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INSIDE OLD CHURCH TOWERS OVER JOHN DAY'S MAIN STREET



PENDLETON

Chamber president apologizes for column

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The president of the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors said she began issuing apologies after writing a column critical of personal pronouns.

In the chamber's Jan. 11 newsletter, President Velda Arnaud entitled her monthly column "Ostrich-like

Behavior." She opens with an anecdote about a phone conversation she had with a person who mistook her comments about starting "'ostrich-like' behavior" for "ostracizing-like behaviors."

"No, I'm going to behave more like an ostrich: I will be sticking my head in the sand until some sense of sanity returns to the world," she wrote. "For example, I cannot use 'they' to refer to a singular person.

While I completely understand that some people are against the use of pronouns, I worked too hard to learn English grammar to just willy-nilly make changes."

She goes on to cover a variety of topics, including her educational experience with grammar, her thoughts on using "it" as a pronoun and "The Addams Family" character Cousin Itt, whether ostriches actually bury their heads in the sand

and how modern vernacular has replaced "sh## show" with "dumpster fire."

Queer, gender nonconforming and nonbinary people sometimes use the personal pronouns "they" and "them" when they don't identify as either male or female. In a Monday, Jan. 24, interview, Arnaud said she didn't know the reason behind the use of they and them pronouns until after she

wrote her column.

"I don't want to offend anyone," she said. "I want to respect people for who they are."

Arnaud said she tries to keep her "Chamber President's Message" column "light hearted," using humor to comment on contemporary issues, such as how to maintain social intelligence during the

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COVID-19

Large indoor events continue

Pendleton chamber's First Citizens Banquet is Friday; Umatilla County reports 198 new COVID-19 cases

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Following two years of cancellations and curtailments due to the pandemic, most local events have returned in earnest. The latest is the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce's First Citizens Banquet, an annual dinner to honor exemplary community members and businesses from the past year.

While the banquet is going ahead as planned on Friday, Jan. 28, at the Pendleton Convention Center, a new spike in COVID-19 cases is spreading throughout Umatilla County.

Umatilla County has been hit hard by each wave of COVID-19, and the surge in cases caused by the omicron variant is no different. During the week of Jan. 17, the Oregon Health Authority reported more than 1,600 cases of COVID-19 in the county, an all-time high during the pandemic.

Umatilla County Public Health Director Joe Fiumara said organizers for events such as the chamber banquet haven't reached out to him to ask for his advice nor is he seeking out organizers to offer his advice unsolicited.

But Fiumara warned that large indoor events are likely to see some

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HERMISTON FOOD POD



Dolores Amaya prepares pupusas Friday, Jan. 21, 2022, at her El Salvadoreno No. 2 food truck at the Hermiston Food Pod. Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

FOOD POD HOLDS A SOFT OPENING

Two trucks to start, space has hookups for a total of eight

By **ERICK PETERSON**
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Customers walked up to his popular food truck, but they seem ready to do cartwheels instead, according to Patrick Hunt, owner of Southern Twain BBQ.

Hunt said he is as happy as his customers — thrilled to be dishing out smokehouse nachos, hickory sausages, sweet tea and other delicacies once more.

Hunt oversees the Hermiston Food Pod, 240 S.W. Third St., across the street from where he also runs his business. The pod was closed at the start of October for improvements that would make it more attractive for additional restaurants.

At the pod's soft opening Jan. 18, there were only two

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Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Patrick Hunt slathers barbecue sauce on a brisket sandwich Friday, Jan. 21, 2022, at his Southern Twain BBQ food truck at the Hermiston Food Pod.

Marcus Whitman statue up for debate

By **EMRY DINMAN**
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

WALLA WALLA — More than a dozen members of the Walla Walla community and others recently spoke in support for or in opposition to the removal of a statue of pioneer Marcus Whitman during a recent meeting of the city arts commission.

Part 1 of this article ran in the Tuesday, Jan. 25, edition of the East Oregonian and focused on arguments for the removal of the statue that is on public display on the campus of Whitman College.

Several others spoke in opposition to removing the statue Jan. 19, during a meeting of the Walla Walla Arts Commission. Marcia Wendler argued Whitman was a renowned

physician who "answered every call of the distressed and sick, no matter the distance, the time, the day or his own weariness."

Susan Schomburg, who served on the Santa Monica Arts Committee in California for more than a decade and who opened an art gallery there in 2001, also spoke in opposition to the statue's removal.

Schomburg argued the statue, which she said is the oldest in the city's public art collection, is accessible to all, but placing it in a museum would create a whitman barrier to viewing it.

The debate around depictions of Whitman has paralleled debates nationwide over other statues, including those of Christopher Columbus (one of which sits on the Walla Walla

County Courthouse lawn), Confederate soldiers and generals, and other controversial historical figures.

Schomburg drew a distinction between them during an interview before the Jan. 19 arts commission meeting.

"He's not like Confederate soldiers," Schomburg said. "I understand why those statues are being removed. I feel that those statues deserve to be removed. But Marcus Whitman did not enslave people, and he didn't deliberately kill people."

In an online petition Schomburg started in 2020, which has been signed by more than 1,350 people, she argued rather than remove the statue, another statue should be placed

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Greg Lehman, Walla Walla Union-Bulletin, File The Marcus Whitman statue stands in September 2020 at East Main Street and Boyer Avenue, Walla Walla.



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