

# Temps remain warmer than normal in Pendleton

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Pendleton area experienced slightly warmer than normal temperatures during the month of October, according to preliminary data received by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service Office in Pendleton.

The average temperature during the month was 52.3 degrees, 0.4 degrees above normal. High temperatures averaged 64.2 degrees, 0.5 degrees above normal, according to the monthly climate summary.

The highest temperature was 78 degrees recorded Oct. 21.

Low temperatures averaged 40.4 degrees, 0.3 degrees above normal. The lowest temperature for the month was 26 degrees, recorded Oct. 12. There were three days with the low temperature below 32 degrees.

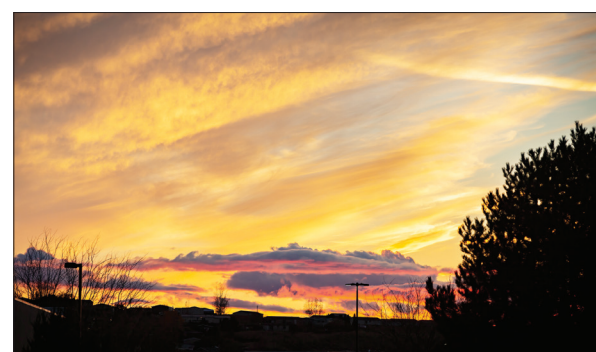
Precipitation for the month totaled 1.03 inches during October, which was 0.02 inches above normal, the report said. Measurable precipitation — at least 0.01 inch — was received on six days during the month, according to the monthly climate summary, with the heaviest, 0.56

inches, recorded Oct. 22.

Precipitation for the year is 6.02 inches, which is 3.65 inches below normal.

The highest wind gust was 47 mph on Oct. 21, the report said.

The outlook for November from NOAA's Climate Prediction Center calls for near normal temperatures and above normal precipitation. Normal highs for the Pendleton airport fall from 56 degrees at the start of November to 43 degrees at the end of the month. Normal lows fall from 37 degrees to 30 degrees. The 30-year normal precipitation is 1.52 inches.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

The setting sun lights up the sky Friday, Oct. 29, 2021, over Pendleton. The National Weather Service recorded slightly warmer than expected temperatures in Pendleton during the month of October.

# Sticking the final landing

## Eastern Oregon Gymnastics Academy closes after 34 years

By PHIL WRIGHT AND ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The last gymnast has tiptoed along the balance beam or flew between the parallel bars at Eastern Oregon Gymnastics Academy.

The private gymnastics training facility in Pendleton closed its doors Friday, Oct. 29. Gary Stanner, who operated the club since August 1987 said at 78 he is retiring, but his love for the sport and the athletes he trained remains vibrant.

Stanner said he felt “kind of sad around the edges” about turning off the lights and rolling up the mats. The closest real gymnast club, he said, is in the Tri-Cities.

Stanner recounted he became involved in gymnastics after earning a Ph.D in anthropology at the University of California, Davis. He took an instructor position at Oregon State University, Corvallis, and there developed an interest in gymnastics and became involved in the sport at OSU.

That would become his life's work.

He departed OSU for Los Altos, California, where he worked as a coach at Twisters Gymnastics and was one of the last coaches for Pam Bileck, before she competed for the United States national team at the 1984 Summer Olympics and won a silver medal in the team competition.

But working at Twisters did not last long. He said the club was in a tumultuous situation with its husband and wife owners splitting up. And the Bay Area's pollution, he said, took a toll on his respiratory health.

So he headed to Europe for a few months then recalled the fresh air of Oregon and stayed with a friend in Salem for a month. There he sent out resumes and landed the gymnastics coach job in Pendleton.

He made the trip east to meet the owner and checked out the club.

“I came over here to teach for a week,” Stanner said. “I found out the club was in terrible, desperate shape.”

But by then, he said, it was too late. He loved the club's athletes and their dedication,



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Gary Stanner gives instructions Friday, Oct. 29, 2021, to gymnasts at Eastern Oregon Gymnastics Academy in Pendleton. Stanner, who has operated the facility since 1987, closed the club's doors that day and stepped into retirement.

and worked a deal to own the club outright in 10 years.

