

Library tech Ginger Bowman retires

By April Hilton-Sykes

Students and staff at Heppner High School will miss a sweet presence when they start back to school next fall. Ginger Bowman, beloved long-time library tech there, is retiring this year. In the midst of the COVID 19 shutdown, her retirement wasn't able to get much fanfare, because of school closures, but the impact will definitely hit HHS next fall when Ginger is no longer a fixture.

"I watched my three children, and many other children graduate from Heppner High School," said Ginger. "I love this job. This is why it is so hard to leave."

Ginger was born on the island of Kauai, Hawaii, graduating from Kauai High School. She then moved to the mainland, attending Oregon College of Education at Monmouth, Oregon, now Western Oregon University. After graduating from OCE, she got a job at Fossil, OR, teaching

English at Wheeler High School.

She met her husband to be, Ron Bowman, at a Fossil high school football game. Ron was from Kinzua and had previously attended Wheeler High School. He was working at the Kinzua Mill at the time and, when the mill closed there, later came to Heppner.

She and Ron were married in 1976 in a quiet ceremony at a friend's house in Fossil. In a few years Ron and Ginger began to grow their family. Son Chris was born in 1982, son Brad in 1984, both at Good Shepherd Hospital in Hermiston. Daughter Jenna came along in 1990 and was born in Pendleton. Chris is now living in Napa, California. He and his wife, Erin have a son, Ryker, five, and a daughter Ayva, six months. Brad lives in Portland, and Jenna in Corvallis.

Ginger taught another year at Wheeler High School but came to the re-

alization that she really did not want to teach. They then moved to Heppner where she began working with kindergarteners at Heppner Elementary School in August of 1980. "I loved working with those kindergarteners," said Ginger. "They are so enthusiastic. They would just do anything for you." When she started at Heppner Elementary, she first worked half-time with kindergarten teacher Cherry Webber and half-time in the resource room with Kay Chinen. She worked in that position for seven years until the school district cut the position to half time. However a full-time position as a media specialist at the Heppner High School library and an aide became available, so she took it. "I found (working with) high school kids even better than elementary," she said. After the district phased out media specialists, she became a library tech in the mid-90s.

Of plans for retirement,

"Our hope is to be able to visit our grandchildren, whom we haven't seen since December (because of COVID 19)," said Ginger. She also said that she hasn't been to Hawaii in six years and hopes to be able to travel back to Hawaii with her husband, children and grandchildren. "My kids haven't met their cousins, she added. Two of her three sisters, Pat and Julie, still live in Hawaii; another sister, Sandy, lives in North Carolina. Her husband, Ron, is now (semi) retired from Morrow County Grain Growers Green Feed.

"How grateful I am for all the students and staff who made this such a wonderful job," said Ginger, who was at the school in the process of packing stuff away at the time of her interview with the Gazette. "It's so hard to leave," she said tearfully. And she will be dearly missed.

Steffani McAnich will take over the library position in the fall.



Ginger Bowman

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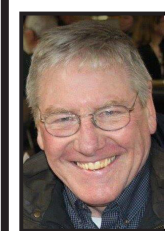
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