

Knowledge Bowl team readies for first competition of the year

By ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Herald

Take the number of legs on Santa's reindeer from the number of geese a-laying in the entire song "The 12 Days of Christmas," and what is the answer? If you answered that the answer is six, you might be a good fit for Hermiston High School's Knowledge Bowl team.

Of course, you would also have to be a HHS student.

Big things are happening for Hermiston's Knowledge Bowl bunch, according to John Lauck. Lauck, a retired HHS teacher, is the school's current Knowledge Bowl team co-advisor. He works with Maggie Hughes-Boyd, fellow co-advisor and high school counselor.

Their team competes against teams from Umatilla, Echo, Helix and Stanfield in a local Oregon league. Pilot Rock and a few Washington schools may soon be competing against Hermiston, too.

The big news, Lauck said, is that the team is very large this year. The team currently



John Lauck/Contributed photo

Hermiston High School students Dillon Herron, Joey Ferguson and Gavin Doherty pose for a photo on Nov. 17, 2021, during a Knowledge Bowl meet at Echo High School. Ferguson, the team captain, is a senior, as is Doherty. Herron is a junior.

boasts at least 17 students who appear at practices, he said. He said this is enough

students to form four teams and is the largest group he can remember.

Schools will convene for a competition Wednesday, Jan. 12, 2022, 4 p.m. at Hermiston

High School, 600 S. First St. At the competition, there will be three rounds of 50 questions. Teams, each with three to five individuals, will be asked questions. When they have an answer, they will hit a buzzer and respond.

Questions are difficult, he said, and they can be on many different topics, including math, history, current events, art, astronomy and biology.

A dinner break is scheduled for the kids after round two. After dinner, the teams compete for a third round, then a final for the top three teams.

He said the kids seemed to enjoy the last meet, which took place in Echo on Nov. 17. Hermiston teams took first and third places at that meet, which was the school's first Knowledge Bowl meet of 2021.

It was nice to have this meet, the advisor said, as the previous meet was in 2020. The 2020 meet was the only meet that year, a small competition in Echo that included one Hermiston team and two Echo teams.

This year's team includes both experienced and new competitors, he said. Among the competitors are three seniors and a handful of promising young freshmen. He said he expects them to do well, depending on the other teams that appear at future meets.

Lauck said he is hopeful that his kids can face off against bigger schools in Washington.

"Some of them are just outstanding," he said of the Washington teams, but he added that the Hermiston students are good, too, and the competition should be interesting.

Historically, he said, Hermiston High performs well at local meets. This is the way it should be, Lauck said, as Hermiston is a comparatively large school. Echo, though, is a competitive team that "should be hard to beat." Helix, too, has had good teams.

"You'd be amazed what these kids know, especially when they work as a group," Lauck said.

Heppner wheat farmer takes seat on State Board of Agriculture

Eric Orem says he is not going into the position with a set agenda

By ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Herald

Eric Orem of Heppner said he hopes his experiences and personal story will prove to be a boon as he joins the State Board of Agriculture.

"I felt that with the board experience that I have," he said, "having served on co-op and commodity group boards, that I can bring something, maybe a different perspective to the board of ag."

Orem owns and oper-

ates a diversified dryland wheat, hay and cattle farming operation in Heppner. Gov. Kate Brown recently appointed him to the board. His four-year term began immediately, according to a press release Wednesday, Dec. 8, from the governor's office.

The state ag board advises the Oregon Department of Agriculture on policy issues, develops recommendations on key agricultural issues and provides advocacy of the state's agriculture industry in general. Orem, who grew up in Morrow County, said he is excited for these challenges and enthusiastic about joining this 12-member board.

He is a past president of the Oregon Wheat Growers League and said people from the league encouraged him to "throw his name into the hat" for the agriculture board appointment. He applied for the position, and he said he was a little surprised to be selected. He also expressed feeling humbled as a result.

Born in Oregon City but raised in Lone, Orem was no stranger to agricultural work. His grandfather had a small farm and his father worked for a wheat and cattle ranch. As he got older, he graduated high school, having worked for farmers

all through high school.

"From a young age, I had a passion for agriculture, but I never thought I would get to be a part of it or own my own operation," he said. "It just wasn't in the cards."



Orem

He was told that farmer owners had to either inherit their farms or marry into them, he said.

"I don't know if that is true, but it is tough," Orem said.

After his high school graduation, he attended and graduated from Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton. Then he started working for Les Schwab Tire Center, and "moved around

in management," he said.

After being away from the area for nine years, an old employer contacted him. One of his old bosses, who had no children of his own, told Orem he was getting ready to retire, he said, and he offered Orem the chance to lease his farm.

It was 2001, and Orem said he was thrilled for the opportunity to become the farmer he had always dreamed of being. He took the offer and he relocated his young family.

"From there, we've grown," Orem said.

He picked up other leases and started doing custom seeding and spraying for neighboring farms.

Orem grows hay to feed

his cows. He also sells hay to others. He farms 7,000 acres of dryland wheat in the Lexington area and has 100 head of cattle.

"Oregon agriculture has been good to me," he said.

He said he thinks by sharing his personal success story and networking he was able to gain the attention of the state board. In becoming a part of the board, he said he hopes he can do good work. He said he wanted to give back to the industry that has given much to him during the past 20 years.

"I am not going into it with a set agenda," he said. "I'm hoping to help guide agriculture, not significantly change it."



Vange John Memorial Hospice



Invites the community to support your local hospice through this fundraiser which takes place during the month of December. Your contribution to Vange John Memorial Hospice will illuminate a symbolic light in a window display area provided by Victory Baptist Church on Main Street. You may dedicate your light in honor of someone you admire or in memory of someone you miss.

All memorials and honoree names received during the campaign will be read January 9, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. on our local radio station, KOHU 1360 AM and will be shared on Good Shepherd Health Care System's Facebook page. An MP3 recording is available upon request.

A meaningful gift, your contribution will help you celebrate the life of loved ones during the holiday season and help us meet the needs of our hospice patients and their families all year long.

Join us for the Light Up A Life Memorial/Honoree Reading of the Names

Broadcast on KOHU 1360 AM or [f](#) @gshcsnews

January 9, 2022 | 6:00 p.m.

*Also, join us this spring for a Community Memorial Service in the park!



Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____
Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____ Phone _____
* Suggested donation for each memorial/honoree: \$15

Please mail check payable to: Vange John Memorial Hospice
645 W. Orchard Ave., Suite 500 | Hermiston, OR 97838 (541-667-3543)
Your canceled check will be your receipt. (A Division of Good Shepherd Health Care System)

Please place a light & ornament in the window display to celebrate the life of:
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2. _____

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