



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Grant Union Junior-Senior High School math teacher Matt Jones is retiring after 32 years with Grant School District 3.

Jones closes 32-year chapter at Grant School District

'I want to thank all my students for the joy they brought into my life'

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant Union Junior-Senior High School math teacher Matt Jones is leaving the school halls this year, retiring after 32 years with Grant School District 3.

Jones, who taught math courses, physics and computer programming, was many times voted Teacher of the Year by the students. He taught grades 7-12 over the years.

He also worked for the Ontario School District one year prior, and he was a student-teacher through Eastern Oregon University.

Jones' greatest joy in teaching was "seeing students grow and learn, not just in mathematics but as a person," he said. "You have to build a relationship with the student, and they have

to know that you care before they'll want to learn from you."

He's held dear the words from two mentors, including his former EOU math professor Dwight Lippe, who said, "You are the epitome of mathematics in your students' eyes."

Former Grant Union teacher Roger Ediger, with whom Jones student-taught, was known to say, "Your students don't care what you know until they know that you care."

Jones, on occasions throughout the school years, invited students to his family's home to study.

"I want to thank my wonderful wife KoRina for all the compromises and the hundreds of tubs of caramel corn for our late-night calculus sessions," he said.

His plan for the future is to spend more time with

his family traveling, hiking, hunting, fishing and farming at his Mt. Vernon ranch.

In his farewell speech at the Grant Union graduation ceremony, Jones said the Latin phrase "carpe diem" and modern-day "YOLO" (you only live once) are obvious on good days, adding, "I guarantee there will be days when you just wish you could push a reset button."

He said, regardless of how hard, painful or fun life is, "to seize the moment means to bring all the love, joy, energy and passion we have into the present."

Jones said to the students, "Don't narrow your opportunities by choosing the easy just because it is easy."

Students, mostly juniors and seniors who have chosen advanced biology, chemistry or physics classes, were allowed to travel on a yearly science trip, headed up by

Jones and science teacher Sonna Smith. Jones said the trips, which have been happening for 30 years, were a reward for students who take a harder science, and it motivates other students to try advanced classes.

He had one piece of advice for administrators and trustees.

"If you want to increase learning, increase the time students spend with a competent, caring teacher," he said. "Keep sacred the time with the teacher, minimize the distractions."

Jones said he was grateful for the administrators, Principal Carl Lino and Superintendent Dean Nodine, who hired him 32 years ago, and the current administration for their support.

"I want to thank all my students for the joy they brought into my life," he said.



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Outgoing Humbolt Elementary Principal Kim Smith, left, stands with secretary Catrina Gabbard. A sign in Smith's office reads: "Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow," a quote by Albert Einstein.

'Students can achieve their biggest dreams'

Outgoing principal reflects on 20 years with district

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Humbolt Elementary Principal Kim Smith is closing a 20-year chapter with Grant School District 3.

She filled the position of principal three and a half years ago when former principal Monty Nash became ill.

Smith began her education career teaching kindergarten for one year at Monument School, before working for Grant School District.

Before becoming principal, Smith was the district's director of special education, testing coordinator, TAG coordinator and diagnostician. She also previously taught language arts at Mt. Vernon Middle School and was a junior-first teacher, a class taken by some between kindergarten and first grades.

She recently attended the Grant Union graduation ceremony where several of her former junior-first students received their high school diplomas.

Smith said one accomplishment that has meant a lot to her was applying for and receiving grants for Response to Intervention and Positive Behavior Intervention Support Systems.

She said data from the programs, which include software to track Humbolt student progress, have helped the teachers pinpoint areas where intervention is needed, both academically and behaviorally.

"We've seen great improvement as we've tracked their progress," she said.

She said a schoolwide goal has been to have focus, clarity and professional working relationships to impact achievement across all grade levels.

"We've worked together well as a team," she said. "I'm proud of all our staff. Everyone works hard for the overall success of the students."

She said a supportive community has also made a difference, from OSU Extension office providing STEM lessons for students to Community Counseling Solutions partnering to assist students who needed extra mental health support.

Families have also been supportive, she said.

"Our students are much more successful when we combine the support of the families with the dedication and hard work of the staff," she said.

Smith has accepted a teaching position through Baker Charter Schools, an online program with several sites in Oregon. The school covers kindergarten through early college education with 1,800 students enrolled.

"It's continuing to grow," Smith said. "For families, it's nice to have different options that fit their needs."

She said she plans to continue to live in John Day and commute to Roseburg.

As she leaves Humbolt, Smith said she'd like her students to know that each one of them has something to offer.

"I want them all to believe in themselves and know they can achieve their biggest dreams in life," she said. "We really do have amazing students."

PRAIRIE CITY SCHOOL HONOR ROLL

SECOND SEMESTER

Seniors
4.0 GPA: Josiah Hoeffner and Brianna Zwegardt.
Honor roll: Megan Camarena, Dorran Wilson and Aitor Ansotegui.
Honorable mention: Cassie Hire and Mariah McClung.

Juniors
Honor roll: Levi Burke, Haley Pfefferkorn and Kyla Winton.
Honorable mention: Deja Amsden, Jonathan Lawrence and Lane Williams.

Sophomores
4.0 GPA: JoLynne Ashley and Shaelynn Bice.
Honor roll: Aleah Johns, Johna Long and Jessica Reames.
Honorable mention: Rilee Emmel and Emily Ennis.

Freshmen

4.0 GPA: Aries Bice, Brandon Horrell, Caitlin Willet and Declan Zwegardt.
Honor roll: Katie Hire.
Honorable mention: Samantha Workman and Jayden Winegar.

Eighth-graders
4.0 GPA: Riley Reames.
Honor roll: Marcus Judd.
Honorable mention: Emilee Myers, Seth Moore and Hannah Wall.

Seventh-graders
4.0 GPA: Kaitlynn Ashley.
Honor roll: Laken McKay, Leif Rausch and Cole Teel.
Honorable mention: Tanner Kesecker, Betty Ann Wilson, Paige Shaw and Boe Workman.

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Early Deadline

For July 4th Edition

Ad, Classified & Legal Deadline

Thursday, June 28th by 5p.m.

Office will be

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Blue Mountain

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Old Photos
Kids - Family - Trophy
Wildlife - Etc.

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HOW BIG OR SMALL YOUR TROPHY WAS

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SEND OR DROP OFF YOUR BEST HUNTING PHOTOS

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Your photos will be published in this year's EAGLE HUNTING JOURNAL

Please have them to the Eagle by August 11th.