

Grant Union students gain political experience

Trio shares highlights of learning and fun

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY – Three Grant Union students took their political knowledge to a new level with a hands-on experience at this year's Girls State Session.

Railey Namitz, Samantha Brock and Avery Lenz, seniors, attended Girls State June 14-20 at Willamette University in Salem.

The trio shared highlights from their trip at the American Legion and Auxiliary dinner Nov. 9 with family and friends attending.

Girls State chairwoman Tammy Bremner said the girls had a positive and memorable time.

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"They learned that their voice is important, and it's OK to express their own opinions – that they could be passionate."

Tammy Bremner
Girls State chairwoman

voice is important, and it's OK to express their own opinions – that they could be passionate," she said.

The girls were voted into political positions for city, county and state, learning and simulating how governmental and public systems work.

Namitz and Lenz served in the House of Representatives.

A girl in the group, from another school, wrote a bill which is, in reality, being considered by the Oregon House of Representatives.

Namitz said the girl advocated for regular scoliosis screenings for students, and said if she'd been screened,

it may have prevented her scoliosis from progressing.

All three Grant Union girls said their time at the session was a life-changing, eye-opening experience.

"It gives a sense of the issues going on," Namitz said.

"And how heated the debates are in the House and Senate," Lenz added.

Other highlights for Lenz included watching a mock trial of a girl "convicted" of murder, and the candlelight ceremony to honor veterans.

Brock, who was voted to the Senate, said she learned the importance of voting and being involved.

"It was probably one of the best experiences I've had to

expand my horizons," she said.

Besides all the important knowledge gained from the event, the girls also enjoyed getting to know the other girls in their groups, and a dance for the Girls State and Boys State attendees – both sessions are held at Willamette.

Namitz said the week was "definitely a wonderful time."

Auxiliary president Ruth Harris, representing the Lion's Club, and Carl Lino were thanked for sponsoring the girls.

Lino sponsors Girls State each year in memory of his late wife, Sondra Lino, who was the Oregon Girls State Director from 2003-2011.



Contributed photo

Three Grant Union seniors took center stage at the American Legion and Auxiliary dinner Nov. 9 where they shared their experiences from last summer's Girls State session. From left, Railey Namitz, Girls State chairman Tammy Bremner, Samantha Brock, sponsor Carl Lino and Avery Lenz. In front is Ruth Harris, the American Legion Auxiliary president also representing the Lions Club.

GRANGE

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Maudean Brown of Mt. Vernon is one of the long-timers. Brown ran her own event, which she called "Christmas in Mt. Vernon," as far back as the early 1970s when she still owned her ceramic shop. Mary Lou Drury and Patricia Ross were co-organizers of that event.

About 12 years ago, after closing her ceramics shop, Brown joined the vendors at the Mt. Vernon Grange bazaar. Among other home-sewn crafts, she is known for her microwave potato bags.

Michele Bishop of Canyon City has been an avid participant at the Mt. Vernon bazaar for the past six years.

"I love interacting with people and seeing repeat customers," Bishop said.

"I love all the vendors – it's like family," she added.

Another regular vendor, P.J. Wunz, said, "It's fun to get to visit with people and besides – plus, I have to have some outlet for all my crafts."

According to Sagert, the Grange bazaar has many of the same dedicated vendors year after year, most of whom are eager to sign up well in advance.

"If I don't get the letter out by the first of October, I have some vendors calling to see if we are doing the bazaar," Sagert said.

"The past few years we have been sold out of tables by the middle of October, and I start a waiting list in case someone has to cancel," she said.

The first Mt. Vernon Grange building, which was "in town," burned to the ground in 1949. The Mt. Vernon Fire Department had just acquired a new engine, and that was its first assignment, Sagert said.

In 1953, the Grange was rebuilt in its present location – about a mile east of town – on land donated by the Holland family and with the labor of Grange members.

For the past year, the building was in dire straits due to a failed septic system, but the tank has finally been replaced. Sagert said the Grange appreciates all the members and local businesses who helped with the repair.

The building may be rented out for such activities as events, meetings, family functions and celebrations for \$55 a day.

Sagert said like many local groups, the Grange is in need of more members, and they encourage all Grant County residents to consider joining. It can be a hardship, she said, because in order to conduct business, they need a quorum of members.

According to Sagert, the Strawberry Grange in Prairie City is merging with the Mt. Vernon Grange, and they are hopeful more members will begin attending the meetings from that collaboration.

The Mt. Vernon Grange meets the second Friday of each month. As with the group's annual fundraisers, food is involved; a potluck



Eagle photos/Cheryl Hoefler

Frequent bazaar vendor Billie Bullard, left, chats with shopper Peggy Clark at the Mt. Vernon Grange Bazaar Nov. 14.



Harriet Crum of Mt. Vernon, left, pays for a 'top secret' gift from vendor Tim Coe of Prairie City.

dinner is at 6:30 p.m. and the general meeting is at 7:30 p.m.

Those attending are "guaranteed to have a great meal every month," Sagert said.

Anyone interested in joining the Mt. Vernon Grange, or renting the building, can call Ron Dowse, master, at 541-575-4268, or Sagert at 541-575-1007.

HUNTERS STEW

Recipe by Marge Porfily

Hunters Stew

This hearty stew, a tradition at the annual Mt. Vernon Grange holiday bazaar, is from the recipe files of long-time Grange member Marge Porfily, formerly of Mt. Vernon and John Day. The large quantities here are for preparing the amount of stew needed to serve shoppers at the bazaar, which averages 80-100 bowls full.

20 lbs. potatoes
10 lbs. carrots
1 lg. stalk celery
1 lg. head of cabbage
3 large onions
1 bag of pearl barley
3 #10 cans of diced tomatoes

1 large bottle of catsup
15-20 lbs. hamburger
Seasonings

Cut potatoes, carrots, celery, cabbage and onion into small pieces.

Cook the barley until done.

Cook all items, except the hamburger, individually until done.

Cook the hamburger with seasoning until done.

Mix all vegetables with the barley, tomatoes, catsup and hamburger.

Place in smaller containers to cool overnight in the refrigerator.

Heat and serve the next day.

Auxiliary Bazaar
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Please bring donations to the Blue Mountain Eagle office by Wednesday, December 16th at 5pm.

The drawing will be held December 17th and the WINNER will be notified that day. All participants will be highlighted in the December 23rd issue of the Eagle.

Thank you for supporting our community!

If you have any questions, please call Lindsay at 541-575-0710.



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