



Melissa Doherty, a teacher at Rocky Heights Elementary, quizzes students in preparation for the Math is Cool regional competition on Friday.

Students learn math can be cool

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
STAFF WRITER

Relays aren’t just for running. For Hermiston Mathletes, it’s one of the many creative ways they solve math equations. One team member will solve the first problem, the next person will use that answer to solve a related problem, and so on. If one person gets the wrong answer, the whole team is thrown off.

In the Math is Cool program, open to fourth and fifth graders, students compete in a variety of different math-related events. There are individual competitions, as well as group exercises such as the relay, multiple choice questions and a Jeopardy-style event. Students are quizzed on concepts both at and above grade level.

Three Hermiston schools sent fourth-grade teams to the Math is Cool regional competition on Friday — Desert View, Rocky Heights, and West Park. McNary Heights Elementary School in Umatilla also has a team. At the fifth grade competition in February, McNary Heights earned first place in their division, scoring 122 points. West Park’s team took first in its division, as well, earning 139 points, and Rocky Heights scored a second place finish at 93 points.

On Friday, the three Hermiston schools put up a good showing in the competition. West Park’s fourth graders did not place as a team, but the highest scorer, Aries Woodward, placed second overall in the division and will continue on to state. Desert View’s team took fifth place in the highest division. Rocky Heights’ team took second place in their division.

West Park students practiced the week of the tournament, working on a quiz that had been offered at a previous tournament. One question asked students:

“Gabe and Maya are throwing water balloons at



Mia Westfall and Kylee Morgan of West Park Elementary School work together on math problems, studying for the Math is Cool regional competition on Friday.

a target. If Gabe has a 30 percent chance of hitting the target, and Maya has a 50 percent chance of hitting the target, what is the probability they both hit the target? Answer as a percent.”

Teacher Tess Neddo said students who were high-performing and showed good problem-solving skills were asked to join the class.

As the students worked, Neddo explained how the competition will go.

“For the multiple choice section, if you get the answer right, you get two points. But if you get it wrong, you get negative one points,” she said. “This is the only test where you get penalized for wrong answers.”

Evelyn Chavez said the team has spent a lot of time learning about percentages, and that they work together to check each other’s answers.

“Sometimes we do it in twos, and we’ll check to see if we’re right or wrong,” she said.

Erica Miller said her daughter, Aries Woodward, has enjoyed math as an extracurricular activity, and hopes she will continue to pursue it.

“She loves math anyway,” Miller said. “It’s good for her to meet other kids that like the same thing as her.”

Some are really good at math. Some are interested in math, and some are very competitive.

Ben Doherty, Coach

As Rocky Heights students gathered for their weekly practice, teacher Melissa Doherty quizzes students on the concepts of mean, median, mode and range, before they worked in teams on story problems. The students had 45 seconds to answer each question.

“It’s been pretty difficult, learning about things we’re not used to,” said Emilie Wyant.

Students said they’ve learned how to calculate the area of triangles, trapezoids and parallelograms.

“We learned about converting cups to ounces,”

said McKenzie Hendrix. “Measurement differences, angles.”

Doherty’s husband, Ben, helps coach the team. He said the program was brought to Rocky Heights by principal Jerad Farley, who used to work in Washington.

“He wanted to get kids involved and see math differently than in class,” he said. “Play games, have fun, and challenge themselves with it.”

He said the team atmosphere allows for several different types of learners to thrive.

“Some are really good at math. Some are interested in math, and some are very competitive. When we do our teams, we don’t just have the mad brilliant kids. We want some kids who are more methodical.”

Doherty said that some students are encouraged to join the class, but it is open to anyone interested.

Some schools build the curriculum into their school day. Heather Mills, a fourth grade teacher at Desert View, said the students spend a portion of their math lesson working on concepts they will use in Math is Cool.



Sam Carpenter, left, speaks to the Hermiston Hispanic Advisory Committee Monday night.

Republican candidate, Sam Carpenter, wants to ‘Make Oregon Great Again’

Carpenter faces pushback from Hispanic Advisory committee

By JADE MCDOWELL
STAFF WRITER

Gubernatorial candidate Sam Carpenter ran into some stiff criticism for his views on public employee unions, immigration and President Donald Trump when he visited Hermiston’s Hispanic Advisory Committee on Monday.

Carpenter, a Bend-area Republican who owns a telephone answering service called Centratel, is one of 17 people running for Oregon governor. On Monday he touted his business capabilities, promised to get Oregon’s economy growing at a faster pace and criticized Oregon’s “out of control” bureaucracy and government spending.

