

BATTLE: Event drew teams from across the region

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and Technology Act grant. There are three categories of competition: grades 3-5, grades 6-8, and grades 9-12. Schools create teams made up of four students who read a selection of books for their age group. Each school then hosts a competition to determine who will represent them at the Regional Battle.

Sisters had two teams at the event in addition to hosting — one team for the grades 3-5 category and one for 6-8.

“As a teacher, my goal is to get the buy-in from as many students possible,” said one of the event organizers, Becky Aylor, also a sixth-grade language arts teacher at Sisters Middle School. “Anyone can join a team and through the process of elimination through battles at lunch and after-school one of the best teams will represent the school.

“(At SMS) all participants who didn’t make it to regionals are then invited to be part of the Battle Squad to help fulfill many of the volunteer positions open for students,” she said. “Even if their team didn’t win, they came here

to support their friends, and represent their school as volunteers.”

In addition to the student volunteers there were several dozen community volunteers who served as moderators, timekeepers, scorers and even in the concession stand to make this event go off without a hitch.

Book titles this year ranged from “The Martian” by Andy Weir, to “Bone Gap” by Laura Ruby for 9-12 grades; “Unfriended” by Rachel Vail to “Drums, Girls and Dangerous Pie” by Jordan Sonnenblick for grades 6-8; and “Matilda” by Roald Dahl to “Woof” by Spencer Quinn for grades 3-5; plus many more.

Each group of students must read the books within the book list provided and discuss the titles with their teammates. Not all students on the team read all the books. According to the Oregon Battle of the Books website, most students only read about half of the books on the list for their age group. A typical battle is a tournament or game, like a quiz bowl or “Jeopardy” where students answer questions about the books to earn points for their team.

Laney Mansfield, a sixth-grader at SMS, participated at the regional battle this year as

an alternate for the SMS team the Book Brawlers. Josie Patton suffered a concussion the weekend prior to the event and had to bow out of competition.

“Participating in the regional battle is my absolute favorite part of the Battle of the Books,” said Mansfield. “I always look forward to regionals because it is a great way to do an important job but still be with your friends.”

“The questions are very detail-oriented,” said Patton who attended the battle to support her team even though she wasn’t able to participate. “Like, what color shirt did a character have on or what did they do during a test?”

“The hardest questions for me are the two-part questions,” said Mansfield. “They are more specific and often difficult to remember.

“I’m definitely looking forward to next year,” she continued, “whether it be battling or just helping out.”

SMS fifth-grade teacher Tiffany Tisdel also helps to put on the event.

“I hope my students gain a love for reading by participating in the OBOB,” she said.

“The bigger piece that SMS students have discovered is that volunteering for events can be an awful lot of fun and that we all have roles we can play that are critical



PHOTO BY ERIN BORLA

Sisters youth put together teams for Battle of the Books.

to the success of everyone involved. Some of our biggest advocates are not the readers at all, but the students that help time, score, set-up, run, and clean up the event. Many of these same kids support all year as we practice and prepare for the school competitions. Battle of the Books has become a school-wide event that kids are proud to participate in, whether they are on a team or supporting teams and helping with the battles.”

Fifty-eight schools participated in the regional battle on Saturday; which brought some 1,000 visitors to the community. While neither Sisters team won, all of the student participants — both

those in battle and those volunteering — had a great time.

“I loved our school being the host because it is great to see so many people in our school from other places around the state,” said Mansfield. “It is a great sense of pride to host; I am proud of our school, my classmates and my teachers. You never know — someone that visited might be a classmate of mine at Sisters Middle School in the future.”

The 2017-2018 Oregon Battle of the Books titles have been released and are available on their website at www.OregonBattleoftheBooks.org for students and families ready to participate next year.

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