

# CASCADE Observations

By PEGGY DILLS KELTER

## The 'Classified' are critical

**C**LASSIFIED in the world of government most often refers to something that someone doesn't want us to know about. In the world of public education, the word has a decidedly different meaning, referring to a group of people who literally are the backbones of schools. These amazing folks, from custodians to instructional assistants, cooks to bus drivers, are too often overlooked when praise is given out. This last week, officially known as "Classifieds Week," teachers and administrators in our school district tried earnestly to let our classified staff know just how much we love them and count on them to educate and protect our students.



At the school where I work, we made silly signs, baked savory and sweet treats, handed out lottery tickets and wrote notes thanking these staff members. Our gifts can't even begin to express our gratitude for their work. Here are a few of the things our classified staff members do on a daily basis: supervise hundreds of kids on the playground, teach long division to small groups, clean up vomit, help struggling students unlock the code to reading, change diapers, stanch bloody noses, referee soccer, find lost coats, teach keyboarding, field hundreds of calls from parents, apply ice packs to recess injuries and translate parent/teacher conferences. For their hard, sometimes heroic work, they are paid an average of \$10-\$15 an hour.

Last week was not only Classifieds Week at our school, but also Arts Week, a four-day experience for kids that also tapped the creative resources of our classified staff. More than 20 people offered instruction in a myriad of media, and students were able to elect a particular artist with whom they wished to work. From Arts in Education in the Gorge we had teaching artists specializing in clay, handmade books, drawing, bucket drumming, music composition, fused glass and music appreciation. Our own staff members offered collage and printmaking. A 4-H cooking class rounded out our group of 10 offerings. In addition, we had extra enrichment activities, staffed almost entirely by our classified staff. Though they may teach reading or work with our high needs students during a regular day, during Arts Week many of our classified employees taught science, crafts, and more. Finally, other classifieds offered invaluable assistance to our visiting artists. Without our dedicated staff of assistants, Arts Week would not be possible.

Arts Week is over for another year, replaced by obligations that loom large for children and staff throughout our District - standardized testing season has begun. To prepare for this, teachers and classified workers are required to attend almost three hours of training and familiarize themselves with a 150 page on-line manual called the TAM, or Test Administrator Manual.

All children who are learning English as a second language must take the ELPA, or English Language Proficiency Assessment. Students from K-12 take this test on-line in two segments. The first evaluates their proficiency in English reading, writing, and listening. The second segment assesses their speaking. It's mind boggling to watch kindergarteners try to navigate a complicated test on the computer, and even more mind boggling to hear the test administrator read a multi-paragraph script informing the children about the test they are about to take. The instructions, which may be read in both English and Spanish, would make a masters in linguistics' head spin. Failure to read the instructions verbatim may result in a teacher losing his or her teaching license.

Students in grades 3-5 at our school will also take standardized tests in English Language Arts and Math, and fifth graders add several other tests to their plates. It's estimated that each student will sit down in front of a computer and take tests for at least 7 hours - more than that for many of our struggling kids. Recently, Eric Cohn, a math teacher at Hood River Middle School, wrote an Op-Ed piece for this newspaper. In it, he reminded us that while he is administering these tests, students are losing out on precious instructional time. He writes, "I will spend seven days basically watching kids take test, after test, after test. School administrators must spend countless hours trying to figure out how to get 450 plus kids to take all of these exams on a very limited number of computers ... What an inexcusable, colossal waste of time, money and educational opportunities for our students."

While the debate goes on about the proper ways to assess student learning, it's important to remember that we all learn in different ways. We teachers rely on each other, and our wonderful assistants, to find the instructional path that is best suited to each student. Recently, Dennis McCauley, principal at Mid Valley Elementary, was interviewed in this newspaper. "We're so focused on academic outcome that we forget how kids' brains work, we forget that kids need different experiences. (Art Week) brings that together for the kids, lets them know that arts are important - that all parts of the brain are important ... (Kids) don't remember the day they learned the hard C sound, but they do remember Arts Week."

They'll also remember that wonderful classified person who welcomed them on her bus, patched up a skinned knee, helped them memorize their multiplication tables or wiped away tears of grief.

The community is welcome to Family Night at Mid Valley Elementary, Thursday, March 12 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Projects from Art Week will be on display. Enriching short classes will be offered celebrating all the ways we love to learn.



Photos by Kirby Neumann-Rea

## CONGRATULATIONS, ESTHER

Friends gather around Esther Yarnell on March 4, the 95th birthday one of Hood River's most durable bowlers. League action at Orchard Lanes stopped as dozens of bowlers presented gifts and sang "Happy Birthday" to Yarnell. "I figured they'd do something but I didn't think they'd do all this!" Yarnell said. Asked what enables her to keep throwing strikes at age 95, Yarnell said, "I just started bowling more than 50 years ago and never stopped." She recently averaged 170 in a three-game series. Her Go Granny Go team surprised her with a cake and a cup (filled with money) created by trophy maker Mary Neville. ("I dug into the box hoping to come up with a '95' and there it was!" Neville said.)



## Delta Kappa honors outstanding members

Delta Kappa ESA held their Outstanding Member Awards luncheon recently at the Hood River Inn. Charlotte DeHart, treasurer, and Tami Arthur, awards chairman, received top honors for their total dedication and excellent work through the years.

Melanie Burns received her Jeweled Pin, signifying full membership. Other awards were given to those

with perfect attendance: Marg Baker, B.G. Brackman, Debbie Sanguras, Penny Phelps, Martha Hoskins, Tami Arthur and Betty Draper.

