

Milton-Freewater's Weekend at the Blues and Rodeo Festival a success

By MAX ERIKSON
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

MILTON-FREEWATER — The Weekend at the Blues Music Festival and Pro Rodeo event in Milton-Freewater brought the community together for what organizers hope is a new tradition.

What was once the Muddy Frogwater Festival has reinvented itself as a more straightforward music festival with many well-known local bands hitting the stage, such as the Coyote Kings, the Wasteland Kings, and Feed-back with Mike Mendoza.

The music festival was Friday and Saturday, July 29 and 30, at Yantis Park, 200 De Haven Street.

Event organizer Kim Munk, who also helped with Muddy Frogwater days for 35 years, says they have been wanting to bring back the festival for two years.

In the meantime, they needed something new to call it.

"We have been trying for two years to come up with a new name," Munk said. "We chose Weekend at the Blues because we sit at the foot of the Blue Mountains, and it made sense."



People listen to The Wasteland Kings on Saturday, July 30, 2022, at the Milton-Freewater Music Festival in Yantis Park.

Munk said the same group of volunteers who helped organize Muddy Frogwater came together for this new event, so it was easy to get things going again.

Pam Wildman, a longtime volunteer at Muddy Frogwater, was the vendor coordina-

tor for Weekend at the Blues.

"It has been a challenge to move on from Muddy Frogwater to get people interested again because it was so iconic to the city for so long," Wildman said. "But we have gotten a great response for this event, and I feel it has

been very successful. We have vendors from all over the area here."

Craig Rouse, a one-time city of Milton-Freewater employee for the parks and recreation department, booked the bands. He said the goal is to grow the event every year.

"We did this with a bunch of volunteers, and we wanted to make it a music festival and concentrate on bringing in local talent," Rouse said. "Music is the main theme and that is what makes it different than the Muddy Frogwater festival."

Rouse hopes in the future, bigger regional and national bands will appear at the festival, like those that played the Walla Walla Frontier Days in the past.

The weekend festival also included a small parade Saturday down Main Street in old town Milton-Freewater.

Families welcomed the event after two years of pandemic-limited activities.

Parade-goer and mother Kayla Marker said it was good to get out of the house and do something fun with the family.

"It is a good thing to have for the summer. It helps because there is not a lot to do at the parks anymore," Marker said. "I like how its all connected, the parade, the music and the rodeo. It's really great for the community and for local businesses."

Kaylee Marker, 9, liked getting out of the house for some fun.

"I like that I can go to a parade and really like getting the candy," Kaylee said.

Weekend events included the Pro-West Rodeo at the Pioneer Posse Grounds off State Route 11 in Milton-Freewater Saturday and Sunday.

Locals take in Irrigon Watermelon Festival Parade



Phil Wright/East Oregonian

Participants in the Irrigon Watermelon Festival Parade line up Saturday, July 30, 2022, on Columbia Lane near the Stokes Landing Senior Center. This year the parade had at least 35 entries.



Phil Wright/East Oregonian

Members of Irrigon High School hand out United States flags to the crowd Saturday, July 30, 2022, during the Irrigon Watermelon Festival Parade.



Phil Wright/East Oregonian

Children scramble to gather candy Saturday, July 30, 2022, at the parade during the Irrigon Watermelon Festival.

COMMUNITY BRIEFING

Register for paddle boarding/kayaking adventure

UMATILLA — For an opportunity to spend a couple of evenings on the Columbia River, consider signing up for the couples paddle boarding/kayaking class.

With autumn just around the bend, the two-day class is Sept. 10-11, 4-6 p.m. at Umatilla Marina Park. Presented by Umatilla Parks and Recreation, the two-day class is open to ages 18 and up. The registration fee is \$30.

Day one will include water safety, paddling techniques and learning how to use your chosen watercraft. The second session features a paddle boarding/kayaking adventure on the Columbia River from McNary Dam to the Umatilla Marina. Life jackets are required and will be provided.

To register, visit www.umatilla-city.org/parksrec. For questions, contact Luke Romero at 541-922-3226 or luke@umatilla-city.org.

Oldies Night highlights Tom Petty

MILTON-FREEWATER — Familiar tunes such as "Free Fallin'," "I Won't Back Down" and "Stop Draggin' My Heart Around" are among the hits BJ the DJ will spin during the upcoming Oldies Night in Milton-Freewater.

Fans of Tom Petty and others are invited to listen and groove on Saturday, Aug. 6, 7-10 p.m. at Wesley United Methodist Church, 816 S. Main St. Disc jockey Bob Jones will share about Petty's days with his band, the Heartbreakers, as well as the musician's joint venture with George Harrison, Bob Dylan, Jeff Lynne and Roy Orbison as the Traveling Wilburys.

There is no admission charge. For more information, contact Jones at dubuquer70@gmail.com or 541-938-7028.

Library Comic Con books into second year

PENDLETON — Comic book characters who participated in the inaugural comic convention in Pendleton should be thrilled to know that the page is about to turn for the second annual Library Comic Con.

Deemed a rousing success, library assistant Heather Culley and others are

gearing up for an even bigger and better event. Comic enthusiasts of all ages are invited to attend — costumes are strongly encouraged — Aug. 6, 2-4 p.m. at the Pendleton Public Library, 502 S.W. Dorion Ave. Admission is free. Free vintage comic books will surely lure many to join in the fun.

Activities include a costume contest, a green screen photo booth, crafts and a one-shot roleplaying game. In addition, there will be vendor booths — so bring some cash for a chance to pick up some awesome comics or cool swag.

For more information, visit www.pendleton.or.us/library. For questions or to inquire about vendor space, call Cully at 541-966-0380.

Summer meal program continues in Pendleton

PENDLETON — The Summer Meal Program, which began in late June, continues through Aug. 18 in Pendleton.

All children and youths through age 18 are invited to enjoy a free hot meal Monday through Thursdays. The food is served from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the cafeteria at the Pendleton Early Learning Center, 455 S.W. 13th St., Pendleton.

For questions, call Suzanne Howard, director of nutrition services at the Pendleton School District, at 541-966-3267.

Living Faith hosts Family Fun Nights

HERMISTON — Water fun and inflatables, games, face painting, specialty coffee drinks and food carts are all featured during a pair of Family Fun Nights at Living Faith Church.

The events, with activities both indoors and outdoors, are Friday, Aug. 5 and Friday, Aug. 19, at 1611 Diagonal Blvd., Hermiston. There is no admission charge.

Also, movies can be viewed on a large indoor screen — "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe" (Aug. 5) and "Luca" (Aug. 19). The flicks start at 5 p.m.

In addition, during the Aug. 5 event, a youth fundraiser offers a Hawaiian barbecue chicken dinner for \$15. Money will be used to support the Hermiston City Youth Night on Sept. 30. Preorder via www.winacity.com/ffn or by calling 541-567-4486.

—EO Media Group

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