

Evergreen students soak in Oregon history at Kerbyville Museum

By Darcy Wallace
IVN Staff Writer

It's that time of year again when Evergreen Elementary School fourth-graders have been exploring early Oregon history of the Oregon Trail and the Gold Rush of the late 1800s.

On Wednesday, March 16, fourth-grade students visited the Kerbyville Museum for the fourth annual Heritage Day, touring the museum and participating in interactive demonstrations.

According to Museum Director Dennis Strayer, volunteers from the Illinois River Valley Arts Council, the Waldo Mining Association and the Backcountry Horseman of

Oregon chapter in Cave Junction were just some of those who helped out Wednesday.

"I want to thank all the folks that helped make it happen, plus the museum volunteers too," Strayer said. "This is another way we can help educate students about the local history."

Pat Soles from the Josephine County Historical Society volunteered to portray "Nanny Naucke," dressing in clothing of the time period. She spoke with students about life before electricity, TV or the other comforts of modern life.

"They were looking at me astounded at the things they did and didn't do," Soles said. "They asked a

lot of questions, such as, why didn't people smile in photographs? I think it had to do with the way photography was in those days; you had to hold still."

In the back of the main museum building, volunteers from the IV River Arts Council showed students how to make 'whirligigs,' an earlier version of what we know as yo-yos.

Students in other parts of the museum washed clothes by hand as 1880s Kerbyville citizens would have done. In the kitchen, fourth-graders churned their own butter. Behind the museum, Waldo Association miners showed students how settlers panned for gold.

"When [students] were doing

hands-on stuff it was amazing to see their reaction," Strayer said. "One said they didn't realize how hard clothes-washing was. How lucky are we with washing machines — you just open the lid, throw in your clothes, push the button and walk away?"

In contrast to previous years, Strayer said there wasn't a demonstration about the Takelma Indians who inhabited the Illinois Valley for thousands of years. But he said he plans to bring that back for next year's Heritage day.

"It's important for students to learn about Takelma native people," Strayer said. "They were here for 10,000 years, but during the Gold Rush they were displaced and moved

off their land.

"I think the more students learn things like that, the more prepared they will be," Strayer added. "They become the future leaders and decision-makers. We learn from the past."

The Kerbyville Museum is a nonprofit, relying on donations and occasional grants. Strayer said he is in the process of seeking an Oregon Cultural Trust grant; if awarded, the grant will match the funds the Kerbyville Museum is able to raise.

The museum building has been around since 1880. Despite renovations, Strayer said that the porch steps badly need replacement after years of years.

"I'm really hoping they will understand the level of need here," Strayer said. "The competition is pretty tough. We're hoping people in the community can help out."

Since the Kerbyville Museum is a 501c3 nonprofit, donations can be used as a tax write-off, Strayer said.

After recently moving to Southern Oregon, Soles said she wanted to find out about the history in her new home. Josephine County Historical Society volunteers sometimes go to other schools and museums acting out roles of noted people in history.

"I was an educator in San Jose before," Soles said. "[Heritage Day] was a treat for me. The kids were very well-behaved and respectful. I found them a joy, and I can speak highly of the teachers. [Students] knew what was expected of them."

Despite the cold weather, rain and recent storms, students dove into the demonstrations. If anything, the cold might have reinforced an idea of what life was like without electricity — and electric heat.

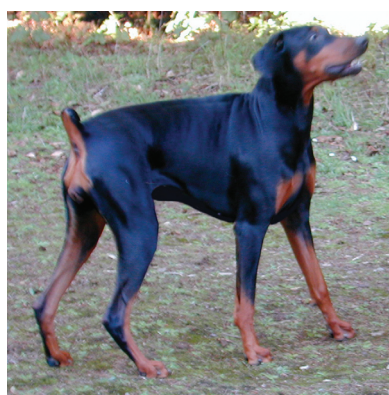
"It taught those kids what they had to put up with in those days," Soles said.



Fourth-grade students listen intently to museum volunteer Bill Dunham as they tour various parts of the Kerbyville museum on Wednesday, March 16.

(Photo by Darcy Wallace, Illinois Valley News)

LOST DOG



Katie got loose from a vehicle wreck on Hwy 199, at Rough & Ready Lumber north of O'Brien, March 12. Black and rust, short hair, Doberman with natural ears, 11 years old, 80 lbs. Purple collar embroidered with our phone number, tags, microchipped. Needs meds. Katie is friendly but may be scared and hurt.



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Josephine County will be holding a series of community information meetings designed to help prepare you to evacuate and shelter your pets and livestock during a disaster. Advance planning for your families and animals will increase their chances for survival during an emergency.

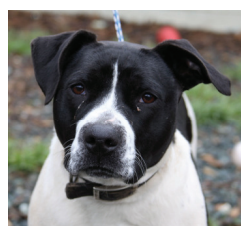


Meeting Dates/Times

Cave Junction - Saturday 3/26/2011 10:00 am until 12:00 noon at the County Administration Building, 102 South Redwood Hwy.

Grants Pass - Thursday 3/31/2011 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm at the Josephine County Fairgrounds Floral Building, 1451 Fairgrounds Rd.

During an emergency be prepared to help those who cannot help themselves.



Save The Whole Family

Food at the meetings provided by Smokehouse BBQ - Courtesy of the Rogue Valley Fire Prevention Cooperative