

FFA chapters prepare for state convention

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Students from three local FFA chapters — Grant Union, Prairie City and Dayville — will attend the Friday through Monday, March 23-26 FFA State Convention in Redmond.

The three Grant County chapters are part of the Strawberry Mountain District, which also includes Burnt River, Burns and Mitchell.

Grant Union FFA advisor Adam Neff said members attending the state convention, at the Deschutes Fair & Expo Center, include Kori Jo Girvin, Kellen Shelley, Cinch Anderson, Averie Wenger, Parker Manitsas, Ellie Justice, Jessi Nolan, Cole Ashley and Logan Namitz.

“Kori Jo Girvin will be receiving the highest award that can be bestowed upon an Oregon FFA Member, the State FFA Degree,” Ineck said.

Girvin is president of the Grant Union FFA for 2017-18, serving with Kellen Shelley, vice president; Cinch Anderson; secretary; Maggie Justice, treasurer; Averie Wenger, reporter; Parker Manitsas, sentinel; and Celine Hicks, historian.

At the convention, Shelley will compete in the Agri-Science Division 3 Food Systems, which deals with research on grass feed, grain fed and organic ground beef. He plans to take his school science fair project to the convention and hopes to advance to the FFA National Convention.

Ellie Justice will compete in Agri-Science Division 3 Natural Resource systems with her research of temperature of cheat grass fires, also shared at the Grant Union science fair.

Anderson will serve on the statewide nominating committee responsible for sifting through 24 state officer candidates to choose six who will serve as the 2018-2019 Oregon State FFA officer team.

Manitsas will compete in Creed Speaking Leadership Development after qualifying as one of the top eight creed speakers in the state on Feb 26 during the Sectional Leadership Development Events in North Clackamas.

Both Manitsas and Wenger will serve as Grant Union's two voting chapter delegates, and Nolan, Ashley and Namitz will be on the Proficiency Area Committees, selecting the top Supervised Agricultural Experience projects from across the state.



Megan Camarena

Prairie City's FFA advisor is Lindy Cruise. Twenty students from the chapter will attend the state convention.

Besides competitions at the convention, Camarena said the students are also looking forward to attending this year's concert featuring Danielle Bradbury with Ned LeDoux opening. Camarena is running as a state officer this year.

“I really hope everything goes well,” she said. “It would be nice to have a representative from this area, since we haven't had one in quite a while.”

She said they've had more Prairie City students participating in FFA this year.

“We've had more younger class men stepping up and showing off what they have to offer,” she said.

Prairie City officers serving with Camarena are Brianna Zweygardt, vice president; Shaelynn Bice, secretary; Carson McKay, reporter; Rilee Emmel, treasurer; and Haley Pfefferkorn, sentinel.

McKay and Bice were voted in as Strawberry District officers. They will attend Oregon officer training in May. The district officers work as a group to plan and prepare for the FFA leadership camp held in fall.

They also perform opening ceremonies and hand out the banners at local contests.

Camarena has been in the FFA program for four years.

“I love the opportunities it's given me,” she said. “I don't think I would be the person I am without it.”

She said FFA has taught her communication skills, public speaking and handling business dealings. It's not just for students interested in agriculture, she said.

“There is a contest for pretty much every sort of interest out there,” she said.

Dayville's FFA group is young, said advisor Jim Lashaw.

Four members plan to attend the state convention, including chapter president Denali Twehues and sentinel Hallie Rhoda.

“Our No. 1 goal is learning what the FFA has to offer these students, and taking advantage of these opportunities,” he said.

Local students join nationwide school walkout

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Ten Grant Union Junior-Senior High School students quietly observed Wednesday's national school walkout in John Day.

The students stood outside the school for about 17 minutes at 10 a.m. to remember the 17 victims who died in a school shooting in February at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, and to protest gun violence.

Junior Cody Combs held a sign that read “Enough, Am I Next?” and junior Savannah Randleas had a red sign with a heart.

“We're supporting everyone,” Randleas said.

Junior McKeely Miller said they weren't trying to make any changes at Grant Union, but were supporting other students.

“It's not a political thing,” she said. “We're just trying to make the country a better place and a safer place.”

Junior Kobe Cantrell simply said, “Rest in peace 17 victims.”

Junior Garrett Lenz said, “It's sad that our school didn't participate in the event, because it's nationwide.”



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Grant Union Junior-Senior High School students Savanna Randleas, left, and Kade Blood bring signs to the March 14 School Walkout in John Day.

Some students at Grant Union who didn't participate in Wednesday's walkout said they didn't like the idea and were concerned about the protection of Second Amendment rights.

