

The Dalles Chronicle

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MINUTE READ



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LOCAL



State opener
TDW girls face a tough foe in No. 4 Thurston in their Class 5A state opener tonight.

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Fire forces 3 from homes

Three local residents are receiving help from the Red Cross after a fire Saturday evening just after 9 p.m. at apartments at 2510 W. Second St. The incident began as an odor investigation, said the Mid-Columbia Fire & Rescue report. One resident reported seeing flames, however they were determined to be electrical arcing from a water heater.

Power was turned off in the complex and it was determined that it is not safe to occupy some of the units until the problem is solved, the department report said.

Oregon Trail chapter of American Red Cross provided aid to the residents.

REGION



Second-half rally

Trail Blazers come from behind to defeat Grizzlies, 103-93 on the road.

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WORLD



Iwo Jima date nears

Marines return to mark one of World War II's bloodiest battles.

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Supremes eye gun rights

Justice: rights subject to politics

By Mark Sherman
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court appeared willing Tuesday to say that the Constitution's right to possess guns limits state and local regulation of

firearms. But the justices also suggested that some gun control measures might not be affected.

The court heard arguments in a case that challenges handgun bans in the Chicago area by asking the high court to extend to

state and local jurisdictions the sweep of its 2008 decision striking down a gun ban in the federal enclave of Washington, D.C.

The biggest questions before the court seemed to be how, rather than whether, to issue such a ruling and whether some regulation of firearms could survive. On

the latter point, Justice Antonin Scalia said the majority opinion he wrote in the 2008 case "said as much."

The extent of gun rights is "still going to be subject to the political process," said Chief Justice John Roberts, who was in the majority in 2008.

At the very least, Tues-

day's argument suggested that courts could be very busy in the years ahead determining precisely which gun laws are allowed under the Second Amendment's "right to keep and bear arms," and which must be stricken.

See GUNS, Page A5

Ukuleles for Students

Chenowith Elementary gets 30 of the pint-sized stringed instruments, as well as training in how to play

By Keri Brenner
The Chronicle

Ukulele fever spread Monday to Chenowith Elementary School.

Gordon and Char Mayer of Gorge Ukuleles in White Salmon donated part of the proceeds from last month's popular Ukulele Festival in Hood River to The Dalles school in the form of 30 new ukuleles.

"Hopefully you'll have fun," Gordon Mayer told members of music teacher Ramona Harwood's fourth and fifth grade class. "The thing about ukuleles is, they just make people smile."

Harwood, who trained at the Ukulele Festival and at a camp with the Langley Ukulele Ensemble in Langley, B.C., said she will be teaching ukulele classes to Chenowith's third through fifth graders starting in April.

"Ukuleles are a neat size, you can sing while playing and they have every note," said Gordon Mayer, who, with his wife, sponsors the Ukulele Festival in Hood River. He noted that many Canadian schools teach music to kids using ukuleles starting in third grade. Last year, the first year of the



Eric Flores gets a ukulele from a smiling Char Mayer Monday at Chenowith Elementary School. Keri Brenner photo

Ukulele Festival, the Mayers donated 50 ukuleles to three Hood River schools. This year, the event was so well-attended, they were able to do-

nate 110 ukuleles to schools in The Dalles, White Salmon and Welches.

See UKULELES, Page A5

Troops due home soon

Local counties hire new veterans' service officer

By Keri Brenner
The Chronicle

About 3,000 Oregon soldiers — including 12 from The Dalles, Hood River and Parkdale — will return from a one-year tour of duty in Iraq in late April or early May, officials said.

At the same time, Hood River and Wasco counties have hired a new full-time veterans' services officer. Anne Debbaut, until last Friday a senior planner in the Hood River County planning department, started Monday in the new position.

"I think Anne will do a wonderful job for the veterans," said Brad Houghton, who resigned from the veterans services officer position in late January to help ease Hood River County's \$2 million budget deficit by allowing the county to hire his replacement from within the existing workforce. "She is smart, she is intelligent and she is very excited

See VETERANS, Page A5

Repairs, recrimination mark special session

By Tim Fought
The Associated Press

SALEM — Oregon legislators came to Salem on Feb. 1 in a political atmosphere still smoking from the Measure 66 and 67 tax campaigns and darkened by a jobless economic recovery.

When they left 25 days later — three days ahead of the deadline

majority Democrats set for a special session — the smoke hadn't lifted and the clouds hadn't parted.

Even though the people had spoken on the matter in January and upheld the tax increases on the wealthy and on business, the bitterness of the campaigns run by business and labor was evident nearly every day of the session.

