

Our Community

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IN BRIEF

Toastmasters meets in Umatilla

A supportive learning environment providing members with an opportunity to develop communication and leadership skills is available in Umatilla.

Columbia River Toastmasters meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. in the Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District's McNary fire hall, 305 Willamette St., Umatilla. Everyone is invited to attend to learn more about the organization and membership.

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization that began in 1924. For information, including how to find other groups, visit www.toastmasters.org.

EBT cards to improve WIC services

Recipients of WIC (Women, Infants and Children) now have a new way to shop for food benefits using an EBT (electronic benefit transaction) card.

WIC families served by Umatilla-Morrow County Head Start recently began receiving their cards. In the past, recipients used paper vouchers to purchase items. The EBT card makes it easier for WIC recipients to track their monthly food balance and assist with making healthy choices. Participants will have access to a new WICShopper smart phone app, allowing them to scan a food's bar code to determine if the food item can be purchased with WIC funds.

The local Head Start provides services to nearly 4,000 lower income pregnant or nursing women, infants and children under 5. There are WIC clinics in Hermiston, Umatilla, Boardman, Pendleton and Milton-Freewater. For more information, visit www.umchs.org or www.healthoregon.org/wic.

Missoula Children's Theatre sets auditions

Youths in Morrow County are invited to try out for parts in an upcoming Missoula Children's Theatre production of "Rumpelstiltskin."

Open to students in kindergarten through 12th grade, the auditions are Monday at 10 a.m. in the gym at Windy River Elementary School, 500 Tatone St., Boardman. In addition to acting parts, participants are needed as assistant directors and backstage help.

Those attending the audition should bring a snack. Some of the cast members will be asked to remain for a rehearsal immediately afterwards. Practices will be scheduled throughout the week in preparation for a pair of performances. The free shows are Saturday, March 26 at 3 p.m. and 5:30 p.m., also at Windy River.

Students unable to commit to the week-long rehearsals may participate in free theater workshops presented by the Missoula Children's Theatre tour directors. Topics include mime skills, stage make-up and story-telling techniques. The workshop times will be announced by the tour directors.

For more information, contact cnrmichael@gmail.com or 541-481-9457.

Agape House seeks murder mystery actors

People with a flair for acting are encouraged to inquire about participating in the upcoming murder mystery presentation by Agape House.

The event is planned as a Mother's Day evening dessert — Sunday, May 8 — at 5:30 p.m. at Agape House, 500 Harper Road, Hermiston. Participants don't need previous acting experience and no lines have to be memorized.

The murder mystery events help raise money for Agape House, which serves the needs of low-income residents in the community.

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

Relay for Life meets Thursday

A group of people committed to raising money for the American Cancer Society invite people to join them in the effort.

The committee for Relay for Life of Hermiston meets the third Thursday of each month at the Hermiston Church of the Nazarene, 1520 W. Orchard Ave. Team captains gather at 6:30 p.m. and the leadership meeting follows. The upcoming meeting is this week on St. Patrick's Day.

The summer fundraiser begins June 25 at the Umatilla County Fairgrounds. With the theme "Paint Your World Purple," people are encouraged to wear purple clothing and decorate with purple, the color which represents every type of cancer.

For more information about Hermiston Relay for Life, contact Trish Witham at 541-561-1998 or easygon@eotnet.net.

Elk foundation hosts annual banquet

Money for research, outreach and habitat improvements that benefit elk and other wildlife will be raised during a fundraiser by the Pendleton chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

In its 29th year, the Big Game Banquet is Saturday with the doors opening at 4:30 p.m. at the Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate. Cost for the meal only is \$20 for youths and \$35 adults. Tickets must be purchased in advance, as they won't be sold at the door.

Memberships with banquet tickets and raffle tickets are also available at <https://events.rmef.org/shop.aspx> or by calling Marla Campbell at 541-379-0488. More than \$40,000 in merchandise is featured in raffles, including guns, rifles, bows and tents.

For more information about the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, visit www.rmef.org.

It's doggone true: Pet ownership benefits health

When asked if I have children, I tell people I have two canine kids.

John and I are currently raising Lucifer, 6, and the General, 3, both German shepherds. And, they are very important members of the Malgesini pack.

It seems life insurance companies also understand the value of dog ownership in regards to a person's health. When I was shopping for a new policy, among the questions my insurance agent asked was did I own a dog.

An article I recently read on WebMD also touted the benefits of being a pet owner. Written by Jeanie Lerche Davis, "5 Ways Pets Can Improve Your Health" was reviewed for inclusion on the site by Dr. Louise Chang, who is board certified in internal medicine. The article isn't merely a

pet lover gushing about their animals — the content is actually endorsed by a medical professional.

"Pets help lower blood pressure and lessen anxiety," Davis said in the article.

