

Community

Health Notes

By Audeen Wagner



Allergies: It's that time of year again, when hay fever sufferers are getting hit by the spring pollens in the air. It is often hard to tell the difference between a bad cold and an allergy, especially at this time of year; the symptoms are often very similar. Providence Family Medicine-Vernonia is seeing quite a few people with allergy problems and, this year especially, it seems that patients are experiencing more eye discomfort—watery, runny eyes, sometimes even with a thick discharge reminiscent of an eye disease. If you have any of these symptoms, you should check it out with your health care provider.

Immunizations: A great deal of information about vaccinations is available to parents. This is good, because parents should have access to information to help them make informed decisions about vaccinations for their families. However, information is sometimes published that is inaccurate or can be misleading when taken out of context. Sometimes it's hard to know how to schedule immunizations for infants and children. If you have questions about immunizations for your child, be sure to check with the clinic. Jeanette Doherty and Dawn Carr, Medical Assistants for the clinic, have the latest, up-to-date information on this subject. They will be happy to help with this important part of child care.

Mammovan: The next Mammovan visit to Vernonia is Wednesday, May 22. Call the clinic for an appointment.

Grant will aid Columbia County Child Abuse Assessment Center

The Columbia County Child Abuse Assessment Center has received a \$2,000 grant from the PGE Foundation (formerly the PGE-Enron Foundation). The center was one of 29 Oregon nonprofits to receive a portion of more than \$640,000 in 2002 first quarter PGE Foundation grants.

The grant will help provide an AmeriCorps volunteer to assist the center in increasing awareness about child abuse and family violence issues, as well as expand services to children and families throughout

Columbia County. In addition to multidisciplinary assessments, the Child Abuse Assessment Center provides education, training, support and counseling services to non-offending caretakers and children who have been abused or involved in domestic violence situations.

Nehalem Valley Pioneer meeting

The Nehalem Valley Pioneer Meeting will be held Sunday, June 9, at 11:00 a.m., at Jewell School, in beautiful downtown Jewell.

It's a potluck with lots of free parking. There will be fiddlin' music by the nationally acclaimed Katie Keller and her Bodacious Bluegrass Band.

Meet old friends, eat lunch and have fun. Y'all come!

State "School Reports Cards" say little

School report cards represent a very limited, statistical snapshot of school performance. Designed by the legislature to provide a way of comparing school across the state only narrowly defined data, available from every school, is included. Students are evaluated at four 'benchmark' levels, usually in grades 3,5,8 and 10. Showing improvement over time as well as actual numbers

Free workshop slated on how to get published

"How to Get Published", a free workshop by Poulsbo, Washington author June Cotner, will be held at the St. Helens Book Shop, 1550 Columbia Blvd. in St. Helens, on June 1, from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.

Cotner, who has gained national acclaim for her spiritual books, will be introducing her newest releases, *Teen Sunshine Reflections: Words for the Heart and Soul* and *Baby Blessings: Inspiring Prayers and Poems for Every Stage of Babyhood*. Her earlier work, *Graces: Prayers & Poems for Everyday Meals and Special Occasions* is in its 28th printing.

For more information, call Gena Pugh at the St. Helens Book Shop, at 503-397-4917 or visit www.sthelensbookshop.com

of students meeting or exceeding benchmarks heavily influences a school, or districts, overall rating. Last year report card contained three areas (Student Performance, Student Behavior and School Characteristics), this year the legislature added a fourth area Improvement.

Banks High School (BHS) and Junior High (BJHS) each received an overall rating of strong. Vernonia High School (VHS), Washington Elementary (WGS) and Banks Elementary (BES) all received overall ratings of satisfactory for 2002.

Student Performance is based on the results of benchmark testing in reading, writing, math multiple choice and math problem solving. The overall data for the school is reported for each subject area and compared to both schools with similar demographics and the state average. Testing of tenth graders in Banks and Vernonia resulted in a strong rating at both high schools. BJHS also received a strong rating for tests at the eighth grade level. Eighth graders in Vernonia are included in the results for WGS. Both WGS and BES received satisfactory ratings for student performance on statewide assessments.

The student behavior rat-

ing is compiled only from statistical data for attendance, and in high schools, drop-out rate for the 2000 - 2001 school year. BHS & BJHS earned an exceptional rating, VHS continues to have a low rating and WGS has dropped to an unacceptable attendance rating.

The third area of evaluation, school characteristics, is the percentage of students participating in statewide assessments. Any school with less than 85% of students participating in statewide test automatically receives an unacceptable rating. All Banks and Vernonia schools receive exceptional ratings in this area.

The final, new, area of evaluation on the state school report cards is improvement. Data are evaluated for the last four years (1998 - 2001) in two areas: student performance and behavior. All area schools (BHS, VHS, BJHS, WGS) showed improvement over the four years in performance on statewide tests in reading and math except BES which stayed about the same. Attendance and Drop-out Rate (Student Behavior) showed improvement at BHS and BJHS, stayed about the same at VHS and declined at WGS and BES.

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