

HEPPNER

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# Gazette Times

VOL. 137 NO. 12 8 Pages Wednesday, March 21, 2018 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

## Local youth sees brighter future following Challenge Program

Joe Jones completes five-month course, receives GED and enlists in Navy



Joe Jones with his graduating class from OYCP (he is holding the flag in front) and with Heppner rancher, Jack Meligan, his mentor throughout the program.

By David Sykes

A couple of years ago Heppner youth Joe Jones was heading down a path all too familiar. He'd dropped out of high school, lost his job at the local market and as he says, "was down on my luck and feeling life was pointless." Then he applied and entered a program that has begun to turn his life around.

"My sister first began talking about it (Oregon National Guard Youth Challenge Program, OYCP) a year or so before I entered," Jones recalls. Located in Bend, and designed for youth considered "academically at risk," those who are failing in school, not attending, or those who have dropped out, OYCP is described as non-traditional live-in school that operates like a military academy.

According to the web site, OYCP is guided by military principles of structure and self-discipline, with the staff utilizing a "hands off", tough love, caring and disciplined approach to instill values to train and instruct cadets. Graduates are eligible to earn a high school diploma, a GED or school credits upon completion of the program.

"I was skeptical at first, I didn't really want to go to

a military school," Jones says. "Then I got interested in what it was." With the encouragement and help from his sister Sibbea and mother Liz he filled out the 20-page application and turned it in. After a while, however, when he didn't hear anything back, he "kind of gave up." Then one day they called and asked "do you want to go to OYCP?" He said yes and after more paper work, the 18-year-old arrived at the Bend, OR facility in July of 2017.

The school and living quarters are located on a former military base, and upon arrival he was grouped together with 60 other youth into a platoon. They lived in pods together and followed a regimented lifestyle of discipline, cleanliness and school work. In addition to daily inspections of their living quarters, the cadets wear uniforms, are in bed by 9:30 p.m. (taps) and arise (reveille) every morning at six.

Jones says a typical day would go something like this: up at six, get dressed and off to morning colors. Come back, eat (typical breakfast of eggs, bacon and hot cakes), go back to the living quarters and work on organization of their lockers and cleaning their

rooms, then start classes at eight. "We studied math, English, science, you know the basic stuff," he says. He said the tests were hard and the grades strict. Jones says it takes an 80 percent for a B and 94 percent for an A. He says he scored well earning 100 percent much of the time and ended up number two in testing in his entire company. During this time the cadets would go to lunch and then at 3:30 it was time for PT (physical training). Then it was dinner at 6 p.m. and back to the living quarters for study time. The students were also assigned various jobs, his being answering the phones in the administration office. They also called their instructors sir at all times.

Another aspect of the school was the community service done in town. He says they spent 90 hours doing jobs like picking up garbage at the parks, directing traffic during community events and other service type jobs. Wearing their uniforms all the time, Jones says towns people would come up and ask him who they were.

During the five-month time he spent in the pro-

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## Community Counseling Solutions to open March 21



The new building location for Community Counseling Solutions is scheduled to open for business on March 21. The open house is will be held on April 2 from noon to 2 p.m. It was previously reported in the G-T that they would not be moving until June. The editor apologizes for this error.

## Bank of Eastern Oregon float takes first in Great Green Parade



The Bank of Eastern Oregon's Leprechaun Kisses float took first place in the Merchant category of the 2018 Great Green Parade held Saturday on Main St. in Heppner. Community Bank was second.

Oregon Trail Library District was first in the Irish Floats – Business category. Morrow County Health District took second.

In the Antique and Custom Vehicles category, Morrow County Museum

took first. James Bullock was second.

First in the Irish Theme – Green category was the Clan McAllister. Grand Marshal, the Joe and Leanne Lindsay family took second.

## St. Pat's road bowling winners announced



The first place winner in the road bowling contest was the Bowl Roaders team consisting of Peter Wenberg, Nels Wenberg and Elliott Strouse with a score of 31. The second place team was Team NO. – Contributed photo

## Anson Fairbank receives donations from play



"Searching for Meaning" cast members chose Anson Fairbank (#ANSONSTRONG) as the recipient of donations from the Fr. Condon play this year. Anson, a two year old suffering from leukemia, is the grandson of Jim and Monica Swanson of Ione. Additional donations for Anson may be made at Columbia Bank. Pictured is Sheridan Tarnasky presenting the \$1,040 collected from donations at the play to Anson's grandmother, Monica Swanson. –Contributed photo.

## Local scholarships now open

The South Morrow County Scholarship Committee will accept scholarship applications from Mar. 1 through 4 p.m. on Apr. 5. In Heppner, they may be turned into Ginger Bowman at Heppner High School and in Ione, Cathy McCabe at Ione High School or a counselor.

Criteria for a South Morrow County scholarship is as follows: the committee will award scholarships to a college-bound Heppner High School or Ione High School senior based on academic achievement, community involvement and financial need. Students must be continuing their education at a community college, trade school or four-year college or university. Applications will be accepted and awarded by the South Morrow County Scholarship Inc., board of directors using their "common local scholarship application" and must include a transcript and principal/counselor evaluation form.

The South Morrow County Scholarship Trust Committee, on behalf of the Del LaRue family, will accept scholarship applications from Mar. 1 through 4 p.m. on Apr. 5. Completed applications may be turned into Cathy McCabe..

The Coach Del LaRue Scholarship criteria is as follows: the Coach Del LaRue scholarship was developed in memory of Del LaRue, a long-time teacher and coach at Ione High School. LaRue had a passion for coaching basketball and track and loved seeing students set and achieve their goals. After retiring from teaching, he continued to coach track for 12 additional years. During this time he helped many student athletes achieve

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