



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Zac Grooms of Hermiston is the frontman for Brewer's Grade Band. The group received the country band of the year at the 5th Annual IMEA Awards, held June 16 at the Paramount Arts Center in Ashland, Kentucky.

Brewer's Grade wins first IMEA award

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
COMMUNITY EDITOR

Brewer's Grade Band walked away with their first IMEA Award while attending the fifth annual International Music and Entertainment Association's Awards event.

Based in The Dalles, the band — which includes Hermiston resident Zac Grooms (guitar, vocals), national flat-picking champion Joe Smart (fiddle, guitar, banjo, mandolin, dobro), Nolan Hare (bass), Al Hare (guitar) and Cody Christopherson (drums) — reeled in the country band of the year award during the June 16 event held at the Paramount Arts Center in Ashland, Kentucky.

Brewer's Grade Band is blazing their own trail in country music. The group is said to perform genre-bending sound with a unique twist on traditional country,

which is known as Northwest Country.

Grooms, the band's frontman, said the group was initially formed in 1998. While it has performed under several monikers, he said the band's name is a tip of the hat to their roots in The Dalles and the vast array of microbreweries in the Pacific Northwest.

The group also was nominated for country song of the year for their single, "Heartbreak Song," which they performed during the ceremony. However, the top country single went to "Tequila Cowgirl" by Cherish Lee.

During the ceremony, the band presented several awards in the folk and rhythm and blues categories. Also, while attending the IMEA event, they participated in several radio interviews — including an appearance on the Grande Ole Opry radio station

WSM 650 AM. Grooms called it a cool experience.

"A career-long dream and goal just came true. Wow," he said on his Facebook page.

This isn't Smart's first award. In 2017, he received a Grammy for his work with the O'Connor Band and their album, "Coming Home." Smart and the O'Connor Band have previously collaborated with Paul Simon and are currently on tour with the Zac Brown Band.

For a chance to applaud Brewer's Grade Band in person, catch one of their upcoming local shows. They will be playing Wednesday, July 4 at 8:30 p.m. during the Ione Fourth of July celebration and Wednesday, Aug. 8 at the Umatilla County Fair in Hermiston.

For more about the band, visit www.brewersgradeband.com or search Facebook.

BRIEFS

Saturday breakfast benefits IMAC project

The monthly breakfast of the Irrigon Multicultural Arts Center offers a home-cooked meal.

The fundraising event is Saturday from 7:30-10:30 a.m. at Stokes Landing Senior Center, 150 Columbia Lane, Irrigon. The cost is \$4.50 per person.

The group is dedicated to preserving Irrigon's 1921 school building and developing a regional art venue. For more information, call Peggy Price at 541-567-3806.

Hansell to speak at outdoor worship service

With a theme of "We are Working Together to Serve God and our Community," churches in Stanfield and Echo are teaming up to present an outdoor worship service.

The free event is Sunday, July 1 at 9 a.m. at Bard Park, Stanfield. Sen. Bill Hansell is the special speaker.

Scott Zielke will serve as master of ceremonies during the program, which features a patriotic flavor with prayer and music. Finger foods and refreshments will be served. People are encouraged to bring a blanket or lawn chair.

Serving his second term in the state legislature representing District 29, Hansell previously was elected to eight consecutive terms as a Umatilla County commissioner.

In addition to his duties as a public official, Hansell has been active in his community and church. A past Athena citizen of the year, he has served as a volunteer coach, youth group leader, Sunday school teacher and 4-H and FFA supporter.

Born and raised in Ath-

ena, Hansell and his wife, Margaret, have been married for 50 years. They have raised six adult children and are the proud grandparents of nine grandchildren.

For more information, contact 541-449-3434 or stanfieldag@eoni.com.

Good Shepherd offers babysitting class

Young entrepreneurs interested in learning general childcare techniques are invited to attend Babysitting Basics 101.

The next one-day class is Saturday, July 7 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Good Shepherd Medical Center, 610 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston. Topics include children's developmental stages, basic first aid and infant/child CPR. Other upcoming classes are Aug. 4 or Sept. 8.

Open to ages 10-15, the fee is \$40, which includes lunch and all class materials. Those who plan to attend need to register and pay in advance. For more information or to register, call 541-667-3509.

Pool party splashes into Independence Day

The public is invited to swim into the Fourth of July with the Stars & Stripes Pool Party.

The event is Wednesday, July 4 from 7-10:30 p.m. at the Hermiston Family Aquatic Center, 879 W. Elm Ave. It features a pool party, barbecue dinner (catered by Dickey's Barbecue Pit), games and live music. In addition, it offers the best seats in the house for fireworks viewing at 10 p.m.

The cost is \$14 for ages 15 and up, \$10 for ages 2-14 and free for under 2. Limited tickets are available and must be purchased by Tuesday, July 3 at the

pool.

For questions, call 541-289-7665 or 541-667-5018.

Singing duo to shine in Irrigon

The singing duo 98% Angels will perform as part of the Music in the Parks outdoor summer concert series.

Otherwise known as Marie Rose and Renate Meakins, the duo first met and began singing together in 1998 in the Blue Jazz Choir Ensemble while attending Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton. Since then, 98% Angels have performed at area festivals, as well as volunteering their time singing in local assisted living facilities. They perform everything from 1930s standards, Big Band swing music and hits of the '50s and '60s to popular contemporary and country tunes.

The free concert is Monday, July 2 at 7 p.m. at Irrigon Marina Park. During the show, the Music in the Parks committee will honor all local veterans in attendance. In case of inclement weather, the performance will be held at Stokes Landing Senior Center, 150 Columbia Lane.

People are encouraged to bring a blanket or lawn chair. In addition, those attending are welcome to bring a picnic and beverages to enjoy while listening to the music.

Music in the Parks alternates each Monday through Aug. 13 between Irrigon and Boardman marina parks. For more information, contact Jackie McCauley at utility.clerk@cityofboardman.com, 541-720-1289 or 541-481-9252.

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