Grant Union Principal Ryan Gerry sent a letter home to all the students' parents and guardians to let them know about the walkout. He said students participating would be marked with an unexcused absence, consistent with their student handbook rules for being more than 15 minutes late for class.

During the walkout, Su-

perintendent Curt Shelley and Dean of Students Jason Miller stood with Gerry to watch over the students.

Gerry said the letter to parents was informational and provided transparency.

“They have a right to their freedom of speech, and we completely support that,” he said. “This is not a school-sponsored event, so we neither support nor oppose it, but we do take school safety seriously, and it's always at the forefront, and we're always looking for ways to improve that.”

Students from two other

Grant County schools participated in the walkout.

Two Monument students were involved in the walkout, freshman Mark Thomas and senior Bailey Thomas.

Four high school and two middle school students from Dayville School also walked out.

Those students met in their school gym, where Superintendent/Principal Kathryn Hedrick met with them.

“I asked the students if it was OK if I join the conversation,” she said.

“There was no marching or shouting, just a conversation of what brought us there and what we hoped to achieve,” Hedrick said. “Not everybody was unified on why they were there, but it centered on gun violence — while we may disagree about the guns themselves, no one is going to support gun violence.”

School officials from Prairie City and Long Creek schools reported they had no students involved in the walkout.

Another student-organized national school walkout is set for Friday, April 20, the anniversary of the 1999 Columbine High School shooting in Colorado.

Grant Union science students win local, regional awards

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

With topics ranging from sports to music and wildfire to beef, Grant Union advanced science students put their experiments to the test and shared their findings with four judges at Thursday's Grant Union Science Fair.

A total of 26 students from Randy Hennen and Sonna Smith's science classes participated. Sophomore Samantha Floyd won Best of Fair. She and sophomore Kellen Shelley won gold. Sophomores Cinch Anderson, Ellie Justice and senior Reagan Shelley won silver, and junior Alondra Moreno and sophomore Eli Sheedy won bronze.

Each winner received a medal and a cash award. Floyd won a \$50 gas card for her Best of Fair Award.

“The Old West Credit Union and an anonymous donor have been providing the awards for over two decades,” Hennen said.

Floyd's project, “The Effect of Pitch Intervals on the Cognitive Processing of Mu-



Samantha Floyd

sician and Non-Musician Youth,” also won first place in division at a regional contest held at Central Oregon Community College in Bend. Floyd plays multiple instruments and writes music, has won solo competitions and plays with an orchestra in Harney County.

She tested 20 subjects, 10 musicians and 10 nonmusicians, using a prerecorded, electronically produced sound while they filled out worksheets, with problems such as simple math. She expected dissonance to disrupt learning and for the results to be similar in musicians and nonmusicians. She said, while the experiment was difficult and her findings were not what she expected, she is still eager to learn more.

“I'm excited to continue because I want to discover what it is within music that affects us the way it does,” she said. “There have been a lot of

studies on how, but not why.”

Kellen Shelley said his project, “How is Meat From Cattle Treated With Antibiotics Different From Meat From Cattle Not Treated?” was fun to work on. His experiment showed beef treated with antibiotics grew less bacteria than non-treated beef.

“I'm taking the project to the FFA State Convention over spring break,” he said. “My goal is to make it to the National FFA Convention.”

Dr. Anthony Tovar, an Eastern Oregon University professor of physics who was one of the judges, said he was impressed with the students.

“The students seemed like they knew what they were doing, and they were projects that involved their everyday life,” he said. “That's really been a joy for someone who is judging.”

Four Grant Union students also participated in the

March 9 Northwest Science Expo regional competition, held at Central Oregon Community College in Bend.

All four placed in their respective categories: Ellie Justice, honorable mention, Plant Science; Cinch Anderson, second, Environmental and Earth Science; Kellen Shelley, second, Animal Science; Samantha Floyd, first, Behavioral and Social Science.

Floyd was also one of three nominees for the Best of Fair Award, though she did not receive the award.

Kellen received a \$2,000 scholarship from OSU and the Sustainable Development Award.

Floyd and Anderson both received Outstanding Project Awards from the Air Force.

Justice received the Outstanding Geoscience Award.

The four students, all sophomores, are in Hennen's biology class.

The City of John Day is seeking applicants for a vacant position on the John Day City Council under the provisions of Ordinance 82-29-01.

One applicant will be appointed by the City Council to fill Councilor Position #6 for the remainder of the term ending December 31, 2020. Persons wishing to apply for city council must reside within the incorporated city limits.

Applications may be picked up at City Hall (450 E. Main Street) during business hours, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Monday - Friday. Applications are due to City Hall by close of business on March 30, 2018.

An appointment will be made during the regular session of the city council scheduled for April 10, 2018, 7PM at the John Day Fire Hall (316 S. Canyon Boulevard).

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