



Contributed photo from Hermiston School District
Catherine Doherty, Eleanor Larsen, Glyn Lystrup, and Caden Lloyd (pictured left to right) of Rocky Heights Elementary School won Hermiston's Battle of the Books championship.

BTW

Continued from Page A1

noteworthy performances during the **Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival**, held Feb. 22-23 at the University of Idaho.

Majazzy, a **Hermiston High School** musical ensemble directed by **Jordan Bemrose-Rust**, was named the runner-up in the category of Senior Area Mic Ensembles Division. In addition, **Sandstone Middle School** soloists **Elizabeth Doherty** (Junior Instrumental Trumpet Solos) and **Amy Wooster** (Junior Instrumental Flute Solos) received recognition during the festival's **Young Artists' Concert**.

In its 52nd year, the event featured student competitions, workshops and clinics. More than 4,000 students from over 130 elementary, middle and high schools, as well as college and universities, participated from across the region. Performances from the Young Artists' Winners Concert are available on the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival's **YouTube** channel.

A friendly competition between employees at the local **Department of Human Services** office recently proved that even a

little change can make a big difference.

The **Penny Wars Fundraiser** included the collection of food items and change. While employees in the **Aging and People with Disabilities** department came out victorious, those in need in the community are the real winners. ADP won with 109,908 points for collecting 1,195 food items and \$196.54 in cash.

Coming in second was the **Child Welfare** department with 599 food items and \$185.81. The **Self Sufficiency** employees came in third with 183 food items and \$236.99.

"This started our as a small feat and turned into a battle that will be talked about for years to come," said **Nicole Depew**, who helped organize the effort.

The menu for the **Harkerider Senior Activity Center** is corned beef and cabbage, carrots and red potatoes, lime Jell-O salad and dessert on Thursday, in honor of St. Patrick's Day. The menu for next Tuesday is Salisbury steak, a vegetable, salad and dessert.

You can submit items for our weekly By The Way column by emailing your tips to editor@hermistonherald.com.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney
Aaron Davis talks to his civics class at Hermiston High School during a discussion Thursday about legislation to lower Oregon's voting age to 16.

VOTE

Continued from Page A1

experience into adulthood, I wish I could have voted."

Although most of Davis' students felt 16-year-olds weren't ready to vote, almost everyone said they planned to exercise their right to vote once they turn 18. And many acknowledged that those who are of legal age may not necessarily be informed, either.

"I think a lot of adults get information from social media as well," Ferguson said. "That was really prevalent in the 2016 election. Picking credible news sources is probably harder

for 16-year-olds, but it affects adults too, who are also influenced by social media."

Temple agreed. "I'd say if being well-informed is the criteria for being able to vote, there are a lot of adults who aren't," he said.

Davis didn't share his personal opinion with students, but said they had all brought up well-informed points.

"More voters isn't necessarily better," he said. "But 16- and 66-year-olds can choose who to follow, whether to isolate themselves, or what they want to hear."

According to an article by the *Ore-*

gonian/OregonLive, the bill would give 16-year-olds the right to vote in all elections, but may ultimately only apply to state and local elections. The article reported that Democratic state Sen. Shemia Fagan, who introduced the measure, said that teens were begging to be able to take action to protect their own futures. She referenced the students from Parkland, Florida, who gained national attention for their activism for gun control after a mass shooting at their school in 2018.

The voting age was lowered from 21 to 18 in 1971, as per the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. That was partly due to teens opposed to being drafted for the Vietnam War.

MAXFEST

Continued from Page A1

Above, three 10-foot-wide fans dispersed radiant heat around the building. Below, stamped concrete created a faux wood floor.

Myers said ticket sales were brisk. Many came not only for the beer, but also to get a peek at the new event center. By night's end, 500 people had come through the door.

Myers said the only blot on the night was that he didn't see any city administrators at the event. During construction, Myers, owner of Mitco Investments, disputed with city building official Chuck Woolsey who Myers said purposely held up the project. Despite the rift, Myers said he had hoped to see city representatives show up Maxfest or

the ribbon cutting the previous evening.

"We had lots of people from the community," Myers said. "We had some police officers. It would have been nice to see the mayor, city manager, assistant city manager or someone from the city council."

