

## BTW

Continued from Page A1

With a Mardi Gras theme, **Imbibe @Blue** offers a festive environment and raises money for student scholarships at **Blue Mountain Community College**. The 21-and-older event is Saturday from 5-7 p.m. in the BMCC Student Union, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton.

Advance tickets, which are \$25, are available at Pendleton Art + Frame, the BMCC bookstore and by calling the BMCC Foundation at 541-278-5775. If available, tickets at the door are \$30.

...  
**Umatilla County Sheriff's Office** employees **Jessica Howard**, a telecommunicator, and **Cherrie Hutchison**, a dispatcher, are set to graduate from Basic Telecommunications #BT113.

They are completing the two-week course offered through the **Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training**. The public is invited to the graduation ceremony, which is Friday at 11 a.m. at the **Oregon Public Safety Academy** in Salem. **Capt. Kathy Lieualen**, also of the sheriff's office, is the guest speaker.

The Oregon academy is recognized nationally for innovative training programs. For more information, visit [www.oregon.gov/dpsst](http://www.oregon.gov/dpsst).

...  
 The upcoming **Eastern Oregon Forum** presents **Our Music** featuring **J.D. Kindle and Friends**.

The event is Tuesday, Feb. 19 at 7 p.m. in ST-200 (Science and Technology building) at **Blue Mountain Community College**, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton. Tickets are \$5 at the door and free for students.

In addition to his role as frontman of **James Dean Kindle & the Eastern Oregon Playboys**, Kindle is in his fourth season as executive director of the **Oregon East Symphony**.

The Eastern Oregon Forum is a collaborative effort between **BMCC**, **InterMountain Education Service District**, the **East Oregonian**, **American Association of University Women** and **Harriet Isom**, a former United States ambassador. For more information, contact **Karen Parker** at 541-966-3177 or [karen.parker@imesd.k12.or.us](mailto:karen.parker@imesd.k12.or.us).

...  
 The **Harkenrider Senior Activity Center** will be serving chicken enchiladas, Spanish rice, salad and dessert for lunch on Feb. 14. The menu for Feb. 19 is hamburger or hot dog, baked beans or potato salad, fruit and dessert.

You can submit items for our weekly *By The Way* column by emailing your tips to [editor@hermistonherald.com](mailto:editor@hermistonherald.com).



## CUPID

Continued from Page A1

"There's not a whole lot of places to meet people in Hermiston other than a bar, and I'm not interested in that," he said.

About a month after they started talking, they took the plunge and met in person. Tammy was nervous about meeting a stranger, so she arranged for them to meet in public at the Umatilla County Fair and brought her sister along.

At first, they acted more like friends than romantic partners, Tammy said. But as they started hanging out she knew Joshua was still talking to other women online and she told him she "wasn't a fan of that."

"After that we started talking a lot, and he apologized and said he just got really scared because he hadn't felt this way about anyone in a long time," she said.

The couple tied the knot in August and Tammy is currently on strict bedrest waiting on the arrival of triplets — two girls and a boy.

"It's going to be an adventure," Joshua said.

## Still looking

Not everyone has been struck by Cupid's virtual arrow yet. Jazmin Avalos, a 25-year-old Hermiston native, said she has been using dating apps for about five years. She got them in college, but didn't start using them regularly until she moved back to Hermiston.

"When I came back to Hermiston, I met no one — everyone here has baby mama drama or has been with one of your friends," she said.

Avalos, who is bisexual, uses a few apps: Tinder, Bumble and Hinge, as well as Her, a dating app for lesbian, queer and bisexual women.

Initially, Avalos said, she went on the app hoping to find a more serious relationship. But when that didn't pan out, she said she decided she was open to anything.

Her radius is set to 45 miles, meaning she usually finds people in the Hermis-



Joshua and Tammy Nycz met online about five years ago and are now married, with triplets on the way.

Contributed photo from Joshua Nycz

ton, Boardman, Pendleton and Tri-Cities areas.

Though Avalos has about 600 matches on Tinder, she said she doesn't message back unless their profile seems legitimate. She said one problem with online dating is catfishing, slang for when a person isn't who they say they are on their profile.

Avalos said she's had a couple of experiences where she met up with the person and they looked completely different from their profile or had heavily edited their photos.

"After that experience, I have a verification process," she said. "To make sure they're not serial killers and they are who they say they are."

Avalos said once she matches with someone, she adds them on as many social media platforms as possible, and asks them to send her selfies. She also doesn't agree to meet with them before talking with them for a couple of weeks.

Though Avalos said her experiences have ranged

widely, they've been more positive than negative.

"I met my ex on there, through an app, and that was real," she said. "You can find what you're looking for on there."

Stacie Ketchum of Hermiston started using dating apps last year. The 38-year-old had been married twice, and had recently gotten out of a long-distance relationship.

"I said, 'I'm going to see what dating is like in my 30s,'" she said.

Ketchum said initially she was apprehensive about the concept of online dating, as she thought it felt impersonal. But she decided to give it a try, and soon started going on dates.

"I downloaded Tinder and Plenty of Fish," she said. "It was really interesting — I was not expecting to get a response like I did."

In her profile, Ketchum said she was very clear that at first, she was just looking to meet people, and not for a serious relationship.

"My stepdad said something that I thought was

really poignant," she said. "You're not ready to be in a relationship until you're OK with being alone. So I decided to just see what's out there."

