

# Westfall takes leadership role in FFA

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN  
STAFF WRITER

Dylan Westfall is not your traditional Future Farmers of America student — if there is such a thing.

The Hermiston High School senior's path to FFA state office has been unconventional, but Westfall is excited to take the role. At a statewide FFA convention in Redmond last weekend, Westfall was elected vice president for the FFA state officer team.

"I didn't join for the 'right reasons,'" Westfall said. "I had no agricultural background prior to sophomore year."

He said he took his first FFA class with the intention of completing one of the programs of study that Hermiston High School offers. But through attending some of the required events, Westfall found himself wanting to come back, and soon took on leadership roles such as chapter and district officer.

"I kind of fell in love with FFA," he said.

Westfall and the five other students elected to state office, all current high school seniors, will spend the next year going to leadership trainings and visiting every school in the state with an FFA chapter to teach students about the program.

The students were elected after being selected from a pool of 24 hopefuls, following a rigorous, three-day session of multiple inter-



GEORGE PAVLEN/CAPITAL PRESS

Dylan Westfall speaks at the state FFA convention.

views and tests, both theoretical and practical.

Finalists for the spots had to give a speech to their peers. Westfall got some laughs with his.

"My speech theme was, 'How I'm like your favorite underwear,'" he said. "I'm supportive, I'm relatable and I'm reliable. I used it to relate to everyone, because everyone wears it, but I also used it to relate back to me."

Hermiston FFA teacher Leah Smith said the last time Hermiston had a state officer was 12 years ago.

The officers have all agreed to defer college for a year in order to serve in the positions.

Smith said officers don't get paid for their roles, but the state FFA organization reimburses them for things like food and travel, and the experience gives them a better shot at scholarships at agriculture-focused colleges.

Westfall said he's looking forward to learning about all aspects of the agriculture industry, from farming to communications, and help-

ing students understand that FFA is not limited to people who only come from farming backgrounds. Westfall is interested in majoring in ag communications.

"I don't have a ton of knowledge on farming," he said. "I have more of the leadership experience, and how to advocate for ag on social media."

He said he's become passionate about dispelling inaccurate information about the industry that he feels often circulates. Because farmers are so busy with the physical demands of running an operation, they often don't have the ability to advocate for themselves.

"As agriculturalists, we have to learn how to not slander other people, but defend ourselves," he said.

One area where he's observed issues, he said, is with the dairy industry.

"Dairy prices are so low right now," he said. "Everyone thinks dairy cattle are being tortured. There are some (farms) that don't do the right thing, but most are."

He said many people who bear that misconception are going away from dairy, which is impacting the industry in Oregon.

"It's hard for them to come back from that," he said.

Smith said that while Westfall asked for help where necessary, he was largely self-motivated in preparing for the role.

# Police search for suspects in shooting

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN  
STAFF WRITER

Umatilla Police continue to investigate the shooting of a man in the early hours of St. Patrick's Day.

On March 17, dispatch received a call at 3:24 a.m. of a shooting at Tri-Harbor Apartments, 210 Klickitat St., in Umatilla. Police Chief Darla Huxel said the Umatilla officer on duty was tied up with a DUI call when the report came in, but Umatilla County sheriff's deputies were in the area and responded at 3:26 a.m.

The victim, who Huxel declined to identify, was transported to Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston. Huxel said the victim has since been transferred to another medical facility, but she did not know where.

Huxel said the investi-

gation had been slowed by the victim's unwillingness to cooperate, and police have yet to identify the shooter. She said law enforcement has been reviewing video footage and trying to talk with anyone who might have been nearby during the shooting.

Huxel said that the city of Umatilla typically has one police officer on patrol duty, but during peak hours they try to have two, one of which may be a supervising officer. She said the department has seven patrol officers, and is trying to fill an eighth position.

Huxel said during low-staffing hours, such as the time when the shooting took place, UPD relies on working relationships with other law enforcement agencies like Umatilla and Morrow county sheriff's offices, and Hermiston police.

# Boardman man gets 18 years for sex crimes

BOARDMAN — Kenneth James Sicard of Boardman is serving 18 years in prison for sexually assaulting two children.

The Morrow County District Attorney's office last August charged Sicard, 57, with multiple sex crimes. District Attorney Justin Nelson said the victims were between 8 and 12 years old.

Court records show Sicard on March 16

pleaded no contest to rape, sodomy and sexual abuse. In exchange, the state dismissed eight other charges.

Circuit Judge Christopher Brauer sentenced Sicard to 18 years, nine months. The offenses fall under Oregon's mandatory minimum sentencing law, so while Sicard receives credit for the time he was in jail, he will not receive an early release from state prison.

# Hermiston sex-crime defendant pushes for sensitive records review

HERMISTON HERALD

Sex crime defendant Jose Guadalupe Sanguino Cancino of Hermiston continues to push for an inspection of sensitive records.

Cancino's attorney, Mark C. Cogan of Portland, filed another motion Thursday afternoon in Umatilla County Circuit Court ask-

ing the judge to review documents the state plans to use at trial, namely school and medical records.

The filing came in response to the letter Circuit Judge Dan Hill sent March 23 to Cogan and Umatilla County deputy district attorney Jaelyn Jenkins regarding Cogan's previous request for the review.

"I have concerns that there is a

request for the court to approve an [sic] series of subpoenas that are not based in any reasonable known need for the material, that meaning it is merely being used as a discovery device and thus a 'fishing expedition,' and or also merely for impeachment," Hill wrote.

The judge also stated he would give Cogan the opportunity to

make his case for need of the record review. Cogan in Thursday's motion contended this the inspection would not merely be a "discovery device" but vital to the issues at the trial.

Cancino, 36, faces eight counts of first-degree sexual abuse, one each of second- and third-degree sexual abuse and incest, and two

counts each of first-degree sodomy and first-degree rape. The state has alleged Cancino committed the crimes against one girl in 2005-2006 and against another starting in 2010 when she was younger than 12.

Hermiston police say there could be more victims.

Cancino remains free on bail.

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