



Ned  
Hickson

## Tip for coaching kids' basketball: Bring jelly donuts

As I've mentioned before, I'm not very athletic. I made this realization in the third-grade, when I was knocked unconscious 32 times playing dodge ball.

After that first game, I remember waking up in the nurse's office and being told of a special program for "gifted" athletes who were so special they got to wear a football helmet during recess.

Of course, I eventually figured out there was no "special athletes program," and openly expressed my feelings of betrayal when I slammed my helmet on the desk of my high school counselor.

After which I was taken to the

hospital with a broken finger.

I live with the memory of being an unathletic child on a daily basis. Particularly when I look in the mirror and see a man whose head still fits into a third-grade football helmet.

For this reason, many years ago when my daughter asked me to coach her fourth-grade basketball team, I smiled, took her hand and began faking a seizure. I panicked at the thought of providing guidance to a team of fourth-grade girls, any one of whom could take me to the hole.

Of course, that didn't matter to my daughter; she just wanted Dad to coach her team.

Knowing this attitude would eventually change (possibly by the end of our first practice), I made the decision to put aside my own petty fears and be her team's coach.

In addition, I also put aside some petty cash for psychological treatment later.

To prepare myself as coach, I read books about fundamental basketball skills. I talked with other coaches. I installed a tiny basketball hoop over the trashcan in my office. Before long, I had gained confidence knowing that with hard work and determination, someone would be able to undo the damage I was doing.

For our first practice, we worked on free throws and lay-ups. I chose these areas because, as everyone knows, they are the most common — and easiest ways — of scoring a basket.

Unless you are me.

As it turns out, repeatedly sending a wad of paper through a six-inch hoop over your trashcan doesn't mean you'll be able to sink a

regulation basketball from the free throw line. Particularly if your entire team and most of its parents are watching, in some cases using their iPhones to send live images to friends while laughing hysterically.

Confident that I had taught my team an important lesson in determination, humility and the value of having a "shared minutes" plan, we moved on to lay-ups. It was at this point I asked parents to please put their phones away.

In addition to the distraction it was causing, there were also safety issues to consider since many parents had now moved under the backboard to get a better angle.

When practice ended a week later (okay, but it felt like a week) we joined hands and reached an important understanding as a team:

The coach has no "game."

Apparently, my players didn't see

this as a problem. What mattered to them most was whether I could be trusted, as their coach, to coordinate the snack rotation.

I assured them I could, and things went pretty well; they brought "game," and I brought jelly donuts.

This year, my wife is joining me in coaching first- and second-graders at our local Boys and Girls Club.

Hopefully between the two of us — and given the fact that the rim is at eye level — we can bring "game."

But I'm bringing jelly donuts anyway, just in case.

(Ned Hickson is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation. Write to him at nedhickson@icloud.com or c/o Siuslaw News, 148 Maple St., Florence, Ore. 97439)

## March

from 1A

According to many participants, the main reason for the march was the ongoing belief that U.S. President Donald Trump does not represent their values and may indeed be acting against women's interests and those of the country.

The primary organizers of the 2018 march are a group of people affiliated with the Florence ORganizes (FOR), an action group formed last year in response to the election of Trump. FOR was instrumental in the 2017 Women's March.

According to some members of FOR, many of the president's policies are divisive and fundamentally at odds with American values.

Stephanie Spradling, Internal Communication Coordinator for FOR, spoke to the motivation for this year's march.

"We are very concerned with what is taking place in our democracy. The Trump administration is taking a more authoritarian position on issues that are fundamental to our democracy and he is undermining institutions like the Department of Justice, the CIA and the FBI," she said. "We are also extremely concerned that Trump lies constantly, seemingly about anything, and we believe he is trying to muddy the waters surrounding the FBI investigation

into his ties with Russia. We believe this is a danger to our democracy."

Saturday morning started out gray and chilly, but by the time the march began at 11 a.m., there was just a slight curtain of precipitation drifting down. Patches of blue were visible in the sky as the upbeat group began the short walk up to Highway 101 and back down Rhododendron Street.

The age of the participants ranged from infants to octogenarians, with many marchers wearing pink and purple. There were about half the people from the inaugural year.

One thing that became clear during this year's march was a more pointed concern about the president and the policies he supports.

This is opposed to last year, when organizer Nin Bebeau said, "He is there to give us a wake up call, but this is not about Trump. This is about women. This is the time for us to make our voices heard and for us to be responsible for our own ideas, goals and what we think is best for the country. We are not against Donald Trump, we are for women's empowerment."

