

Ed students take over classrooms

By LARRY CALLISTER
Of the Emerald

"It's a nice place to teach, but do I want to live there?" That's the question a group of University education students asked themselves last week in Condon, Ore.

In a unique project, 15 secondary education students spent five days at Condon High School, about 100 miles southwest of Pendleton. In Condon, the students literally took over the high school to bring their brand of teaching to the Condon students.

As partial fulfillment for a teaching certificate in Oregon, students in Teaching Strategies 314 learn to prepare lesson plans. In the past, students have presented these lessons to fellow classmates.

This may be good practice for some, but facing one's contemporaries doesn't compare with standing in front of a room full of real live high school students.

In an attempt to make the class more meaningful, education Professor Ray Hull modeled the Condon trip after learning of a similar program in Utah. This was the first time any such program has been tried in Oregon. Oregon College of

Education and Oregon State University both have expressed interest in the program's outcome.

After being given the okay by state authorities, Hull wanted to choose a school away from the Willamette Valley. Although most of Oregon's high schools lie outside the Willamette Valley corridor, these schools are rarely involved in experimental programs with state universities.

After a year of planning, the trip was arranged. Following a five-hour drive via Redmond, Willowsdale, Antelope and Fossil, the University entourage entered Condon.

The home of the Condon "Blue Devils" was built in 1965 and appears modern in every respect. The 110 students don't exactly overcrowd the 11 classrooms, nor do they overwhelm the 13 faculty members. Classes range from

two to 30 people and average only 10 to 15 students each.

For three days, all classes were conducted by University students. An attempt was made to have students teaching in their areas of expertise. Above all, the would-be teachers tried to be innovative.

A freshman science class had a presentation on whales. A journalism class reported on its view of a "murder" committed when one teacher shot the other with a blank from a starting pistol. No one slept through that class.

The three-day respite from the classroom was well used by the actual Condon faculty. Their time was spent attending workshops with University education staff and graduate students. They covered new and better teaching methods and ways to increase school-community communication.

When the students weren't

teaching, they tasted Condon nightlife. "Condon does have social gambling laws allowing blackjack and other card games in these nightspots," one student says. "But if disco fever should strike, the nearest fix is in Portland, three hours away."

If the student teachers involved had a good time, then in the eyes of Principal Arim Freeman, the program was a success.

"As a small school administrator, I want to cancel the myth that small schools are a dead end place to teach," he explains. "I firmly believe that the good school and relaxed, small-town atmosphere more than cancels out the negative side of small-town social life. Having once worked in large schools, I'd never go back."

Freeman laments the lack of job applicants, both in quantity and quality.

"We just don't get well-qualified college graduates to apply for jobs here," Freeman says.

Last year there were just three applicants for a grade school position. Of those, one took another job and the second declined it when offered, so they had no choice but to give the job to the third applicant.

Nearly all student teachers called the experience a good one. Would anyone now be applying to a small school on the basis of this experience? No one could say for sure, but if participant Lad Salness reflects the other University students' feelings, the future could hold promise for the small schools.

"Now at least we have something to base our choice of schools on. Up until now, we only considered large schools. Condon was one hell of a positive experience and positive experiences can do nothing but help open prospective teachers' eyes toward small schools," he says.

Cancer-causing chemicals gain open hearings

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Labor Department, anticipating a barrage of industry protests, today defended its sweeping plan to regulate all potential cancer-causing chemicals found at American job sites.

The department opened an expected two months of public hearings on the controversial rule by conceding it has been too slow and haphazard in trying to protect an estimated 1 million workers potentially exposed to carcinogens on the job.

"In the past we have reacted with rule-making initiatives as new reports of scientific study are made public," the lead-off witness, a spokesman for the Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration, said in prepared testimony.

"The process has been slow, it has been interrupted and it has been inconsistent," added Grover Wrenn, director of OSHA's health standards program, which developed the proposal.

So far, OSHA has issued regulations limiting worker exposure to less than two dozen of the 1,500 to 2,000 chemicals identified as known or suspected cancer-causing agents.

Among the chemicals already regulated are asbestos, vinyl chloride, arsenic, benzene and the pesticide DBCP.

The proposal establishes for the first time a systematic procedure for quickly identifying, classifying and regulating cancer-causing agents that pose a threat to workers' health.

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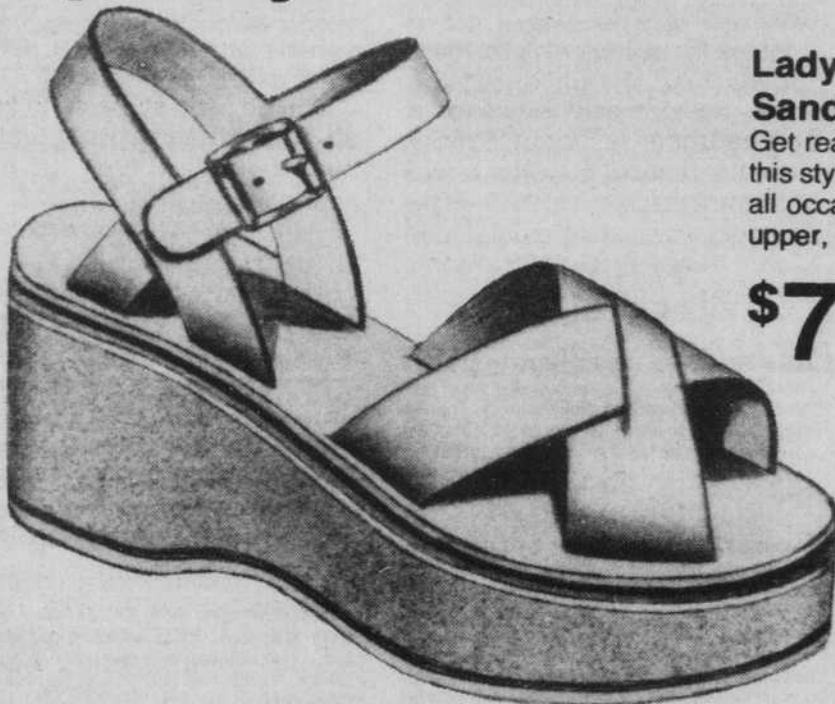
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