



May Street Elementary teachers Heidi Von Lubken, left, and Natalie Wright (themselves alumnae of Hood River elementary schools) communicate with students during morning sessions last week. In its Oct. 28 regular session at 6:30 p.m., Hood River County School District board plans a detailed discussion of the district blueprint for a possible return to in-person instruction, as early as Nov. 9, in grades K-3. Kelly Beard photos

LEARNING Older siblings help younger kids

Continued from page 1

headphones and the glasses on, it gives her a headache and makes it hard for her to concentrate, but without her glasses, she has trouble seeing," she said. "My 8-year-old said the headphones hurt her ears and don't always work properly. And my 15-year-old has little sisters who continually ask her for things, especially once they are out of class and she is trying to be in class."

Because both she and her husband, Craig Maurer, work fulltime in sales, they must rely on the older kids to help with the younger. It's Dylan, for example, who goes to May Street to pick up materials for his younger sisters on his lunch break each Tuesday.

"We are not part of any parent pods," Walker said. "We are having to rely on our older kids to help with our little ones."

In Borton's family, the challenge has been "a lack of typing skills." Her youngest son struggles to complete assignments because it takes him a long time to write and

type his responses.

"We have switched to drawing and writing on paper as opposed to on the computer, and then just taking a picture to submit," she said.

Another challenge is a lack of internet or internet outages. "Out here in Underwood, there are few options and we get kicked out of Zoom meetings regularly," she said.

Gooding has had a similar issue with technology. The schools provided Chromebooks, but they are not always Zoom compatible. "There have been some tech issues," she said. "... I was fortunate to have two fantastic bosses who donated computers to my kids because we had issues with the Chromebooks."

She sees the commitment as something of a challenge as well. "I had to rearrange my whole life so that they can get an education," she said.

"My kids are doing okay, but I think many are struggling," she added. "I have motivated kids and I encourage them to stay that way. Not all kids are motivated to work — distance learning doesn't help those kids. There is no incentive to do the work and they can easily be left behind, not at the fault of the teachers or parents."

All have had to supply some materials for their students, although all said support from their respective districts have been good on that point.

"The Hood River County School District has been very good at supplying everything the kids have needed to succeed," said Walker. "I did have to change internet providers to be able to have enough bandwidth and speed for all of them to be online at the same time ... we also had to purchase a WiFi booster."

Borton said that her family had to upgrade both its wireless plan and internet service "and we still struggle to get enough to sustain our family needs."

All three have discovered unexpected benefits to distance learning. Walker said her kids aren't as tired at the end of the day and that they enjoy their half-day schedules. Gooding said that, while her children miss seeing their friends, "overall, they love the freedom distance learning gives them — they are so adaptable and tech savvy."

"I am really impressed by how much the kids are learning to navigate through the platforms," said Borton. "They are getting pretty savvy with Google Classroom,

"My kids are doing okay, but I think many are struggling."

Cassie Gooding

Google Documents, etc. I am also so proud of them learning to get out of their comfort zone and email their teachers or go to office hours."

Still, it's a difficult balance.

"I couldn't work and assist my kids without my family and support from my employers," said Gooding. "... I have had to work fulltime the past few weeks, so my mom has helped me out with the kids. I had to move their setups to her house two hours away, but the bonus is that distance learning can happen from just about anywhere."

"... My kids are worth the time and effort. Not everyone can afford to give up a job to help their kids in school. I am fortunate to have people that support me and my kids during this time," she said.

Borton also has support. "My husband also works at home, so he comes in and helps at times when I am in meetings with my students. My mom has also been a huge blessing ... she has learned how to help Nate get into his Zoom call and how to navigate Seesaw. I think it's

really fun for Nate to teach his grandma some technology skills."

Working at HROA has also "been a blessing," she said. "I am working a lot, but I have much more flexibility to support my children." Her two youngest children will soon be attempting a hybrid option, having in-person classes twice a week.

Walker said, "Honestly, no," when asked if she had enough support to work and assist her children with distance learning. "But we are trying to make the best of it. I feel like the schools/teachers are doing their best to make sure we have supplies (and) supplementary instruction tools ... but it's still exhausting trying to both work and try to coordinate distance learning. And we are lucky in the sense that we have older kids at home to help, some families don't have that."

"... I feel like we are all trying to navigate this together, but while we are having a shared experience, it's different for everyone," she said. "... I feel like everyone is doing

triple duty to try and make this work. Personally, I feel like I'm failing miserably and just when I think we've got it down, schedules change, or something else gets added (that needs to happen during the weekday before 5 p.m.) and it feels like an uphill battle again. However, as difficult as it is, I would rather not have my children get sick, so in that respect, I appreciate the caution and having them in a safe environment."

