

Local student participates in gifted program

School can be frustrating and difficult, but not just for special education students with learning disabilities or physical handicaps. "Between 5 and 15 percent

of the school-age population who have above-average intelligence are not being sufficiently challenged by the normal school system and may actually become underach-

ievers," according to a U. of O. news release. Some 440 of these students, who are classified as "gifted and talented," including Anne Murray of Heppner, have been participating in the University of Oregon's new

summer enrichment program sponsored by the College of Education. The junior-high-school-age young people, who

achievement potential in intelligence and creativity, come from all over Oregon and neighboring states to attend one of three sessions. The students each elect to

study four of 24 subjects, ranging from astronomy, botany, physics, ecology and creative writing to semantics, social sciences and performing arts. The non-competitive classes are designed for personal

enrichment, "to show these kids they can become independent learners," said education professor George Sheperd, head of the program. They are encouraged to mix "hard" and "soft" courses, to take classes reflecting both their present interests and

areas in which they have no previous knowledge, he noted. Bill Douglas, a former student of mime Marcel Marceau and teacher for the mime performance class, said his students create and perform their own scripts. In every session, Douglas said, there have been several students whose talent is "so extraordinary that they could easily become professional." Other class projects include creating artistic designs in the lawns around the Erb Memorial Union and making bricks to be laid on one of the university walkways.

The students also attend other events at the university and in the community, such as the recent brain research conference sponsored by the education college and the Summer Music Festival hosted by the music school.

Oregon has a unique program here, Sheperd asserts, explaining that the age group the program serves "is at a crucial time in their lives where they need to explore as many options as possible."

One problem Sheperd acknowledges is that these students may face when they return to their home schools is that their intellectual needs are greater than normal school systems may be able to supply.

But he hopes that the summer enrichment program has stimulated the students to be more independent and to initiate more of their own creative development. In addition, parents and teachers in hometown schools receive observational reports on each student to aid in developing each youngster's special abilities.

Student reactions about the program have been enthusiastic, reports Sheperd. Most are eager to come back next summer.

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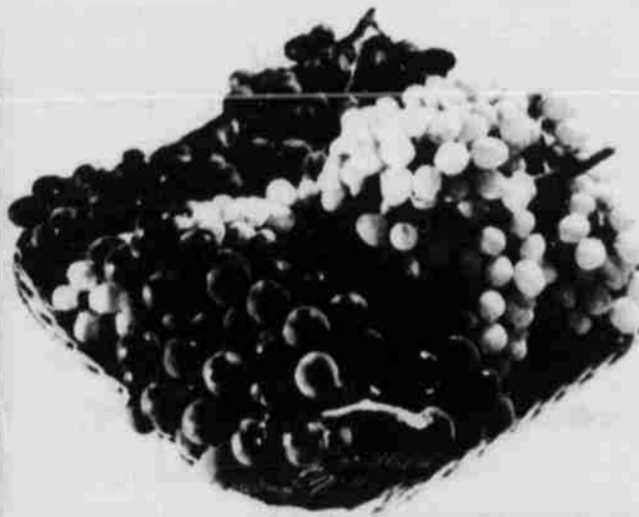
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O-plus to save time, money

If time is money, nearly 7,000 Pacific Northwest Bell customers in Hermiston, Stanfield and Echo stand to save a little of both over the next two months, thanks to a new long distance service called "O Plus" dialing, according to a Pacific Northwest Bell (PNB) news release.

PNB Manager Linda Buckner says "O Plus" dialing replaces the old procedure of just dialing "0" when placing collect, person-to-person, credit card and third-number-billed long distance calls. With the old system, the operator took the billing information then placed the call.

"With 'O Plus' dialing the customer dials '0' for an operator and then the telephone number, including the area code, if necessary. While the call is going through, an operator asks for the billing information.

"An 'O Plus' dialed call is routed to an operator using a modern electronic console instead of a switchboard. The console allows the operator to serve the customer about twice as quickly as with a switchboard," Buckner explains.

Operators will also help with emergency calls, just like they always have, she reports. They'll have a complete list of emergency services in the towns PNB serves.

Hermiston customers were to have gotten "O Plus" dialing service last Thursday, Aug. 14, Buckner says. Echo customers will receive it September 27, and "O Plus" dialing comes to Stanfield on October 25.

The local conversion is part of a five month program to provide the service to nearly 30 communities served by PNB and other telephone companies in Northeast Oregon. It coincides with a \$2.2 million modernization project to replace 36 outmoded wooden switchboards in PNB's Pendleton Operator Service office with 44 modern, high speed electronic operator consoles. The conversion will be complete, Buckner says, in late December.

