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Humbolt plans to combine third and fourth grades

Parents express concerns

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

Parents are worried blending third- and fourth-grade classes at Humbolt Elementary School may not be the best thing for their children.

School board members attempted to assuage fears about having two grade levels in a single class while expressing their own concerns during a June 7 school board meeting.

The blend will merge the third- and fourth-grade classes in the 2017-18 school year. Recess, lunch, library, physical education, music, science, social studies and writing will be in the blended setting, while math and reading will be taught by separating students into grade levels, according to Humbolt Principal Kim Smith.

The blend is being considered because of a combination of lowered state test scores and a smaller second-grade class, according to Smith.

This school year's second-grade class consisted of 37 students, while the third- and fourth-grade classes consisted of 46 and 42 students, respectively.

With two teachers per grade, Humbolt students still had smaller classroom sizes than the state average of 30 students, according to Smith.

The blended class is predicted to consist of four classrooms with 21 students each. Students will have two classroom teachers, one for their blended class and one for their grade level core instruction, Smith said.

Heather Rookstool, a parent with a child going into fourth grade, expressed concerns about the change at the school board meeting.

Rookstool said she was disappointed in a lack of communication by the school's administration, and she felt the decision had been made without involving parents. She said, if the decision was set in stone, she would deal with it. However, she said the lack of communication was seriously affecting the school.

She described the school as once being "happy and bubbly," but said now teachers were leaving the school because of poor communication with the administration.

"I feel like that school is broken," she said. Sena Raschio expressed concern her fourth-grade son's personality would lead him to tutor younger students in the blended class instead of learning new material. She felt her parental choice as to how her child was taught was taken away.

Samantha Phillips worried her son might be left behind in a blended class and was considering moving him to the Dayville School, where he would still be in a blended class but with fewer



The Eagle/Rylan Boggs
School board member Gordon Larson.

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'62 DAYS IS 'GOLDEN'

Whiskey Gulch Gang celebrates with a bang

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Whiskey Gulch Gang's annual '62 Days celebration in Canyon City went off without a hitch.

Rain held off for the Gold Rush Run and Walk 5K and Hope 4 Paws benefit breakfast.

Although sprinkles threatened later that morning, clouds parted for the '62 Days parade.

Grant County Commissioner Boyd Britton, at the microphone, announced it was the 50th parade in the event's history.

Janine Goodwin of Prairie City sang the national anthem as John Day's Boy Scouts of America Troop 800 posted the colors.

Parade organizer Leslie Traylor said she was happy with the parade, which had 25 entries.

The Whiskey Gulch Can-Can Girls won first for the schools/organizations division for their float and a \$100 prize for theme.

Traylor said the group was in keeping with the "Miner's Eclipse" parade theme. Their float also included a miner and a goat along with the can-can dancers.

The Rocky Top Riders won first place for mounted groups, wearing black outfits symbolizing the upcoming total solar eclipse.

Mindy and Abby Winegar won first in decorated vehicle and the sweepstakes for their Grant County Rug Rats entry, honoring the late Mary Jane Allen.

'62 Days Parade results

- Commercial**
Mtn. View Mini Mart, first
KJJD's Cowboy Fast Draw Competition, second
John Day Polaris, third
- Schools/Organizations**
Whiskey Gulch Can-Can Girls, first
Grant/Harney Fire Prevention Co-op, second
John Day Volunteer and Rural Fire Department, third
- Non-motorized**
Bed Race Contest entry, first
- Classic Vehicles**
Ron Phillips, '27 Model A, first
- Decorated Vehicles**
Grant County Rug Rats, first
- Mounted Group**
Rocky Top Riders 4-H Club, first
Grant County Fair Court, second
Strawberry Riders 4-H Club, third
- Derby Cars**
Steve Patterson, first
- ATV/Motorized**
Grant County Snowballers, first
- Best in Theme (\$100 prize):**
Whiskey Gulch Can-Can Girls Sweepstakes: Grant County Rug Rats, Abby and Mindy Winegar

In front, LeRoy Gillies, aka "Cody," of Boise, Idaho, wins a round at Friday's Oregon State Fast Draw Championship in Canyon City.



Four-year-old Hayla Reilly of Prairie City rides the parade route atop Rooster with Chelsey McDaniel leading.

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Rainbow gathering choosing Oregon location

Malheur National Forest among possibilities

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Malheur National Forest could host an annual gathering of thousands known as the Rainbow Family gathering.

Adam Buxbaum, a Rainbow gathering attendee, said it's not yet known where the gathering will be held. He said the decision would be made within the month at the Spring Council, taking place on the Umatilla National Forest in northern Grant County.

"This is an open circle which anyone can attend and participate in," he said. "It is the circle which will make the determination by consensus of which site we will use to host the annual Rainbow gathering."

Following the council's decision, which usually takes between two and five days, those present will move to the decided upon area and begin preparing the site, he said.

“The Rainbow gathering could land anywhere in Oregon that has a national forest.”

Adam Buxbaum
Rainbow gathering attendee

This is when most of the infrastructure is developed, according to Buxbaum.

"The Rainbow gathering could land anywhere in Oregon that has a national forest," he said. "Spring Council is

usually within an hour or two drive of the best site or two that people have located while scouting."

The Forest Service's main concern with the influx of such a large group of people are the effects on natural resources, public safety and the impact on the community, Malheur National Forest Public Affairs Specialist Mike Stearly said.

The Rainbow gathering will be managed by a federal incident management team with law enforcement officers and advisors. The team will be similar to those dispatched for wildfires and

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Two injured in stabbing at Rainbow gathering meeting

Blue Mountain Eagle

Two people were treated for stab wounds after an incident on the Umatilla National Forest in northern Grant County early Saturday morning.

At an annual spring council meeting for the Rainbow Family gathering, which may bring 25,000-40,000 participants to Grant County July 1-7, a 20-year-old from Sweden was arrested for first-degree assault for stabbing a 23-year-old from Redding, California, according to a press release from Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer.

At about 12:32 a.m., the sheriff's office and ambulances from Long Creek and John Day were dispatched to a report of a stabbing near Hunter Spring, about 12 miles east of Highway 395 on Trout Road.

Deputy Tyler Smith and Reserve Deputy Dan Vandehy met the victim, Kathleen Abigale Todd, who was stabbed in the upper left tricep, at the intersection of Highway 395 and Trout Road. She was transported to Blue Mountain Hospital in John Day when an ambulance arrived.

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