

New gym in Hermiston invites people to return to training

By ERICK PETERSON
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Having recently opened a new gym, personal trainer Toni Piek has been seeing people who are excited to start training again.

Piek is the owner of Elevate Fitness Studio, 2120 First St., Hermiston, which opened Oct. 3. This is the first time she has opened a gym.

She was training three customers in one session the morning of Thursday, Nov. 18, and they expressed happiness about Piek, her gym and their workouts.

“My body told me I needed it,” Pam Hefner said about working out.

She said she used to train at the gym before the pandemic, back before it was closed under a different name and different ownership. Then,

she changed her lifestyle, doing some walking and Zoom workouts, but it was not the same as being in the gym, she said.

She added she missed the gym, is glad to be back and is happy with Piek as a trainer. The other two women training with her expressed the same feelings.

“Toni is such an awesome trainer,” Connie Burke said. And Geneva Timpy agreed but added, “She cuts me no slack.”

Exercise provided Timpy with stress relief, she said. Yoga, in particular, provided her a way for dealing with the difficult time we have all been facing since we first heard of the coronavirus.

“The last couple of years have been tough,” Piek said. She expressed her hope that her gym could raise people’s



Erick Peterson/East Oregonian
Geneva Timpy, Toni Piek, Connie Burke and Pam Hefner take a break from a training session Thursday, Nov. 18, 2021, to pose for a photo in Piek's new Hermiston gym.

spirits in addition to improving their health. Therefore, she said, she named the gym “Elevate.”

For Piek, exercise is a great helper, she said, and she

told of her own history with it. She said she has not been fit all of her life. Though she was active and played basketball in her youth, she did not start working out until after

she had kids.

Then, she went to a gym, dropped the kids off in the gym’s kids room and trained, she said. It helped her both mentally and emotionally, as it relieved her stress, she said.

Having now trained for 15 years, she is a National Academy of Sports Medicine certified personal trainer with a work history in physical therapy. Her work includes employment at Wheatland Village in Walla Walla, and she has been working with seniors for the past three years, she said.

These days, she gets up at around 4 a.m. for her first appointment 90 minutes later three days a week. By early afternoon, she has a break, but she returns to work in the evening for additional classes.

“It’s not work if you love what you do,” she said.

And she added most of her clients range in age from their 30s to their 70s and are trying to find the same of peace of mind she sought when she started training.

Piek is not offering an open gym membership in which people enter any time for workouts. Rather, she accepts clients for personal training sessions, group work or classes. In addition to classes she offers, she also has a yoga class and a cardio class, which other instructors teach. And another trainer comes in to train young people for sports.

Owning the gym excites and frightens her, she said. “Everybody wishes that they could have their own place to call her own shots, but it’s scary,” she said.

She also said people have supported her, and she is appreciative.

Downtown parking still available, city study says

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Downtown Pendleton parking lots are fuller than they have been in the past, but open parking remains ample, according to a study the Pendleton Development Commission conducted.

At a Tuesday, Nov. 16, meeting, Charles Denight, the commission’s associate director, and Patrick Holzman, an associate working for the city through AmeriCorps’ Resource Assistance for Rural Environments program, presented their findings.

Denight and Holzman did a windshield count of every on-street and off-street parking spot between Southwest First Street and Southeast First Street, and Frazer Avenue and Byers Avenue, in addition to the public parking lot near the Pendleton Center for the Arts, at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 14 and Saturday, Oct. 16. The study excluded private parking lots like the lots belonging to Zimmerman & Company True Value and Old West Federal Credit Union.

On both days, the vacancy rate was 63% in the morning. In the afternoon, the vacancy rate was 64% on Oct. 14 and 70% on Oct. 16. Compared to the last time the commission conducted this study in 2017, the overall 2021 rates were lower, though still far above 50%.

Broken down by location, the 200 block of Southwest



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian
Parked cars line the road Friday, Nov. 19, 2021, on South Main Street in Pendleton. The Pendleton Development Commission in a recent study found downtown parking is fuller than it has been in the past but an ample number of parking spaces remain available.

First Street and the nearby Crabby’s parking lot had the heaviest traffic and were the only areas where the vacancy rate was below 25% overall. At the other end of the spectrum, parking lots on the outskirts of the downtown core — the art center parking lot, the Eagles parking lot and the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce parking lot — were all more than 75% vacant regardless of date or time of day.

“We have more people driving and parking downtown now than in 2017, which would indicate that there’s more economic activity,” Holzman said.

City Manager Robb Corbett added the lower parking vacancy rates could be attributed to new apartments downtown. Since 2018,

developer Al Plute has been converting the second and third floors of the Bowman Building from office space to apartment units.

Mayor John Turner said the study seemed to run counter to some residents’ claims that they can’t find any parking downtown, but Councilor McKennon McDonald encouraged staff to study the parking lots at night when people travel to the downtown area to dine.

“Pretty much every night that I drive down Main Street, there are very, very few slots in the evenings,” she said. “I feel like that’s when people make comments and then people are less likely to want to park in a lot because it’s further and the lighting has always been something that comes up.”

Pendleton Children’s Center receives support from OCF

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Oregon Community Foundation announced Thursday, Nov. 18, it granted \$904,220 to 30 Oregon-based nonprofits through its GO (Giving Opportunities to Kids) initiative.

Funds were awarded to organizations that are working to close the “opportunity gap” for children from low-income families, communities of color and rural areas.

Pendleton Children’s Center is the recipient of a \$100,000 GO Kids grant to support its work to build a new child care center. The funding is renewable in 2022, according to a press release from the center, and will total \$200,000 over two years.

