

CASCADE Observations

By PEGGY DILLS KELTER

Dennis, dedicated driver

AT MID VALLEY Elementary School, it's the same occurrence every May, as dependable as the annual arrival of one's birthday. Fifth graders flock upstairs to the dark and cluttered storage closets and unearth ancient pieces of cardboard and plywood. Back downstairs, volunteers take this motley collection of materials and transform it into the booths that make up the annual Mid Valley Carnival. There's Putt Putt Golf, nothing more than a putter, a golf ball and a sloped piece of wood covered with artificial grass and drilled with a single hole. There's "Go Fish," consisting of a lone fishing pole, a painted sheet depicting the ocean, and a bucket of prizes kids can hook. There's the Bean Bag Toss, and the most popular of all, Face Painting. Yet on a warm evening



in May, children raised with iPads and Xboxes find these dozen or so booths just as entertaining as the high tech toys they're used to.

For a few hours, the county allows the school to close off the road in front of our building, and the parking lot is cleared of cars. The empty pavement is soon filled with taco trucks, popsicle vendors, and old cafeteria tables. Over the course of the evening, hundreds of tacos will be consumed, along with snow cones and ears of corn. Music fills the air as The Cake Walk, a circuitous path made by drawing on the pavement with chalk, is populated with folks hoping to win a donated dessert.

What the Carnival lacks in sophistication is more than made up for by the incredible sense of community everyone feels. Grandparents visit with new babies and teachers share tacos with their students. Kids dress up in traditional Mexican outfits and perform dances for the crowd. High school students, many of them alumni of Mid Valley, volunteer to run the booths. When the Carnival is over, lots of folks form a clean-up crew that makes quick work of the mess.

The Mid Valley Carnival is over for another year. The booths are back in storage, and the popcorn machine has been cleaned and put away. While much remains the same, much will also change in the coming year. Fifth graders are moving on to middle school, and with them go their parents who have been vital to the school's PTO. Several teachers, myself included, are leaving the school's staff. And the fearless, creative leader of Mid Valley Elementary, Dennis McCauley, is retiring.

Dennis came to Mid Valley 11 years ago after a long career as a teacher and administrator working for the Reynolds School District in east Multnomah County. During the principal selection process, our staff reviewed Dennis's resume and letters of recommendation, and interviewed folks from Reynolds about him. No one had anything but praise for Dennis. When he accepted the job at Mid Valley, the Reynolds community wept as we cheered.

Principals have a difficult, often thankless job. Among other tasks, they must balance budgets, attend to disciplinary issues, evaluate teachers and maintain their buildings. They arrive early, and often leave late, attending evening meetings on a regular basis. But aside from all the "have to" tasks Dennis has taken care of while principal, he has added his own long lists of "musts." He personally built a ramp on a family's home so their handicapped child could negotiate the home from her wheelchair. He helped an older boy, an alumnus of Mid Valley in danger of flunking out of high school, complete his senior project. He sat with children while they took their state assessment tests, his supportive, quiet presence essential to their success. When the kids finished the test, he played air hockey and one-on-one basketball with them to celebrate. He goes to the homes of consistently absent children and personally drives them to school. He walks the halls every day, greeting each and every student and staff member as though they are his best friends. He found the funding to provide enrichment activities for our students, and has trusted his staff, giving them the autonomy to teach their students as they know best. He has turned the school into a true community center, adding a pre-school and a satellite county health department clinic. And always, always, he has found opportunities to make kids smile, dressing up as everything from a leprechaun to Captain Kindness, from a cowboy to a super hero complete with phone booth. His costumes are a metaphor — they remind us all that, with effort and creativity, we can transform ourselves if we want.

Several years after Dennis became principal at Mid Valley, I was chatting with him about those unofficial interviews we had done with the Reynolds community. At the time, Dennis drove a red Miata, a flashy car that often turned heads. Several people in Reynolds had described Dennis as "that guy who drives the red sports car." Soon after our chat, he traded his sports car in for a practical Prius. When I asked him about the vehicle change, he responded that he hoped to be remembered for the good work he did, not the car he drove.

He need not worry as he retires from Mid Valley. His legacy as an innovative leader, caring boss, and advocate for children is secure.

Birth

Penelope White

A daughter, Penelope Elaine White, was born April 26, 2015, at Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital to Tyler and Lindsey White. She weighed 7 pounds, 9 ounces and measured 21 inches.

She joins a sister,

Josephine, 34 months. Grandparents are Perry Smith, Tony White, and Lorie Repp, all of Hood River. Great grandparents are Don and Mary Smith of Hood River, Leonora Repp of Hood River, Chuck and Barb White of Kennewick, Wash., and Mary Lynn Totten of Tulsa, Okla.



Photo by Patrick Mulvihill

YOUNG GARDENERS AT WORK

Ann Hansen, Alternate Roots Preschool co-director, guides students spreading bark Friday morning at a new garden area on State Street shared by Riverside Community Church and Hood River News. Kids at the preschool have helped to improve and maintain the garden for the last several months. The bark was provided by Hood River News.

Jibson marries Ryan

Sarah Marie Jibson and Timothy Paul Ryan, both of Hood River, were married April 18, 2015, in Milwaukee, Wisc.

The bride is the daughter of Dan and Sherri Jibson of Milwaukee. She graduated from high school in 2010 and from Maranatha Baptist University in 2014.

