

PEIRIS:

continued from Page A1

Although he didn’t expect it to reach so many people, Peiris admitted he was after a laugh.

“I’ve actually been thinking about this for a few years for how to make my senior pictures funny,” he said. “I try to be funny as much as I can because I like to make people laugh. I actually won an award for best comedian from my high school last year.”

He pitched the idea to his photographer, Tammy James, owner of 60 Minute Photo in Hermiston, while they were out taking some other shots at Cold Springs Reservoir. She was on board, and the rest quickly became online history.

James said they started outside with the shot of Peiris sitting on the car. Click. They went inside the store, and she followed him around using natural lighting for the photos. As he was ringing up a customer’s items, James suggested using the infrared scanner in one of the shots. Click. Peiris wanted one by the Slurpee machine. Click.

James said she didn’t think the pictures were that out of the ordinary, considering his family owns the store and he spends so much time there. Her son later told her the photos were “blowing up on Twitter,” so she became one of Peiris’ many followers on the social network.

“I have definitely done some unique pictures, but these ones just went crazy, just went everywhere,” she said. “It is really fun to see what it’s done with Stefano, and I think he’s kind of lov-



STAFF PHOTO BY SEAN HART

Stefano Peiris talks with employee Britney Longoria, right, at his parents’ 7-Eleven franchise in Hermiston Tuesday.

ing the fame of it all. It’s just been fun to watch and see what his mom has to say.”

His mother, Anoma, said her friends were telling her about the online popularity of the photos, but she had never used Twitter.

“I quickly asked my son to get me a Twitter account,” she said. “I think it’s funny how people go crazy on something like this. It is fun for a little town.”

His father, Michael, said everyone was surprised at the reaction generated by the photos. Many other students have stopped by the store talking about them, he said.

“We never expected that,” he said. “I don’t think anybody expected it to go that big. All the kids know about it. They’re all talking about how famous he is.”

Peiris suggested that because he was now famous he should have no curfew and a new car — as he was sitting on his brother’s car in the parking lot photo. His mother quickly replied, “You’re not that famous.”

Peiris said he plans to enjoy his fame while it lasts.

“It’s nice walking around school and having everyone call my name,” he said.

“Some people actually took pictures with me. It’s a good feeling actually. I think it’s at its peak of Twitter fame right now, but who knows really?”

For anyone else planning their senior pictures, Peiris said the key is to not take them too seriously.

“When you look back at it, you can either pose on a tree with your arms crossed like everybody else, or you can be different,” he said. “It’s always better to be different.”



PHOTO COURTESY TAMMY JAMES

Hermiston High School senior Stefano Peiris gained hundreds of new followers on Twitter and his post has been shared more than 27,000 times since Sunday.

Agape House changes hours

The hours of operation are changing at Agape House.

Beginning Monday, Oct. 19, the organization will be open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon and 1-3 p.m. Agape House is located at 500 Harper Road.

The nonprofit organization provides emergency assistance, including food, to those

in need in western Umatilla County and north Morrow County.

Also, Agape House is in need of additional volunteers. A variety of opportunities are available to those who would like to give back to the community.

For more information, call Executive Director Dave Hughes at 541-567-8774.

JUDGES:

continued from Page A1

thing different that’s the time,” Smith said.

During the meeting, the city gave staff the go-ahead to start the public process to amend the definition of “multi-family dwelling” in the zoning code. Clint Spencer, city planning director, said the current code classifies multi-family dwellings as three or more apartment units in the same building, but on occasion a developer wants to build a different configuration. The amendment would change the definition of multi-family dwellings to describe three or more units on the same lot, rather than in the same building.

After listening to committee reports and staff reports and agreeing to start having a work session before every council meeting instead of once a month, the council re-convened as the Hermiston Urban Renewal Agency and ap-

proved a facade grant for the Hermiston Herald building at 333 E. Main St. The agency will reimburse a 40-percent match, totaling up to \$1,560, for new landscaping in front of the building.

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