

Van Fans fundraiser to be all 'fun and games'

Get together with friends for a fun day of card games and lunch at the Van Fans fundraiser Wednesday, Feb. 17.

The fun begins at 11:30 a.m. at the Florence Events Center, 715 Quince St. There will be raffle prizes and other exciting games and happenings throughout the event.

Sign up for a table and choose your game. Ticket price, with or without card games, is \$15 per person and includes the luncheon.

The Friends of Florence Van Fans is a non-political organization that sponsors this event.

All proceeds go to support the Friends of Florence van program, which transports cancer patients every weekday to Eugene and Springfield for

School from 1A

The district submitted the grant application Jan. 15 and expects to learn if it has been selected in February.

Superintendent Ethel Angel said the board would not take the next step until they learn if the state grant has been approved.

"It is the luck of the draw for us," Blake said. "If we are lucky enough to get the \$4 million, we would want to try and do the bond in order to take that off the bill."

The district will only be able to utilize the funds if the bond measure passes.

The nearly 50-year-old high school facility is the oldest building in the district.

According to Blake, costs have increased significantly since the middle school was built in 1999. The rough estimate to build a new high school is approximately \$35 million.

"There is still a lot to consider in whether we want to go out for an election in May," Blake said. "We are another year out if we look to the November election. The cost increases are what make me a little bit nervous.

"The maintenance costs are increasing at the high school, because our systems are aging. They are reaching the end of their lifecycle. We thought this would be the perfect time to take a look at going out for another bond," she added. Angal said a cafeteria would be a priority in the new high school plans. "The present high school does not have a cafeteria," she said. "It is a challenge, especially when so many kids in our district are eligible for free or reduced-cost lunches." Food for the high school lunch program must be brought over from the middle school kitchen. Blake feels that this is the primary reason fewer students participate in the high school lunch program than the elementary or middle school programs. The board will not take the next step until they learn if the state grant proposal has been approved. If it is, then the board plans to form several committees made up of board members, school staff and members of the community. "It feels premature to be talking in detail, because a lot of the details will be strongly influenced by what our community sees and wants," Angal said. "We are hoping that they want the same things, but we know better than to ask for input and then not take it. We are taking the input with an open heart and an open mind." Angal and Blake are concerned about waiting until the middle school bond is paid off in 2019 because there is no guarantee the state will continue the matching grant fund beyond the 2016-17 biennium. "We could wait and see if the state will release more funds in the next biennium," Blake said. "But then we are looking a couple of years farther before making a decision and that feels a little too far down the



COURTESY PHOTO

Card games will be among the many fun activities during this year's Van Fans fundraiser.

radiation treatments. For more information or to

road for my comfort zone."

If the state approves the

funding grant and voters

approve the bond measure,

then the district has six months

of a bond, and of concern to the

taxpayers who will finance the

bond, is the creditworthiness of

finance our kindergarten facili-

ty through Oregon Pacific

Bank," Blake explained, "we

were told we had an excellent

According to Blake, there is

"We want to make sure that

a lot of nostalgia connected to

the community has input on

the high school facilities.

"When we went out to

A key factor in the salability

to sell the bond.

the school district.

rating."

sign up for card games, call Karen Lee at 541-997-9669.

how we can keep some of that history here, even though we are going to move forward with a new building," she said.

Many basic questions still need answers, such as where to construct the new building and whether to begin construction at the end or beginning of a school year.

But the question of the moment is, will the district get the \$4 million grant from the state?

"I think that would be the tipping factor," Angal said. "We live in exciting times."

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Rhody

"We will still have a Queen Rhododendra, but the entire team will win prizes," Wobbe added.

from 1A

Each Senior Princess now has a team of three to four Junior Court members. They will have a team name, color, uniform and motto that goes with the nautical "Catch the Wave" theme.

Anderson's team is called the Walloping Whales and includes Flansberg, Waggoner and Kenji Tanikawa. Coolidge's team is the Jumping Jellyfish. Her Junior members are Dascher, Wall and Jones. Keppol's team, the Electric Eels, has Selig, Armer, Garcia Galvan and Meadows.

"They will compete at the showcase as a team," Wobbe said.

Jared Anderson and Meg Spencer return to produce the Scholarship Showcase on Wednesday, May 11.

Wobbe said it may feature tug-o-war and other games. "The Showcase will actually

gear around the talents of our teams," she said.

The Rhody Court is not all about games, however. In the

months leading up to the Showcase and the Rhododendron Festival on May 20-22, the court will visit community events, business leaders, senior living centers, youth organizations and civic groups with an emphasis on giving back.

Wobbe said, "If we can put more emphasis on promoting that at a younger age, we get to really intervene in young kids' lives at a time when having an extra person in their life can be really helpful."

Court members will receive one-on-one mentorship from advisers. The Senior Princesses will mentor their teams.

The Rhododendron Court program provides scholarships for higher education, promotes community outreach and volunteerism and offers mentoring opportunities in a program that perpetuates an appreciation for 109 years of Rhododendron Festival history and tradition.

This is a transitional year for the Rhody Court, said Wobbe, who again will be the master of ceremonies for the showcase, but she thinks it will be her last.

"This is a wonderful program and the benefits are good for the students," she said. "A lot of sponsors stay involved in the students' lives."

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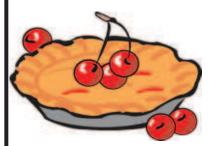
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Kick-off Party!

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www.RelayForLife.org/FlorenceOR

For more information or to enter a chili or bring a dessert, please contact: Bonnie Ell, #971.219.9949, bonnie.ell@cancer.org