

WEATHER: Balloon soared to 94,000 feet over Central Oregon

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Blackburn, who is working under science teacher Rima Givot, said, “The point is to design experiments that are exposed to atmosphere and see what happens to them. It’s good for students to have some in-the-field experience learning about gas laws and variables and how gases change in the atmosphere.”

The weather balloon is a six-foot-diameter balloon made from latex. It takes 2,700 grams of helium to fill the balloon. Attached to the balloons were GPS tracking devices and GoPro cameras so they could see where the balloon had flown and where it landed. It took the first balloon 30 minutes to reach its peak altitude of approximately 94,000 feet, and took 45 minutes to land in the Crooked River National Grasslands. The second balloon took approximately the same time and it landed in Madras.

Students retrieved the balloon and the payloads and brought the results back to school, and examined their experiments. Each experiment had a controlled variable that would be unchanged throughout the duration of the balloon’s flight.

“It is a great experience to get out and to truly be a scientist in the field and not working out of a textbook,” said chemistry student Holland Hartman.

There were many community volunteers that came out for the launch, including Thomas Jeffery and Ron Thorkildson, who did the weather predictions. It was a bluebird sunny day, so the launch went perfectly. Rod Moorehead helped with logistics of the launch and the experiments. Steven Peterzen helped the students blow up the balloons and made sure

the launch went smoothly.

Peterzen owns a company called ISTAR that works in stratosphere research. They have been launching balloons all over the world for research since 1991. He has conducted research in Antarctica, and has spent 11 seasons in Greenland. His company works with various researchers from various companies — including NASA — all over the United States and the world using balloons to conduct research about the ice caps, examining the Earth’s stratosphere and conducting interstellar dust research.

His company takes care of putting together the researchers’ payload and they launch many different sized balloons — depending on what they are researching — in order to see what happens to certain things in the stratosphere. He has worked with balloons that can pick up 3.5 tons. He and his family moved around a lot for his work, but he is now based in Central Oregon and loves being close to the mountains and giving back to the schools.

“It is a fun thing to be able to give back; I’ve taken students to Norway



PHOTO BY BY CEILI CORNELIUS

Students prepare the payload for a weather balloon launch.

for experiments, and it is fun to get students together researching,” said Peterzen. “It is rewarding for me to see where they go and if they might end up in the researching field in the future.”

The weather balloon launch is a way for students to examine what happens in the

Earth’s stratosphere and see their own experiments being launched almost 100,000 feet into the atmosphere. And then they are able to go into the field and retrieve the payload.

It is an enjoyable and engaging scientific event for students, teachers, and community volunteers.

CHORALE: Two performances set for weekend

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of Martha Graham’s ballet “Appalachian Spring.”

“Prayer From Hansel and Gretel” will come next, followed by Gershwin’s “Porgy and Bess.” “Porgy and Bess” was first performed in Boston on September 30, 1935, and featured an entire cast of classically trained African-American singers — a daring artistic choice at the time.

“Bridge Over Troubled Water” will be the final number.

In several of the numbers, the audience will be encouraged to sing along.

Members of the chorale have been rehearsing in The Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration Monday nights for a couple of months.

If you are inspired to join in for the next performance, visit www.sistershighdesertchorale.com, watch for the next rehearsal schedule, sign up and come on down.

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