Myers said he has gotten a lot of interest in the facility.

"We've already got many events booked through the summer. We had events booked before we even finished the building," Myers said. "We're real excited to see what it brings."

The facility has a maximum occupancy of 300, but opening those \$80,000 roll-up doors adds another 600 square feet outdoors for summer events.

A trio of beer connois-

seurs, Ashley Lovejoy, Danielle Baldwin and Jordan Richards, sat around one round table sampling microbrews and admiring the scenery.

"It's awesome," Baldwin said. "It's beautiful."

And the beer?

"So far, so good," said Richards, who sipped a Peaches and Cream Ale from Laht Neppur Brewing Company in Waitsburg, Washington.

Two couples, Steve and Jane Watson and Nathan and Paula Thompson, sat in the tented area. They said they had watched construction of the event center last summer with curiosity as they visited the nearby farmers' market.

"I love it," Steve Watson said. "This used to be an eyesore."

The facility was set to

host the city's farmer's market in 2018, but construction was hampered by the dispute between Myers and Hermiston's building department. Myers plans to host the farmers' market, rebranded as Maxwell Market, at the new pavilion this spring.

Myers plans to eventually install a replica of a bell that once stood on the property with a plaque telling about the Maxwell Siding.

He said he loves the event center's connection to the past. He gestured down the tracks and then up.

"Maxwell siding went for about 200 feet that way and 300 feet that way," he said. "If not for Maxwell Siding, there probably wouldn't be a Hermiston."

Contact Kathy Aney at kaney@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0810.

Ample snowfall boosts Oregon snowpack

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
 EO MEDIA GROUP

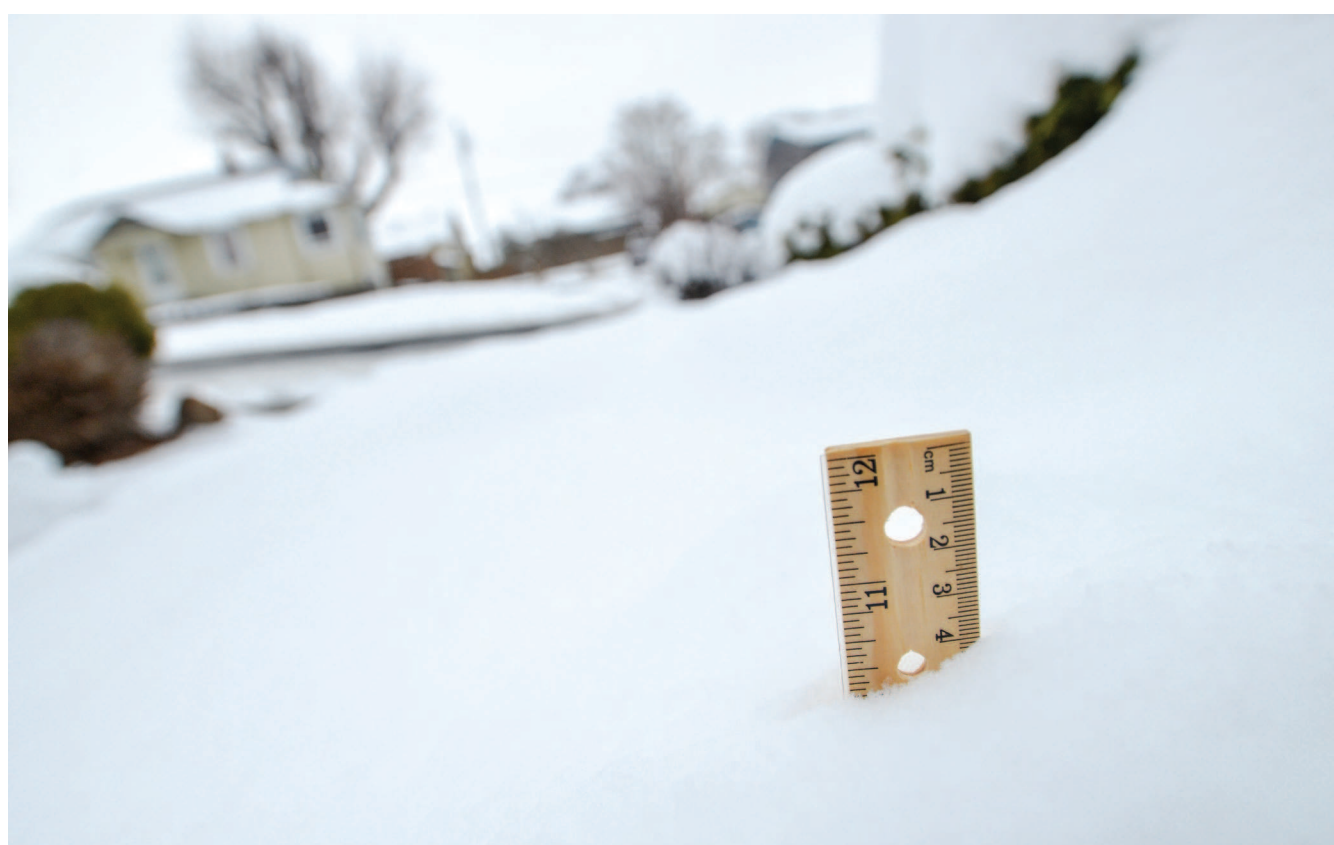
What a difference a month makes.

