

Rock hunt group providing cure for summer boredom

By **JADE McDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

Hermiston parents looking for a way to keep the kids entertained for the summer can add rock-hunting and rock-painting to their list.

Painting colorful, fun designs on rocks and hiding them for people to find isn't a new idea, but the rocks have been popping up around town in abundance lately after local mother Cassandra Evens created a rock-hunting group on Facebook that gained more than 700 members in two weeks. She said she got the idea from a woman on a Facebook group for moms and found a lot of local interest.

"Everyone was telling me, 'If you start a group, I'll join,'" she said.

The group is "just for fun," she said, and she doesn't want to set up elaborate rules or see anyone get frustrated. All she asks is that people be polite and responsible. That means keeping the messages on rocks appropriate for children, not trespassing and not taking large numbers of souvenirs without contributing any artwork in return.

Evens said she encouraged the group to start out placing rocks along the Oxbow Trail and in Riverfront Park so that beginners had an idea of where to start looking. Several painted rocks that looked to be the handiwork of multiple artists could be seen along the trail last week. But she said people have also been posting pictures of their painted rocks in the Facebook group with clues that they hid them on the Hermiston Butte or elsewhere in town.



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE McDOWELL

A painted rock sits in the grass near the Oxbow Trail.

She said luckily right now the painter-to-hunter ratio has been in good balance and people have been able to enjoy both activities.

The fad calls to mind a low-tech version of the Pokemon Go craze last summer, which got young people outdoors together in unusually high numbers to hunt digital monsters that appeared on their smartphones when they visited certain locations. Evens said she hopes finding and hiding rocks gets families out together in the nice weather. She said she has enjoyed painting with her niece and nephew and 2-year-old son.

"I had him in mind because he loves rocks," she said. "Every day I walk inside and there are rocks lining my coffee table and shelves and everywhere, so if he found a painted rock on the trail he would be ecstatic."

She said she had some ideas for future activities to keep interest in the group going, including rock-painting parties at the park and prizes for finding certain rocks pictured on the Hermiston Rock Hunt Facebook page.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

Fragrant festival blooms for Agape House, Martha's House

HERMISTON HERALD

The Purple Ridge Lavender Festival has officially become the top fundraiser for Agape House and Martha's House, bringing in about \$6,000 this past weekend for the Hermiston non-profit organizations.

Executive director Dave Hughes said the event stepped into the top slot after the last A Very Poplar Run was held this past fall. Featured in "Runner's World" in December 2012, the popular event came to an end after the sale of tree farm by GreenWood Resources.

Buzzing with activity, in addition to the multitudes of bees that were busy in the lavender fields, an estimated 800 adults and 600 kids attended the Saturday event. Held at Purple Ridge Lavender in Hermiston, Jim and Sheri Konningrud have hosted the fundraiser for seven years. All vendor fees and gate receipts were donated to Agape House and Martha's House.



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Hermiston residents Joleen Pruett and her mother, Sharon Ekenstam, cut fresh lavender during Saturday's Purple Ridge Lavender Festival. Hosted by Jim and Sheri Konningrud of Hermiston, the event raised about \$6,000 for Agape House and Martha's House.

In addition to enjoying the lavender fields, festival-goers were treated to live music, art displays, vendor booths, a quilt display,

food, a visit by Penelope Pendragon and her Whimsical WiSH Wagon, and an opportunity to shop at the farm boutique.

Agape House and Martha's House serves those in need in the community. For more information, call 541-567-8774.

NEWS IN BRIEF

First Thursdays sizzles during summer months

The First Thursday event continues during the summer in the downtown Hermiston business district.

People are encouraged to meet up with friends and shop local. The event features refreshments, discounts and a bonus drawing. The next First Thursday is July 6 from 4:30-7 p.m. More than a dozen businesses are participating.

For more information, call 541-667-5026 or visit

www.facebook.com/hermistondowntown.

Banner Bank recognizes top employees

Three local Banner Bank employees have been selected to receive the Banner's Best award.

The award represents the highest level of recognition within the company and the recipients are truly Banner's best, said Kelly McPhee, vice president of communications. The recipients

are: Ashley Erevia, personal banker in the Hermiston branch; Gordon MacKenzie, a Hermiston branch teller; and Yadira Murillo, a Boardman branch teller.

Each of the employees surpassed individual professional goals in 2016, as well as providing exceptional customer service to the bank's clients and their fellow colleagues. Less than four percent of all Banner employees receive the award. They are selected by members of executive leadership.

"Banner's Best recipi-

ents exemplify our value proposition — connected, knowledgeable, responsive — yet what truly sets them apart is how they constantly strive for a higher standard in all that they do," said Mark Grescovich, Banner Bank president and CEO.

Headquartered in Walla Walla, Banner Bank is a Washington-chartered commercial bank that conducts business from more than 200 locations in Washington, Oregon, California, Utah and Idaho. For more information, visit www.bannerbank.com.

Discretion and Comfort

that's ready-to-wear.

Silk™

from Signia

Clinically proven better than normal hearing with less effort.*

- Discreet, nearly invisible solution for your hearing loss
- Available in three sizes to fit any ear comfortably
- Custom fit without the wait

2237 Southwest Court Place

Pendleton, OR 97801

541-276-5053

RE NATA

Anderson

M.A., CCC-A

signia

Life sounds brilliant.

Hearing Systems

SIEMENS

* Study conducted at the University of Northern Colorado, 2015, examined the effectiveness of the new features of primax by collecting and analyzing ongoing EEG data while subjects performed speech testing. For both primax features SpeechMaster and EchoShield, the objective brain behavior measures revealed a significant reduction in listening effort when the feature was activated.

Copyright © 2016 Sivantos, Inc. All rights reserved. Sivantos, Inc. is a Trademark Licensee of Siemens AG. 9/16 SIL17076A

Inland Northwest Toyota Dealers

SENSATIONS OF Summer

TOYOTA

Feel the Thrill of a New Toyota!

10 New 2017 TOYOTAS with over \$2000 Cash Back

2017 COROLLA

2017 RAV4 Excludes Hybrid

2017 CAMRY

also includes

2017 Camry Hybrid

2017 Prius v

2017 Avalon Gas

2017 Avalon Hybrid

2017 Yaris

2017 Yaris iA

2017 Sienna

Or choose from 5 vehicles that can be leased for less than \$200 per month. SUCH AS:

\$179/mo for 36 mos.

2017 Camry SE

\$199/mo for 36 mos.

2017 RAV4 LE

Special leasing also available on:

2017 Corolla LE

2017 Corolla iM

2017 Yaris iA

ROGERS TOYOTA OF HERMISTON

(541) 567-6461 or 800-522-2308

ToyotaOfHermiston.com

Every new Toyota comes with ToyotaCare No Cost Service & Roadside*

TOYOTA Let's Go Places

Mon - Fri 8:30a - 7:00p

Saturday 8:30a - 7:00p

Sunday 10:00a - 5:00p

All financing on approved credit through TFS. All vehicles subject to prior sale. All prices plus tax and title. \$75 dealer doc fee. Offers end 7/5/17. For more details call 1-888-21-TOYOTA.