



PHOTO BY ERIN BORLA

Students paint in Clay Warburton's signature style.

## Students try hands at portraiture

By Erin Borla  
Correspondent

"It's my favorite day of the year," said fourth-grade teacher Clay Warburton, as he observed his class of students painting their abstract portraits all laid out across the floor of the elementary school commons.

Each of his fourth-graders worked on portraits throughout the last several weeks. Most drew themselves three or four times, some as many as seven, in different ways. The students started practicing the project on a smaller scale using a photograph and drawing portraits in different media.

“It's my favorite day of the year.”  
— Clay Warburton

They took the black-and-white photo and identified specific lines and features on their own face. Those features were then transitioned to large-scale outlines on heavy black paper approximately 3 feet by 3 feet. The outlines each student created made large areas perfect for filling in with bright colors of paint. Students were encouraged to use colors that were not realistic.

"We are trying to express ourselves," said student Jake Beutler. "The pictures don't look exactly like us, we want to mix it up. On mine, if you close your eyes, (then open them) then look at my picture, your eye is drawn to the lightest point – something I want to draw attention to."

Some students chose colors because they liked the

"cool" color palette; while others preferred simple colors like red, orange, blue and green, so they could blend them and create new colors.

"I love that they experiment with color," said Warburton.

"Warm colors are my favorite," says Brooke Blakelock. "I'm a warm-colored girl – I love wearing neon!"

Throughout the 2-hour process last Friday, a mix of upbeat music played in the background while the students worked independently on their own portrait.

Parent volunteers were on hand to assist as well. As they finished their painting they were allowed to help others with certain aspects of each piece.

"My favorite part of the project is blending (the colors)," says Teague Wessell. "I liked going from warm colors to cool colors on my head. I'll probably paint again sometime in my life."

Warburton himself is a painter, and his work in acrylic can be seen throughout town including Three Creeks Brewing Company and other locations.

The paintings the students do reflect the teacher's signature style of bright colors on a dark background.

"This is a special time in their lives," said Warburton. "I encourage them to enjoy the process and listen to their inner artist."

The paintings will be hung from the ceiling of the commons at Sisters Elementary School beginning the week of May 2.

Sisters community members are encouraged to stop in and enjoy the pieces that have been created, but need to check in at the front office first.

## ALLEN: Interim will be in Sisters part-time working with council

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districts, city, and county organizations."

Allen's skills include the ability to work "with various types of people toward a shared vision and common goal while bringing along those not necessarily supportive." When he began in La Pine in 2010, Allen reported that no one was serving out their council terms. Now everyone does.

"The city manager is responsible for building good group dynamics within the staff and the council and between the staff and the council, the council and the city, and the staff and the city," he said.

Community outreach and extensive collaborative ventures have included working with national, state, and country agencies as well as foundations, colleges, and regional and rural entities.

Allen has developed and built from the ground up, operated, and managed

various business projects in Madras, providing him with understanding of small-business challenges and their relationships with local government.

During his interview on Thursday, he identified the role of an interim city manager to be, first of all, getting to know the council members and helping them "move along in the process" of re-establishing a smooth-running organization and recruiting a permanent city manager.

In order to rebuild relationships, Allen believes people must be listened to, so the existing issues can be identified. He highlighted communication issues as a common source of difficulty. Educating people is important in settling disagreements.

"Disagreements grow out of a lack of knowledge," Allen said. After a problem has been identified, "we need to figure out how to solve it so that all parties are happy," he added.

Allen will be working on a part-time basis. City management staff felt they have a good handle on the day-to-day running of their departments. Allen's main responsibilities will probably



PHOTOCOURTESY MADRAS PIONEER

Rick Allen.

entail working directly with the council, team-building and oversight with the staff, taking the lead on some of the major projects currently on the drawing board, and direct involvement in the recruiting of a permanent city manager.

Allen told councilors during the interview, "Sisters is a great place. Lots of places would like to be you."

He has been awarded the Central Oregon Firefighter of the Year, the Public Sector Administrator of the Year by Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO), and the Jefferson County Community Champion of the Year.

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