

SCHOOL BOARD:
Election is set for
May 19

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certainly take a look at that," he says.

Karan Swaner

Like many parents, Karan Swaner came to Sisters for the schools. After a lengthy career in the foreign service, which took her all over the world, Swaner chose Sisters Country to settle in and raise sheep.

"My daughter graduated last June," she says. "We moved here because of the school district. I think the school (district) is the glue that holds us all together. The schools define, to me, the Sisters Country."

Swaner's work with NGOs and the State Department brought her family into a range of different types of schools — public, private, international, large and small. That breadth of experience gives Swaner a unique perspective on the possibilities of education.

She is also a strategic thinker, and she believes the school district needs that in this time of transition and challenge.

"That is an area where a superintendent often needs more support from a board," she says.

Swaner was initially activated by talk of consolidating Sisters schools with a larger district — a prospect she categorically rejects.

"I absolutely believe that Sisters School District *must* remain independent," she says.

That requires squarely facing up to challenges

— including enrollment that is no longer climbing precipitously, but which is still not strong enough.

"I am a firm believer that we should not be anticipating growth," she says.

Sisters has a harder time attracting young families than it does retirees.

"When I look around I see a lot of new residents who are my age," she says.

She recognizes that the district will have to decide what to do with the aging Sisters Elementary School building and will have to continue to find ways to deliver mandated services for special-needs students.

It is not easy to maintain a high level of academic achievement while accommodating the varied needs of students — some of whom are headed for Ivy League schools, some of whom will go to community college and some of whom want to get straight into the work world.

Swaner comes into her candidacy with little baggage, which she believes will help her dispassionately and strategically take on difficult decisions ahead.

"I'm not coming in with any special affiliations ... to any particular program or sport," she notes.

Voters have ballots in hand for the election. They are due May 19.

Festival welcomes two songwriters

Two outstanding songwriters will be performing in a double bill at The Belfry in Sisters (302 E. Main Ave.) on Saturday, May 16, at 7 p.m., presented by the Sisters Folk Festival (SFF).

Steve Poltz has thrilled audiences worldwide with his wacky, over-the-top stage performance and heart-wrenching, soul-stirring songs. At the SFF in 2013, Steve engaged festival audiences throughout the weekend, at one point even crowd-surfing — a first for SFF.

As a road-tested troubadour armed with whimsy, curiosity and a healthy respect for the absurdities of existence, he is unafraid of saying yes, unafraid of letting his relentless, giddy energy fill a room, and he is unafraid of letting his streams-of-consciousness take him wherever he needs to go.

Poltz is legendary for his improvisational songwriting and timeless, original classics. Oh, and he's a pretty good guitarist too. His shows are the stuff of legend — no two are alike — and can take an unsuspecting audience from laughter to tears and back again in the space of a single song.

Since first emerging in the early '90s as the frontman and songwriter of the

internationally acclaimed trio Grant Lee Buffalo, Grant Lee Phillips has been drawn to the conflicts at the heart of the American experience. Originally from California, Phillips signed to the Boston-based indie label Rounder Records and launched a solo career, issuing Ladies' Love Oracle online in 2000. His first full-length LP, "Mobilize," was released to critical acclaim in 2001. Being praised as much for its gentleness as much as Buffalo were for their rock, it featured Phillips' talents on many instruments, including both dreamy pop and dark but comforting ballads.

He says of his most recent record, "Walking in the Green Corn," released in 2012 and his seventh solo recording, "History and legend have often found their way into my songs, but sometimes I don't have to look quite so far to find inspiration." The album's 10 songs are drawn from



Steve Poltz.

Phillips' intensive investigations into his native lineage.

Phillips, who is Muskogee (Creek) Indian, explores the intersection of past and present, personal and political.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.sistersfolkfestival.org/sff presents, or call the festival office at 541-549-4979. Tickets are \$20 advance, \$25 at the door, and \$10 for youth 18 and under.

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