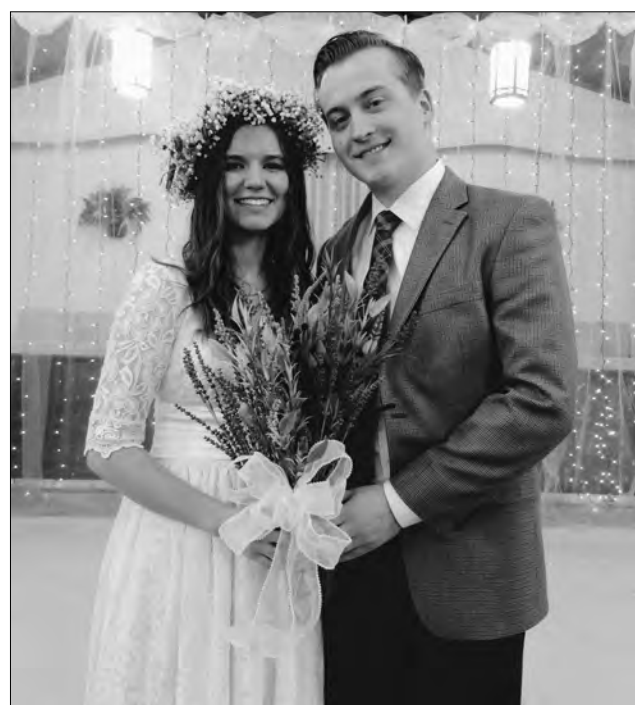
The groom is the son of Steve and Tiffany Ryan of Hood River. He attended high school in Hood River, graduating from Nampa Christian School in Nampa, Idaho, in 2009. He graduated from Maranatha Baptist University in 2015. He is employed at Orchard View Farms in The Dalles as a human resource assistant.

Officiating was Pastor Tom Loggans. Bridesmaids

were Rachel Ryan, sister of the groom, Moriah Norris, friend of the bride, and Tirzah Jibson, sister of the bride. The Best man was Jacob Dillman, college friend of the groom, and groomsmen were Nick Hinrichsen, high school friend of the groom, Josiah Jibson, brother of the bride, and Nolan Ryan, brother of the groom.

Flower girls were Aleigha and Jayleigh Standerwick, friends of the bride, and Malachi Wochinski, friend of the bride.

Sarah and Timothy met in college. Both minored in Spanish and have traveled abroad, Sarah to Peru (where her dress was made) and Timothy to Spain and the Dominican Republic.



Submitted photo

Sarah Jibson and Timothy Ryan

'Finding Peace Art Tour' at the library

Visit the Hood River Library through May 22 to view the "Finding Peace: Art Tour." The art display is part of a larger project created by Columbia Gorge Community College (CGCC).

CGCC invited artists of the Gorge to submit original artwork to "Finding Peace: Art Show and Conversation." The event consists of three parts: a community art show, a community conversation project, and a community tour of prize

winning pieces from the show. The Hood River Library is one stop on the art tour.

CGCC asked that artists and the community in general reflect on the concept of "Finding Peace" and what that may mean to them as an individual, as a member of a community, or as a global citizen. "Finding Peace" may speak to world peace and the elimination of war and violence based on nationalism. It may represent

an end to local disputes and community bickering. Or it may speak to a more personal and private concept, the inner peace that each person strives for when they are troubled or facing crises. CGCC invited the gorge community to share its vision.

Visit cgcc.edu/news/cgcc-art-show-finding-peace to learn about all the events for the "Finding Peace: Art Show and Conversation." This art show is supported

by a grant from the Wasco County Cultural Trust Coalition with funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust to support Oregon's arts, heritage, and the humanities.

This display is free and open to the public for viewing during regular library hours. For more information, please contact the Hood River County Library District at 541-386-2535, info@hoodriverlibrary.org, or visit their website at hoodriverlibrary.org.

Host families sought for international students

EF High School Exchange Year, the leader in high school cultural exchange, is seeking host families in the Hood River area. Host families open their homes to a 15-18 year old from countries around the world who come to the U.S. to attend one or two semesters of high school. Through the exchange experience, both student and family get the chance to learn about a new culture and potentially establish a lifelong bond.

Hosting an exchange student is a volunteer program supported by the U.S. Department of State and is a great step towards preparing your own children for the 21st century. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated that "the goodwill, generosity, and mutual understanding fostered through exchange programs are critical to meeting the challenges of today's world. Such citizen diplomacy may start with one visiting student and his or her host family but it ripples throughout communities in the United States and

abroad."

There are few experiences that can spark interest in new cultures like welcoming an international student into your home. "Serving as a host family allows Americans to share their culture and customs, and also learn about another country for a true cultural exchange and becoming lifelong friends and family," said Leslie Melby, the EF High School Exchange Year local coordinator responsible for placing and supervising EF students in the Hood River area. She has two great young ladies who need homes: one from Germany one is from Japan.

EF Foundation host families represent the diversity of American culture. Some host families have teens, while others have young children or no children, or adult children who no longer live at home. Host families express many reasons for participating in the program. Some are looking for new ways to connect to their communities, while gaining fresh perspectives on the world; others

seek exposure to other cultures for themselves and their children.

EF Foundation is supporting the United States foreign policy goal of expanding communications between U.S. citizens and people from other countries. Along with EF High School Exchange Year fulltime professional staff, local coordinators in the community match students with host families, enroll the students in high school, and provide students, schools, and host families with ongoing guidance and support throughout the exchange experience.

Headquartered in Cambridge, Mass., EF High School Exchange Year has been committed to promoting international under-

standing and global awareness for over 30 years. Since 1979, the organization has matched more than 100,000 enthusiastic students from around the world with caring host families across the United States. EF High School Exchange Year is designated by the United States Department of State as an Exchange Program Sponsor.

For more information about hosting an international exchange student, contact Leslie Melby at leslieefexchange@gorge.net or 541-490-5617, or visit the EF High School Exchange Year website at www.efexchangeyear.org.

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 on 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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