

Umatilla house fire displaces 2

HERMISTON HERALD

A Umatilla house fire displaced two women on Wednesday, Jan. 3, and sent huge clouds of black smoke into the air above a small neighborhood on Cherry Street.

Engines responded from Umatilla Fire Department, Umatilla County Fire District, Boardman Fire Department and Irrigon Rural Fire Department to the home at 1913 Cherry St.

Scott Goff, Umatilla County Fire District fire marshal, said the department has not yet been able to identify a cause for the fire. Contacted Tuesday for an update, he said the basement of the home was still flooded, preventing fire personnel from getting down there to investigate.

Goff identified the residents of the house as owner Carolyn McCall and her daughter Annette.



A house on fire on Cherry Street in Umatilla on Wednesday afternoon. Firefighters from Umatilla, Umatilla County Fire District 1, Irrigon and Boardman responded to the blaze.

Desert View school principal resigns

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
STAFF WRITER

Families of students at Desert View Elementary School were informed on Jan. 2 that the school’s principal, Laura Jacobsma, resigned over winter break.

Assistant superintendent Bryn Browning told families in a letter sent home with students that she would serve as the school’s interim principal for the remainder of the 2017-2018 school year.

Jacobsma was hired for the Desert View job in May 2017 and moved from Oakridge School District, where she worked as an instructional coach and taught multiple grades. She said she was leaving the position for personal reasons.

Browning has been the assistant superintendent for Hermiston School Dis-

trict since 2008, focusing on curriculum and instruction. She previously served as the superintendent/principal of Ione School District and Ione Community School for four years. She has taught first and fourth grade, and worked as an elementary school reading specialist.

Browning also acted as an interim principal at West Park Elementary after Shane Pratt left in October of 2012 for personal reasons.

District communications officer Maria Duron said Jacobsma gave notice of her resignation on Dec. 29, but did not give a specific reason for her departure.

Duron said district administrators do not yet know when they will post the position, but the search for a new principal will be conducted during spring, the regular hiring season for school districts.



Jacobsma



Browning

Bounds nominated to Ninth Circuit Court

HERMISTON HERALD

Ryan Bounds, an assistant U.S. Attorney for Oregon and a Hermiston native, has been nominated for a second time by President Donald Trump for a seat on the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The White House announced the nomination of Bounds and 20 other justices on Friday in states it said are “suffering from judicial emergencies.”

Bounds was first nominated by Trump in September to replace Appellate Judge Diarmuid O’Scainnlain, who took semi-retirement senior status Jan. 1, 2017.

Bounds’ nomination was effectively blocked at the time by Oregon Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden, both Democrats, because they said Bounds had not



Ryan Bounds

gone through a bi-partisan review process. Senators have the ability to withhold “blue slips,” a Senate rule that essentially allows the minority party veto power over judicial nominees.

The committee is now reviewing Bounds’ application, as well as other candidates according to Merkley’s

office.

If his nomination is approved this time around, Bounds would require a confirmation hearing from the Senate Judiciary Committee before joining the Circuit Court.

Merkley and Wyden didn’t dispute Bounds’ credentials, however, and he has support from Rep. Greg Walden and attorney associations down to local mayors.

Walden, a Republican, wrote in September that Bounds would represent a conservative, rurally-rooted voice on the court which holds great power on federal decisions in the Second Congressional district.

Letters of support were sent to Merkley and Wyden from 15 Oregon senators including Bill Hansell, the Oregon Criminal Defense Bar, the Oregon Wheat

Growers League and both Hermiston Mayor Dave Drotzmann and Pendleton Mayor John Turner.

Bounds has been a federal prosecutor for the District of Columbia, an assistant to the president on domestic policy and a deputy assistant attorney general in the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Legal Policy.

Earlier in his career Bounds was a law clerk for O’Scainnlain, one of the most conservative judges on the 29-member Ninth Circuit court. Bounds has a B.A. in psychology and political science from Stanford University and a J.D. from Yale Law School.

Oregon has traditionally had two seats on the circuit court, which is directly beneath the U.S. Supreme Court. It guides federal law in nine Western states.

BRIEFS

Dinner, auction set Jan. 20 to help local man fight cancer

A benefit dinner and silent auction will help raise money for John Parker of Hermiston, who is being treated for pancreatic cancer.

A small group that meets regularly at Oasis Vineyard Church with Parker’s wife, Vanda, are organizing the event to help offset costs due to medical treatment.

The event is Saturday, Jan 20 at 5:30 p.m. at the church, 1255 S. Highway 395, Hermiston. The cost is \$20 per person or \$120 for a table of eight.

The meal includes pork chops, potatoes, a vegetable, rolls and dessert.

Items up for bid include a guided goose hunt and gift baskets from Lucky Endz Gifts and Bellinger Farms and Gourmet Shoppe.

For more information or to make a dona-

tion, call Sylvia Smith at 541-720-0040.

Nonprofit center aids people with vision impairments

The Edith Bishel Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired provides assistance to people who are blind and visually impaired.

A nonprofit organization, the center offers vision examinations, independent living aids, skills training, social activities, support groups and workshops for family members.

Located at 628 N. Arthur St., Kennewick, the Edith Bishel Center is dedicated to serving the blind and visually impaired in southeastern Washington and northeastern Oregon. Donations assist with its mission.

For more information, contact 509-735-0699, info@edithbishelcenter.org or visit www.edithbishelcenter.org.

Hermiston High student to attend to Brown University

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
STAFF WRITER

This fall, Heidy Mejia-Puerta will wake up for her first day of school on the opposite coastline. Mejia-Puerta, a Hermiston High School senior, was recently accepted to Brown University as an early-decision applicant. The terms of the application state that Mejia-Puerta is now committed to attending the Ivy League school — an exciting prospect for her.

“Looking at the curriculum, the location and the student body, I found [Brown] to be the one for me,” she said. “I knew if I did early decision, I’d be happy with attending Brown.”

Though she has not yet visited the campus, Mejia-Puerta said one of the things that attracted her about



Heidy Mejia-Puerta

Brown is the school’s open curriculum, which does not bind students to general education requirements, but allows them more flexibility in the early classes they take, before settling on a course of study. A first-generation college student, she said she is unsure of what she’ll study, but is interested

in law and political science.

She is also the recipient of the Brown University Scholarship, which will cover a significant portion of her tuition.

She credited her admission to the school to taking advantage of resources available to her, as well as help from teachers and staff.

A member of the LEDA (Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America) scholars program, Mejia-Puerta spent several weeks last summer at Princeton University, learning about how to prepare for college applications.

“I think the application process, for me, was much simpler than for a lot of my classmates,” she said. “I had a lot of resources and people helping me. But as facil-

itated as it was, it was still daunting.”

She said being involved with LEDA helped, with people from the program continuing to check on her and helping her with the process even after she returned from Princeton.

She also credited her involvement with the Generation College program, run locally by HHS staff Melody Bustillos and Roger Berger.



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For more information about the EO Forum, please contact: Karen Parker at 541-966-3177.

The EO Forum is a collaborative effort among leaders from Blue Mountain Community College, InterMountain Education Service District; the East Oregonian; American Association of University Women; and Harriet Isom, a former United States ambassador who also serves on the committee. This EO Forum program is offered as part of Blue Mountain Community College's annual Arts and Culture Festival. For more information on the festival go to www.bluecc.edu.