

## THREE MINUTES WITH...



## Rita Campos

Umatilla

### Can you tell me a little about yourself?

*I'm originally from Costa Rica, lived in southern California, close to 38 years. I went to Bremerton (Washington) to work for Head Start for a few years, then came over here to work at Umatilla-Morrow Head Start where I've been working for four years. I love what I do, because I get to make a difference for children. I work with parents to help kids as they get ready for kindergarten. It's all about making things better for families, giving them tools.*

### Could you tell me a little more about Umatilla-Morrow Head Start?

*We are a non-profit organization that's pretty much a blanket. We have early Head Start, Healthy Families and WIC. We also have a program, Pre-school Promises. We have CASA as well. We help people who go through the foster program. There's more, too. We're part of the community, and I like to get out in the community to be present and share with people about what we do. And everybody who is in the organization, they'd say the same thing. We are there for families, children and the community.*

### Today, you have a booth at the Umatilla Saturday Market, talking to people about what you do. What do you think about the market?

*It is a great way to get to know people and organizations. I've gotten to know people and the things they are doing in the community. And there are other things like this. I went to Landing Days, and it was awesome. A lot of the vendors there are here (at the Umatilla Saturday Market), so it becomes a community event. You get to know everybody.*

### What are some of your other favorite activities in Umatilla?

*I've done the Polar Plunge.*

### Isn't that dangerous?

*No, not necessarily. There's some ice, and it's cold, but it's not bad. It's a fundraiser, and we got more than 60 coats for kids.*

### It sounds like you do a lot of good for your community.

*Yes, but I'm not the only one. There're so many people with school districts, libraries, police departments and more. There is so much work with so many different people, and it's just growing so there are more and more.*

## HERMISTON HISTORY

# Watermelon Festival enjoyed 25 years ago

25 YEARS AGO  
JULY 8, 1997

It is pretty obvious this area is famous for its watermelons. So when the annual Watermelon Festival comes around, you can guarantee it will be packed with activities to celebrate Umatilla County's prized crop.

The all-day gala began at 6:30 a.m. on Saturday, July 26, 1997, with a "Breakfast In The Park." Once everyone was fed and energized, the festivities began.

Some of the anticipated events were the watermelon eating and seed-spitting competitions, lawn mower races and demonstrations by the Northwest Olympic Taekwondo Oregon State National Junior Team. For sport enthusiasts, there was even an all-day softball tournament near the Marina Park.

A festival is not a true celebration without music, though. Many performers, including duet pair Lynette Barthel and Brenda Goodyear, "Cowboy" Steve Ferree, Duane McMillin and Tony Madrigal entertained throughout the day.

Co-chairwoman Lavelle Partlow said, "Everybody comes to hear Tony. He is our main performer."

Along with all the events mentioned, numerous vendors, craft stations and booths were open.

50 YEARS AGO  
JULY 6, 1972

A court filled the Echo City Hall for a rare jury trial concerning the previous Echo marshal and a suspended license.

Ronald D. "Tex" Wilson was charged with operating a motor vehicle in Echo on the evening of May 28, 1972, while his license was suspended. He was town marshal until two years prior, when the city hired Dennis Rockwell as its police chief.

Joe L. Martin, who became municipal judge in March, served as the judge. Leeroy Ehlers, a Pendleton attorney, represented Wilson. Donald Morrison served as city attorney. Dennis Rockwell was the key witness, and his wife, Marcia Rockwell, served as court clerk.

The trial opened with verification of the accusation and Wilson's license suspension.

Next was Rockwell, who explained how he saw Wilson driving that night, communicated with the vehicle department and then



Hermiston Herald, File  
**Skip Walchli examines his crops to be donated to the 1997 Watermelon Festival with Tyler Fox and Linda Fox, a member of the Watermelon Festival Committee.**

issued Wilson a citation.

Wilson countered that in his experience as a law enforcement officer, suspended licenses that have not been surrendered are picked up by the state police, and his had not been picked up.

"I did not drive intentionally with a suspended license," he claimed.

After about 20 minutes of debate and discussion on the topic, the jury arrived at a verdict, innocent.

75 YEARS AGO  
JULY 10, 1947

According to the Umatilla City Planning Commission, the town of Umatilla "ought to be bigger."

According to the previous census, Umatilla had just 370 residents. However, with the construction of the McNary Dam, an estimated 4,000 workers would be required.

The dam would be two miles up the Columbia River from the current city boundaries, though.

