

2 LIGHTER SIDE

THREE MINUTES WITH...



Matt Combe
MORROW COUNTY

Who are you and what do you do?

I'm Matt Combe, superintendent of Morrow County School District.

Where did you grow up? When did you come to Morrow County?

I grew up in Summerville. I have lived in Morrow County since June of 2006. I attended Imbler High School, Imbler. Undergraduate at Eastern Oregon State College (Bachelor of Science in physical education and health). Graduate Studies: Eastern Oregon University (master's degree in teacher education), Lewis & Clark College (administrative licensure program).

What are a few of your hobbies?

Spending quality time with my three kids; Madison (21-years-old), Kaden (18) and Mariah (14). We enjoy outdoor recreational activities.

How do you spend your free time?

Attending local youth and high school athletic events and extracurricular activities. And, spending quality time with my kids.

How would you describe yourself?

I'm a civic minded educator who enjoys living, serving and working in Morrow County.

What is something that you're passionate about?

In addition to my work as an educator for Morrow County School District, I am passionate about my service on the Oregon Schools Activities Association Delegate Assembly and Executive Board.

What are a few of your proudest accomplishments?

Without a doubt my three kids, Madison, Kaden and Mariah. Additionally, being elected to serve on the Oregon Schools Activities Association Executive Board and receiving the Heppner Chamber of Commerce "Lifetime Achievement" Award for community service in 2021.

What do you like most about the community you live in?

What I like most about living in Morrow County is all of the hard working people and community leaders who have "can-do" attitudes and continually strive to make our communities a great place to live with lots of activities and opportunities for kids.

HERMISTON HISTORY

Rotary in 1972 welcomes Finnish exchange student

25 YEARS AGO
AUGUST 26, 1997

Joseph Overstreet, a 15-year-old Pendleton resident, had thrived in the art of karate, having qualified for international competitions in Hawaii twice, where he placed third in fighting. However, earning a black belt would perhaps be his hardest task yet.

Overstreet's career began at a very young age, as both of his parents were Karate-ka, practitioners of karate. Before he could walk, he was introduced to the art of punching and kicking. By age 3, Overstreet was in uniform and started formal instruction just two years later, practicing twice a week for 10 years.

His test for a black belt in Shito Ryu Karate spanned three days, during a training camp that covered typical karate aspects such as exercise, basic skills training, kata — forms — self-defense and weapons. While the other participants rested in between training events, the black belt candidates underwent further testing. In addition to all those physical rigors, they also had to teach karate to younger ones to demonstrate their mental capabilities.

Overstreet was undaunted by the tests that pushed his boundaries. As his mother, Karen Overstreet, added of his performance, "You find out you can do a whole lot more than you think."

50 YEARS AGO
AUGUST 24, 1972

Jouni Hakunti, a 17-year-old from Raisio, Finland, was the first foreign exchange student to attend Hermiston schools under the Rotary International program.

Selected on a scholarship and good ambassadorship basis, Hakunti stayed with the Klum family. One of the Klum boys, Lyle, was around Hakunti's age and the two became friends quickly, spending his first Sunday in America rowing across the Columbia River.

As you can imagine, traveling to a foreign country offers exciting opportunities to experience many new things. A futbol enthusiast, Hakunti was eager to observe the American spin of the game and hoped to play.

As for school, Hakunti was most looking forward to math and history. Although



Hermiston Herald, File

Joseph Overstreet, 15, proudly poses in August 1997 with his large collection of karate awards.

worried his English would not measure up, it was observed that he spoke the language well. After all, like many European countries, Finnish students were required to learn English.

However, leaving one's family, of which Hakunti had a brother and two sisters, would be difficult. In the event he felt homesick, it was a lucky coincidence that another Finnish exchange student would be attending Pendleton that year as well.

75 YEARS AGO
AUGUST 28, 1947

Lela Sievers of Hermiston brought something unique to the Umatilla County Fair. More than 1,000,000 feet of thread and 10 hours of unique, that is.

Talented with intricate handiwork, Sievers made and collected numerous rugs, tablecloths, pillow slips and other articles to feature in her fair exhibit. Among the items were a pair of pillow slips handwoven and handmade in Sweden over 100 years prior. A quilt pieced together by her great-great-grandmother during the Civil War would also be on display, in addition to rugs that Siever wove from clothesline and nylon shroud lines from a parachute.

