

HERMISTON

# Students learn that math can be cool

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN  
East Oregonian

Relays aren't just for running. For Hermiston Mathletes, it's one of the many creative ways they solve math equations. One team member will solve the first problem, the next person will use that answer to solve a related problem, and so on. If one person gets the wrong answer, the whole team is thrown off.

In the Math is Cool program, open to fourth and fifth graders, students compete in a variety of different math-related events. There are individual competitions, as well as group exercises such as the relay, multiple choice questions and a Jeopardy-style event. Students are quizzed on concepts both at and above grade level.

Three Hermiston schools will send fourth-grade teams to the Math is Cool regional competition on Friday — Desert View, Rocky Heights, and West Park. McNary Heights Elementary School in Umatilla also has a team. At the fifth grade competition in February, McNary Heights earned first place in their division, scoring 122 points. West Park's team took first in its division, as well, earning 139 points, and Rocky Heights scored a second place finish at 93 points.

West Park students practiced the week of the tournament, working on a quiz that had been offered at a previous tournament. One question asked students:

"Gabe and Maya are throwing water balloons at a target. If Gabe has a 30 percent chance of hitting the target, and Maya has a 50 percent chance of hitting the target, what is the probability they both hit the target? Answer as a percent."



Emely Coria, Addison Mathews, Isabel Puerta and Evelyn Chavez work together on math problems, preparing for this Friday's Math is Cool regional contest.

Teacher Tess Neddo said students who were high-performing and showed good problem-solving skills were asked to join the class.

As the students worked, Neddo explained how the competition will go.

"For the multiple choice section, if you get the answer right, you get two points. But if you get it wrong, you get negative one points," she said. "This is the only test where you get penalized for wrong answers."

Evelyn Chavez said the team has spent a lot of time learning about percentages, and that they work together to check each other's answers.

"Sometimes we do it in twos, and we'll check to see if we're right or wrong," she said.

Erica Miller said her daughter, Aries Woodward, has enjoyed math as an extracurricular activity, and hopes she will continue to pursue it.

"She loves math

anyway," Miller said. "It's good for her to meet other kids that like the same thing as her."

As Rocky Heights students gathered for their weekly practice, teacher Melissa Doherty quizzes students on the concepts of mean, median, mode and range, before they worked in teams on story problems. The students had 45 seconds to answer each question.

"It's been pretty difficult, learning about things we're not used to," said Emilie Wyant.

Students said they've learned how to calculate the area of triangles, trapezoids and parallelograms.

"We learned about converting cups to ounces," said McKenzie Hendrix. "Measurement differences, angles."

Doherty's husband, Ben, helps coach the team. He said the program was brought to Rocky Heights by principal Jerad Farley, who used to work in Washington.

"He wanted to get kids involved and see math differently than in class," he said. "Play games, have fun, and challenge themselves with it."

He said the team atmosphere allows for several different types of learners to thrive.

"Some are really good at math. Some are interested in math, and some are very competitive. When we do our teams, we don't just have the mad brilliant kids. We want some kids who are more methodical."

Doherty said that some students are encouraged to join the class, but it is open to anyone interested.

Some schools build the curriculum into their school day. Heather Mills, a fourth grade teacher at Desert View, said the students spend a portion of their math lesson working on concepts they will use in Math is Cool. She said Desert View has a team of 18 students competing at this weekend's event.

PENDLETON

# Council revives river quarter discussion

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

In the eight years it's been in effect, developers have given the Pendleton River Quarter no quarter.

A stretch of land along the Umatilla River on Southwest Court Avenue from First Street to 10th Street, the city envisioned the river quarter as a series of two-story developments with shops, restaurants and apartments that connected South Main Street with the Round-Up grounds.

But with little development, the Pendleton City Council and Pendleton Development Commission were back to the drawing board at a joint meeting Tuesday.

"The reason why we're focusing on the river quarter is because we've seen some projects take place throughout the rest of the urban renewal area, but we're not seeing anything along the river area and we're asking ourselves why," he said.

The council had been alerted to the problem three years ago, when a member of the Pendleton Development Commission's advisory committee told the council that the development commission's \$100,000 building incentive wasn't enough to offset the onerous building requirements.

While the committee member advised scrapping the river quarter plan entirely and starting over, the council instead sent the plan back to the planning commission for tweaks.

City Manager Robb Corbett said the commission has been busy dealing with Pendleton's marijuana zoning laws, leading to the delay in action.

If the city was to make changes to the plan, it would either need to increase its monetary incentive or strip down its building requirements.

"I think it's going to be a long time before this is a wealthy enough community before people are going to come in and build what we want them to build," he said.

There was concern among the councilors and commissioners that watering down the building requirements too much would lead to an undesirable new development that would stand for decades to come.

Planning Commissioner Joseph Hull said getting the "first seed planted," the first river quarter development, would be key to the area's success. The director of business operations and development for McCormack Construction Co., Hull said developers will proceed with a new project as soon as they can determine its profitability.

Councilor McKennon McDonald said the council has previously discussed initiating the first river quarter development itself, noting that the city owned the old police station at 109 S.W. Court Ave. and the soon-to-be-vacated Pendleton Fire Station at 911 S.W. Court Ave.

