

## Questions and 47J survey

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from the audience implied disagreement.

Asked about moving the modular classroom from LGS to WGS in order to locate all classrooms outside of the basement, district maintenance supervisor John Lewis explained that, in addition to being the district's oldest mod, it is infested with ants, and the heating system is in bad shape.

WGS Principal Nate Underwood said that art and music would have remained in the basement, regardless of completion of a new building, as well as one other class. Rather than attempt to hold K-8 special education in a single room, Underwood said, he decided to move the sixth grade to the basement.

### Public Opinion Survey

Funderburg gave an overview of the results of a non-scientific survey of community, staff and student attitudes about the district. The survey was divided into eight topic areas (Safety, Staff, Character Education, Specialized Programs, Academic Programs, Facilities Communication and Technology) and participants were asked to agree or disagree with several questions in each category. In spite of efforts to distribute the survey to the community, he said, most of the community responses were from parents. Staff and students also completed the survey.

In the area of safety, while

staff, community members and younger students feel safe at school, older students had a different view. WGS students felt the schools do not do a good job of preventing fighting, harassment and bullying. High school students, mostly neutral on the issue of fighting, agreed that the schools could do a better job in preventing harassment. High school students also felt the school did not do a good job of preventing theft and drug use.

All groups feel that the staff is knowledgeable and skilled, but staff disagreed with other groups about being provided with adequate resources.

In specialized programs, differences in perception from inside and outside the schools were evident regarding the dropout rate. Community members strongly agreed the school works hard to prevent dropping out, but staff and high school students solidly or strongly disagreed. The groups also contrasted in the area of attendance. While younger students and the community felt that attendance rates were acceptable, staff and high school students disagreed. All agree that talented and gifted students receive inadequate enrichment.

In other business, the board:

- Changed the date of the budget hearing from June 24, to June 22. The public is encouraged to attend.

- Were told that grants will fund attendance of Underwood and Scholl at the National Charter School Conference.

## Black bear facts help alleviate concern about visits

With the recent black bear siting within Vernonia city limits, some information on bears might be useful. Black bears are the most common and generally the smallest of North American bears and the only bear known to currently exist in Oregon. Black bears were once hunted for bounties as a predator and nuisance animal and were not protected as a game mammal until 1970. Since then, bear numbers have increased under a managed harvest program.

The current Oregon black bear population is estimated at 25,000 animals. A black bear can live 20 years or more in the wild. Black bears are very agile, can run in bursts up to 35 mph and can run up or down hills quickly and easily. Their short, curved claws help them to climb trees. Black bears are also strong swimmers.

Threats to black bears include diseases, predation and starvation. Natural enemies include other bears and mountain lions.

Black bears eat almost anything, including human food, garbage, hummingbird food, pet food and livestock feed. Once a bear has found the easily accessible, consistent food source that humans offer, it may overcome its wariness of people and visit regularly, increasing the chance of a human/bear encounter. By handling food and garbage responsibly, encounters with bears can be prevented.

To decrease the likelihood of meeting a bear in the yard; remove all food attractants, keep all garbage inside until just before garbage pick-up, pour bleach in garbage cans that bears have already ransacked.

Most bears sighted in residential areas do not cause any damage. If a bear doesn't find abundant food, it will move on.

A bear exhibiting the following behaviors is considered a human safety hazard:

- Exhibits little or no fear of people;
  - Displays aggressive or warning behavior when in contact with people such as false charges, growling or teeth popping;
  - Attempts to break into residences or buildings, thus indicating no fear of people;
  - Repeated feeding in garbage, pet/bird feeders or stock feeders;
  - Animal is in poor condition due to injury or malnutrition; or
  - The bear is frequently seen around people during daylight.
- If you do encounter a bear,

in almost all cases, the bear will detect you first and leave the area. Bear attacks are rare compared to the number of close encounters. However, if you do meet a bear:

- Stay calm. If you see a bear and it hasn't seen you, calmly leave the area. As you move away, speak softly to let the bear discover your presence.

