



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Ozark Hippie Art & Creations will open March 30 in Stanfield.

New studio to offer art classes for kids

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

A local artist is hoping to increase art opportunities for young people by opening an art studio in Stanfield.

Kim La Plant plans to teach art lessons to children and teens at Ozark Hippie Art & Creations, opening March 30 at 135 W. Coe Ave. Her own artwork will also be on sale at the studio to help support the venture.

La Plant plans to charge \$10 per child for most lessons, with some offered for free so that families of any income wouldn't be left out. She said she hopes students will pick up some art skills, but also that they will be able to benefit from a creative outlet and increased self-expression and self-esteem.

"It will mostly be for the kids to have a soft place to land," she said.

La Plant has been teaching classes at Pendleton Center for the Arts and has worked with youth and art in other settings, including Head Start. The Hermiston Public Library showcased



Photo contributed by Kim La Plant

Kim La Plant works with children at Pendleton Center for the Arts.

her work — which often features colorful watercolor representations of nature — in December.

An art teacher made a significant impact on La Plant when she was growing up in the Ozarks. She said kids on the west side of Umatilla County have

few opportunities for art classes outside of school, which is what inspired her to open Ozark Hippie Art & Creations.

Things have come together perfectly for her to open the studio, she said, from the affordable space to donations from busi-

nesses, such as Hermiston's Details 2 Enjoy home decor store. One day she and her husband, Brian, were driving to the Tri-Cities and she prayed to be able to find 40 chairs and three tables she could afford for the art classes.

"We turned the corner (at Goodwill) and they were literally just wheeling these out," she said, gesturing to the blue plastic chairs lining the tables. "They had just been donated, and there were exactly 40."

Art classes offered at Ozark Hippie Art & Creations will include various mediums, from acrylic paint to wood burning. Specialty classes will include mother-child classes, father-child classes and projects that pair children and senior citizens together. La Plant plans to firm up the class schedule soon, but expects to be open Wednesday through Saturday.

For more information, visit the Ozark Hippie Art & Creations Facebook page, email ozarkhippiecreations@gmail.com or call 541-656-6754.

Hermiston's Bonifer excels at state chess tournament

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

The game of chess is more than just moving pieces on the board. There is an art to the game, and more moves than off-season baseball.

Hermiston junior Isaac Bonifer has a handle on the nuances of the game, and that paid off last weekend at the 52nd Annual Chess for Success Oregon State Tournament at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland.

Bonifer won two games, lost two, and had another finish in a draw, recording 2½ points — more than any Hermiston player in the past 20 years — and finished tied for fifth in the field of 22 players.

Joshua Grabsinsky won the state title, winning all five of his matches.

Had Bonifer had won his final game, he would have placed second.

"I played the other kid's game and I shouldn't have," he said. "He caught me off guard. After a while I slowed down and he got mad. In the end he had more pieces than me."

This past weekend was Bonifer's second trip to the state tournament. Last year he won one of five games.

"I have only had one other kid (Oscar Galdamaz) who had gone two years in a row," Hermiston chess club advisor Delia Fields said. "Isaac has a chance to go three times."

While Fields is the advisor, she admits she is not a chess master. She gets help from former Hermiston teacher Dan Jamison, who comes in and challenges the players.

"Dan helps the kids think through their game," Fields said. "Isaac has beaten Dan a couple of times this year."

Fields said the kids need the extra push.

"They see a high level of competition over there," she said of the state tournament. "Some of those kids have personal chess coaches."

Bonifer said he started playing chess in the seventh grade with his father, Luis.

"He used to be able to beat me," said Bonifer, who also plays on the school's lacrosse team. "That has changed. I beat him all the time now."

New gaming lounge to open in Hermiston

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

Tech Tech Goose Gaming will open its doors in Hermiston on Thursday.

The new gaming lounge, located at 182 E. Main St., will offer a pay-by-the-hour gaming experience with a variety of consoles and virtual reality options.

Owner Douglas Sanders is an Army National Guard veteran and former TRCI correctional officer, who was born and raised in Hermiston. He said he and his wife are "highly involved" with youth at Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church.

"We realized there's nothing for them to do here," he said. "There's the bowling alley and the movie theater and that's about it."

Sanders said he hoped young people in the community decide to come spend

time at Tech Tech Goose Gaming. He plans to provide consoles ranging from Xbox One to Nintendo Switch, tabletop games such as Dungeons and Dragons, and a "full-immersion" virtual reality gaming system. He also hopes to bring in a professional gamer from the Tri-Cities to teach classes on how to make money from gaming.

Different levels of memberships will help frequent users save money, but non-members will pay \$9 per hour for most gaming and \$20 per virtual reality session. Hours are 1-10 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. to midnight Fridays and Saturdays and 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sundays.

For more information visit the Tech Tech Goose Gaming Facebook page or call Sanders at 541-720-5808.

Students turn pages in book battle

By HERMISTON HERALD

Secondary students in the Hermiston School District recently held building-wide contests for the Oregon Battle of the Books.

The top teams from each school included an all-seventh grade team from Armand Larive Middle School. The Raw Reading Recruits included Joseph Rovig, Elijah Robinson, Jesus Herrera and Mauricio Mendoza. The winning team from Sandstone Middle School, who call themselves the Wonder Women, are Alea Garrett, Ava Garrett, Reagan Stanek and Hailey Magallegenes. And, the Hermiston High School division winners featured a veteran team — Jessica Ferguson, Nadine Ferguson and Jerence Lyons —



Photo contributed by Delia Fields

Sandstone Middle School Battle of the Books team, Wonder Women: Alea Garrett, Ava Garrett, Reagan Stanek and Hailey Magallegenes.

who had some extra fun with their team name, CAPITALIZE CORRECTLY, said Delia Fields, the district's secondary librarian.

The annual reading competition centers on a selection of 16 books for middle schoolers and 12

for high schoolers. Teams of students answer comprehension questions about the stories.

The students usually compete in teams of three or four students and often have their book battles during lunch times in their

school libraries, Fields said. Each of the buildings hosted a double-elimination bracket tournament culminating in a final battle. Winning teams advanced to the Region 6 Tournament in Baker City.

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