

Bend school brings back alumni for 100th anniversary

The school is Bend-La Pine's oldest remaining school building

By JACKSON HOGAN
EO Media Group

BEND — Patty Stell has many memories of her six years at Kenwood School in the early 1960s, but the one that stands out was the day she brought a goat for show and tell.

She walked the goat into the Kenwood courtyard, where it stayed for students to gawk at and interact with all day long.

"It was kind of like having a small part of a petting zoo," recalled Stell, 64, laughing.

Kenwood — known as Highland Magnet at Kenwood School — is turning 100 this fall, marking a century's worth of memories for many who grew up in its hallways and classrooms. The brick building on Newport Avenue welcomed its first students in the fall of 1919, when Bend's population was about 5,400, according to the U.S. Census.

Although he didn't grow up in Bend, Kenwood Principal Brian Kissell said he understands that his job requires him to not only oversee daily operations, but

also to serve as a steward for Bend-La Pine's oldest school.

"In a positive way, I feel a lot of pressure to have that really good experience for people to come back and visit their old stomping grounds," he said. "It's not something I've taken lightly since I've been here."

Simply mentioning that he's the principal of Kenwood in conversation can make about 25% to 30% of people in Bend suddenly start sharing memories of the school, Kissell said.

"It's not your typical school, where I can have that many people all around town, or even outside of town, have a good chance of them having some connection to this building," he said.

When walking through the hallways of Kenwood School, it's hard to tell that the building was built a century ago.

But even after an extensive, \$4 million remodel of Kenwood in 2015 put a clean, sleek sheen on the school's hallways and classrooms, there are plenty of quirks intact from its history. Right by the front entrance, a metal radiator from the 1940s remains for nostalgic reasons, although it no longer works. And all the classrooms that were part of the initial 1919 structure have their origi-



EO Media Group Photo/Ryan Brennecke

Brian Kissell, principal at Highland Magnet at Kenwood School, reads a newspaper clipping from the 1940s while reviewing poster boards created for the school's 90th anniversary on Wednesday. Several of the poster boards will be on display during a 100th anniversary celebration for the school on Saturday.

nal wood floors, with visible marks and stains from decades-old desks.

Larry Blanton, the former Deschutes County sheriff who works for the Bend construction firm Kirby Nagelhout, attended Kenwood from fourth through sixth grades in the late 1960s. Every day, he walked to and from Kenwood from his home on Columbia Street, lugging his trombone with him, he said.

"It was three or four blocks away, but at that age, it felt like the proverbial uphill both ways," said Blanton, 62.

For fifth and sixth grades, Blanton was taught by Jack Ensworth, who would later

be named National Teacher of the Year in 1973. Blanton said Ensworth taught him and his classmates many skills outside the typical academic subjects, such as fly fishing and American Sign Language.

"I'm a little rusty on it right now, but I certainly used it in my law enforcement career," Blanton said of learning sign language.

Redmond resident Philomena White, 45, said she remembers running around Kenwood's gym as a fifth-grader in the mid-1980s while the hit song "Eye of the Tiger" was playing.

Stell, who served as Bend's city recorder later in

life, said although typically, she walked home for lunch every day, on occasions when her mother wasn't home, she got to eat at Kenwood's cafeteria. She said those occasions were "a treat."

"They had the most wonderful dinner rolls in the whole world," she said. "It's still hard to find any that compares."

Kenwood's students also lived through historic American moments. White said her fifth-grade class took a field trip to Central Oregon Community College to see Geraldine Ferraro, the first woman to run as vice president from a major party in 1984. Ferraro was stumping for her running mate, Walter Mondale.

Stell said that one day in fourth grade, a student came back from the office and informed the class that President John F. Kennedy had been shot. She said her teacher began to get teary-eyed, and soon, a voice on the school intercom told the students to pack up their things and go home.

All the students walked home "with purpose" and didn't play around like on most days, Stell said.

Stell said she was confused that day, because she had always mixed up Kennedy and her principal, Henry Hall.

"I thought Mr. Hall had been killed, and I was very upset," she said. "He wasn't, of course."

When the roof of Kenwood's gym collapsed due to heavy snowfall in 2017, more memories surfaced for Kenwood's alumni. Because his new company Kirby Nagelhout was tasked with tearing down and rebuilding Kenwood's gym, Blanton said it was an unusual feeling, seeing his old stomping grounds in disarray.

"I remember standing at the edge of the foundation, looking into what used to be the basement," he said. "Quite a number of people had gathered around; it wasn't a good time for a lot of people."

On Saturday, Kenwood will host an open house from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for community members to reminisce. Kissell said visitors will see "memory boards" in each classroom, where people can write notes about their experience at the school.

When walking through Ensworth's former classroom, Kissell noted that its wood floor was ragged and patched up with old putty. He chuckled at how the authentically worn surface had become trendy.

"People pay to have this put into their homes now," Kissell said. "It's just here."

Group seeking to decriminalize drugs in Oregon

By JEFF MAPES
Oregon Public Broadcasting

PORTLAND — An influential national group that has led the way on cannabis legalization around the country is looking at asking Oregon voters to decriminalize the possession of all illegal drugs.