Then Pendleton got into his blood.

“I love this town,” he said. “I love the people in it.”

Since then, Stanner said, the rest of the story is rather historic.

Eastern Oregon Gymnastics Academy has sent teams to perform and compete three times in England and twice each in Switzerland and Hawaii, he said, where one of the club's athletes won the Aloha Junior Gymfest.

The little gymnastics club that could in Pendleton also played host to international teams, Stanner said, including for a week to the junior Romanian national team, and has hosted half a dozen or so competitions. The club even has produced a pair of gymnastics judges, he said.

The club usually has a team of 12-15 athletes, he said, but the coronavirus pandemic threw up some road blocks, and as of the last week, there were 10 members on the team.

Stanner said his own physical problems make this the time to depart.

“I have to have my right knee replaced,” he said.

### One last trip to the mat

Stanner held a closing party Friday evening at the club, 1819 Westgate, with members of the team and previous students and others associated with Eastern Oregon Gymnastics Academy.

Wearing a black T-shirt that read, “If gymnastics were easy they'd call it football,” Stanner invited several generations of the academy's gymnasts to the party, including Sandra Easley, who was among Stanner's

first students in Pendleton.

“She knows all my secrets and where all the bodies are buried,” he said jokingly.

Stanner's youngest students came in leotards and took part in one last set of tumbling drills. Watching the students tumble around the mat, Easley pointed to the opposite wall, now covered in mirror.

“I'm pretty sure my skin cells are still on that wall,” she said.

For all the success and renown that Stanner brought to the gym, his former students often remembered some of their biggest wipe-outs just as often as they remembered international trips and tournament victories. Stanner recalled the time he donned a motorcycle helmet during practices because one student kept whacking him in the head as she attempted a vault.

But that was all a part of the process in Stanner's view. Winning was fleeting, he said. The character that was built through gymnastics was far more permanent.

No matter what age they were, students said they found camaraderie and confidence at the Eastern Oregon Gymnastics Academy, building self-esteem and community as they attempted to hurl themselves through the air every week.

Students who aged out of the program came back as coaches, and when they started having children of their own, they provided the next generation of students. His latest coaches, Grace Chay, 17, and Shaelynn Silva, 18, did a few floor exercises after the students wrapped up their drill. They later

## LOCAL BRIEFING

### Committee set to vote on Sams nomination

WASHINGTON — Chuck Sams, the former interim executive director of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, could get one step closer to becoming the director of the National Park Service on Tuesday, Nov. 2.

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources will meet that day to vote on Sams and seven other Biden administration nominees. The committee held a hearing for Sams on Oct. 18, and although some senators questioned Sams lack of experience in national parks, no one seemed to object to his nomination.

The public can view the committee's vote at energy.senate.gov and then click on “Live Webcast” under the “Committee Activity” tab. The committee's meeting will start at 7 a.m.

If Sams passes out of committee, he will still require a vote from the full U.S. Senate to be confirmed.

### Family medicine doctor joins Good Shepherd staff

HERMISTON — Good Shepherd Health Care System in a press release Monday, Nov. 1, announced a family medicine Dr. Nicole

Patching is joining the Good Shepherd Primary Care Clinic.

Patching is accepting new patients at the clinic at 620 N.W. 11th St., Suite M-103, Hermiston, along with Dr. David Shanley, family nurse practitioner Angie Hayes and JoDee Williams, doctor of nursing practice. Patching is board certified by the American Board of Family Medicine.

Patching was born and raised in Winnipeg, Canada where most of her family lives. But the appeal of the Pacific Northwest brought her to Eastern Oregon.

“I am drawn to the mountains, seasonal weather and outdoor activities,” she said in the press release “It's beautiful country to set some roots down.”

She obtained her doctor of medicine at Saba University School of Medicine in Saba, Dutch Caribbean. Patching then completed her family medicine residency at Hennepin Healthcare in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Patching can care for patients of all ages and provides a wide scope of practice.

For more information, call the clinic at 541-667-3830. For a more complete listing of services, visit [www.gshealth.org/good-shepherd-medical-group/primary-care-clinic](http://www.gshealth.org/good-shepherd-medical-group/primary-care-clinic).

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