Service awards were given to B.G. Brackman for 15 years and Betty Draper, who started Delta Kappa in 1966, was given her pin for 50 years of service to ESA.

Other honors were given for points

received for work with Delta Kappa philanthropic endeavors through the years. Beautiful gold medallions were received for first and second degrees service to Charlotte DeHart, B.G. Brackman, Diana Barnes, Martha Hoskins and Tami Arthur.

The Humanitarian Award went to Debbie Sanguras for total dedication for service to all Chapter members.

## Underwood Community Gardens begins third season

The Underwood Community Gardens begins its third season with all 21 garden spaces leased and a new Board of Directors: Sally M. Stillman, President; Molly Hamlin, Vice President; and Kirby Richards, Treasurer. Like most Community Gardens, UCG is a gardener-led organization that relies on all participants to enhance the community experience.

The mission of the Underwood Community Gardens is to offer Underwood residents the opportunity to work, learn and grow together through shared gardening and to enrich our community with programs focused on local food economy, nutrition, cooking, and food preservation.

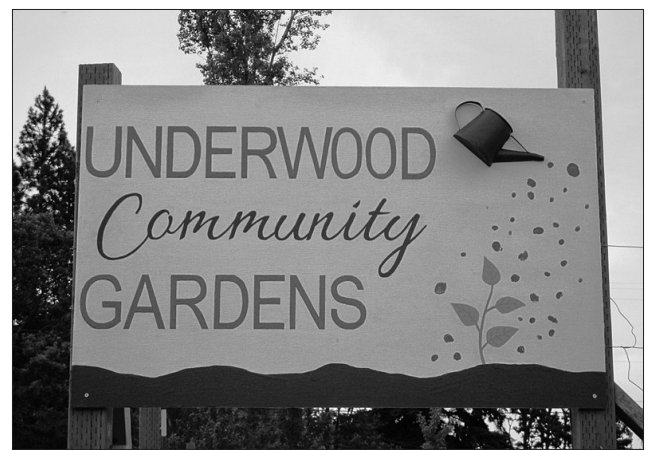
The 2015 calendar of events of public presentations, workshops, and special occasions include three first-quarter Garden Chats: a hands-on reminder of drip systems and composting and a launch the new season social evening for our gardeners - both in late March - and a Plant Sale, Seed Swap, Small Farms Booth, and Seed Science and Bird House Painting for

Kids in April. Future events include canning workshop "Jams, Jellies, and Chutneys" in June and the annual August gathering of Eating from Our Gardens.

It's been a mild winter, and many gardeners are now beginning starter plants and planning our organic raised-bed gardens. Aromatic herbs and ornamental edibles are two of the options for some of our gardeners. Of course, the effort to grow and harvest year-round is another challenge.

Underwood Community Organic Gardens, located behind the post office in the Underwood Community Park, are made possible by Skamania County (Community Health and General Services), Washington State University (WSU) Extension Service, the residents and gardeners of Underwood and The Gorge, the Underwood Community Council (UCC), and both CEKC and WGAP.

For more information, email [underwoodcommunitygardens.ucg@gmail.com](mailto:underwoodcommunitygardens.ucg@gmail.com) or find us on Facebook (keyword: Underwood-Gardens).



Submitted photo

UNDERWOOD Gardens plans year-round events.

## Free kids admission at Gorge Discovery Center for spring break

Looking for a fun family activity during spring break? Come to the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center & Museum! Free admission for kids when accompanied by a paid adult during Oregon and Washington spring break, March 21 through April 12. Kids will enjoy a

scavenger hunt throughout the museum and craft activities in the Kids Explorer room. A special kids menu will be served in the Basalt Rock Cafe, which will be open daily 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. from March 21 through March 29, and Tuesday through Sunday beginning April 1. Enjoy a walk on the native plant trail to see the budding wildflowers. See the birds of prey up close as the raptor shows resume a daily schedule, at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., beginning March 21. For more information, phone 541-296-8600 x 201, or visit [www.gorgediscovery.org](http://www.gorgediscovery.org).

## Leadership Development classes available at CGCC

Beginning in April, Columbia Gorge Community College will offer the series Leadership Skills for the High Performance Workplace, with Marge and Mike Cieri of Mardac Consultants.

This high-level, upbeat seminar series targets organizations who want to compete more effectively by increasing employee involvement. It is designed to give participants the technical skills necessary to turn them into exceptional performance managers and supervisors.

Classes meet once a month, on the second Tuesday of the month, from 1-5 p.m., on April 14, May 12, June 9, July 14, Aug. 11, Sept. 8, Oct. 13, Nov. 10, and Dec. 8.

Workshops cover the following topics:

- Emotional Intelligence
  - Problem Solving and Decision Making
  - Recruitment, Interviewing, and On-Boarding
  - Managing Day-to-Day Performance
  - Holding Employees and Others Accountable
  - Coaching and Giving and Receiving Feedback
  - Managing Diversity in the Workplace
  - Working with Difficult People
  - Team Development for Greater Productivity
- Tuition for the entire series is \$725, or \$95 per class. All classes meet at Hood River Indian Creek CGCC campus. Preregistration is required by calling the college at 541-506-6011.

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**Recycle Tips**

**MILK CARTONS**

- Are NOT recyclable locally.
- Also known as 'gable tops', milk cartons and shelf-stable "aseptic containers (juice cartons) take too long to pulp up at Northwest paper mills, which are designed for newsprint. If you put milk cartons in recycling, they end up at the landfill and add cost to garbage/recycling service.
- Purchase milk and juices in recyclable plastic containers if possible.

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