The Drug Policy Alliance, which has received major funding from billionaire investor George Soros, has filed a proposed initiative for the 2020 ballot and hired a team of political consultants in Oregon.

Matt Sutton, the spokesman for the New York-based alliance, said his group has not decided whether to move forward on the measure, known as Initiative Petition 44.

"We're really just assessing the situation," said Sutton, adding that the group is looking at "how we can move away from a system of criminalization to a more health-centered approach."

Sutton said his group is also looking at similar measures in other states that he declined to name.

Oregon has long been a leader in lowering penalties for illegal drugs. In 1973, it was the first state to decriminalize the possession of small amounts of marijuana, making the penalty a fine equivalent to a traffic ticket. And in 2014, it was third to fully legalize the drug, behind only Washington and Colorado.

Since, the state has lowered several penalties for

possession of illegal drugs.

But treating possession of drugs, such as heroin or methamphetamine, as a minor noncriminal violation could spark a fierce political debate.

"Decriminalizing all drug possession would be an extremely reckless move," said Washington County District Attorney Kevin Barton.

While seeking to decriminalize drug use, the alliance's ballot measure would require the state to make major increases in funding for drug addiction treatment in Oregon. The state would have to pump at least \$57 million in the first year into treatment, with the amount growing each year thereafter.

The money would chiefly come from taxes on marijuana sales, which are projected to produce about \$120 million a year for the state. Additional money would be redirected from savings on prosecution and incarceration costs.

Janie Gullickson, the executive director of the Mental Health and Addiction Association of Oregon and one of the chief sponsors of the initiative, said that Oregon is among one of the worst states in the country in terms of providing access to drug treatment.

"The wait list to get treatment is months long, and in some rural counties, there is practically no treatment at all," Gullickson wrote in an email.

At the same time, the initiative has worried some

treatment groups.

Mike Marshall is the director of Oregon Recovers, a coalition of provider groups pushing the state to upgrade its addiction treatment programs. He said he plans to hold a community meeting next month to discuss the initiative's flaws.

He said he sympathizes with the group's goals but calls the measure "too little, too soon and too dangerous."

Marshall said legislators, state officials and health care providers are working on plans to upgrade treatment programs and better tie them into the overall health care system.

He said the measure's treatment goals are not well thought out. And he said it doesn't provide an alternative way of channeling people into treatment that often occurs when addicted drug users are forced into the legal system.

Barton, the Washington County district attorney, said that's one of his major concerns.

"If we completely decriminalize drugs, there will be a whole host of people that will not get the treatment that they need," he said, adding that many of these are "more dangerous and more addictive drugs."

Peter Zuckerman, a communications consultant working on the proposed ballot initiative, wrote in an email that the current approach to drugs has failed.

"We need to start treating addiction as a health issue, not something we crimi-

nally punish people for," he said. "Criminalizing drugs disproportionately harms poor people and people of color, and punishing people who are suffering from drug addiction ruins lives, is more expensive and less effective than treatment."

Zuckerman said he is working with two longtime Oregon political consultants, Mark Wiener and Liz Kaufman. All three worked on the successful 2014 campaign to legalize recreational cannabis in Oregon.

The political arm of the Drug Policy Alliance contributed about \$1.7 million of the \$4 million campaign waged to pass that ballot measure. The alliance played a key role in similar pro-cannabis efforts around the country.

Polls show voters around the country support marijuana legalization by strong majorities, and many social justice groups argue that criminalizing drug use has been devastating to many minority communities. The opioid addiction crisis, which has hit many rural areas hard, has also spurred a rethinking of how to handle illegal drug use.

Portland research shows vaping illness may not be new

By KRISTIAN FODEN-VENCIL
Oregon Public Broadcasting

PORTLAND — In 2011, Cathy Markin, a lung doctor at Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland, had a 42-year-old patient who came to her with serious breathing problems. She had suffered from a cough and a fever. She had also vaped for about seven months.

Markin looked at the fluid in the patient's lungs and diagnosed lipoid pneumonia. That's the appearance of oil in the lungs. Regular pneumonia is mucus in the lungs.

Markin suggested she stop vaping, and her lungs cleared up. She wrote an article on the case, which appeared in CHEST, a publication for the American College of Chest Physicians.

Markin said she had another case three years ago, so she's not sure what's new with this recent outbreak.

"I think part of it is that

more people are vaping. More physicians are recognizing that vaping could be playing a role in unexplained respiratory failure. But I also think that there's something different going on out there. We wouldn't see this cluster of cases unless there was something that was changing out there," Markin said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is not ruling out contaminants. It just activated an Emergency Operations Center to continue investigations into 380 cases across 36 states.

The Food and Drug Administration is testing more than 100 samples from those states, and has not ruled out problems linked to contaminants, such as THC, Vitamin E acetate, nicotine, diluting agents, cannabinoids, additives, pesticides and poisons.

Oregon Health Authority officials said the agency is still investigating cases in the state to determine the cause of the latest illnesses.

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