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Patricia Gallagher reads "Back of the Bus" to a group of children at the Monmouth Public Library on March 25.

LITERATURE LOVER

Children's book award named after Monmouth resident

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Isaac Hoffman, 2, loved the first book read by Carrie Kasperick at the Monmouth Public Library. It was "Three Hens and a Peacock."

Every time he saw a glimpse of blue on the page, he yelled out, "Peacock!"

The book was one of five nominated for the Patricia Gallagher Picture Book Award, a children's choice award.

After learning the fate of the relationship between the hens and peacock, Monmouth resident Gallagher, herself, took a turn reading a book, "Back of the Bus" — the first time she has read in public in about five years.

Gallagher immediately captured the attention of everyone in the room, pulling them into the story.

"This is an interesting story because there is a character in this book that was a real live person, Rosa Parks," she explained. "The rest of the characters

Learn More

The Patricia Gallagher Picture Book Award is open to all grade-school children. The five nominated books may be voted on once children have either read each of them or they have been read to the child. Voting deadline is May 1, and may be completed in a classroom, school library or public library. The books are: "Back of the Bus," by Aaron Reynolds, illustrated by Floyd Cooper; "In the Wild," by David Elliott, illustrated by Holly Meade; "Joha Makes a Wish," by Eric Kimmel, illustrated by Omar Rayyan; "Tarra and Bella," by Carol Buckley, illustrated with photos; and "Three Hens and a Peacock," by Lester L. Laminack, illustrated by Henry Cole. For more information about the award or books: oregonread.org.

are fictional. Aaron Reynolds (the author) made them up. Her story is absolutely true; but the little boy's story is

made up."

The words used in the book sound differently from those people in Monmouth use, Gallagher, 84, said.

"He tells the story in a very special English that is partly black dialect, the language of his people in Montgomery, Ala.," she said.

And then she began reading the tale of a young boy sitting in the very back of the bus, playing with his marble, on his way home with his mother at the end of the day. Also sitting on that bus is Rosa Parks, who is arrested for not moving for a white person to sit.

The feeling in the library room changed. Children and adults alike were enchanted — almost like they were on that bus with the boy, the marble and Parks.

It was as if Gallagher knew the book by heart, bringing the story to life of how Parks helped changed the nation.

It is no wonder, then, that the picture book award was named after Gallagher.

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WOU narrows president search

Four finalists visiting Monmouth campus starting this week

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Western Oregon University is poised to officially be independent from the Oregon University System, which will dissolve on July 1.

With the board of trustees named, all that's left is finding a replacement for President Mark Weiss, who will retire effective June 30.

After reading 45 applications for the post, four finalists were chosen to make campus visits, starting Wednesday (today) and continuing through Tuesday.

The four candidates scheduled to be interviewed for WOU's presidency are Fernando Delgado, Christo-



Ames Delgado Fuller Madden

pher Ames, Margaret Madden and Rex Fuller.

Delgado, 48, currently working as provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, said he was attracted to Western Oregon for a couple of reasons.

"The mission of the university, and the faculty and staff commitment to it," he

said. "The profile of the students and the geography itself played a role in that as well."

Making the move back to the western states is something the San Francisco Bay Area native would look forward to, Delgado said.

He said the president needs to be embedded in the community both on and off campus.

"The president is often 'the face' for the university and has a primary role of making sure that campus is vibrant and healthy, connected to the external community," Delgado said.

Ames, 58, works as the vice president of academic affairs at Shepherd University in Shepherdstown, W.Va. He also was attracted to WOU's mission of providing accessible, affordable, high-quality education.

"That's an important niche in the higher education market today, and Western has done a really good job of it," Ames said. "They have made the education gap a high priority, and had success with (closing that gap)."

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IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS NEWS

Most longtime residents of Dallas have a story about the Blue Garden in downtown Dallas — memories of its hopping heyday.

Those days may come back — at least that is the hope of prospective new owner Bob Collins.

Collins is in the process of buying the deteriorated 125-year-old building, located at 827 Main St. The sale is currently in escrow, but with rumors running around town about its possible purchase, he decided to come forward about his plans for the landmark.

A 35-year Dallas resident and owner of Collins & Linsly Construction, he has his own Blue Garden story.

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FALLS CITY NEWS

Falls City has submitted a grant application to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to purchase and improve the property at the city's namesake falls.

Currently, the Falls City Alliance owns the property on the north side of the falls, purchased with money borrowed from the city's revolving loan fund, about \$133,000.

The grant, through the department's Local Government Grant Program, would allow for the city to buy the property. Funding also would be available to improve access to that side of the falls, build a viewing platform, pavilion and restrooms.

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INDEPENDENCE NEWS

With the exceptionally warm winter this year, it's felt like spring for weeks.

The opening of two farmers markets in Independence on Saturday makes it official.

Martha Walton, manager of the 22nd annual Original Independence Farmers Market, said the warm weather has been making things grow too fast.

"We'll see what Mother Nature presents us with in April," she said. "In years past, she's not been very nice to us in April."

Regardless of weather, the Original Independence Farmers Market will be open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday.

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MONMOUTH NEWS

After one of the most successful seasons in program history, the Western Oregon men's basketball team is in search of a new coach.

Brady Bergeson accepted the head coaching position for Regis University's men's basketball team on Friday.

Bergeson went 69-45 during his four-year tenure. The 2014-15 season was his most successful: WOU finished 23-7, the first time Western Oregon won 20 games in a single season since the 1996-97 campaign. The Wolves also won the Great Northwest Athletic Conference regular season title.

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POLK COUNTY NEWS

The deadline has come and gone for the May 19 ballot, and little interest was shown in running for open positions.

No race is contested in the bid for seats on boards of water districts, fire districts and school districts in Polk County.

In fact, two seats on the Central School District Board of Directors had no candidates file for the position. A number of positions on various water districts also have no candidates interested.

The one issue on the ballot that should attract voters is the Polk County public safety tax levy.

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<p>THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK</p>	<p>wed</p> <p>Need some laughs? Art Klug headlines an evening of comedy entertainment at Pressed Coffee & Wine Bar in Dallas. 7:30 p.m. \$15-\$20.</p> <p>Showers Hi: 56 Lo: 36</p>	<p>thu</p> <p>Salem's Heidi Schulz, author of "Hook's Revenge," will give a talk and do a book signing at the Dallas Public Library. 4 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Mostly Cloudy Hi: 57 Lo: 36</p>	<p>fri</p> <p>Legendary jazz organist Dr. Lonnie Smith and the Dr. Lonnie Smith Trio perform at WOU's Rice Auditorium. 7:30 p.m. \$11-\$28.</p> <p>Mostly Cloudy Hi: 56 Lo: 38</p>	<p>sat</p> <p>Bring your appetite to the Monmouth Senior Center for the monthly all-you-can-eat community breakfast. 8:30-10:30 a.m. \$6.</p> <p>Showers Likely Hi: 55 Lo: 38</p>	<p>sun</p> <p>It may be Easter, but the Polk Flea Market will be open for its monthly sales session at the fairgrounds in Rickreall. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. \$1.</p> <p>Showers Likely Hi: 54 Lo: 38</p>	<p>mon</p> <p>Sports trivia: Baseball season has arrived. Did you know that the American League began using the designated hitter on this date in 1973?</p> <p>Showers Likely Hi: 56 Lo: 39</p>	<p>tue</p> <p>The baseball and softball teams at Dallas and Central high schools are all hosting conference home games. 4:30 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Rain Hi: 60 Lo: 42</p>
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