Oregon snowpack was averaging just 73 percent of normal at the beginning of February, setting the stage for low spring and summer stream flows, particularly west of the Cascade Range. Now farmers in Hermiston can expect stream flows up 140 percent of normal in the Umatilla Basin from April to September.

After weeks of record-breaking snowfall and precipitation from Crater Lake to Baker City, every basin in the state is now measuring above normal for snow, except for the Hood, Sandy and Lower Deschutes basins, which were at 93 percent as of March 11.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has released its latest monthly Oregon Water Supply Report, which calls for vastly improved conditions based on the sudden surge of winter weather.

"A remarkable and unexpected recovery in snowpack occurred during the shortest month of the year, dramatically improving the water supply outlook across Oregon," the report states. "February storm cycles more than doubled the amount of snow on the



Snow piled up this winter for Eastern Oregon, boosting snowpack and stream flow predictions.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

ground in most locations, breaking many records along the way."

According to the NRCS, seven of Oregon's long-term snow monitoring sites broke records for highest snowpack on March 1, with data going back 35 years. Between Feb. 20-26, almost every snow measurement site from Crater Lake to Mount Jefferson set records

with 2 to 3 feet of fresh powder.

As a result, most basins went from a snowpack deficit to a surplus. Eastern Oregon is piling up the snow, with the Umatilla, Walla Walla, Willow, John Day, Malheur and Goose Lake basins all topping 150 percent of normal. Precipitation at lower elevations also set records in places like

Hepner, Baker City and Malheur County.

"All of the state just dramatically improved for snowpack," said Julie Koeberle, a hydrologist with the NRCS Oregon Snow Survey team.

More snow is, of course, good news for farms and fish. Koeberle said forecasts are looking especially promising in northeast Ore-

gon, with stream flows predicted to be 140 percent of normal from April through September in the Umatilla, Walla Walla and Willow basins.

A few areas, including the Deschutes River basin and Mount Hood, are still lagging behind at 80 to 95 percent of normal stream flows. But based on the current trajectory, Koe-

berle said most of the state is going to have normal to above normal stream flows heading into spring.

The one caveat, Koeberle said, is avoiding sustained periods of warm weather that can melt snow too quickly — as it did last May, diminishing what was an already sparse snowpack and leading to water shortages and drought statewide.

The U.S. Drought Monitor still shows more than 60 percent of Oregon in moderate to severe drought.

"You can't really get rid of drought with just one good wet month. It takes a little more than that," Koeberle said.

The federal Climate Prediction Center, meanwhile, continues to call for a better chance of higher temperatures over the next three months, and a roughly equal chance of dry or wet weather. If warmer weather does melt away snow quickly again, Koeberle said the impacts could be mitigated if Mother Nature comes through with enough spring rain.

"It's really just kind of a wait and see," she said.

Reservoir levels are a bit more hit and miss across the state, storing anywhere from 65 percent to 97 percent of capacity, though most can expect significant inflows in the coming months as snow begins to melt.