To prevent the appearance of "shackle towns," as the commissioner called it, the city needed to grow. In addition, if Umatilla was enlarged, the dam workers would have a faster and easier commute. The proposed expansion would have Umatilla run west to Morrow County, south three miles and east four more miles. If this were to happen, Umatilla would end up being about a third the size of Portland.

On August 11, the people of Umatilla

would have the opportunity to vote on whether to expand their city to an area of 35 square miles or keep it as it was.

90 YEARS AGO  
JULY 7, 1932

After a long and full life, at the ripe age of 89, Civil War Veteran William C. Morse passed away.

Morse grew up and spent most of his childhood in Indiana and Illinois. Still rather young, he enlisted in the Civil War in 1861, though it was not mentioned which side he joined.

After serving for three years, Morse remained in the area for a while. Then, in 1880, he traveled west and settled in Idaho, spending his later years in California and Oregon.

A devout Christian, Morse was totally blind for 18 years and in poor health for his last three years. On June 30, 1932, he passed away at the house of his son, J.P. Morse.

Morse left behind a large family to mourn for him, including his three sons, J.P. Morse of Hermiston, S.P. Morse of Pierce, Idaho, D. Morse of San Diego, California, 14 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.

A funeral service was held at the Prann Funeral Parlor and burial ceremony at the Hermiston Cemetery to honor the long life of this man who participated in one of our country's most influential times.

■ McKenzie Rose, a junior at Echo High School, searched Hermiston Herald archives to compile these article summaries.

## By The Way

# 'Ghostbusters: Afterlife' begins Movies in the Park season

**Movies in the Park** kicks off Friday, **July 8** in Hermiston.

Grab some snacks and lawn chairs or blankets and enjoy the free flicks at **Butte Park**, 1245 N.W. Seventh St. Held the last four Fridays in July, the shows start around sunset, approximately 8:30-8:45 p.m.

Scheduled movies include: "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" (July 8), "American Underdog" (July 15), "Clifford the Big Red Dog" (July 22) and "Beethoven" (July 29). For more information, visit [www.hermistonrecreation.com](http://www.hermistonrecreation.com) or call 541-667-5018.

Drop by the **Hermiston Public Library**, 235 E. Gladys Ave., for an extra-special event on Thursday, **July 14**, 6 p.m. Author **Jane Kirkpatrick** is planning to be present at the library to discuss her book "The Healing of Natalie Curtis."

Kirkpatrick is an award-winning author and speaker from central Oregon with more than 39 published works that have sold more than a million copies.

She primarily writes historical fiction, often based on the lives of real people, with themes of faith, commitment, hope and love.

There's a whole lot more at the **Hermiston Public Library**.

Its activities include the **Teen Summer Reading Program Water Balloon Fight** on **July 30**, 3 p.m. The library is hosting this event as a big thank you to everyone participating in its summer reading program.

There is still time to join the program and get ready for the balloon fight, but you'll want to be quick. Go to the library and ask how you can get involved right away.

Mark your calendars, the **234th Army Band** is marching into town for a concert. Among the performers is **Kyle Ketchersid**, a 2019 Hermiston High School graduate.

The event is **July 22**, 7 p.m. in the auditorium at **Hermiston High School**, 600 S. First St. There is no admission charge.

Visit the **Boardman Farmer's Market** Monday, **July 11**, 5-8 p.m., as it supports local farmers and artisans. Music, activities and fun await at **The Farmer's Cup**, 450 Laurel Lane, Boardman.

The **Umatilla Saturday Market** is the place to be for some fun Saturday, **July 9**, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Located at **Village Square Park** on Sixth Street, next to Umatilla City Hall, the market takes place every Saturday to September 10.

The **Harkenrider Senior Activity Center** menu for **Thursday, July 7**, is baked potato, salad, fruit and dessert. The menu for **Tuesday, July 12**, is spaghetti, garlic bread, Jello salad and dessert.

In-house meals will be served from noon to 12:30 p.m. People planning to dine in are asked to call by 11 a.m.

For a **Meals on Wheels** delivery in Hermiston, call **541-567-3582** before 10 a.m. to place an order. To pick up a meal from the center at 255 N.E. Second St., call before 11 a.m. Meals are \$5 and can be picked up between 11:30 a.m. and noon.

The **Boardman Senior Center** is open for dine-in lunches on **Tuesdays and Thursdays**, noon at 100 Tatone St. Meals are \$4 for seniors and \$5 for others. Take-out lunches are available by calling **541-481-3257**.

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## PRIORITIES

A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove... but the world may be different because I was important in the Life of a Child.

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