There was a consensus among the council and commission that they wanted to hear from developers about what they would like to see from a river quarter plan.

City Planner George Cress said he's arranging exactly that kind of meeting, with developers scheduled to meet with the commission next month.

# State librarian fired, specifics remain elusive

By CLAIRE WITCOMBE  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregon Gov. Kate Brown fired state librarian MaryKay Dahlgreen on Tuesday, an apparent surprise to the state's association of library professionals, the chair of the state library board and Dahlgreen herself.

While the Governor's Office says Dahlgreen failed to meet lawmakers' expectations, it did not provide specifics to the EO/Pamplin Capital Bureau.

Dahlgreen says the governor did not provide her with specific written feedback on her performance, either.

Dahlgreen had served as state librarian since 2012, and had worked for the state library since 1996.

The state librarian is appointed by the governor and subject to confirmation by the state Senate.

Kate Kondayen, a spokeswoman for Gov. Brown, said in an email Wednesday that



MaryKay Dahlgreen

Dahlgreen "fell short of clear and timely expectations from legislators, and as a result of these performance issues, did not have the Senate support necessary for confirmation."

Kondayen continued: "Once qualms about (Dahlgreen's) confirmation came to light, and in consideration of stability for state library staff and programming, the Governor's Office offered to pursue a collabora-

orative transition out of the role. Ms. Dahlgreen instead chose to be terminated and leave the State Library under unplanned and immediate circumstances."

In response to that statement, Dahlgreen said she was "very proud" of the work she did during her tenure.

"The work I've done at the state library is the best work I've ever done," Dahlgreen said Wednesday. "I don't regret a minute of it, and I would also like to point out that I was never provided with written concerns about my performance."

Dahlgreen said that during some budget hearings, there were some times when she "was questioned very closely."

"And when I was asked to provide further information, I did that," Dahlgreen said. "I always followed up. There were some very pointed questions about my performance and my feeling is that I addressed every single one of those concerns."

The state librarian may not be a particularly high-profile job, but the Oregon State Library does important work, advocates say.

These include helping the state's public libraries to share resources and adapt to changing technologies; providing support for library patrons who are blind or have impaired vision; and assisting state agencies with research.

Three years ago, the Legislature changed how the state librarian is chosen.

It used to be that the state librarian was appointed by a group of trustees.

But in 2015, the Legislature passed a law that "grandmothered" Dahlgreen into the position until July 1, 2017, at which point she would be subject to gubernatorial appointment and senate confirmation.

That 2015 law also converted the group of trustees into a board and, advocates say, made its composition more representative of library patrons.

# Marijuana businesses behaving, chief worries about home grows

East Oregonian

At the joint meeting of the Pendleton Development Commission and Pendleton City Council on Tuesday, police chief Stuart Roberts gave a presentation on Pendleton's legal marijuana market, which has now entered its second year.

Roberts said he's been "pleasantly surprised" about how responsible they've been in how they operate their business.

Since the trio opened in 2017, Kind Leaf Pend-

leton has had four calls for service, Pendleton Cannabis two calls and High Desert Cannabis one call. Two cases — one each at Pendleton Cannabis and High Desert Cannabis — were referred to the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, the state agency that regulates recreational marijuana.

While the three recreational pot shops have financial incentive to stay on the good side of the law, Roberts said he remains concerned about home grows operations.

Oregonians can legally grow four marijuana plants for personal use, but they can grow more if they're doing it on behalf of medical patients. Roberts said experienced growers can easily grow more than they can possibly consume and then turn around and sell it on the black market or ship it across state lines.

A concern among some of the councilors, commissioners and audience members was the zoning rules for professional marijuana grows.

While dispensaries may not be within a 1,000 feet of a school, park or another dispensary, there's not the same level of regulation for a grow.

Marijuana grows are required to be in industrial zones and there are already two grows approved by the city for the Riverside area and another at the base of South Hill.

Turner asked Roberts to speak with city staff and formulate some changes to marijuana grow zoning rules.

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# Freel murder case could settle

PENDLETON — Evan Freel of Milton-Freewater is aiming to settle the murder case against him in a closed-door conference.

Freel, 18, appeared Wednesday morning in Umatilla County Circuit Court, Pendleton, for an update. His attorney, Kara Davis of Pendleton, told the court that Senior Judge Patricia Sullivan would oversee the conference.

Circuit Judge Christopher Brauer set the conference for May 2 at the county courthouse, Pendleton.

Freel sat quietly through the brief proceeding. The state charged him with murder and first-degree criminal mistreatment related to the June 2016 death of his infant son. He remains in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton.

The court also received an update on the manslaughter case of Angela Marie Fix, 41, of Pilot Rock. Davis also represents her and said she is waiting for the state to send digital photos from the crime scene, and those could arrive any day.

Six faces first-degree arson and second-degree

manslaughter charges for the July 2017 death of Larry Castro, 77, at his Pilot Rock home. Davis said she hired an expert to examine the fire investigation report, and that expert needs the photos in a digital format he can enlarge. Once he has them, she said, it would only take a couple days to complete his work.

At a hearing last month, Davis said a better understanding of the fire report would help her determine if this case also could use a settlement conference.

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