While I totally agree with this, I also can attest that pets can act out in ways that raise your blood pressure and increase anxiety. Like the time Lucifer chewed the remote control — then a short time later, he gnawed another and then a third one.

Growing up during the pre-remote control world, the convenience of changing the channel without having to get up is now firmly embedded in our lifestyle. After the third remote bit the dust, Lucifer and I had a serious sit-down.

Lucifer is John's dog

and his affinity for remote controls was putting his status as man's best friend at risk. Even though my lecture probably was comprehended as, "Lucifer, blah, blah, blah ... no, blah, blah, blah," he seemed to understand the severity of the situation and discontinued the attack on the remote controls.

As for my dog, the General seems to exhibit symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder. At about 6 months old he got weird about drinking out of only one bowl in the house.

Overall, it's not a big deal if he prefers running downstairs to get a drink — even though he jumped over a perfectly good bowl of water sitting next to the daybed. However, it becomes an issue when that's

the only bowl he'll consume water from.

One time during a pack outing, I was concerned that he'd become dehydrated or get heatstroke. Panting heavily, his tongue was dangling from his mouth. I finally ended up sucking water out of my CamelBak and then spit it into his mouth. While he didn't protest, I'm sure it looked rather odd to anyone who might have witnessed it.

Our dogs definitely add to our life ... and you just can't beat the excitement they exhibit when greeting us at the door after a long day at work.

Tammy Malgesini is the community editor. Her column, Inside My Shoes, includes general musings about life. Contact her at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539.



Tammy Malgesini
INSIDE MY SHOES

Leprechauns, pots of gold and blarney, oh my

Heppner celebrates St. Patrick's Day all weekend long

By TAMMY MALGESINI
Community Editor

Celebrating its Irish roots is more than a wee bit o' fun this weekend in Heppner.

"Whether you are Irish when you come, you will certainly be Irish when you leave," said Sheryll Bates, Heppner Chamber of Commerce executive director.

The Wee Bit O' Ireland Celebration features food and fun for everyone. In its 34th year, organizers know how to throw a party and the result is lots o' fun. There's no fee for most of the activities.

In what has become a traditional kickoff for the event, Father Gerry Condon presents an original play. A drama of forgiveness and faith, "Intrigue at Glendalough" will be presented Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in the parish hall at St. Patrick's Catholic Church, 525 N. Gale St. The evening also features Irish music. Although there's no admission charge, donations will benefit the parish hall restoration project.

Activities on Friday include an arts and crafts fair, the annual Friends of the Library book sale, a celebration of the Morrow County Courthouse clock restoration and the dedication of the Judge Alba Bartholomew Building, a new county facility located at 110 N. Court St.

The celebration kicks into high gear Saturday with activities from sun up 'til the wee hours of Sunday morning. Some of the highlights include the Sheep Dog Trials (Thompson's Ranch off Highway 74 on Bunker Hill Road), the St.



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

The boots were flying at the Welly Toss during the 2015 Wee Bit O' Ireland Celebration. The event, in its 34th year, includes activities Thursday through Sunday in Heppner.

Paddy's Cruz-In (9 a.m. to 3 p.m.) and the Welly Toss (10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.) for a chance to participate in ol' Irish fun and braggin' rights for tossing the boot the farthest. And, the Great Green Parade gets rolling at 1 p.m.

For Irish fun and entertainment, be sure to attend the KUMA Coffee Hour (10-11:30 a.m.) and Ceili (2-4 p.m.) Both programs are held upstairs at the Elks Lodge.

The coffee hour, which is really 90 minutes, is live on the air with Tom Melton. He shares the microphone with Rep. Greg Walden, Dom Monahan and Father Gerry Condon — expect lots of jokes and even more blarney.

The Irish Singers will be on hand and the Laughlin family, grand marshals for the event, will be introduced. The Irish Brogue Contest provides the audience an opportunity to tell their best blarney.

The Irish Singers return for Ceili and the festival's main entertainment, Cross Strung, will stop by to sing a few songs. The event also includes a drawing, so people are invited to come and sit, clap their hands, stomp their feet and maybe walk away with a \$100 Pot o' Gold. Cross Strung will perform an evening concert

(7:30-9:30 p.m.) at St. Patrick's parish hall.

Kids can have loads of laughs at the Bouncin' Leprechaun Fun Zone. A

fundraiser for the Heppner Day Care, it runs from 1:30-5:30 p.m. in the high school gym. Activities for preschool through high school ages includes bouncy structures, a rock climbing wall, a bungee run, an obstacle course, a slide and a mini-carnival with games. The cost is \$5 for children 5 and under and \$6 for those 6 and older.

The Sheep Dog Trials continue all day Sunday. And, the celebration's grand finale features Road Bowling at 1:37 p.m. Participants must meet at 1 p.m. at Balm Fork Road.

For a full schedule, visit www.heppnerchamber.com or www.facebook.com/st.patrickscelbration. For more information, call 541-676-5536.

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