

Music helps teen find her identity

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

PILOT ROCK — JoJo Jeffers credits her escape from depression to an old guitar and a song that she says God planted in her heart.

The song, "Identity," came out April 19 and is available on Spotify and eventually on other platforms.

Jeffers, 19, started singing as a tiny girl who used her toothbrush as a microphone. She helped lead singing in church from age 13, sometimes performing solos with the worship team at Life Church in Pilot Rock where her father is pastor.

JoJo's struggle with depression started during her freshman year at Pilot Rock High School. She often holed up in her bedroom after school, sitting on the carpeted floor and writing into a black leather journal. The turmoil raging inside seemed more serious than typical teenage angst. She considered suicide and tried cutting. She carefully hid her struggle from her parents, Harley and Dawn Jeffers.

"Once they found out, they loved me through it," Jeffers said.

But, in the midst of it, her thoughts took her to painful places.

"I just started believing these lies that I was unloved," she recalled. "That I was unworthy. I just closed myself off from the world. I'd sit there and dwell on my feelings."

One day, Jeffers picked up a beat-up guitar that someone at church had given her after rescuing the dusty instrument from the attic where it had sat for years. With her fingers becoming calloused from playing, the teen mastered chords learned from YouTube videos. She accompanied herself singing while sitting crosslegged on her bedroom floor. Over time, depression loosened its grip.

In her sophomore year,



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

JoJo Jeffers sings and plays her guitar on her bedroom floor in Pilot Rock on March 30, 2022.

she decided to write a song. This first stab at songwriting came after a heartfelt prayer in which she told God she felt lost and like a stranger lived in her head. Though she had stepped back in her Christian faith at the time, she believed the song that flowed out was God's response to her prayer.

"He just took my hand and wrote it all on paper for me," Jeffers said. "It doesn't really feel like it's mine."

The lyrics seemed to speak directly to her, telling her she was worthy and loved. Jeffers, now a freshman at Blue Mountain Community College, sang the song to her parents and they were impressed. Encouraged, she shared a video on Facebook of herself singing the song. A woman Jeffers didn't know messaged that the song helped her deal with her own struggle. Family friend and professional singer Ericka Corban saw the video too and encouraged her.

Corban had originally met Jeffers in 2010 when Corban, her husband and their young children stopped at McDonald's in Pendleton on their way home to the Washing-

ton coast from a concert. She started chatting with Dawn Jeffers and 9-year-old JoJo. Corban has since performed at the Jeffers' church and mentored JoJo, who she says has music in her bones. After seeing the video, she pushed the teen to record it.

"When something moves you like that, you know it's special," Corban said.

She connected Jeffers with Brandon Bee, a Kennewick producer, singer and songwriter. Last fall, Jeffers met Bee on Zoom and then traveled to Tri-Cities in February to record her song in his studio.

"She's a natural," he said afterwards. "When I see a natural, it's typically somebody who really has a connection with their songs and they don't care who's in the room. They're just going to present the song in the most authentic way."

To calm Jeffers' nerves, the producer urged her to imagine herself back on her bedroom floor.

"It was just her and her guitar," Bee said. "I added some production for sure, but I really did try to paint

around what she already had. I wanted to keep it close to what she did naturally."

Bee said he normally tells aspiring singer/songwriters that their first song is something they need to get through so they can get to their next thing and then the next.

"But I don't really think that was the case with this one," he said. "The song was so good all on its own. This wasn't just something she had to get done. It's the real deal."

At BMCC, Jeffers serves as an ambassador for the school. She plans to work toward a degree in counseling. Jeffers doesn't know where music will take her, but envisions nothing with big stage lights, fame and fortune.

"If this is something that glorifies me, I don't want it in the long run," she said. "The goal is to glorify God and not me."

She continues to write songs for a future album. Her twin, Trent, who has a passion for photography, is shooting photos for the album cover.

Hermiston man faces murder charge in death of Kennewick musician

By CAMERON PROBERT
Tri-City Herald

KENNEWICK — A Hermiston man is accused of the violent attack that killed a well-known Kennewick musician.

Christopher R. Calvert, 44, was caught in rural Skamania County, Washington, driving Clayton "Clay" Wick's car about 3 p.m. Thursday, May 5, Kennewick police Lt. Jason Kiel said during a media briefing May 6.

Wick was a former bassist for the Walla Walla Symphony.

Calvert was an acquaintance of Wick's, police said.

Police think Calvert took the 2012 Honda CRV after killing the man inside Wick's Buchanan Street home.

A housekeeper discovered Wick's body two days earlier, according to Kennewick police. Investigators suspect the 76-year-old, who lived alone, had been dead for three to five days before she found his body.

