

# Racing pigeons help students learn

BOTHELL, Wash. (AP) — Sounds at Woodin Elementary School: Children in class and on the playground, and cooing racing pigeons in their loft in a corner of the building.

Racing pigeons at an elementary school?

"I'd never heard of it either," says fifth-grade teacher Bryan Lowe. But then he ran across some pigeon fanciers while tapping into a computer network and decided to keep racing pigeons as an educational tool.

"I knew I could teach a thousand subjects with something like this, because the kids really like working with living things," he said. "The thought of having birds, especially homing pigeons, was very appealing, even though I knew there would be nothing in the school budget for anything like that."

Lowe contacted Herb Cartmell of Woodinville, promotional materials chairman of the American Pigeon Union, a national group of racing pigeon owners.

Lowe wanted to know how well the pigeons would take to being handled frequently by children.

"They're raised from the beginning to endure a lot of handling, so all we had to do was teach the kids to be gentle with them, like they would any animals," Cartmell said. Cartmell gave Lowe six young birds to start his racing team. As an adviser,

he visits the school regularly to check the birds' health and answer questions.

"As far as I know, there is no other school in the country that has racing pigeons living on the grounds. This appears to be a first," he said.

Cartmell said he'll probably train this first group to race because they'll be ready during the summer. He intends to show next year's class how to train more birds, so the school can build up its team.

"They'll be ready to race them sometime next fall," he said.

Lowe had no trouble persuading Principal Paul Bodnar to allow his class to keep pigeons, once the principal had assurances that the birds would pose no health problems and had a definite teaching purpose.

A parent used his own money to buy perches, dowels, screens, nest boxes and feed.

For the past couple of months, students have taken turns each day measuring out feed and grit, and then weighing the birds to check weight gain, and charting the results.

Having the pigeons has been worth the additional responsibilities, Lowe said.

"Not only am I able to use them in everything from math to map reading, it's made school come alive for some disinterested kids."

## ET ALS

### MEETING

**Unwanted Sexual Behavior Task Force** will meet today at 1 p.m. in EMU Cedar Rooms C and D. For more information, call 346-1133.

**Overeaters Anonymous** will meet today at 12:30 p.m. in Koinonia Center Parlor.

### RELIGION

**Newman Center** will sponsor a catholic mass for students tonight at 9 at 1850 Emerald St. For more information, call 346-4466.

### MISCELLANEOUS

**Survival Center** will present "Forever

**Wild Roadshow: A Celebration of Canadian forest activism** tonight at 7:30 in Room 100 Willamette. For more information, call 346-4356.

**Survival Center** will present "Chiapas: The Other Central America" today at 5 p.m. in the EMU Ben Linder Room. For more information, call 346-4356.

**Asian Pacific American Student Union** will conduct a study break today at 5 p.m. in Room 225 Counseling Center. For more information, call 346-4342.

**Knight Library** will extend hours of service June 1 through June 9. The new hours are 8 a.m. to 1 a.m. Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 10

p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 1 a.m. on Sundays. For more information, call 346-3056.

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