every week during the season.

When he heard of the closure, he began making calls.

“The city was kind enough to say, ‘Yeah, come down, and we’re not going to charge you anything.’” He also called his farming friends, people who also

have booths at the Maxwell Market.

With short notice, he was not able to organize a larger market, but he said he believes he can attract more people in the following week.

Veronica Delgado, Veronica’s Fresh Produce owner, operated the other booth at the impromptu market in the park. A Pasco farmer, her family has five acres. She has been at the Maxwell Market for three years, and she likes it.

She came to Hermiston on Sept. 16 with peaches, potatoes, beans and more.

When Mueller called her and said they had an opportunity to sell in the park, she jumped at it. Otherwise, she said, her products would have gone to waste. She said she hopes to return Sept. 23.

## LOCAL BRIEFING

### Judge Hill seeks appointment to Ore. Supreme Court

SALEM — Umatilla County Circuit Court Judge Dan Hill is seeking a promotion.

Gov. Kate Brown on Tuesday, Sept. 14, announced a list of candidates for vacancies on the Oregon Court of Appeals and the Oregon Supreme Court. Roy Blaine, trial court administrator for the 6th Judicial district, which encompasses Umatilla and Morrow counties, said Hill applied to serve on the Supreme Court.

In a written statement, Hill said he believes “advancing to the Supreme Court would allow him to continue public service in a meaningful capacity, able to best promote the rule of law, fairness and equity for all, in these complex times.”

Blaine said he was sure Hill would accept whatever position was offered.

Hill is a 1979n graduate of Hermiston High School and won election in 1990 as municipal judge for Hermiston and appointment to half-time circuit judge pro-tem for Umatilla County. In the appointment, he spent three years hearing civil post-conviction relief cases.

While serving as a judge, he maintained his Hermiston law practice and served as a city prosecutor and an Army judge advocate.

Umatilla County voters elected Hill to the bench in 2004, the winner of a three-way race with the endorsement of his predecessor. Hill is in his third six-year term.

Hill’s military service was a direct commission into the Judge Advocate Gen-

eral’s Corps in September 1987. His service included deployment to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and to Afghanistan. He retired as a brigadier general on May 31, 2020.

Hill is a graduate of Blue Mountain Community College, Oregon State University, Willamette University College of Law and the U.S. Army War College.

Brown is inviting attorneys and members of the public to comment on the candidates by contacting her general counsel, Dustin Buehler at 503-378-6246 or by email at [dustin.e.buehler@oregon.gov](mailto:dustin.e.buehler@oregon.gov).

### McCarthy files to rejoin city council

HERMISTON — David McCarthy filed to run for one of the Hermiston City Council seats up for election on Sept. 10, becoming the first person to declare their candidacy for the 2022 election.

Hermiston splits their city council between at-large seats, where all candidates run on the same ballot and the top four vote get elected, and ward seats, where candidates run in four separate races based on their residency. In either election, all Hermiston voters get to vote on all the candidates.

A sales manager at KOHU, McCarthy was appointed to a vacant at-large seat in May 2020. His bid for a full term was denied when he placed fifth in the November election. McCarthy is now running for a seat representing Ward 4, which is held by incumbent Phillip Spicerkuhn.

Filing for the ward seats

on the Hermiston City Council and the municipal judgeship opened on Sept. 9 and will close on March 8, 2022. Election Day is May 17, and should no candidate receive a majority of the vote, the top two candidates will compete in a Nov. 8 runoff.

### Umatilla County lifts burn ban

PENDLETON — The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners in its meeting Wednesday, Sept. 22, voted to lift the county’s burn bans.

The ban in agricultural burns ended at noon Sept. 22 and the nonagricultural ban ends Oct. 1.

The action excludes any land state, federal and tribal governments own or is inside a fire district, according to a press release from the Umatilla County Department of Land Use Planning.

The county adopted the bans in early summer due to severe drought conditions. The bans prohibited agricultural burning, burn barrels, yard and garden debris piles and small-scale residential burning.

