

COMMUNITY

Hermiston students show their art

March library display features work from Sandstone, Armand Larive

BY SEAN HART
HERMISTON HERALD

Hermiston middle school students were excited to talk about their artwork on display this month at the Hermiston Public Library.

At a reception for the young artists Thursday, students and teachers from Sandstone and Armand Larive middle schools enjoyed punch and cookies at the library, where more than 100 pieces created in art classes throughout the year are on display until the end of the month.

Sandstone art teacher Nici Cimmiyotti, who will display her own work during one of the library's monthly shows later this year, said the event was a great opportunity for the students.

"I think it's been really successful," she said. "I'm really happy the students have somewhere in the public to display other than just the schools now. I hope it continues on for the next few years."

During each quarter of art class, Cimmiyotti said the students usually begin with a drawing project and

then progress to a painting or sculpture, and several examples of each project are saved for art shows. At the library, a wide variety of projects are on display, and she said the students' effort is visible in the work.

"It's really impressive," she said of the art. "I still have a hard time believing that middle school students did this."

One of her students, Rose Jurchic, an eighth-grader at Sandstone, said, although drawing is not her "cup of tea," she enjoyed the embroidered portrait project. She said she spent about a week sewing the arm tattoos on her portrait of Andrew Biersack, the lead singer of Black Veil Brides.

"You didn't have to do it a specific way," she said. "You could kind of do it however. As long as you did it, it was OK, and it didn't matter what it really turned out like. It's just your work of art."

Sandstone eighth-grader Baylee Hunsaker has five different projects on display and said it was "pretty cool" to show her work to an audience outside of school. She said she kept poking herself with the needle during the embroidery project, but she enjoyed creating a bright "eye color candy" piece.

"I like doing art when I have free time," she said. "I like the beginning process of sketching out ev-



Armand Larive Middle School art teacher David Larson, left, and Sandstone Middle School art teacher Nici Cimmiyotti admire their students' work on display at the Hermiston Public Library during a reception Thursday. The art will be on display until the end of the month.

everything, like getting different ideas for it."

The most difficult part of the art projects, she said, was making sure everything was done the best way.

Armand Larive art teacher David Larson said student effort resulted in the "impressive" display.

"They learn it through hard work," he said. "A lot of them don't think of themselves as artists, I don't think, but they realize, after they do work hard, they can see that they are very capable."

Larson said he and Cimmiyotti meet weekly and

create lesson plans together, and the different styles that emerge from the same projects from the different schools are interesting. Finding places to show the students' best work has been difficult, he said, so the library was a perfect opportunity.

"It's much greater exposure because it's a really public place other than the schools," he said. "We used to have an annual school district art show at the high school, K-12, and that was huge, but that kind of got taken away from us about five or six years ago, so that was disheartening. We

jump on any opportunity now to show, so we're pretty excited that they asked us."

Madeline Rotter, a seventh-grader from Armand Larive, said she enjoys drawing, painting and sketching and was happy to be able to show her work. She spent three weeks on a drawing of a lion's eyes on display at the library.

"It was kind of fun, and it was a little bit hard," she said. "We had to find a picture online of a face and had to draw an outline. I like how it turned out."

Library assistant Jodi



Sandstone Middle School eighth-grader Baylee Hunsaker stands in front of one of her five pieces on display with other students' work at the Hermiston Public Library.

Hansen, who came up with the idea for the month-long local artist displays, said she hopes to continue the student show in future years.

"I want this to encourage them to keep going with their art and to let them know there is public support for it," she said. "A lot of people have come in to look at it."

Librarian Marie Baldo said she loves the student display.

"I was amazed when they put them up," she said. "I remember being in middle school and doing art projects, and it was nothing like this. Jodi's idea of art each month has been really successful, and this one has been closest to all of our hearts."

Clara Brownell students learn what it is like to be an author

BY MAEGAN MURRAY
HERMISTON HERALD

Clara Brownell Middle School seventh-grader Naomie Wyckoff hopes to one day be a computer programmer, but during her down time, she also wants to write books.

So when she and her peers had the chance meet with young adult author Dale Bayse and then attend the Cavalcade of Authors conference Friday, she was ecstatic.

"I got to ask (Bayse) a lot of questions," she said. "It's a fun experience to find out how he became an author and what all he had to do."

Bayse is the author of a young adult series called "Heck: Where the Bad Kids Go." The series, similar to that of Dante's "Inferno," follows characters as they make their way through different layers of Heck, rather than Hell, making it more lighthearted and child friendly. Each book focuses on a particular sin that the character commits, such as lying or being greedy, which results in them dying and dealing with their life after death. The tone of the books isn't so heavy as it may sound, however.

Bayse told students Thursday he tried to make his characters' deaths as ridiculous as possible, so they were still funny for children, like when one child dies in a marshmallow explosion.

"I tried to make them all silly," he told the students with a laugh.

Many students were interested in his creative process and how he got started in the writing business. Bayse told them he went to school for journalism and film making, and, before writing novels, he actually reviewed movies for the San Francisco Chronicle in college before starting his own newspaper business with his wife and then landing a job at the Willamette Weekly.

Bayse said he has always enjoyed stories, which was why being a writer was a perfect fit. His job in journalism, however, didn't pay well

enough for he and his wife, which is when he took a job at Nike. Shortly after that, he began writing his children's series.

Bayse said he has always been interested in books and used to enjoy reading science fiction and comic books growing up. Now that he writes fiction for a living, however, he finds he doesn't like to read fiction as much anymore.

"It's weird," he said. "Now, I like to read biographies."

Wyckoff said she could relate to Bayse in that she, too, is interested in stories, but also wants to pursue another career. She is currently on the robotics team at CBMS, which has spurred her interest in programming. She asked Bayse if it was possible to do that and write, and his response made Wyckoff



Portland-based author Dale Bayse signs an autograph for a Clara Brownell Middle School student Friday. Bayse was visiting while participating in Cavalcade of Authors this week.

smile.

"Absolutely, you can do both," he said. "I have a friend who has started in that. She's 50 years old, but she wanted to take classes in programming. She loves it."

Seventh-grader Andrea Hernandez said she en-

joyed asking Bayse questions because she also wants to become a writer.

"I'm actually writing a story at home," she said. "He was helpful in trying to come up with ideas."

Sixth-grader Nataly Vazquez said she also wants to be a writer and



Portland-based author Dale Bayse talks with a group of Clara Brownell Middle School students about how he became an author Thursday afternoon.

used meeting Bayse as an opportunity to gain perspective on what being an author is like.

"You get to see what his process is," she said. "Since meeting him, I have more knowledge on how it all works. When you get to meet an author,

you get a whole new perspective."

Seventh-grader Darian Smith said he just enjoyed being able to meet and interact with an author.

"It's cool spending time down here with him," he said. "I think it is fun."

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