Spradling said that this year, millions of people across the country, across the world and across the political spectrum were protesting the policies and behavior of the president.

One of the major issues



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

"We had women, men, children and even dogs marching," said FOR member Eileen Angilletta about Saturday's Women's March in Florence.

concerning the marchers was the current standoff surrounding DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) legislation and the need to resolve the issue with respect for other cultures and the people impacted by the controversy.

"We are marching after being in consultation with women's groups from across the country and across the world," Spradling said. "There are sisters across this nation that are very concerned with what is taking place in our democracy and they want their voices to be heard."

Florence City Councilor Ron Preisler attended the march not to protest the president, but to support the more overarching issue of women's

rights.

"I felt it important to attend the march to show solidarity with women in their struggle for equal rights," Preisler said. "This includes choice, health-care, pay equity and the recent publicity about how workplace sexual abuse is prevalent in our society. By my participation, I wanted to show that many men are aware of their struggle and stand in full support of their issues."

Another topic that concerned marchers was the president's continuing actions against the press and the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

When asked to elaborate on these issues, several marchers asked to remain anonymous.

One of these was a retired school administrator who has been the recipient of hostility and threats while peacefully holding signs of protest on local street corners.

This man expressed concern that the current president is eroding the freedoms inherent in the U.S. democracy and debasing the office he holds.

"America used to be the shining city on a hill," the protester said. "In addition, much of that allure had to do with the First Amendment, freedom of speech and the independent nature of our press. This president does not seem to recognize this essential component of our democracy and continually denigrates one or our most important means of hold-

ing people in power accountable — the press."

Another marcher, Bonnie Costa, carried a sign that supported freedom of the press.

"I went to the Women's March because I had recently seen the movie 'The Post.' It reminded me that our freedoms can be lost if we do not act to protect them," Costa said.

FOR member Eileen Angilletta gave a speech at the beginning of the march to "remind everyone of the progress women made during 2017."

"We have encouraged people here in town to get involved locally by attending town halls and other events," Angilletta said. "Smaller groups have come out of the larger group of FOR to address local issues such as plastic recycling, beach clean ups and much more. I believe that our community is more informed now in 2018 due to people getting involved."

When asked what broader message march organizers wanted to share with the community, the answer from Spradling was clear.

"When we start dividing people into groups and turning them against each other for political reasons, that is wrong and it is un-American," she said. "That is why we marched in Florence and why millions of us marched across the country."

## Remodel

from 1A

One of the needs the students voiced was for a gathering place during breaks. Currently, the students mainly congregate in the halls during lunch and before and after school.

"That was the one thing they really wanted because they didn't have their own space," said O'Mara. "So, the architects helped us design a new student area that's about the size of a classroom that will be student friendly. It actually will exit out on the courtyard."

Another problem the high school students faced was with food service. Currently, students have to trek across campus to get lunch on the upper campus where the elementary is located.

"We'll be delivering lunch (at the high school) and have an area that we serve food out of. That area is also across from the gym, so it can serve a dual purpose as a concession stand for volleyball and basketball games," O'Mara said.

Along with upgrades inside the building, the outside of the high school will have a very different look.

"The glass blocks will be gone," O'Mara said. "New siding, new windows. The front will look different because the classrooms coming out of the library will have an exit. There will be more exits out."

A vestibule at the entrance will be installed, allowing an extra level of security for the students.

The entry door will be unlocked, but visitors will need to check in with the front office before they can access the rest of the building.

Work is also being done to make the school seismically safe.

Despite all the changes, O'Mara and the designers worked hard to ensure the charm of the original building

will not be lost.

"The characteristics that make Mapleton 'Mapleton' will remain," O'Mara said. "The anchor will be staying. The senior bench is still going to still be the senior bench, it's just going to be more centrally located near the student commons. The characteristics that make this the Mapleton school will remain."

Ultimately, O'Mara hopes that the changes to the school will not only benefit the students, but the community as a whole. The little-used junior high school will be converted to a community center, where the public can come in, use high-speed internet and hold meetings. Other plans are in the work for the building, including a space for mental

health services for students, with the eventual goal of creating a community healthcare space.

"The school in Mapleton, and I think in any community, is the heart of the community," O'Mara said.

The project is scheduled to be completed by graduation of this year, which will mark the end of the construction bond.

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