The group at Hermiston City Hall was more interested in talking about his views on immigration, particularly a line in the brochure he handed out promising to end Oregon’s sanctuary status for “illegal aliens.”

Carpenter stated that he was only talking about removing people who had committed other crimes besides immigration-related ones.

“I’m sorry, they need to go away. Those folks are giving the Hispanic community a horrible reputation,” he said, adding that they were “probably more of a danger to you than to the native Americans here.”

He repeatedly stated that under Trump, families are not being broken up and people are not being deported solely for their immigration status. When audience members contradicted him, he said they should not get their information from the news media, which he called corrupt. When someone brought up a recent, local instance they knew of where a man was taken into custody during a routine traffic stop, Carpenter said he wasn’t there and neither was the person bringing it up so they didn’t know for sure what happened.

Carpenter said his two children from a previous marriage are Puerto Rican so he is sympathetic to the Hispanic community. He said the country needs to stop focusing on divides between races, genders, sexual orientations and religions.

“I believe in small government and I believe individual rights are the ultimate minority, which means if you can’t respect an individual’s rights you can’t respect anybody’s,” he said.

Eventually, as audience members continued to question him on immigration issues, he said it was a federal issue anyway and what he could do was get Oregon’s economy growing, which would cause a lot of other problems in the state to take care of themselves.

Many in the audience questioned the tactic.

“You’re trying to distance yourself from the federal government, but you’re embracing a slogan from someone who ran for federal government and is in a federal position,” committee member Roy Barron said, referencing Carpenter’s campaign slogan “Make Oregon Great Again.”

“No I’m not,” Carpenter replied. “That’s my slogan.”

He said he did support Trump, however, and praised him multiple times throughout the night, stating that the economy was doing “things it’s never done before” and that ISIS is now “gone” thanks to Trump.

When Barron and committee member Carlos Gallo said that Carpenter was making his support of Trump clear, and Trump had been very “blatant” in stirring up racial tensions and criticizing Latinos, Carpenter asked “What has he said that is very blatant?,” drawing laughter from the audience and committee.

Carpenter touched on a number of other issues Monday night. He said he is in favor of school vouchers, which would improve schools by encouraging competition between public and private schools, and said the state needed to stop wasting money on things like the failed Cover Oregon exchange and address serious problems like mental health, drugs and the “horrible” state of child protective services in Oregon.

Many in the audience disagreed with his stance on unions, asking what it meant in his campaign literature that he wants to “stand up to public unions.”

Carpenter said government employees are employed by the taxpayers and therefore it is a “conflict of interest against the people” for those employees to collectively bargain against the government. He said he wouldn’t break up the unions but he disagreed with them.

Several public employees and retired public employees in the audience disagreed with his characterizations of the problem, including statements that all three tiers of the Public Employee Retirement System were very similar in terms of payouts and that people were getting \$800,000 per year on PERS (a 2017 Oregonian report found the top annual payment in the state was \$663,354, with three more employees getting over \$400,000).

Despite heated exchanges on specific issues like unions and immigration, at the end of the evening Carpenter asked the group to read his website, www.makeoregongreatagain.com, with an open mind and remember the important thing was what he could do for the state’s economy and its efficiency.

“The forests are burning down, PERS is going to bankrupt the state. A lot of what’s been going on is bad management. I’m a manager,” he said.

Motorcyclist killed in crash with semi

HERMISTON HERALD

STANFIELD — A motorcyclist died Tuesday afternoon around 2:15 p.m. after being struck by a semi on the Interstate 84 overpass that connects Stanfield and Echo.

Sgt. Seth Cooney of the Oregon State Police trooper reported the motorcyclist killed was Jason Blankenship, 40, of Stanfield. The semi truck driver is Roberto Rodriguez Diaz, 41, of Hermiston. He was uninjured in the crash. Cooney said the cause of the crash

was still under investigation, and that law enforcement was still on scene as of 5:20 p.m. The overpass was closed Tuesday afternoon and into the evening while police investigated the wreck.

Cooney said he did not yet know whether charges would be filed against Rodriguez.

The wreck is the second fatal motorcycle crash in the area recently — Daisy Burton of Hermiston died of her injuries earlier this month after a crash on Harper Road near Highway 395.



A motorcyclist died Tuesday afternoon after being struck by a semi on the Interstate 84 overpass that connects Stanfield and Echo.

STAFF PHOTO BY JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN