

Sandy students learn grafting techniques

by JUDE RAMSAY JENSEN

Ron Grantz is a Sandy Union High School teacher who believes in using hands-on biology projects to supplement "lots of book work" and give students something to remember.

Last Wednesday, March 4, Grantz' classroom looked more like a tree nursery than a biology lab as 330 students each grafted a dwarf apple tree.

"We teach plant biology in the spring, and talk about the cambium layer and conductive tissue of trees,"

Grantz explained. "We thought a hands-on experience like this would be good for the kids. They can see it and understand it better."

Grantz and his fellow biology teachers combined classes for the all-day project. Arnesson's Nursery supplied the M-9 dwarf rootstocks for about 20 cents apiece. Scion wood — the fruiting top of the tree — came from members of the Home Orchard Society for the same price. Two members of H.O.S., Ken Fisher and Carl Heinz, were on hand to assist with the procedure.

When class began, students received

grafting and safety reminders, then chose a rootstock and scion variety. Students had been given a list of varieties to choose from with descriptions of origin, color, flavor and fruiting season. The list was top-heavy with heirloom apples — Golden Russett, Maidenblush, Calville Blanc, Winter Banana, Yellow Newton and Baldwin, plus a few others. Newer varieties included Orenco (an Oregon original), Wealthy, Melrose and more. All of these apples have been grown successfully in Oregon.

Students then made grafting cuts,

joined the scion to the rootstock, wrapped the joint with a length of rubber band, and sealed the graft. The scion wood was pruned to three buds, the roots wrapped in wet paper towels and placed in plastic sacks with the graft exposed. Students labeled each tree with their name and the apple variety. At the end of the day, four sinks were filled with dwarf apple trees.

"I expect 60 to 70 percent to take," said Grantz. "I'm hoping most of the kids will take them home to plant." Students living in apartments with no place to plant, or in Government

Camp where the trees won't grow well, are planting their trees along the nature trail behind the high school. Someday, Sandy Union High School may boast a productive heirloom apple orchard.

Grantz has taught at SUHS for 14 years. His "hobbies" include being the head coach of the volleyball team and "growing things." He became interested in growing fruit trees a while ago. "I joined the Home Orchard Society a year ago and got interested in apples," he said. "A month ago, we (the SUHS biology teachers) went to grafting classes at Mt. Hood Community College, then practiced and talked about it until we had a handle on it."

The teachers' main concern was

student safety. Working with very sharp grafting knives requires a special handling technique to avoid injury. Students were coached in proper techniques and few injuries resulted from the day of grafting.

The well-manned, well-planned project looks to be successful. But the real payoff for the kids comes later, when their baby trees mature, give them fruit to eat, and memories of the day they grafted those trees.

Grantz summed it up well. "It will give them something to look back on in 10 or 15 years. When these people are out on their own, with jobs in the community, with families of their own, they may remember this. And now that they've done it, they will be able to teach their kids."



Clayton Stoner, David Mayea and David Bergeron try their hand at grafting during a biology class at Sandy High School.

Photo by Jude Ramsay Jensen

Senior Center news

The Mystery Tour will depart for an unknown destination on Friday, March 14. The ever popular once a month day trip will leave the center at 10 a.m. Included in the day's itinerary are several stops to explore interesting new places and lunch in an unusual restaurant. Return will be at approximately 4 p.m.

The Hood View Academy third grade class will be at the center on

Bakke commended by Air Force

First Lt. David A. Bakke, son of Arnold and Carol Bakke of Sandy, has been decorated with the Air Force Commendation Medal in Italy.

The Air Force Commendation Medal is awarded to those individuals who demonstrate outstanding achievement or meritorious service in the performance of their duties on behalf of the Air Force.

Bakke is an energy conservation officer with the 7275th Civil Engineering Squadron.

His wife, Diana, is the daughter of John Waldron and Lois Clark, both of Lyle, Wash.

He is a 1973 graduate of Walla Walla College, College Place, Wash.

Tuesday, March 18 at 12:30 p.m. to participate with seniors in the Adopt a Grandparent program.

Every Thursday at 9:30 a.m. there will be a special shopping trip to downtown Sandy as well as the shopping centers west of Sandy. Call the Senior Center, 668-5569, for further information.

The movie "The Quiet Man," starring John Wayne, Maureen O'Hara, Barry Fitzgerald and Victor McLaglen, will be shown on Thursday, March 20 at 12:30 p.m. following the Loaves and Fishes lunch.

USDA surplus commodity cheese will be distributed on Saturday,

March 15 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Sandy Assembly of God Church. Single people receiving \$569 or less in monthly income are eligible for the program. For a couple, the income limit is \$765. Homebound seniors needing assistance in acquiring their cheese allotment are urged to contact the center at 668-5569.

The Sandy Senior Center is continuing to accept donations for the April 11 dinner and auction. Items with an estimated value of \$10 or more will be gratefully accepted. Tickets for the event will be available after March 17 and will be \$6 per person.

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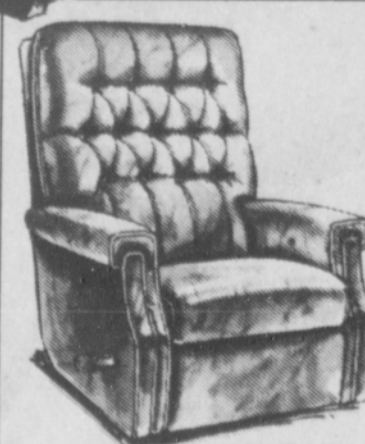


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