According to Sievers, the longest amount of time she spent on a project was 18 months for a tablecloth made of

50-gauge thread. That effort and all the other time she dedicated to crafting was well spent as her masterpieces would prove to fairgoers.

90 YEARS AGO
AUGUST 25, 1932

While sad to see another Hermiston pioneer die, the life of Thomas Walter Botkin was one to remember.

He came to Hermiston in 1910 and established one of the first farms in an area now known as North Hill. A member of the Odd Fellows Lodge for many years, he also served in the Spanish-American War.

Botkin was very active in public affairs and cared deeply for the land, having served two terms on the district water board. Also, he was in charge of the turkeys at the old Umatilla Experiment farm, where Botkin had lived with his wife since 1945.

After several years of failing health, Botkin died at the Veteran's Hospital in Walla Walla. To honor his historically rich life, funeral services were to be held in La Grande followed by a burial at the La Grande Cemetery. Botkin was survived by his wife, daughter and Rube Zweifel of La Grande.

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

By The Way

Make a paws-itive impact on National Dog Day

With **National Dog Day** coming up on **Friday, Aug. 26**, people might consider lending a paw to dogs (as well as cats and kittens) that are going through a "ruff" spot. **Fuzz Ball Animal Rescue** is seeking foster providers.

Needs and situations vary — for the animal and the potential placement. From emergency fosters on short notice for a few days or several weeks to longer-term foster homes, Fuzz Ball is looking for people to join its pack.

The nonprofit organization wags its tail for donations, including monetary, pet food and supplies. Also, other volunteer opportunities are available.

To inquire about fostering, submit an application via www.fuzzballrescue.com. For questions, email fuzzballrescue@gmail.com.

An old-fashioned county fair is underway in Moro. The **Sherman County Fair** kicked off **Tuesday, Aug. 23**, and runs through **Saturday, Aug. 27**. It features free admission, including all the special activities. However, bring your wallets — a handful of food vendors will be on hand, as well as a beer garden.

While there isn't a glitzy midway, the fair is packed with fun things to do and see, including rodeo action **Friday, Aug. 26**, 7:30 p.m. and live music with **Countryfied** at 9 p.m. And a demolition derby is **Saturday, Aug. 27**, 6:30 p.m., followed by

live music with **Jager Bumz** at 9 p.m.

For more information, search www.facebook.com/shermancountyfair. For questions, call **541-565-3510**.

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Book lovers won't want to miss the opportunity to peruse more than 50,000 books and media available for purchase. After a two-year hiatus, **Pendleton Friends of the Library** is turning the page with its annual book sale at the **Pendleton Convention Center**, 1601 Westgate.

To take advantage of the first selection, register as a member at the door or in advance via www.pendletonfriendsofthelibrary.wordpress.com.

- **Thursday, Aug. 25**, 7-9 p.m. (member preview sale)
- **Friday, Aug. 26**, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- **Saturday, Aug. 27**, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- **Saturday, Aug. 27**, 3-5 p.m. (\$1 bag sale)

For more information, email pendletonfriendsofthelibrary@gmail.com or search www.facebook.com/pendletonfriendsofthelibrary.

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The doctor is in — mark your calendars because the **Teddy Bear Clinic** is returning as part of **Family Health & Fitness Day**. The free family-friendly event is **Sept. 24**, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Hermiston High School. Watch for a story in mid-September with more details.

New this year is a pre-event **5K Fun Run**. For an event T-shirt, participants must register by **Wednesday, Aug. 31** at www.eventbrite.com. The fee is \$20 or a family ticket for up to six people is \$90 — without a shirt, registration is \$15 or \$60, respectively.

Also, vendor applications — related to health or fitness — are accepted through Aug. 31. For questions, contact **541-667-3509** or healthinfo@gshealth.org.

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The **Harkenrider Senior Activity Center** menu for **Thursday, Aug. 25**, is baked chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, vegetables and dessert. The menu for **Tuesday, Aug. 30**, is pork loin chops, stuffing and gravy, vegetables 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.

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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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