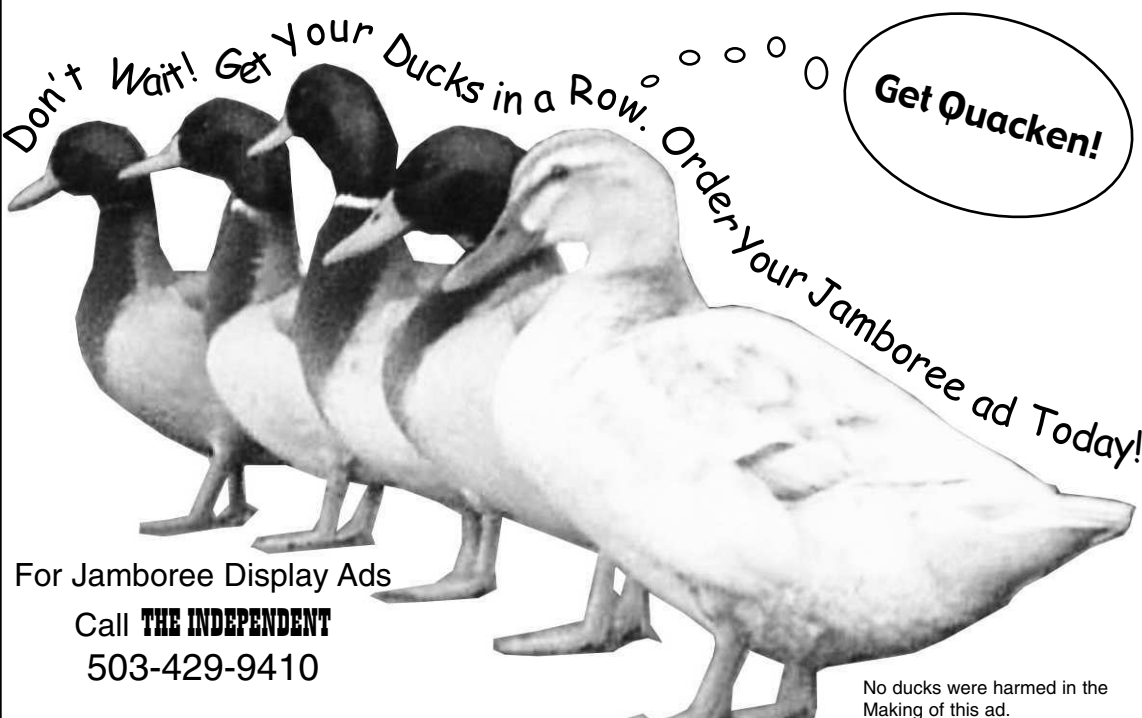
- Stop. Back away slowly while facing the bear. Avoid direct eye contact as bears may perceive this as a threat. Give the bear plenty of room to escape. Wild bears rarely attack people unless they feel threatened or provoked.

- Speak softly. This may reassure the bear that no harm is meant to it. Try not to show fear.

In the unlikely event of attack by a black bear, fight back. Black bears have been driven away when people have fought back with rocks, sticks, binoculars and even their bare hands.

Most black bears are just occasional visitors, not pests.

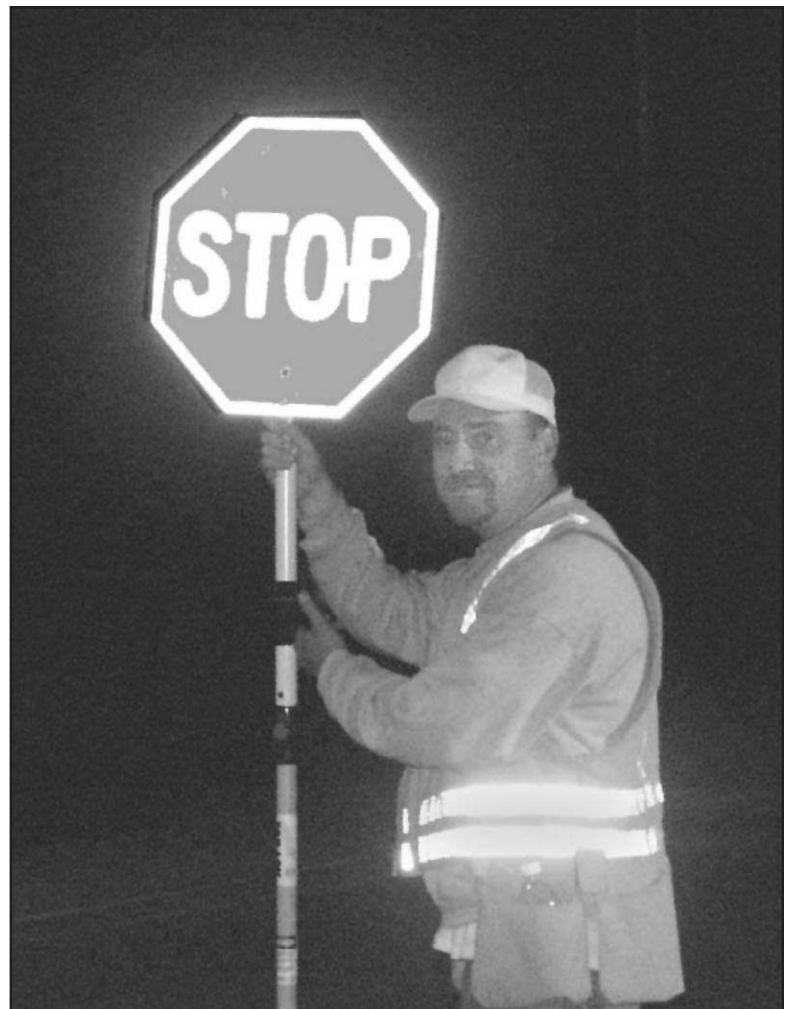
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Vernonian Jim Fields is working as a flagger on the OA Hill project. Fields says that people near the construction have been great to him, bringing coffee and treats while he works the night shift on the project that now has 24-hour flagging due to the closure of one lane while a new pedestrian walkway is installed.