Police said it appears Wick died after a "violent assault and blunt force trauma." The results of an autopsy conducted May 5 have not returned, said officials.

Washington State Patrol crime lab technicians spent two days documenting and gathering evidence from the "violent encounter," said a news release.

Many of the details about Wick's death remain under investigation, including the reason for the attack and how they knew each other.

"The motive is not completely known at this

time," said the release. They had been seen together at the house at least one other time, Kiel said.

Missing car

When police began investigating, they noticed Wick's CRV was missing and thought Calvert had stolen it, Kiel said. A warrant for car theft was issued for his arrest May 3.

After more investigating, detectives were able to link him to the murder investigation and a judge agreed to issue a nationwide, \$1 million first-degree murder warrant for his arrest.

Police tracked him to Stevenson, Washington, a small community about an hour east of Vancouver, on May 5.

Skamania County Sheriff's deputies along with the U.S. Marshals Fugitive Task Force and Kennewick detectives found Calvert driving around that area around 3 p.m. May 5.

When police tried to pull him over, Calvert sped away, starting a five-minute chase that ended when officers forced the car into a ditch in a rural area of Skamania County.

Calvert was arrested and taken back to the Benton County jail where he was booked on suspicion of auto theft and first-degree premeditated murder with the aggravating circumstances of invasion of privacy, lack of remorse and excessive injuries.

Calvert has a lengthy criminal history, mostly from Oregon that includes convictions for eluding police, possession of meth and manufacturing a controlled substance.

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Pendleton city manager looks to boost police department

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Pendleton City Manager Robb Corbett's 2022-23 budget proposal boosts public safety and brings changes to city spending.

The proposal calls from adding two new positions for police officers for the upcoming fiscal year with plans to add two more positions the following year. Corbett said the last time the Pendleton Police Department saw an increase in positions was nearly a decade ago.

"We used to get 20 or 30 qualified applicants per job listing, now we are lucky to get four or five," he said. "But with a mixture of increased calls, family medical leave and young people not interested in entering the profes-

sion, we commonly find ourselves understaffed."

Corbett said he is hopeful increasing the department's staff will help alleviate these problems.

Police Chief Charles Byram echoed Corbett's ideas.

"Ultimately the impact will allow for police to be proactive," he said. "An increase in officers would allow us to respond to situations faster and keep up with the workload."

While the increase in patrolling officers will help the department, the other issue to address is retaining officers the city already has. The police department is short staffed, and Byram made no bones about not dropping standards.

"You have to have the

right people with the right temperament for this job," he explained, "we will not lower our standards just because we need a body."

Corbett also is proposing a complete remodel of how Pendleton disburses funds between departments. He referred to this as a "cash carry over system" that allows departments to keep what they didn't spend last year for the upcoming year.

"This system will hopefully end the use-it-or-lose-it mentality," he said, "In the past, departments would spend the money before the end of the year, so it stayed in their department."

Corbett said the move is about incentivizing departments to spend less and prevent frivolous overspending at the end of the year.



Good Shepherd Outreach & Events

May is Older American's Month

Good Shepherd's Community Health & Outreach offers free health screenings for community members of all ages!

Healthy Cooking on a Budget

Second Tuesday of the month (May 10, 2022)

Walk with Ease

May 23 - July 1, M/W/F

GOOD SHEPHERD
COMMUNITY HEALTH & OUTREACH

541-667-3509 | healthinfo@gshealth.org



Public Information Meetings



US Army Corps of Engineers®
Walla Walla District

McNary Master Plan Revision

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District is revising the McNary Master Plan for Corps lands behind McNary Dam and surrounding Lake Wallula on the Columbia River near Umatilla, OR. We invite you to an open house scoping meeting to learn about the Master Plan and to comment on how you would like to see these lands managed for the next 20 years. The scoping comment period is open from May 2 to June 2, 2022.

To submit a comment or for more information, visit the Walla Walla District website at: <https://www.nww.usace.army.mil>. You may also mail comments to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District, ATTN: McNary Master Plan, 201 N. 3rd Ave., Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876, or email comments or questions directly to McNaryMP@usace.army.mil.

Meeting 1

Date: Tuesday, May 10, 2022
Time: Open House 4-7 p.m.
Presentation 5 p.m. & 6 p.m.
Location: Red Lion Inn Columbia Ctr.
1101 N. Columbia Center Blvd.
Kennewick, WA 99328

Meeting 2

Date: Wednesday, May 11, 2022
Time: Open House 4-7 p.m.
Presentation 5 p.m. & 6 p.m.
Location: McNary Lock & Dam Visitor Ctr.
82790 Devore Road
Umatilla, OR 97882