The county noted in the press release that burn day protocol remains in effect, and those who wish to burn should call the county burn line at 541-278-6397 or check the county’s website, [www.co.umatilla.or.us](http://www.co.umatilla.or.us), open the dropdown menu under “Popular” and click the link to burning information.

Burn day determinations also are on Facebook at Umatilla County Smoke Management.

— EO Media Group

# Trio of surgeons join Good Shepherd

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Three surgeons are joining the Good Shepherd Health Care System in Hermiston.

Drs. Marques Johnson, David Maccabee and Ann Rust join the Good Shepherd Medical Group General Surgery, according to a press release Wednesday, Sept. 22, from Good Shepherd Health Care System. All three are board certified in general surgery.

“Good Shepherd now has a powerhouse of surgeons with a combined 40-plus years of experience that provide best-in-class surgical care for our patients,” Good Shepherd President and CEO Brian Sims touted in the press release.

Johnson has a special focus in minimally-invasive surgery and colorectal surgery. He was born in Medford and grew up in Eugene, where he obtained his bachelor’s degree from University of Oregon. He went on to medical school at Loma Linda University School of Medicine in Loma Linda, California, and completed his general surgery residency at Maine Medical Center in Portland, Maine. He is a member of the American College of

Surgeons and the American Medical Association.

Maccabee specializes in minimally-invasive surgery, including robotics, bariatric surgery and endoscopy. He attended undergraduate and medical school at the University of California Davis in Davis, California. After a brief stint for graduate school at Oxford University in England, he returned to the United States for his surgical training. He completed his general surgery residency at University of Washington in Seattle, and Oregon Health & Sciences University in Portland. He went on to complete a fellowship in laparoscopic surgery at OHSU.

Maccabee has broad experience with all types of gastrointestinal surgery and endoscopy, including minimally-invasive hernia repair, surgery for reflux disease and weight loss and varicose vein disease. He is a member of the American College of Surgeons, the American Society of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgeons, and the Society of Gastrointestinal Surgeons.

Rust has special focus on women’s health, as well as advanced laparoscopic and endoscopic surgeries. She was born in Sandpoint,

Idaho, and followed the footsteps of her physician father. Rust earned her doctor of medicine degree from Creighton University School of Medicine in Omaha, Nebraska, where she also completed her residency. She is a member of the American College of Surgeons, American Society of Breast Surgeons, Association of Women Surgeons, and the Society of Laparoscopic Surgeons.



Maccabee



Rust

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**Dear Evan Hanson (PG13)**  
1:30p 4:50p 8:10p

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**Cry Macho (PG13)**  
1:50p 5:10p 8:30p

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**Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings (PG13)**  
1:10p 4:30p 7:50p

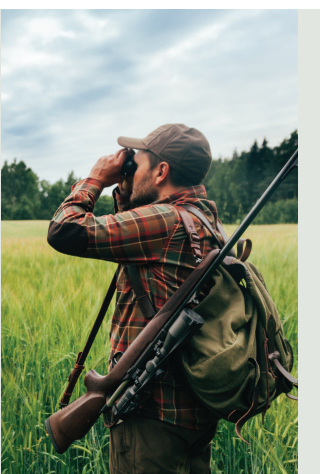
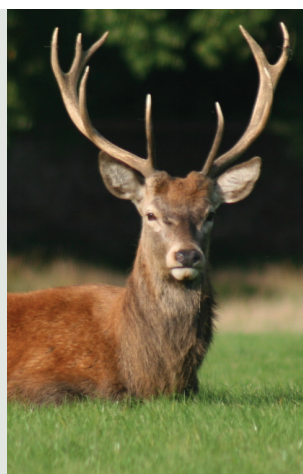
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**Copshop (R)**  
1:00p 4:20p 7:20p

•••••

**Free Guy (PG13)**  
12:50p 4:10p 7:00p

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