

GUNNARSON: Teacher is also a graduate of Sisters High School

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art teachers who exemplify the mission of the Oregon Art Education Association to advocate for the advancement and expansion of quality visual arts education.

“Bethany’s focus is on creating opportunities for each student. When visiting Bethany’s class it’s easy to observe that she creates individual plans for each student. The students in Bethany’s class always seem to be focused and often working independently. When visiting her class there’s usually multiple types of art projects happening in one single class. It’s amazing how there’s so much going on in the class but there’s a calmness in the class that’s positive and conducive to learning. Additionally, Bethany will spend her time working with other teachers and doing outreach with the community. Two years ago Bethany gave up a week of her summer to be trained in the instructional strategies of Advanced Placement Art. Since that time a half a dozen students have taken AP Art.”

Gunnarson’s colleagues at SHS were quick to add to the praise shared by the Association, since learning of her honor last week.

Humanities teacher Gail Greaney said, “Having both taught on staff with Bethany and having had my own kids in her classes, I can

unequivocally say that this is a well-deserved award. Obviously she is a talented artist herself, as well as an outstanding teacher. Every time I am in her art room, students are engaged and happy to be there. There are so many things going on — and the atmosphere is energized and positive.

“As a teacher I’m most impressed with how she manages to differentiate for every single student she has in her room. As a parent, I’m most impressed with how she is able to tease out a love of art from students who never considered themselves artistic. And as just a person, I’m most impressed with how she has created a safe space that is accepting to all students. Kids love being in the art room and choose to go there whenever they have a chance. That’s the sign of a true educator.”

Music teacher Rick Johnson works closely with Gunnarson and appreciates her “team mindset” when it comes to the arts.

“Bethany is an ultimate team player who embraces her own art department and the other departments in the school,” he said. “Every other year, the Sisters High School Choir, band, and art departments join forces to create a full-stage high school musical. Bethany’s creative energy and positive attitude pushes her art students to create incredible scenery, set pieces, and posters for the show. I respect and appreciate her talent, dedication, and drive.”

Samra Spear views Gunnarson’s program as a key

to the culture of SHS.

“Bethany embraces the unique culture of SHS,” said Spear. “She cares about each and every student she comes in contact with and assists each one to tap into his/her creativity. I am continually impressed with what Bethany’s students produce, and I know it is only with her guidance, direction and encouragement that they are able to do so.”

Gunnarson felt humbled and honored at the ceremony.

“As I attended the Oregon Art Education Association conference yesterday, I looked around the room and as always was amazed at the great teachers we are blessed to have in the state of Oregon,” she said. “To receive this award amongst those peers, and to be nominated by them, was really cool.”

Gunnarson acknowledged the Sisters community for its support of the arts.

“I’m so thankful to live in a place where the arts are valued, so that I can focus on teaching well and not battling for acceptance,” she said. “Our program has been so well supported by our local foundations, specifically the Sisters Schools Foundation, Roundhouse Foundation, and Sisters Folk Festival, who all have made sure the art department is thriving by providing funds, outreach, and connection to a greater art community. I’m so lucky!”

Movie depicts wildland firefighters

Sisters knows well the grit and sacrifice displayed by wildland firefighting crews. The movie *Only the Brave*, which will open in Sisters on its national release date, Friday, October 20, brings their difficult and dangerous work vividly to life.

“We had to scrap a little to get this picture, as it is not being released that widely by the studio (Sony),” said Drew Kaza, co-owner of Sisters Movie House, “but we explained that the heroics of our firefighters have been on everybody’s minds here for months.”

Only the Brave is being lauded for its accurate portrayal of what wildland firefighters do, telling the story of the ill-fated Granite Mountain Hot Shots, who

battled the Yarnell Hill fire in Arizona in 2013.

“We know action superheroes are all in vogue these days but we happen to appreciate those movies that depict our everyday real-life heroes just a little bit more,” Kaza said. “We think the good folks of Sisters and neighboring areas might feel the same — and this movie provides a glimpse into a vocation and calling that few of us can properly appreciate without being there. Kudos to the film-makers for taking us there. We’re very pleased to be able to bring this to Sisters, especially given the record number of wildfires — and firefighters battling them — in Oregon this year.”

For show times visit www.sistersmoviehouse.com.



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