

# Stanfield graduate does big things in animation

'My overnight success was 14,600 nights,' artist says

By ERICK PETERSON  
Hermiston Herald

Since leaving his hometown, former Stanfield resident Richard Florence has been gaining fame as a cartoonist and illustrator. Most recently, he has achieved extra notoriety for his work on the new NBC game show, "Family Game Fight!"

Now living in Westminster, Colorado, the Stanfield High School graduate, said he has good memories of his time in the area. He worked on farms, played with dirt and stayed out until curfew every night. He did not have cable, but he did not need it. He had plenty of friends, and there were even people who would prove influential in his future career.

His grandfather was one such person who left an impact. Florence remembers his grandfather having given him the newspaper every day. The young Florence would turn excit-

edly to the comics pages after receiving them from his grandfather. Alley Oop was his favorite comic strip, and Florence would learn to draw by tracing the comics.

He was drawing comics before he could even read.

Another influential family member was his "crazy aunt," who was a nude model in Portland in the 1930s.

"She was wild," he said, but she did communicate her free spirit to him, as well as her love of art. She had a big box of comics that she would share with him. Pogo, Katzenjammer Kids and Dick Tracy were some of his favorites.

He also remembered long car trips with his family, in which he would read Archie comics.

In those early days, he fell in love with the sort of storytelling an artist could do with cartooning. He said, there is no way to do cartooning wrong. It is not the sort of realistic work done by classical painters. The difference is good because he did not think he had the ability to be the next Michelangelo. Making cartoons, he could be himself.

In school, instead of pay-



Ryan Florence/Contributed Photo

**Richard Florence of Westminster, Colorado, graduated from Stanfield High School and went on to do exciting work in the world of animation.**

ing attention to classroom lessons, he drew. He drew dinosaurs, then spics, then Batman.

When he was young, he met a boarder who rented a room from his mother. The man shared his comics, underground comics — sometimes strange works from independent artists.

"It was eye-opening," he said. When he read them, he realized he could say anything in a comic.

When he got a little older, he painted murals and signs

around Stanfield. He met his wife, Ginger Florence, at the Umatilla County Fair in 1980. In 1981, he left town for the Art Institute of Colorado.

He published his first comic, "Hap Hazard," in 1987. It is the story of a bumbling detective, and he still is doing it.

Then he started drawing manga for a Tokyo studio. He drew a 209-page-long story at the pace of 25 pages a month about his poodle and followed it up with a

179-page story on American life.

The Japanese were interested in his stories for a look into a different culture. When, for instance, he drew a drive-in, people thought it was interesting and foreign.

His work life was not all art, though. He worked for a phone company and made money. Art was a side project.

Then, he found a second life in animation. He learned flash animation, and realized that a one-man

shop could make an entire show. It was like magic to him.

He started doing commercials for Papa Johns, the Chicago Tribune and other companies. He even saw some of his work in a Super Bowl ad.

"I was over the moon," he said of his Super Bowl ad. He had made the animation for a video game, but it was repurposed for this other ad. Four million people saw his work, he said, and he could not be happier.

"My overnight success was 14,600 nights," he said.

Ironically, his biggest professional success came after his massive heart attack 16 years ago. Since then, he has gotten great jobs and awards.

His work for the NBC show "Family Game Fight!," a show produced by Ellen DeGeneres, is his latest achievement. He has not met DeGeneres, but he does speak on Zoom with people who work for her, and that is just fine with him.

In addition to his animation work for the show, he is drawing a book based on his travels in Germany, where he was born. That work will be around 200 pages.

# Good Shepherd welcomes three new surgeons

Johnson, Maccabee and Rust are accepting new patients

Hermiston Herald

Three new general surgeons, Marques Johnson, David Maccabee, and Ann Rust, joined Good Shepherd Medical Group General Surgery.

"We are excited to add three new surgeons to our medical staff and are very proud of the work they are already doing," said Brian Sims, Good Shepherd Health Care System president and CEO.

"Good Shepherd now has a powerhouse of surgeons with a combined 40+ years of experience that provide best-in-class surgical care for our patients," said Sims.

Dr. Johnson is board certified in general surgery with a special focus in minimally-invasive surgery and colorectal surgery. He was born in Medford and grew up in Eugene where he obtained his bachelor's degree from University of Oregon. He went on to medical school at Loma Linda University School of Medicine in Loma Linda, Calif., and completed his General Surgery residency at Maine Medical Center in Portland,

Maine. He is a current member of the American College of Surgeons and the American Medical Association.

Dr. Maccabee is board certified in general surgery and specializes in minimally-invasive surgery (including robotics), bariatric surgery and endoscopy. Maccabee attended undergraduate and medical school at the University of California Davis in Davis, Calif.

