

Alternatives for Mist School

From page 1

students are in blended classrooms The K-5 proposal (presented May 1) would require 70 percent of Vernonia students to be in blended classrooms. According to Funderburg, blended classrooms work well only with small numbers of students and in an environment that can provide additional staff training and support. Blended classrooms do not follow "best practices" (teaching techniques that are based on data and research, and that show increased academic achievement) Funderburg said.

Funderburg concluded his remarks by saying that he would recommend instituting blended classrooms only "out of necessity" and requested the board to respect the fact that most of the staff do not want to teach blends. The best education option would be a K-3 benchmark design, he said, but that model would not be best, financially, at this time. He added that the administration would support the board's decision and implement whatever structure the board approved.

Board comments

Following Funderburg's presentation, board members talked about the research and the conclusions they had each reached. Randy Hansen began the discussion by stating his "anti-Vernonia bias" and went on to say that he would do everything possible to continue operation of MGS and give the community a choice.

Jim Krahn, Leslie O'Leary and Darrell Hamblet concurred that the administration had exercised determined diligence in evaluating options and that they had each decided they were not in favor of blended classrooms, even though all recognized the importance of the MGS option. Cari Levenseller and Tim Titus also said that they did not like blended classrooms.

Sometimes acrimonious public discussion

A sometimes acrimonious discussion followed between the board and the public, with many in the audience presenting objections to closing MGS, even though that option had not been discussed or suggested. WGS teacher Ilene Grady read a letter that carefully outlined her reasons for preferring to teach in a straight grade classroom and gave the board

three additional letters from teachers who prefer a single-grade classroom.

Elementary Principal Kirk Sherrill said that teachers are trained to teach in straight grade classrooms and that most of his staff prefer unblended classrooms. However, Kari Hansen, currently teaching a blend at MGS, told the board that test scores for her students are not low in math or reading and spoke with great feeling about preserving the small school option.

Consensus was missing

After a great deal of discussion, it became clear that neither the board nor the audience wholeheartedly supported any of the options presented. The board then began to consider another option, ie., continuing operation of MGS as a K-5 school primarily for residents of the Mist area. A motion to table the discussion was passed with Hamblet, Hansen, Krahn and Titus voting in favor and Levenseller, O'Leary and board chair Carla Strand opposed. A special meeting was then scheduled for the following Tuesday.

Another meeting set

At the May 6 meeting, Plews presented the cost analysis for operation of MGS with a single blended class, resulting in a net loss to the district of about \$9,000. Hamblet told the audience that the Budget Assistance Team (BAT), of which he is a member, met for several hours earlier in the day to develop final recommendations for the budget committee that will balance the budget and absorb this cost.

Carolyn White and Tom Jones each made comments that were representative of the opinions voiced at prior meetings. White praised the efforts of the board to understand the issue, seek public comment and decide this very difficult and emotional issue. Jones, on the other hand, told the board that it was his perception that the discussion was about "control, power and the self serving ideology of a few" and that not nearly enough input had been sought from those affected by the decision.

Titus told the audience that the board is trying to create options in the district. Hamblet said that BAT and the board had looked at every feasible option. He said that the board "could go on forever having

Horse Classic signals start of 4-H summer

Spring Horse Classic marks the beginning of the summer 4-H horse season and the end of long hours and large amounts of training for Columbia County 4-H youth. This year, the Columbia County 4-H program sent 14 youth to 4-H Spring Horse Classic in Roseburg.

Four of the youth competed in the 4-H State Horse Bowl, a quiz bowl-type contest where horse related questions are asked of each member. The second portion of this contest allows team members to select who may have bonus questions for more points.

The youth competed at the local Winter 4-H Horse Classic, in St. Helens, placed first at the Region "D" competition, then practiced until the competition April 26.

The Columbia County team of Jackie Sleeper, Nichole Andrews, Samantha Klein and Amber Kennedy, brought home third place honors statewide. Team coach is Linda Todd. In individual scoring, Jackie Sleeper placed second in the state.

The second contest, held

meetings and getting input, but we have to put together a budget." Strand reminded the audience that at the end of the previous meeting, the board invited anyone in the audience to call the district office with ideas about how the elementary classes should be structured. She said that no calls had been received.

The board voted to operate MGS as a K-5 blend for the 2003-2004 school year (Levenseller, Titus, Hansen, Krahn, O'Leary in favor; Strand and Hamblet opposed.), with one teacher and one aide. Students currently attending MGS will be offered first chance to participate in the blended classroom of 15 to 25 students.

during Spring Horse Classic, is the 4-H State Horse Judging Contest, which requires youth to consider up to four classes of horses and evaluate them for strengths and weaknesses, plus feed identification. Once the youth make their selections and mark their judging cards, they begin the note taking process. Many of the classes require the youth to present an oral defense of their judgement. Youth are awarded a maximum of 50 points if they place the class correctly and up to another

50 points for their reasons.

The Columbia County Senior Team placed eleventh, with team member Jackie Sleeper taking second high individual statewide. The team of Juliane Kalhar, Megan Jennings, Jackie Sleeper, Kirsten Schrader and Nicole McNinch was coached by Laura Kalhar. The Intermediate Team included Lindsay Brown, Amy Anderson, Courtney Savage, Whitney Johnson and Ashley Parker, and was coached by Sheryl Savage.

Spring Contest Day warms up 4-H

The ovens were hot and the smell of food wafted out of the Home Economics room at St. Helens Middle School, April 26, as 4-H youth from around Columbia County participated in the 4-H Spring Contest Day, an event which included the 4-H Foods Contest and Junior Presentations.

Participants in the Foods Contest prepare a meal, including tablesetting with correct

dishes and flatware, a balanced menu for an entire day and a food item from the menu. The time allowed and the level of food preparation depends on the level and age of the youth.

The Junior 4-H Presentation Contest requires members to select a topic, prepare a speech and present it to a judge. Topics selected may be 4-H projects or other areas of interest.

SMOOTH RIDES. POWERFUL DEALS

SPORTSMAN 700 TWIN

SPORTSMAN 600 TWIN

SPORTSMAN 500 H.O.

SPORTSMAN FAMILY

- Sportsman is the world's best-selling automatic ATV, now with a bold new look
- 4 engine choices: 400, 500 H.O., 600 Twin and 700 Twin
- Independent rear suspension for a legendary smooth ride



\$39 BUY NOW FOR ONLY /MONTH AND **3.9% APR**

TVI POWER & SPORTS

Parts * Sales * Service

34515 S.W. Tualatin Valley Highway
North side of TV Hwy between Hillsboro & Cornelius

Over 17 years
Serving the
Community



503-648-1254

*On your Polaris StarCard, subject to credit approval. Max. finance amount \$10,000. \$39 minimum monthly payment plus debt cancellation fees, if applicable, and a Reduced Rate 3.9% APR effective on these purchases for 24 months from date of purchase if your Account is kept current. The number of months you will pay and the amount of your total payment due will depend on additional purchases and your Account balances. Standard Rate APR 17.9%. For Accounts not kept current, the Default Rate 21.9% APR will apply. Min. Finance Charge \$2.00. Warning: ATVs can be hazardous to operate. ATVs with engine sizes larger than 90 cc may not be ridden by anyone under 16 years of age. Always wear a helmet and be sure to take a training course. For safety and training information, see your Polaris dealer or call 1-800-342-3764.

Swim Lessons

at

Cedar Ridge



Ses-

sions start

Monday, July 14.

Pick up Registration Forms
at Creative Impulse or call

Dana Hyde

for information at

(503) 429-9351