So were the economic numbers:

11 percent unemployment, 100,000 people running out of unemployment benefits, a \$2.5 billion budget gap confronting lawmakers next year.

Oregonians looking at the Legislature's output — 100 bills and assorted resolutions — might see two themes:

— Repairs.
The Legislature did fix-it work

on the budget, on runaway tax credits for green energy, on a criminal sentencing bill from the last legislative session that was universally regarded as botched and on low-profile bills such as a "whoops" measure that returned to judges the ability to allow people convicted of hunting violations to

See SESSION, Page A5

Readers invited to take Tundra on a test drive

Editor's note: Periodically, The Chronicle gives readers a chance to try new comic strips. For the next two weeks, we're introducing Tundra, written, drawn and self-syndicated by Chad Carpenter from his home in Alaska, replacing Blondie to do so. We're very interested in readers' reactions. Comments may be e-mailed to TDC@thedalleschronicle.com, faxed to (541) 298-1365, or mailed to P.O. Box 1910, The Dalles, OR 97058.

Consisting of anything animal, vegetable or mineral, but with a decidedly outdoorsy slant, Tundra takes an offbeat view of the

woody side of life. Whether it's outhouses, chainsaws, fishing or even something a bit more metropolitan, everything is always in season.

In addition to the usual craziness as described above, there is also a cast of recurring characters that turn up from time to time. They consist of Dudley the Bear, the well-intentioned but less-than-intelligent butt of many jokes and mishaps; Sherman the Squirrel, whose role in life

is that of a self-serving instigator of schemes and a cata-



lyst for chaos; Andy the Lemming as the supplier of snappy comebacks, quick wit and raising the cute-

ness quotient; and, finally, Chad the Cartoonist as the hapless victim of all those characters' exploits.

Chad Carpenter started cartooning while living for three years in Sarasota, Florida where he became "greatly inspired and personally advised by two of the comic strip greats — Mike Peters (Mother Goose & Grimm) and Dik Browne (Hagar the Horrible)." Returning to his native

Alaska in 1981, he approached the Anchorage Daily News which gave the comic a try.

It was picked up by most of the other Alaskan newspapers. A year later Chad was able to quit his job as a process server/security guard and devote all of his energy to being a cartoonist.

Starting in 2006, he self-syndicated, and in just four years, Tundra has added more than 330 newspapers including the L.A. Times, the New York Daily News, the Chicago Tribune, and newspapers in Europe, Jamaica, and Trinidad.



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Roy and Blazers rally for win

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Nate McMillan let his team know at halftime they were not playing as if they were fighting to hold on to a playoff spot.

The Portland Trail Blazers responded by scoring 41 points in the third quarter, equaling their points in all of the first half.

Brandon Roy scored 25 points and Nicolas Batum added 21 as Portland erased a 14-point first-half deficit with the strong third quarter and defeated the Memphis Grizzlies 103-93 on Monday night.

"We didn't play defense," Batum said of McMillan's halftime talk, adding the coach was



MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES' Marc Gasol, left, of Spain, battles Portland Trail Blazers' Rudy Fernandez, right, also of Spain for a loose ball during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Memphis, Tenn., Monday.

AP Photo/Mark Weber

angry. "Got too many turnovers. He just said for us to wake up."

LaMarcus Aldridge finished with 13 points, and Andre Miller scored 12 points and handed out 11 assists as the Trail Blazers

ended their five-game road trip with four victories. They also solidified their hold on the Western Conference's eighth playoff spot.

Roy said that while the Memphis game was the last on the road trip, he knew when they left Portland it would be important since the Grizzlies were one of the teams fighting to make the playoffs. Everyone in the locker room knew it, too.

"That was the message before the game," Roy said of the playoff talk. "We didn't come out and play like it. At halftime, we said we have to play this team tougher."

Session

Continued from Page A1

keep their licenses. A misplaced "shall" in a previous law required revocations in all cases, not what lawmakers had intended.

— The session itself.

The Legislature sent voters an amendment to make annual sessions part of the state constitution. The February special session was billed as another audition for voters, a demonstration that it would be a good idea to have lawmakers in session in Salem every year, instead of every other year, as it has been since statehood.

Democrats said the session had been, in House Speaker Dave Hunt's words, "productive and efficient," reeling off a list of measures designed to encourage employment such as expanding access to a state loan program and help families through the recession.

"We think we can say that we genuinely stimulated jobs," said Senate President Peter Courtney.

Senate Republican leader Ted Ferrioli called the session an opportunity "to do great evil," saying the Democratic majorities increased spending and borrowing.