"There is a huge equitable disparity that we are all trying our best to overcome," said Borton. "I know how much I have to do to help my own children makes me feel so bad for parents who have to work outside the home each day or for older siblings who are also given the responsibility for teaching their younger siblings."

"Shout out to the teachers," Gooding said. "This is not easy — especially at the elementary level, to control your classroom over a screen is nearly impossible, but they are doing it. As the weeks go by, it seems to be getting better and the kids are adjusting to this new routine. Distance learning is far from perfect — and the teachers are doing their very best."

Sense of Place returns Oct. 21

Mt. Adams Institute has announced the line-up for the annual Sense of Place Lecture Series. Now in its 11th season, the series will feature virtual lectures rather than in-person events as a way to mitigate risks associated with COVID-19. As in previous years, lectures will occur on the second or third Wednesday of the month, October through April, at 7 p.m. Descriptions of each lecture and information about how to access the lectures are available at mtadamsinstitute.org/senseofplace.

■ Oct. 21 — Responding to a Pandemic: An Indigenous Perspective. Speakers: Emily Washines and Chuck Sams

■ Nov. 18 — Klickitat Country: The Cradle of Plant Based Diets. Speaker: Seth Tibbott

■ Dec. 16 — Meet Your Neighbor: A Conversation with Gladys Rivera. Speaker: Gladys Rivera

■ Jan. 13 — Magical, Menacing, and Magnificent Wildlife: How to Ensure their Future in the Gorge. Speaker: Bill Weiler

■ Feb. 17 — Black Pioneers on the Oregon Trail. Speaker: Zachary Stocks

■ March 10 — The Legacy and Promise of Land Grant Universities and Oregon State Extension in the Gorge. Speaker: Ann Harris

■ April 14 — Pikas Under Fire: American Pika Ecology and Behavior in a Time of Global Change. Speaker: Dr. Johanna Varner

The season welcomes the return of Sarah Fox as the host and curator. "The format of this season will be unconventional, but the line-up of speakers could not be more intriguing. The variety of topics and range of guests will provide a great opportunity to learn about and connect to the Gorge during this fall and winter."

This season will offer a few exciting "firsts."

■ All lectures will be recorded, archived, and made available to the public.

■ Admission to the lectures will be free, with the option to donate.

■ The December lecture will be made available in Spanish and English.

Also new this season, Sense of Place has launched the Dear Neighbor Project, which provides a way for participants to engage with one another in meaningful ways. Dear Neighbor is a letter-exchange project that will run concurrently with season 11 of Sense of Place. More information can be found at mtadamsinstitute.org/dear-neighbor.

The decision to move forward with season 11 came after overwhelming support from an audience survey expressing a desire for the season, even in a virtual format," said Fox. "A memorable sentiment from the surveys was that having Sense of Place this year would provide a needed sense of continuity for the community."

Sense of Place is a program of the Mt. Adams Institute, whose mission is to strengthen the connection to the natural world through education, service learning, career development, and research. For more information, please go to mtadamsinstitute.org/senseofplace.

EVOLUTION: BIOLOGICALLY IMPOSSIBLE #13

As noted in the last article the functioning biological body of a living creature is more complex than most casual evolutionists would care to admit. When the idea of evolution was first introduced by Mr. Darwin in 1859 the workings of a biological cell was considered very simple. So in 1859 the theory looked possible. Not now. Evolution should have been put to sleep when DNA was discovered in the 50's. Nope. To look at the DNA structure under a powerful microscope and still insist that it evolved over millions of years is just nothing but pure contempt and hate for the idea that it was "Created." How is it possible to see this structure and "believe" that it all came to be just by millions of chance random mutations? How? Genetic fact, 99.99% of all mutations are detrimental to the species. Think. Chance mutations would produce the nervous system? It would be like playing craps and always... always throwing a seven. Millions of sevens in a row for millions of years. Each human brain contains about one hundred thousand billion electrical connections (more than all the world's electrical appliances). Biologically possible from chance mutations? A person who wants to question this theory need not be a genetic scientist or a have a PhD. in microbiology. They just need to use commonsense and less hate.

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Festival of Light Neighborhood Party
October 31st, 5 - 7 PM, all over White Salmon

Grace Baptist Church will be hosting the Festival of Light in a modified version this year. In order to avoid large crowds but maintain the connection to our friends and neighbors, the FOL will be hosted at a number of locations throughout White Salmon. Each location will host a game booth with prizes, just like always.

Maps will be provided at Bubba's Brew parking lot!

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