Pendleton Children’s Center, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, was established in 2019 to solve the community’s child care shortage, with a mission to provide high-quality, affordable care to benefit working families and enhance the economic vitality of Pendleton.

The organization is working toward acquiring property to remodel for a child care center. Eventually, it plans to

have capacity for 150 infants, toddlers and preschoolers. According to the press release, the center’s board of directors has contracted with Brittney Jackson, long-time Pendleton child care provider, to be the administrator to get the center up and running.

In addition to the \$200,000 GO Kids funding, Pendleton Children’s Center also reported it recently received grants of \$50,000 from the John and Ginger Niemeyer Foundation, \$1,000 from the Ward Family Fund and \$750 from the Walmart Community Grants Team and Facility No. 2492.

“Our board is so grateful for all the support we have received from Oregon Community Foundation, the Niemeyers, the Ward Family,

and Walmart,” said Kathryn Brown, secretary-treasurer of Pendleton Children’s Center and the vice president of the EO Media Group, the parent company of the East Oregonian. “This is a great start to our capital campaign. We know that this project will be of lasting benefit to Pendleton’s children, families and economy.”

For more information about Pendleton Children’s Center and how you can help its efforts, contact Brittney Jackson at director@pendletonchildrenscenter.org or 541-429-0553. You also can find more about the center at www.pendletonchildrenscenter.org and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PendletonChildrensCenter.

LOCAL BRIEFS

Collision sends tractor driver to hospital

MILTON-FREEWATER — A man driving farm equipment Tuesday morning, Nov. 16, on County Road just outside Milton-Freewater was hit from behind by a vehicle.

A woman driving a car collided with the back of the tractor, which had a mower attached. The force of the collision caused the tractor to flip over, according to Chief Rick Saager with the Milton-Freewater Rural Fire District.

Saager said his crew responded to the collision at about 7:35 a.m. and closed the road for 20 minutes to move the tractor safely out of the way of traffic.

The man, who was not identified, was taken by ambulance to Providence St. Mary Medical Center, Walla Walla, and was treated and released.

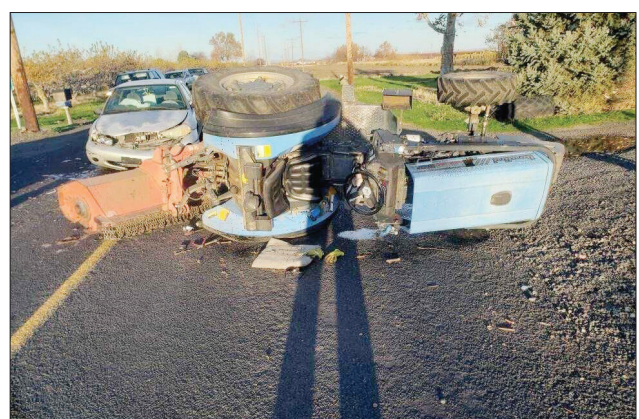
The woman driving the car suffered no injuries, Saager added.

Police: SUV strike on local offender ‘intentional’

HERMISTON — Hermiston police Monday, Nov. 15, arrested Carlos Barragan in connection to a felony theft case, and now police are looking for the suspect who smashed into Barragan with a Hummer H2.

Police Chief Jason Edmiston reported the collision took place at 6:39 p.m. Nov. 17 while Barragan, 43, was riding his bicycle on West Orchard Avenue near Southwest 11th Street (Highway 207).

“I can say based on video evidence, this was not accidental, it was clearly intentional,” Edmiston said. An ambulance took



David Prock/Contributed Photo
A vehicle Tuesday morning, Nov. 16, 2021, struck farm equipment from behind on County Road just outside Milton-Freewater.

Barragan to Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston, according to Edmiston, and later an emergency craft flew him to Legacy Emanuel Medical Center, Portland, for his non-life-threatening injuries.

Police do not know who was driving the large SUV, but the department issued an attempt-to-locate notice for a yellow Hummer H2 with possible front-end damage.

Edmiston also said the hospital reported on the morning of Nov. 18 that Barragan was stable and awaiting surgery.

Barragan is well-known to local law enforcement. Capturing Barragan on Nov. 15 at his father’s home while he was trying to hide in a crawl space marked the 15th time Hermiston police arrested him, Edmiston said.

And Barragan in 2009 helped set up the largest illegal marijuana crop in Grant County. Two years later in federal court he pleaded guilty to conspiracy to manufacture and deliver more than 1,000 marijuana plants.

No print paper on Thanksgiving holiday

PENDLETON — In observance of the Thanks-

giving holiday, the East Oregonian will not publish a print edition on Thursday, Nov. 25.

“It’s a chance to give our employees an opportunity to spend an uninterrupted holiday with their families,” said EO editor Andrew Cutler.

The EO will publish an expanded edition, including additional comics and puzzle features as well as the weekly GO! magazine, on Tuesday, Nov. 23.

An e-edition only paper will be published on Thanksgiving and will be available to paid subscribers through the East Oregonian website, www.eastoregonian.com. The Thanksgiving e-edition will include local stories, an opinion page and spots.

To make sure you are subscribed to the e-edition:

- Log on to www.eastoregonian.com/users/forgot, enter your email address and click “I’m not a robot” then “Reset Password.”
- An email will be sent to you with a link to click on, click on the link.
- A website will popup to enter your new password.
- You’re all set.

For questions or problems, call the EO Media Group customer service line at 800-781-3214.

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