



Bull Run School

A new style of education but the charm of a one-room schoolhouse

With the spread of efficiency testing and specialization, there are still a few bastions that experts have been hard-pressed to improve upon. One is the one-room schoolhouse.

While technically not a one-room schoolhouse any longer, Bull Run School has maintained the rural charm and individualized attention that greeted its first students in the early 1880s when it was a single-room school on the Sam Bacon property.

Later a two-room school was built on property donated by one Mack Thomas, but certainly the meticulous attention to detail and flexibility of the one-room situations was maintained.

Now, nearly 100 years after the district separated from the old Revenue School District No. 6 as the result of a bridge washout on the Sandy River, the school has continued the personality of the old one-room school that began the district, but has grown with the times to offer its pupils some of the newest innovations in education without losing the personal touch.

When teachers come to Bull Run, they stay. "We don't have a lot of turnover," principal Bob Fones said recently, so it came as a bit of a surprise this year when the district hired two new teachers to replace former faculty members.

And while their teaching styles are different, the two new members of the Bull Run staff have learned that they like the personal touch of working in a smaller school within a close-knit community.

Both Robin Roberts, 24, and Glen

Olsen, 29, have experienced smaller schools prior to coming to Bull Run and both are happy with the freedoms that they have found and the sense of community that exists.

"The community interest is fantastic," Roberts said. "I feel like I'm getting a lot more support."

She taught last year at Dickey Prairie School near Molalla, coaching football, volleyball, baseball and nearly every other sport. The load finally got to her and she contracted mononucleosis. She will coach just volleyball this year at Bull Run.

With 23 7th and 8th graders, Roberts teaches all their classes except science, which Fones teaches to the whole school, and she has discovered that she has an exceptional group of students. Eight of her students are members of the school's talented and gifted program, an "unusual" percentage for one group of students.

And the range of the students' talents is "really diverse," she said. Some specialize in art, others in writing yet all of them maintain a high level of energy that carries over into all the classroom activities.

Roberts plans to take her class skiing this winter, an activity she did last year at Dickey Prairie with great success.

Olsen has been teaching for eight years, mostly on Indian reservations, after originally being interested in Indian education.

His classroom has been divided into "centers" designed to help students with specific sections of the curriculum.

The students proceed through the

centers as they need the work, completing assignments and brushing up on past studies. "It allows me to individualize as much as I need to individualize," Olsen said.

"It doesn't matter what year they're in," he said. "The curriculum a kid gets here is going to be appropriate to him or her." And the system is working.

Parents of the 29 5th and 6th graders in Olsen's class have approached the teacher asking what kind of wonder he has worked to get their children interested in schoolwork.

At Halloween time, that theme was utilized at each of the various stations. As an example, the math station featured the conversion of various recipes with ghastly names from small portions to servings for large crowds. That work helps the students understand ratios, Olsen explained, "and it's a little more exciting than just getting out the math book."

After-lunch sing-alongs help relax the students and prepare them for an afternoon of studying.

With the two new teachers, a "first" came to Bull Run School this fall when an artist-in-residence visited the school. John Freese worked with 12 students on various art projects.

He anticipates that each student will complete a canvas and, he hopes, be able to exhibit it in a Sandy area business. The paintings will then be hung permanently in the school as a reminder that the opportunities available to students, even in traditional "one-room school districts," are expanding, without losing the personal touch.



The Bull Run School building (top) is a landmark in the Roslyn Lake area and one of the few remaining country schoolhouses in the county. But times are changing as is evidenced by teacher Glen Olsen's (above) fifth and sixth grade class. Robin Roberts (left) is more of a traditional teacher, but is also new to the school. She teaches seventh and eighth grades. Visitors always spice up a school day and Bull Run is no different as Barney, a visitor from a Mt. Hood Community College class, chats with a student (far left).



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