

McKirdy to retire from Broadway Middle School

Teacher brought history to life for three decades

By Katherine Lacaze
For Seaside Signal

What could students expect when they took a class with Broadway Middle School social studies teacher Kelly McKirdy?

Mock elections, out-of-state and overseas trips, interviewing a grandparent and learning strange facts, figures and tidbits not often found in conventional history books, to name a few.

“I always try bringing in things that are sort of different,” said McKirdy, who is retiring this month after 30 years at Broadway Middle School. “I try to, if I can, relate it to something in their life. Anything, even if it’s a small thing, so they can make a connection somehow.”

For instance, when teaching local history, he shared about the 1960s riots that occurred in Seaside and were, in fact, one of his first introductions to the town.

McKirdy started his teaching career straight out of college — where he majored in political science — at Canyonville Christian Academy, previously Canyonville Bible Academy. He spent five years there, took a temporary job in Brookings for a year and then landed his job in Seaside. He said when he told people where he was moving, they often responded, “That’s where they had the riots.”

Not to be deterred, McKirdy still took the job and incorporated information about the incidents into his curriculum for students.

Using old newspaper clippings and images from the Oregon Historical Society, he put together a slide-show and collages about the riots, which involved “a bunch of college kids going crazy, doing all sorts of things,” McKirdy said. They took place Labor Day weekend and lasted three years, before the U.S. National Guard was dispatched to dispel the problem.

McKirdy invited a former policeman who served during the riots to present for the students.

“That was really fun to hear what it was like,” he said.

Teaching students little-known facts about history, or sharing with them a different perspective or twist, was one aspect of McKirdy’s classes, which included seventh-grade world history, eighth-grade United States history and multiple electives.



KATHERINE LACAZE/FOR SEASIDE SIGNAL

Broadway Middle School social studies teacher Kelly McKirdy.

Another tradition he borrowed from a Clatskanie teacher and started at Broadway Middle School was the grandparent report. Students interviewed one of their grandparents— or another person two generations older, if no grandparent was available — and write a report.

McKirdy said he is happy to learn his replacement, Daniel Floyd, agreed to keep that project in the curriculum for eighth-graders.

Exploring new places

McKirdy also led a project during which students selected a state and gathered information such as the state capital, population and when they might want to visit. This year, he “jazzed up” the project by giving students the route he intends to follow during a 22-week road trip with his wife that starts the day after classes are over. The route includes New England, Tennessee, Georgia, California, Arizona and many states in between.

The students created a slide show with information about each state, such as where McKirdy can find a state park, national park, places to camp in an RV and a theme park — “because I love roller coasters and theme parks,” he said.

“I think it helped add to the excitement,” he said.

As for him, he has planned this trip for about a year but desired to do it his whole life. McKirdy enjoys traveling and, over the years, gave students opportunities to take history and culture-focused trips to Europe, Costa Rica, Australia and East Coast destinations such as Washington, D.C., New York, Boston, Florida, Baltimore and Kentucky. He usually led students and adult chaperons or parents on trips in June. Over the years, McKirdy said, “It’s been harder and harder to get people who can afford the trip,” which he believes is unfortunate because of how the trips benefited students.

MUSCLE AND CHROME



JEFF TER HAR/FOR SEASIDE SIGNAL

Crowds in Seaside enjoyed Muscle and Chrome Saturday.

Car show features hot new cars along with classic iron

Kepler from Page 1A

The Kepler name, adopted by company founder Russ Wicks, was inspired by astronomer Johannes Kepler.

Along with the Motion, which never left the floor of the convention center, new performance cars were interspersed between Malibus, Mustangs and vintage muscle cars buffed and polished for show. Visitors enjoyed sunny skies and mild temperatures as they strolled the line-up in downtown Seaside, along Broadway and connecting side streets. The 4 p.m. downtown cruise brought cars from Holladay via Broadway to the Turnaround, then back to First Avenue and returning to Broadway.

“It’s going great, we couldn’t ask for better weather,” car show committee chairman Keith Chandler said at the Seaside Downtown Development Association’s Broadway booth. Seaside’s Tsunami Skippers performed jump rope and bands set up along Broadway. Judges chose winners on the streets and placed a car indicating that they are winners. The event celebrated show-quality vehicles from 1960 to 1978 and factory performance vehicles from 1979 to today.

“We’re seeing more performance cars, because there are no car shows out there for them,” special events coordinator Laurie Mespelt said.

The Kepler, however, remained in a class by itself. “It’s worth between \$3 million and \$4 million,” Chandler said. “It’s unique, the only type like it.”



JEFF TER HAR/FOR SEASIDE SIGNAL

Visitors came to Seaside Saturday for “Muscle and Chrome,” featuring classic cars from throughout the decades.



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

One-hundred-thirteen cars were displayed at the car show.



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

Car show committee chairman Keith Chandler.

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