

Swimmers home in on district

By Charlie Kanzig
Correspondent

With the District Swimming Championships less than two weeks away, February 9 and 10, the Outlaws team worked to refine individual and relay events at two different meets last week.

On Friday, January 26 the team took part in a four-way meet hosted by Sweet Home that also included Newport and Stayton. The next day Salem Academy hosted a fundraiser meet in Albany called the Breast Cancer Awareness Invitational.

Official results from neither meet were available before press time.

Head coach Bryn Singleton scheduled the two days of competition to prepare the team for the rigors of the two-day District and State meets.

“Even though these two meets were more casual than regular meets, they still helped us in multiple ways,” she said. She cited a number of benefits to racing in the two meets.

“Swimming two days in a row obviously replicates the rigors of the District and State meets, for one,” she said. “Secondly, we raced against many of the top teams from our district, and finally we got to get further familiarized with the pool in Albany where the District meet will be held.”

Singleton already considers the season to be successful in that the team, chock-full of inexperienced swimmers along with some state-level veterans, because of the way they are all improving and meshing as a team.

“So many of them had never swum before this season and I am amazed week after week how much they

have improved, grown in confidence, and bonded as a team,” she said. “Their continued efforts to learn this challenging sport has been a joy for me to watch.”

In looking forward to the District meet, Singleton sees the strengths of the team becoming more apparent.

“Our girls relay teams are quite strong because we have a good number of very strong individuals, including Lydia Bartlett, Brook Robillard, Hawley Harrer, and Meredith Mandal,” said Singleton.

The boys team lacks the experience, but Singleton does not count them out from making their mark at District.

“The boys relay teams are coming together behind the efforts of Peyton Myhre, Jackson Rheuben, Connor Crowe, Sam Mayes and Gator Haken,” she said. She added that Jackson Rheuben is becoming a powerful racer and that newcomers Haken and Mayes continue to build speed in the 50- and 100-meter freestyle. When asked to focus in on individuals who have had a particularly positive impact on the team, Singleton first pointed to junior Brooke Robillard.

“Brooke Robillard is a wonderful team leader; she encourages everyone, shows everyone what they need to be doing at meets and is always offering to help out in any way needed,” she said.

Since last weekend’s meet conclude the regular season, the Outlaws will be working to prepare for the District meet, which not only determines the league champions, but is the qualifier for State.

“These kids have come a long way since November and I know they will do the best they can at District,” Singleton concluded.

Stars over Sisters

By Grace Maiden
Columnist

As the year 2018 advances into its second month, celestial treasures await discovery by curious observers. Chief among them is the famous Pleiades star cluster, which is near the meridian at nightfall in February.

Located in the constellation of Taurus, this group of stars marks the Bull’s shoulder. The Pleiades cluster is known by many names, such as M45, the Seven Sisters and Subaru, Japanese for Pleiades. In fact, the Subaru car company uses the cluster as its logo, but featuring only six of the seven stars because tradition says that one of the “sisters” is invisible.

The Pleiades is rich in Greek mythology. The Seven Sisters were daughters of the titan Atlas and the sea-nymph Pleione, and their names were Maia, Electro, Alcyone, Taygete, Asterope, Celaeno and Merope.

The story tells of how Orion the Hunter took a liking to Pleione and her seven daughters and began to chase them round when Atlas was tasked with holding up the heavens on his shoulders by Zeus. This frightened the women to the point that Zeus eventually transformed all of the sisters into white pigeons that flew up into the night sky and turned into a cluster of seven stars, known as the Pleiades. The constellation of Orion is said to still chase them across the night sky.

The cluster is made up of extremely luminous middle-aged, hot B-type stars that have formed within the last 100 million years. Astronomers say the faint reflection nebulosity around the brightest stars was once thought to be leftover material from the formation of the cluster, but is now known to



PHOTO COURTESY NASA

The famous Pleiades star cluster is one of the nearest and brightest in the entire sky, and lies at a distance of just 445 light-years.

be an unrelated dust cloud in the interstellar medium through which the stars are currently passing. M45 is one of the nearest star clusters to the earth, lying at a distance of just 445 light-years.

By the end of February Mercury and Venus, the solar system’s only two inferior planets (at least as viewed from the earth), can be glimpsed very low on the western horizon just after sunset. Using a pair of binoculars in this endeavor will increase one’s likelihood of success.

But the best planetary display is in the morning sky. Jupiter rises before 2 a.m. local time at the beginning of the month; just before midnight by month’s end, and spends the entire time in the constellation of Libra.

On February 1, Mars is about 12 degrees to the lower left of Jupiter in the

constellation of Scorpius. Throughout the month, however, the Red Planet races eastward among the stars to a position in Ophiuchus, a full 27 degrees from Jupiter on February 28. An interesting exercise during this time is to compare the brightness and color of Mars with the nearby red-giant star Antares, known as the rival of Mars.

Saturn doesn’t rise until almost 5 a.m. at the beginning of the month; two hours earlier as the month expires.

Because of last month’s Blue Moon on January 31, the month of February will not be cursed with a dark-sky-spoiling full moon. The lunar phase wanes to last quarter on February 7 before going dark on February 15. From here a brightening moon will appear half lit at first quarter on February 23.

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