

Fishing:

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The men and women who served America's armed forces deserve respect, he said. In their service to the nation, they made our freedoms possible. Those freedoms include fishing, he added.

Thirty-three boats, captained and prepped by volunteers, carried the veterans. The captains, who also were experienced fishing guides, took the veterans out for sturgeon, salmon and walleye.

The starting time was 8 a.m., with the singing of the national anthem and a prayer, though veterans arrived hours earlier and chatted with one another. Breakfast —turnovers, cinnamon rolls, doughnuts, and more — was provided for them, as was coffee. Lunch and dinner also were provided, as were prizes. Fisher wrapped up the event at 5 p.m.

Participants and volunteers

As they participated in the event, the veterans articulated their gratitude for labor and resources given, making Fish'n the Brave possible. Meanwhile, the volunteers also gave their appreciation for the sacrifices the veterans made for their country.

David Stockdale, Umatilla city manager, said he is happy for his city's involvement. Umatilla has hosted the last four of the six annual Fish'n events. Though not a veteran, he has family members who have served.

"This event means a lot to me and to Umatilla," he said. "It's an opportunity for our community to say thank you to our vets. It's great."

At the event, Jon Cox of Western States Equipment Company said supporting veterans is important both for him and his company. Western States provided bait for Fish'n.

"They give us the freedom to do what we do and live in the nation we live in," Cox said of our veterans.

Rick Henderson, a veteran from Moscow, Idaho, was in the Navy from 1990 to 1994. Saturday was the first time he had been to this event. He went because a friend suggested it to him. He had not fished in a long time, he said, and he has rarely gone to veterans' events. As he prepared for his day on the river, he was excited.

"It's nice to have people recognize the service that we signed up for," he said. "It sends a good message to the young right now that it's worth joining our military and taking on that sacrifice."

Dave Winters, veteran, served at the "tail end" of Vietnam. From Hepner, he said he was happy to make the trip from his home to Umatilla. It was his first time at the event, as his friends encouraged him to attend. He said he was happy to commune with his friends and possibly make new friends.

His brother was in the Vietnam War, as were many other people he has known. People spit on those veterans upon their return stateside, Winters said. Finally, those former servicemen and women, as well as other veterans, are getting the respect they deserve.

"It's really nice that people are taking the time to recognize the sacrifice these men and women made," he said.

Dan Seimer, Irrigon, said it also was his first appearance at Fish'n. A veteran, he described himself as an "anxious fisherman," as getting on the water, and being the subject of so much attention, made him feel a little overwhelmed.

"These guys are putting on a real fine deal for us vets," he said. He participates in American Legion, and he likes gathering with people who share his military experience.

Bill Jennings, Hermiston, also is a veteran, hav-

ing served 1969-70. When events like this one occur, he said, it shows people are looking after veterans. This makes him feel good, and he appreciates the efforts.

Not a veteran, Lisa Reardon was one of the few women at the event. A Hermiston resident, she was a volunteer deckhand at Fish'n. As she has two sons who serve, she said she is proud of the people who have fought and continue to fight for America. Wearing a United States Marine Corps sweater, she described herself as a patriot. Several members of her family have served, she said, adding "service is a big deal."

"I think any way that you can honor people who served, have served, is the right thing to do," Reardon said.

Mark Ribich, Umatilla Chamber of Commerce executive director, is not a veteran, though he said being at Fish'n the Brave means a lot to him.

"I get a little choked up about that," he said. His oldest brother was wounded in the Vietnam War, and he did not survive his injuries. This gave him an affinity for those that did return from that war and all the U.S. wars which followed.

"We've got millions of out there in the country,

and they need to be supported in various ways," he said. Any chance he gets to be at veteran events to support, he said, he is "all in" in participating.

The chamber has been supporting Fish'n as a sponsor for four years. Ribich called it the "signature event" for Umatilla. There are other events in Umatilla, but this one is extra special. Several organizations and local businesses also helped, he said. Operating Engineers Local 280, Ranch & Home, the city of Hermiston, Hagerman Inc. and the city of Umatilla are just a few other groups that made this event possible.

"This is a marvelous event," Salud Campos, Umatilla, said. This was her third year as a volunteer.

Pablo Ames, Umatilla, said providing food and fun for veterans is important to him. They deserve it, he said, and he feels satisfied to see smiles on their faces. As a serving member of the National Guard, he said he likes veterans' events such as this one. It kind of gives him a look at his future, he said. He said he likes to hear their stories, too.