She said she was nervous to go on her first date, as she hadn't dated since high school. Fortunately, she said, the man was nice, and the two of them are still friends.

Ketchum said she has had some really good dates with people she met online. The bad ones, she said, have made her tougher.

"I have a much thicker skin now," she said.

She admitted that one of the risks of online dating is that you don't know what you're getting — a problem she said goes both ways. In one date, after talking on the phone and exchanging some photos with a man, she agreed to a date. But when she arrived, he told her she didn't look like her photo, and said he didn't want to go on the date.

Ketchum said she did look like her photo, and she felt he probably just wasn't

interested. In those situations, she said, she prefers the person just be honest, and that most of her dates have appreciated it when she's told them — politely — that she doesn't feel a connection.

"My theory is that if you don't have any connection — physical, emotional — something's not going to blossom out of that," she said.

Ketchum has since deleted the apps, and is currently in another long-distance relationship with a man she met through an online gaming community.

"Things are progressing, and we're seeing where they're going," she said. "So I did meet him online, not online dating, but in a sense."

Both Avalos and Ketchum said the pool of dating options in Hermiston is slim.

"All you see out here are cowboys," said Avalos. "That's fine, but it's not my type."

Both women said when they did end up matching or meeting with someone, they were usually people in the Tri-Cities.

"I'm pretty picky when it comes to guys with kids," Ketchum said. "My stepdaughter is now 19, and I came into her life when she was five. I've dated someone with kids before, but I don't really want to do it now. And it's very difficult to find a man in his 30s who doesn't have that, especially in Hermiston for some reason."

But they said it is possible to meet someone and have a successful relationship that started on an app.

"I feel like there's a stigma that they're only for hooking up, but not always," Avalos said. "Half the people are on there for serious relationships."

She said it's important to be clear about what you want in your profile.

"People don't think bios are important, and they are," she said. "I know what a good bio is. If you explicitly say, 'I'm looking for this, this and this,' you might find a match who's looking for the same thing."

## SNOW

Continued from Page A1

Oregon State Police Sgt. Seth Cooney said he was out that day with a rash of crashes on Interstate 84 west of Boardman and stopped into the Love's Travel Stop in the town. Folks there inundated him with questions on how to get to where they wanted to go.

"The first thing I tell everybody is look up Trip Check," he said, referring to [www.tripcheck.com](http://www.tripcheck.com), which the Oregon Department of Transportation uses to provide information about road conditions and closures. "They really need to take a look at that, because ODOT is very good about keeping it up to date."

For travelers without internet access, they can also dial 511 on their phones to listen to updates.

Cooney also suggested drivers plan for alternate routes. With I-82 shut down, he said, you could take Highway 730 east to Highway 12 to Pasco. He said road crews do a good job of keeping that route open.

"Those are the two biggest things — look at the road conditions and look for an alternate route," he said.

Cooney added if you don't have to travel in this weather, don't.

Jaymie Hathaway, another Hermiston resident stranded Saturday, said she learned not to travel at all during a blizzard if it isn't

an emergency.

Hathaway had gone up to the Tri-Cities to purchase a van. Her father, Brad Hathaway, drove her up, and offered to drive the van on the way back because it would be less reliable in the snow than his SUV. They got on the road about 2 p.m.

Hathaway said they had made it just past Coffin Road when people started hitting their brakes. After she stopped, she said, two pick-up trucks slid around her and her dad managed to stop sliding just feet behind her.

"I was just waiting for the impact," she said. "I was so scared."

The van didn't have much gas in it, Hathaway said, so her dad turned it off and got in the SUV with

her as they watched that gas gauge creep farther below a quarter tank.

About 8:30 p.m. a group of cars in front of them were given the OK to start moving, and everyone cleared off their windshields and re-started their cars. Hathaway said she was at the head of the line for the second batch of cars that was let through.

"So many times I couldn't see anything," she said. "It was just pure white. I just kept going straight and hoping I was on the road."

She stopped at a gas station as soon as she hit Umatilla, and said she would encourage everyone to fill up their tank any time they're heading out in bad weather.

While all the stranded travelers were off the interstate before midnight, the road did not open again until Sunday afternoon.

The National Weather Service issued a winter storm warning Monday for a swath from outside Fossil to Pendleton and covering the rest of northeast Oregon. That warning means "severe winter weather conditions will make travel very hazardous or impossible."

Forecaster Rob Brooks with the federal agency said back-to-back winter storms are covering the region, with one heading north toward the Tri-Cities. That could provide a break in snowfall Thursday, but the next weather system moves in Friday with more snow.

## McKay Creek Estates

## FREE Cognitive Screening

Is Mom a little more forgetful lately?

There are many early warning signs of a potential memory disorder, such as Alzheimer's disease. That's why we're offering a **FREE** and **CONFIDENTIAL** cognitive screening. We encourage anyone who is concerned about cognitive decline to take this short, in-person screening. The screening is administered by a qualified health care professional.

To schedule your cognitive screening today, please call (541) 704-7146.

McKay Creek Estates  
 1601 Southgate Pl.  
 Pendleton, OR 97801



[www.PrestigeCare.com](http://www.PrestigeCare.com)

## PHONAK MARVEL

Thanks to modern technology and industry-leading expertise, Phonak is able to bring you the best possible solutions for your hearing needs



Renata Anderson, MA  
 2237 SW Court, Pendleton • 541-276-5053  
[www.renataanderson.com](http://www.renataanderson.com)

