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### PENDLETON

## Librarian discovers U.S. news ignored Holocaust

Exhibit at the library probes what Americans really know

By TRISH YERGES  
For East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The “Americans and the Holocaust” traveling exhibition at the Pendleton Public Library is attracting visitors and raising eyebrows about what Americans knew about the systematic genocide of millions of European Jews and millions of others.

Assistant library director James Simpson, who is working on a related project to digitize data on the holocaust for future use by researchers, said, “The information on the (exhibit) panels is supposed to provide the viewer with what we knew.”

The exhibit is on display until July 1.

Simpson pointed out that during the 1930s there were not a lot of articles in American newspapers that mentioned German concentration camps, and the ones that did rarely mentioned they held Jewish people. Sometimes articles mentioned so-called “undesirables” or Poles were in the concentration camps, he said, and there was no mention in newspapers of mass annihilations going on at these camps until the 1940s.

Dachau concentration camp in Germany was opened in March 1933, less than two months after Hitler was appointed as chancellor of Germany. One Associated Press article Simpson found reprinted in the East Oregonian read: “Dachau, Germany — Guards today killed three communists and wounded one who were attempting to escape from a concentration camp.”

Other than this brief mention, news on concentration camps and their prisoners was rarely published, Simpson concluded from his research into local newspapers.

### Denial a common theme

However, he did find local newspaper articles about the war in general, articles with anti-Semitic themes, and “articles about Reichstag laws that prevented German Jews from participating in public

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# ‘AGE BUBBLE’ pushes up class size at McKay Elementary School

District shifts resources as fifth grade class booms

By JOHN TILLMAN  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — McKay Elementary School class size looks to grow significantly from fourth grade last year to fifth grade for 2022-23.

Fourth grade had just 19 students per teacher in 2021-22, according to Matt Yoshioka, director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for the Pendleton School District. But class size could rise to 29 in fifth grade for the coming year, he estimated.

Such a projected sharp spike in the student-to-teacher ratio concerns families with children in grade school.

“Several parents have contacted the district to get answers,” said Amy Marvin, mother of a McKay fifth grader, “and there has not been a response. Funding does not seem to be an issue, according to several educators I have spoken to. This would be a huge increase in class size for kids still catching up from pandemic online schooling.”

She said no other school in the district will have classes this large.

### Moving resources to meet needs

Yoshioka said the class size increase is due to the number of students.

“There’s an age bubble at McKay,” he pointed out. “Next year, fifth grade at McKay will have 29 students per teacher, but the year after that, only 22 per class. Last year the classes were 29 and 30 in fifth grade at McKay. This year they were 17 and 19 due to a smaller group coming through.”

Historically, 29 is not out of line in a fifth grade class, he said. Washington Elementary had 24 to 25 students per fifth grade class this year and Sherwood had 27.

“A fifth grade class with a size of 27 to 30 is not out of our norm for any of our schools,” he said.

The district shifts around resources to keep class sizes as even as possible, Yoshioka explained. But hiring more teachers is tough. Enrollment in the district dropped about 36 elementary students this year, which means less state funding.

“When we lose funding, we have to make adjustments,” Yoshioka said.

The district had to look at the big picture as a whole to keep class sizes down as best as possible to make decisions based on the resources it has, Yoshioka stressed.

We continue to make K-3 classrooms the highest priority in keeping class sizes



Yasser Marte/East Oregonian

Parents Amy Marvin, left, and Tiffany Tovar on June 8, 2022, talk about their concerns regarding the fifth grade class increasing in size at McKay Elementary School, Pendleton, in the next school year.

down,” he said, “as these grades have been shown to be the most critical to a child’s academic development.”

*“A FIFTH GRADE CLASS WITH A SIZE OF 27 TO 30 IS NOT OUT OF OUR NORM FOR ANY OF OUR SCHOOLS.”*

— Matt Yoshioka, Pendleton School District director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

### Some parents worry about effects of larger classes

Marvin noted the Oregon Education Department reported average state class size in 2019-20 for fifth grade was 22 students and studies show optimal class size is 15 to 20.

Marvin said her son isn’t struggling as much as some fellow students because her husband is a teacher. Nursing instructor Tiffany Tovar’s son, however, is falling behind. She is concerned about the effect of a 30% increase in student-teacher ratio.

“I have seven students in my class,” Tovar said. “I can’t imagine teaching and grading 31.”

Her son already was on an Individualized

Education Program before online learning during the pandemic put him further behind the curve. He needed extra help in reading and math, requiring in-person instruction.

“This year he experienced an exponential amount of growth, being back in school, playing catch up after the pandemic,” Tovar said. “I fear overcrowding and teacher burn-out next year. It’s not reasonable to expect one teacher to meet the needs of 31 students.”

### Sherwood to have most fifth graders in district

Yoshioka said the district’s largest group of fifth graders next year will be at Sherwood Elementary School.

“Even larger groups are coming up at Sherwood over the next three years, at 96 to 104 students per year. McKay and Washington do not have such large groups. Sherwood is also our largest school by enrollment, currently at 461 students.”

The district has no plans to reduce the number of fifth grade teachers at any school, he said, but Sherwood is getting another grade teacher. Rather than a new position, he said, the district is shifting staff at Sherwood.

“Based on projections, we will have a smaller group of incoming first graders at Sherwood this fall,” Yoshioka concluded. “We do not need five first grade teachers there. We will have four grade one teachers at Sherwood and one additional fifth grade teacher, but the number of total teachers at Sherwood has not increased. Class sizes are still projected to be 20 or 21.”

## A special project

Umatilla robotics students build an off-road wheelchair for a young Baker City boy

By ERICK PETERSON  
East Oregonian

UMATILLA — Gus Macy, son of Levi and Karla of Baker City, is set for a very enjoyable summer, according to his mother. Team Confidential, the Umatilla High School robotics team, is responsible for some of his latest summertime plans.

The team made a wheelchair specifically for 6-year-old Gus, who has spina bifida and is unable to use his legs.

“What we determined to do as a robotics club is to give him a chance to have more activities with his family outside of normal wheelchair activity,” Team Confidential coach and UHS teacher Kyle Sipe said.

He described it as a “trike, retrofitted into an e-bike.” It’s electric, so Gus, who is unable to peddle a bicycle, can use his thumb to control the throttle and operate the chair.

Karla Macy said such chairs, built for off-road adventuring, can cost more than \$20,000. This one, she said, will make a big difference in her son’s life.

“This is a new and exciting way for him to get around,” she said.



Umatilla School District/Contributed Photo

Gus Macy of Baker City checks out his new wheelchair that Team Confidential, the Umatilla High School robotics team, built for him.

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