Darla Huxel, Umatilla chief of police, is a member of the American Legion Auxiliary. Not a veteran herself, she is appreciative of those who served. She

also is proud of her town and all the volunteers who helped.

Being that Fish'n was on Sept. 11, the day of remembrance for terrorist attacks in 2001, this event has deeper reason for extra thought, she said. She said she remembers the people who were lost on Sept. 11 and the soldiers who took up arms in defense of the country after the attacks.

The Umatilla Police Officers Association was among the groups that donated items to be raffled for the event.

As he was preparing his boat to take veterans fishing, Travis Larson said he is glad to give veterans a good time. In addition to helping others, he also is able to enjoy the experiences himself, as he likes listening to the stories told.

Cathy Stolz, Hermiston resident and president of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 37 of Hermiston, was another one of the volunteers and said she had been encouraging veterans to participate because Fish'n participation is limited. Participants need to sign up prior to the event. They can do so at fisherscatchoutfitters.com/fishn-the-brave.

This year was full, and next year looks to be the same.

Shelter:

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Rather than each of the four cities creating its own solution for the new mandates, Smith said the shelter is an effort by the cities to find a comprehensive solution to assist those experiencing homelessness.

The project still is in its early stages, Smith said, and officials have yet to determine what kind of services would be provided. He added city or county employees are not likely to staff the shelter but perhaps a local nonprofit would take on the task. Organizations, such as Stepping Stones, which has taken the area's homelessness problem, will continue to be welcomed for input.

Smith said officials are also in the process of exploring funding for the shelter's operations. However, he said the county and the four cities would each have a financial stake in the project.

Echo City Administrator David Slaght said he

is enthused about a plan between larger partners, as Echo has difficulties with homelessness but cannot fund a solution on its own.

"I totally, 100% believe we need to do this," Slaght said.

He said he will bring the plan to the Echo City Council for further discussion. The council then will determine the role Echo will have in enacting the plan. This will take time, and though Slaght would like to see a shelter created before winter, he does not know when it will be built and open for use.

Stanfield City Manager Ben Burgener said Stanfield stands with other Umatilla County cities in trying to help homeless people, and he is hopeful.

"We're looking forward to continue working with the county and the cities over here to find a solution to best help," he said.

This shelter plan works toward the aim of helping, though more discussion is needed regarding transportation and resources, he added.



Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald

The cities of Hermiston, Stanfield, Umatilla and Echo are partnering to establish a homeless shelter on 10 acres Umatilla County owns at the intersection of Lind and Bensen roads, Hermiston.

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Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald, File

Stella Queen of Echo poses for a portrait in October 2019 holding a picture of her great-niece Antonia Cobarubias, who was killed in an unsolved hit-and-run in Hermiston about two months earlier.

Hit-And-Run:

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The entire front bumper came off in the collision.

By the time police and other emergency personnel arrived at the scene at 2:30 a.m., the driver was gone. Police searched for the vehicle, which was believed to be a 1994 to 2001 Acura Integra. The car was missing its passenger side mirror, as well as its front bumper, which were recovered on the road. Authorities hoped they would find the damaged car and then find the driver.

Cobarubias, born June 12, 1978, was remembered by her family, as well as her faith community. Desert Rose Ministries, which

offers services to homeless people, posted photos of her, according to a 2019 article by the East Oregonian and Hermiston Herald. Echo Community Church held her funeral on Sept. 18, 2019.

Cobarubias' family offered a \$1,000 reward for any information that would lead to a conviction of the responsible person.

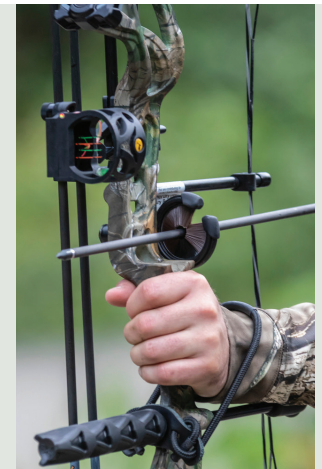
Cooney has spoken with Cobarubias' family regularly, he said, since the hit-and-run. He said hopes someone will come forward with information that will help him solve this case. Maybe then, Cobarubias' family will find some peace.

Meanwhile, even Cobarubias' friends are looking for answers and reflecting

on the woman's life.

Cobarubias was a part of the Echo Community Church's congregation, according to Charlene Marcum, wife of the pastor. She knew Cobarubias well, believing her to be a helper, sometimes to her own detriment.

"She had a big heart," Marcum said of Cobarubias.




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