

Battle of the Books descends on Sisters

By Charlie Kanzig
Correspondent

Hundreds of young readers descended on Sisters Middle School for the annual Battle of the Books regional competition on Saturday, March 10.

According to co-director Deb Riehle, a total of 43 teams from all grade divisions attended this year's event, which serves as a qualifier for the state competition, which is set for April 6. Teams came from throughout Central and Eastern Oregon, from as far away as Fossil and Burns.

Preparation for Battle of the Books begins months ahead of the actual competition as participants must become intimately familiar with 16 books. During competition teams score points based on correct answers from two categories: "In Which Book" and "Content."

Sisters was represented in the grade 3-5 category by a team of fifth-graders, which included Olivia Nieto, Grace Fendall, Haven Heuberger and Norah Thorsett. "The Hatchets" as they dubbed themselves, qualified for Saturday's competition after surviving many rounds of battles with the 13 other teams made up of Sisters Elementary and Sisters Middle School students. Clare Nieto stepped in to coach them Saturday.

The Sisters team in the grade 6-8 division comprised of Zoey Haney, Madison Haney, Kiara Martin, Layla Hicks, and Violette Kennedy made it to the semi-finals. They were coached by Angelique Haney.

"We had great participation in our own school system," said Tiffany Tisdell, Riehle's co-coordinator. "It's heartening to have so many of

our own students who choose to take part in this competition. It's amazing that the elementary alone had 10 teams and that it is all done through teachers volunteering and kids giving up lunch time and recess time to do it all."

Tisdell continued, "I am so proud of our staff and students who put in a very long day Saturday. It takes a tremendous amount of effort on the part of our staff, parents and students to host this event. Everyone stepped up in a huge way."

Tisdell felt especially thankful for all of the students who gave up their Saturday. "This generation of kids that we often hear of as inactive, un-motivated, video-gaming individuals worked enthusiastically together all day, taking on any role asked that was needed," she said. "It makes me proud to be an Outlaw and a part of this school community!"

Riehle felt overwhelmed by the generosity of the community as well. "Angeline's Bakery, Melvin's Newport Avenue Market, and Sisters Coffee provided refreshments for our many volunteers, and Kerry Prosser organized it all for us as well as serving as a shepherd for any wayward volunteers who needed direction."

"Paige Bentley of Sisters Public Library provided gift bags and goodies for the winners and Becky Aylor was a miracle worker in operating the concessions, providing signage and even stepping in as a moderator when we need one," she said.

Miller Elementary of Bend won the grade 3-5 title, Seven Peaks, also of Bend, took top honors for grade 6-8 and Mountain View captured first among high school teams.

High Desert Chorale sings into spring

By Jim Anderson
Correspondent

Despite our recent heavy snowfall, Connie Gunterman, director of the Sisters High Desert Chorale, has her eye and ear turned toward spring.

"Well," she announced, "the sun is out and the birds are singing, so it's time for our Chorale to start practicing for our spring concerts...."

The Sisters High Desert Chorale Spring Performance is tentatively planned for the weekend after Mother's Day (May 17 evening and May 19 afternoon concerts). The Chorale will be again joined by the popular third- and fourth-grade choir from Sisters Elementary School under the direction of Sara Miller. They are working toward a March Festival in Bend with an animal theme so they will already be prepared for the concerts in May.

Sue Edgerton, who has been singing with the chorale since its inception, said, "I love to sing in the High Desert Chorale in Sisters, under the direction of Connie Gunterman. She helps the singers to be our very best; we have fun, and love making music together. I am lucky enough to have sung in a community choir in Sisters since



PHOTO BY SUE ANDERSON

Connie Gunterman and the Sisters High Desert Chorale at the 2018 Christmas performance.

we moved here in 2002, under three different directors. I hope to see more new singers this spring... Come! You will be welcomed and will also enjoy singing with us!"

Practices started last week at the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration (68825 Brooks Camp Rd., Sisters) in the community room. Practices are held 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. each Monday until concert week in May.

Gayla Nelson, another soprano, said, "The hills come alive with the sound of music. Singing with the Sisters Community Chorale, under the direction of Connie Gunterman, with accompanist Donna Moyer, is pure joy!"

"Connie is gifted with amazing musical talent and knowledge. She challenges chorale members to achieve levels of music many of us

never thought personally possible. We laugh, we have fun and, in the process, we learn and are continuously inspired to work hard to be the best we can be. Each season, when the last strains of the final concerts fade away, for singers, it's on a par with leaving summer camp."

Gunterman notes that, "The choir will sing favorites from old and new shows, movies and musicals. No audition is required and all singers are welcomed. This is a fun group that truly enjoys the chance to not only sing, but be a part of the community and give back with the gift of music. We're recruiting, so if you want to sing with a wonderful group — please join us!"

For more information, contact Gunterman at 541-588-0362 or any Chorale member.

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