

# Everybody's favorite teacher, Marguerite Nice, taking retirement

Vernonia School District board meetings begin with indulgent smiles when Chairman Carla Strand starts to recite the pledge of allegiance and the adults and children in the audience attempt to synchronize their cadence. Eventually, the singsong voices of the children and the more placid adult voices find a rhythm and manage to end the, somehow more meaningful, pledge together. Board meetings are also attracting a larger audience in their new location at City Hall than had attended in the past.

## Marguerite Nice Retires

With the June retirement of

long-time teacher Marguerite Nice on the agenda, elementary schools Principal Kirk Sherrill stood to emphasize the tremendous respect he has for Mrs. Nice, saying that he could not simply recommend that the board accept her resignation and "remain silent about her gifts as a teacher." Administrators do not lightly throw around the title "Master Teacher," Sherrill said, but he was told when he came to Vernonia five years ago that Nice was such a teacher. He told the board that on every visit to Nice's classroom he observed three qualities of her outstanding teaching ability. First, Nice is completely

invested in her students. According to Sherrill, she "pours herself into them" in almost a parental role. Second, Nice loves the children in her classroom liberally. And, finally, Nice is able to see the deep potential in all students.

Superintendent Mike Funderburg praised Nice's ability to "keep her passion" for teaching. Board member Randy Hansen, who first met Nice when he was a member of the football team coached by her husband, concluded the emotional remarks, praising Nice's contributions. Board member Jim Krahn received tremendous support from the board

and the audience for his attempt to move that the board NOT accept Nice's resignation, but the board, regrettably, met its obligation by accepting the resignation.

## School Reports

One of the district's greatest assets, Sherrill told the audience, is having two very valuable music teachers, which allows children as young as third grade to experience music education. Four students from Mrs. Eagleson's class performed for the board and audience, both individually and as a group.

Junior high student Heather Bassett told the board that Washington and Lincoln Schools had collected over 2400 cans of food for the Vernonia Cares Food Bank. Mist School collected over 500 cans of food, which were donated to the Mist Fire Department. Bassett also told the board that a new slide installed at WGS was made possible by donations from the Gwins and the McClellans.

Vernonia High School Principal Mike Durbin introduced student Samantha Purvee as the new public relations representative, a position previously unfilled this year. Purvee reported that VHS had donated over 1,000 cans to the food bank, held a successful Winter Festival on the last day of school before Christmas break, and announced the members of Winter Formal Court. The targeted charity of the student body is the Juvenile Diabetes Association (JDA), again this year, and several fundraisers have raised \$714 to date, according to

Purvee. She also told the board and audience that a Red Cross blood drive would be held February 16.

Durbin told the board about a special benefit concert given, as part of his senior project, by Jake Brock and his band "Broken Glory." (See page 8) Durbin also reported that students recognized Raymond Mott, of the Oregon Department of Transportation, for his work to pave the high school parking lots. Mott was presented with a plaque at the Renaissance Assembly.

## Senior Trip approved

The board approved this year's senior trip after a presentation by advisor Rena Titus. Board member Leslie O'Leary asked whether the issue that occurred last year, when some students managed to come home with pierced ears or tattoos, had been addressed. Titus said that this year's itinerary is more closely scheduled and does not allow a "free day," as in last year's itinerary. The approximate cost this year will be \$639. About 40 members of the class have signed up and are working to raise funds.

## High School Schedule

A major portion of Funderburg's report concerned inadequacies in the trimester schedule to meet students' academic needs. Students could attend 24 to 36 weeks on the trimester schedule, he said, without receiving instruction in core subjects such as math and English. He recommended retaining the

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