Notable measures from the session:

— Told school districts they could plan on a \$6 billion school aid package promised them last year and added \$12 million for day care for low-income workers and \$10 million for college grants. Since revenues have consistently been running below expectations, the budget committees tapped reserves, trimmed here and there, and acknowledged that without new federal aid or an unexpected upturn in the economy writing the next two-year budget could be difficult.

— Extended jobless benefits for about six weeks for an estimated 18,600 Oregonians who are among 100,000 expected to exhaust their eligibility for relief this year. Some have been on unemployment for as much as two years.

— Repealed a 1920s law against teachers wearing religious dress in public school classrooms.

— Voted to prohibit employers from using credit checks in hiring, a bill with major exceptions for financial institutions, law enforcement agencies and employers who say the credit check is "substantially job-related" and disclose the check to a job applicant.

Veterans

Continued from Page A1

about it." Debbaut, who formerly worked for the U.S. Navy on the East Coast, begins the job with a week of training in Salem at the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs. On March 8, she starts her regular weekly schedule of two days in each of two veterans' service offices in Hood River and The Dalles, with the fifth day reserved for catching up on paperwork, according to Hood River County Planning Director Mike Benedict.

The job is headquartered in Hood River County and Debbaut will be a Hood River County employee. However, her salary is 60 percent financed by Wasco County and 40 percent by Hood River, Benedict said.

"There's twice as much work over there [in Wasco County]," Benedict said in explaining the higher contribution rate from Wasco County. "Veterans' Services sees a lot more veterans in Wasco County."

Meanwhile, area veterans groups are making plans to welcome the troops back home.

"They're all veterans when they get back," said

Tom Mann, public information manager for the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs. "They'll be eligible for veterans' benefits."

Mann said the troops are from the 41st infantry brigade combat team. Their tasks in Iraq were to guard transportation routes and provide security for military convoys.

"It's a dangerous job," Mann said. He noted there were several casualties during the year in Iraq and some people were wounded.

Seven of the soldiers coming home are from The Dalles, four from Hood River and one from Parkdale, said Kim Lippert, spokesperson for the Oregon Military Department. She said she was not authorized to give out their names.

Mann said he had no word yet on how long the brigade will be back.

"They'll be home until they get deployed again," he said. "The question is, what will happen with Afghanistan?" Mann added that the brigade's first tour of duty, prior to Iraq, was in Afghanistan.

Les Cochenour, president of the Mid-Columbia Veterans Committee, said he is planning a briefing soon with other area veter-

ans groups — including the VFW, American Legion and Mid-Columbia Veterans Committee — to talk about the returning brigade.

"When the unit left, we had a barbecue," he said. "I know the red hats [community group] are talking about putting yellow ribbons on the poles when they come back."

Cochenour, who also serves on the board for the veterans' home in The Dalles, said he wants to clear up some communication problems at the veterans' home, officially known as the Veterans' Care Center of Oregon, before the troops get back.

"The veterans' home is catching blame because there is no information at the clinic up there about how to contact the VA [federal Veterans Administration]," Cochenour said. "They're saying it's the veterans' home's fault, but it's not."

Houghton, a retired Army field artillery lieutenant colonel who lives in The Dalles, was in the Wasco-Hood River veterans' services officer job for only a couple months when he realized that Hood River County was facing possible layoffs. His career in the military had spanned 23 years.

Challenges to the gun laws in Chicago and its suburb of Oak Park, Ill. Handguns have been banned in those two places for nearly 30 years.

The court has held that most of the rest of the Bill of Rights applies to state and local laws. But Feldman said the Second Amendment should be treated differently because guns are different. "Firearms are designed to injure and kill," he said.

But Feldman ran into difficulty with some of the five

justices who formed the majority in 2008. Justice Anthony Kennedy, who joined Scalia's opinion two years ago, said it seemed to him that Feldman was arguing that the court got it wrong two years ago.

Of the other two justices in the majority then, Justice Samuel Alito also appeared to agree that the Second Amendment should be extended to state and local laws and Justice Clarence Thomas said nothing, as is his custom during argument.

Guns

Continued from Page A1

James Feldman, a Washington-based lawyer representing Chicago, urged the court to reject the chal-

Ukuleles

Continued from Page A1

Harwood said Rosie Thomas-Whiley, an ELL teacher at Chenoweth, put the Wasco County elementary school on the ukulele radar two years ago after she attended a festival in Canada and then in Hood River.

"If teachers attend the festivals, they can show interest to be considered for the ukuleles," Harwood said. During this year's festival, the Langley Ukulele Ensemble gave a concert for Chenoweth students at the Discover High School cafeteria.

"Ukuleles are a good size for kids," said Chenoweth Principal Matt Ihle. "They only have four strings, but those strings do a lot."

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