

MCELROY:

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“I think it’s one thing to be a teacher and tell a kid trees are green, but it’s entirely different to ask why trees are green,” she said. “I get to teach kids stuff, but, more than that, I get to teach them why stuff is the way it is.”

McElroy teaches earth, life and physical sciences, which are taught in a loop to seventh- and eighth-graders, so she has the same students in her classes both their seventh- and eighth-grade years, something she also likes because she gets to know the youths.

“I feel like I absolutely have my dream job right now,” McElroy said.

She said she also loves teaching middle school students because they are funny and relatable, and she hopes to make a difference in their lives by teaching them not to fear being wrong. She said she hopes her students leave her class thinking that they learned a lot but had fun doing it.



JESSICA KELLER PHOTO

Sandstone Middle School seventh- and eighth-grade science teacher Lisa McElroy talks to students during an exercise with circuit boards last month. McElroy, who was one of the Hermiston School District’s Crystal Apple Award winners, said the challenge of teaching students keeps her coming back and trying new things every year.

WEATHER:

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temperatures climb.

“The temptation when hot weather strikes this time of the year is to seek relief in area rivers,” the statement reads. “While snow melt is sparse this year, many area rivers still have temperatures in the lower to mid 50s, cold enough to cause issues for those trying to swim in these rivers. In addition, flows are lower than most years, and this may lead to more injuries from exposed

rocks and debris. Fatalities are quite common in area rivers during the beginning of summer-type weather.”

As of Wednesday, the Columbia River temperature was 61.8 degrees at McNary Dam.

Also in the statement was a notice about the speed in which temperatures will rise.

“With this early period of hot weather, most people are not yet acclimated to the heat,” it said. “Be sure to avoid exertion during the heat of the day and to stay hydrated with clear liquids.”

SWIM:

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a lot of confidence when they realize I can do this, I can pull somebody off the bottom of the pool, because I did it in class. We try to simulate situations as best we can.”

Gestny Findley, 15, recently became a certified lifeguard and said the training was intense. She opted for a two-day course, working about 12 hours each day.

After learning techniques, such as placing a victim’s arms on each side of their head to act as a splint to prevent further spinal injury, Findley said she is looking forward to her first season at the pool.

“I feel like now since we’ve practiced it so many times that, if I had to, I’d get it done pretty well,” she said of using her lifeguard training. “I’m pretty confident about it right now.”

Aristea Loveland, 16, another new lifeguard this year, said learning to use the backboard for spinal injuries was the most interesting but difficult part of the training. She said she, too, is now confident about using what she learned, but she was unaware how extensive it would be.

“It was long, but it



SEAN HART PHOTO

Aristea Loveland, 16, and Gestny Findley, 15, recently completed their Red Cross lifeguard certification to work at the Hermiston Family Aquatic Center for the first time this year.

was really fun and interesting,” she said. “It was a little more than what I expected. We had to learn how to save people in different ways and how to do CPR and what to do in certain occasions, if they’re conscious or unconscious and stuff like that.”

Even after obtaining the general certification, the lifeguards undergo training specific to the Hermiston facility. Earp said they learn the rules in place to keep people safe by preventing problems.

“What Red Cross teaches you is to be proactive and preventative,” he said. “Oftentimes, when people think of lifeguarding, they think of lifesaving, but the whole



Olson

POOL:

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slides and other equipment.

When everything is ready, filling the 330,000-gallon 50-meter pool and the 200,000 multi-use pool requires even more time.

“Each pool takes the majority of a full day to fill,” Earp said. “We hook up with a fire hose, so it’s putting a lot of water in, not just like a garden hose. It takes pretty much about 12 hours to fill the 50-meter pool.”

Chemicals are added to clean the water, and the boilers are fired up to heat it. It takes four to five days



Earp

when it’s not cold outside to warm the water from 60 degrees to the low-to-mid-80s.

Earp said most of the staff are students or teachers, so he and a maintenance employee perform most of the work themselves.

“It’s 12 years old, so we’re always trying to keep this place looking new and keep it looking as clean as possible,” he said. “However, if anyone ever has comments or anything, we welcome ways that they feel like we can improve the facility because we know that the community is very invested.”

idea is you enforce the rules and you prevent it from ever getting to that situation. Hopefully, if they’re doing that, then it never gets to the situation where we actually have a potential drowning incident, and that’s our goal.”

Earp said new lifeguards are also required to shadow a returning employee for at least one busy shift before being cleared to serve on their own.

Fourteen lifeguards are on duty during public swim sessions, and lead lifeguard Buz Olson en-

sures the entire operation runs smoothly. Olson said he enjoys working with the great staff, who make his job easier.

“Every day, our lifeguards are pulling kids out of the water, and they are doing preventative safety out there, so that we never get into a situation where a patron actually drowns,” he said. “There’s different scenarios, things that happen in different parts of the pool, where our lifeguards are actually preventing somebody from becoming an actual drowning victim.”

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