After a brief stint for graduate school at Oxford University in England, he returned to the United States for his surgical training. He completed his general surgery residency at University of Washington

in Seattle and Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU) in Portland. He went on to complete a Fellowship in Laparoscopic Surgery at OHSU as well.

Maccabee has broad experience with all types of gastrointestinal surgery and endoscopy, including minimally-invasive hernia repair, surgery for reflux disease and weight loss, skin, breast and intestinal cancers, and varicose vein disease. He is a member of the American College of Surgeons, the American Society of Metabolic and

Bariatric Surgeons, and the Society of Gastrointestinal Surgeons.

Dr. Rust is board certified in general surgery with a special focus on women's health, as well as advanced laparoscopic and endoscopic surgeries. She was born in Sandpoint, Idaho, and followed the footsteps of her physician father.

Rust earned her Doctor of Medicine degree from Creighton University School of Medicine in Omaha, Nebraska where she also completed her resi-

dency. She is a current member of the American College of Surgeons, American Society of Breast Surgeons, Association of Women Surgeons, and the Society of Laparoscopic Surgeons.

When asked what they enjoy doing outside of work, the surgeons referenced dedication to their families and maintaining active outdoor lifestyles.

All three surgeons are accepting new patients at Good Shepherd Medical Group General Surgery in Hermiston.

# Farm to farm: Water from NE Oregon data centers reused for agriculture

By GEORGE PLAVEN  
EO Media Group

The tiny city of Umatilla and the internet giant Amazon have come up with a unique use for the cooling water from the company's massive server farms.

They are using it irrigate the region's other farms — the kind that grow crops.

Perched along the Columbia River in northeast Oregon, Umatilla is a haven for irrigated agriculture where farmers grow everything from hay and wheat to high-value potatoes, onions, carrots and melons.

In 2009, Amazon broke ground on its first campus of data centers in Umatilla. Data centers are large warehouses filled with computer servers. All the information gathered by websites like Amazon and Facebook is stored in the server farms.

Amazon was attracted to the Columbia Basin, in part, by the availability of clean water that could be used in cooling systems for all those servers. A single data center consumes between 250,000 and 1 million gallons of water per day in the warmer summer months, when outside temperatures can top 100 degrees.

That water is still mostly clean once it comes out the other end, said Umatilla city manager Dave Stockdale.

With two data center campuses now online and another two being built, Stockdale said it didn't make sense, nor was there capacity, to treat all that mostly clean water at the city's sewer plant.

Both the city and Amazon began pondering ways they could reuse the water, adding benefit for the community.

The answer, they decided, was to deliver the water to the same farmers that have powered Umatilla's economy for decades.

"To take this new age technology and sort of marry it to our traditional roots, especially in Umatilla which has always been an agricultural community ... in reality, they actually worked out in a great symbiotic relationship," Stockdale said.

The cooling water from Amazon is piped to an irrigation canal run by the West Extension Irrigation District, which serves 10,400 acres of farmland.

The project broke ground in 2019, with roughly 7 miles of pipe that run from the data center campuses to a new headworks on the district's canal at the northeast end of the city.

From there, the water flows about 1,200 feet allowing it to mix with the district's water pumped directly from the Columbia River, diluting any excess salts and reaching a suitable pH level before it can be used for irrigation.



Wikimedia/Contributed Photo

**Umatilla, and Amazon have built a system for using cooling water from the internet giant's server farms to irrigate the region's farms.**

Stockdale said the infrastructure cost a little more than \$5 million. So far, Amazon is the only customer on the new system, though that could change with future developments.

Water deliveries began in 2020. This year, Stockdale estimated they provided enough water for farmers to grow an additional 1,000 acres of crops, all with existing water rights.

"Technically, it's the city's water in the irrigation district's canal," Stockdale said. "If a farmer wants access to additional water, they have additional water capacity available to them through this system."

The value of agriculture in arid Eastern Oregon grows exponentially with water.

Dryland wheat grown without irrigation yields roughly \$100 per acre. Adding 1 acre-foot of water increases the crop's value to \$500 per acre. Add 3 acre-feet of water, and farms can earn up to \$5,000 per acre growing higher value specialty crops.

An acre-foot covers an area about the size of a football field with 1 foot of water, or about 325,851 gallons.

As more data centers come online in the coming years, Stockdale said the city is examining other potential uses for the water in addition to irrigation, such as repairing wetlands in the area for wildlife.

"We continue to look at ways to be good environmental stewards of our resources," Stockdale said.

A spokesperson for Amazon Web Services said the project is the first of its kind in Oregon and for the company, and the goal is to increase water reuse at its northeast Oregon data centers to 100%.

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