



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

The Grant Union senior band won the March 16 Special District 4 band competition in Hermiston. Front row, from left: Ali Chobo, McKeeley Miller, Rose Allen, Chloe Bentz and Mariah Boyd. Back row: Chase Workman, Alyssa Hoffman, Jeffrey Hensley (back), Kohlten Jones, director Mary Ann Vidourek, (back), Samantha Floyd, Ricky Weickum (with drum in back), Carle Wright, Sam Bentz and Connor White.

Grant Union senior band wins district contest

Tri-County Band Festival set for March 16 in John Day

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

HERMISTON — The Grant Union senior band, led by director Mary Ann Vidourek, won the March 16 2A/1A Special District 4 band competition.

"I was thrilled, and this is our fourth consecutive year winning," she said.

To qualify for state, a band has to meet certain requirements, including playing in a certain amount of time and playing repertoire from a list provided.

The state band competition is in May at Oregon State University.

She said the junior-senior choir also performed well, but didn't qualify for state.

"We received good scores and marks and comments," she said. "I'm proud of their progress as a 7 through 12 (grades) choir."

Vidourek said she was especially proud of the 14-piece ensemble.

"We have excellent instrumentation with many students being the only instrument on their part — each person is very important," she said. "We received a very high sight-reading score."

Vidourek announced a Tri-County Band Festival concert at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 6, at Grant Union's old gym. Admission is \$1.

"It gives kids who play in small bands the opportunity to play in a 125-plus member ensemble."

Mary Ann Vidourek
Band director

Band students from Weston-McEwen, Stanfield, Heppner, Irrigon, Riverside and Grant Union will practice all day for the event with band clinician, retired Burns High School band director Ken Peckham.

"It gives kids who play in small bands the opportunity to play in a 125-plus member ensemble," Vidourek said.



Contributed photo

Railey Namitz of John Day, a member of the Grant County 4-H program, gets up close with the Florida wildlife during a trip to Marine Science Camp in mid-February.

4-H NOTES

Marine camp: an 'amazing experience'

By Railey Namitz
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

As a 4-H member, I was given the opportunity to participate in a marine camp called Ocean Watch in 2013 on the Oregon Coast. This camp led me to make many great friends and contacts in the 4-H state office. One of those contacts, and friends, was Andy Hoffman. Two years later, Andy invited me back to another marine camp. But this one would be in Florida from Feb. 14-20, 2016.

For months, this trip seemed very out of reach. I used most of my spare moments earning money for my plane ticket and was also sponsored by the Grant County 4-H Association and Oregon Fairs Association. Once school started, time flew by. Before I knew it, I was in Portland waiting to board my plane. Of course, being my first time on a plane and afraid of heights, I was very nervous. But everyone on the trip, though I had never met them beforehand, was very kind and supportive.

While in Florida, we stayed at a 4-H camp center. From there, we went to the Archbold Biological Station

located in central Florida near the Everglades. At the station, I was allowed to hold a python and learn the nature of how they came to live in Florida. The next day, our group hiked through everglade trails. The water was so black in places that you could not even see your own reflection. Virginia, one of our leaders, found the boardwalk too sketchy for her, so she waited by the vans for us.

That night we had a bonfire, silly string fight and got our food stolen by a family of raccoons. The next few days were spent down at Sea Camp, which is located by the keys of Florida. We went snorkeling, dissecting and enjoyed exploring the island. I learned about the ecosystems in Florida and how they differ from Oregon. I now want to possibly intern at Sea Camp, and I am considering a career in marine biology or Extension work. I made such great friends and will never forget this amazing experience.

Railey Namitz is a member of the Sharpshooters club, part of the Grant County 4-H program. A senior at Grant Union Junior-Senior High School, she lives in John Day.

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MARCH 30



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