

# National Spelling Bee in Wyoming

by Chris Thomas  
Oregon News Service

The countdown is on, as wordsmiths sharpen their study skills to compete in the AARP National Spelling Bee in just a few weeks. Dr. Bill Long of Portland is a regular annual contestant, finishing in the top ten in each of the past five years. Even for those who have some natural aptitude for spelling, Long says, being in the spotlight is a whole different experience.

"When you just have 30 seconds in which to respond, it can be a lot more difficult. So, I have been going through and making lists of words, and I probably have, oh, 1200 or 1500 words, something like that."

In 2007, another Oregonian, Susan Hartner of Hillsboro, won the competition. AARP says some contestants spend all year preparing, while others rely on their lifetime of learning and don't do much studying.

Most contestants say they spend a lot of time with their noses in dictionaries, and returning 2009 champ Michael Petrina Jr., from Arlington, Virginia, describes how he created a study guide at the same time.

"I copied down all of the words that I thought I needed to know on index cards. I've been basically reviewing those index cards with some supplemental lists."

Spelling bee words come from the Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition. The competition is June 18-19 at the Little America Hotel and Resort, in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Registration is open until the day of the event, for spellers aged 50 and over. So far, people from 21 states have signed up to compete for more than \$1000 in gifts and prizes.

The entry fee is \$30 until June 11; walk-in registration is \$40. Those who want to compete can register online at [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org).

# Summer reading program to start

Children from ages one through 13 are invited to Make a Splash – READ! at the Vernonia Public Library's 2010 Summer Library Program, starting June 22nd!

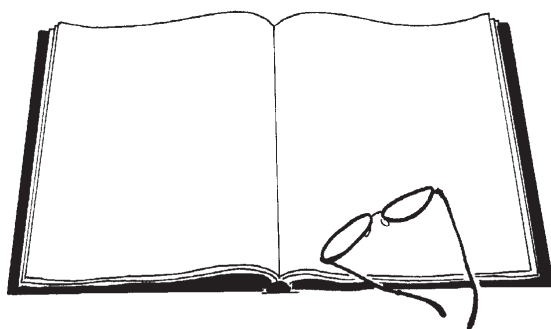
Register for the reading programs any time after June 1, and receive a log to record the amount of time you read this summer.

Sign a contract with the librarian to decide the amount of time you plan to read per week.

There will be a variety of programs, give-a-ways, and contests all summer, so pick up a list of events and drop in as often as possible.

Everyone who finishes the program by completing their contract will be invited to a final party, with certificates and rewards! The library welcomes children of all abilities.

For more information, call the library at 503-429-1818 or come in to register.



Ilene Grady, with Roxie, get their mark for a lap completed during the Alumni Walk on May 22 at Vernonia Lake. The walk was a fundraiser for the new schools project.

## Chalk Talk

Chalk Talk is a column of information about Vernonia schools. This column was provided by Superintendent Ken Cox.



Last year we met the economic impact of the recession by eliminating a number of positions and cutting at least 10 days from all staff, including one student contact day. As we began the budget process this year, we felt that we had cut deep enough that we would be able to make it through next year without any more cuts.

With input from the administrative team we made minor adjustments to the budget to add back five days for most staff. As it turned out we ended up needing to cut nearly \$80,000 prior to presenting the proposed budget to the budget committee in early May. Unfortunately, last week's economic forecast brought with it the news that we needed to make an additional \$300,000 in cuts to the budget.

When the budget committee met last week I recommended that, rather than make hasty changes to the proposed budget, we reduce our contingency fund and work with the school board to determine if we need to cut days next year rather than eliminate any more programs or staff. This topic will be discussed at the next board meeting, 6:00 p.m. on June 10th.

Oregon's school funding is in crisis! As a district and as parents you and I should be able to count on stable funding for our children's education and not have surprises right in the middle of our budget process. This is a state issue and I would encourage you to contact our state representatives to take this issue seriously and do something during the next session. Yes, I know that the economy has not begun to turn around yet, we could even see further cuts in the fall, but there is a better solution than what we currently have. We need to ask our legislators to work cooperatively, ignoring party lines, to find the answer. As voters we must insist on establishing a better financial foundation for the education for our children. They are our future, let's not shortchange their education!

## Girl Scouts ask for return of books

Do you have any Girl Scout books that you are not using? The Vernonia Girl Scouts have loaned a few books that haven't yet been returned. They would appreciate the return of these books so others may use them.

If you have some Girl Scout books, please contact Kinnell Steward at 503-819-0143 and she will pick them up. They may also be put in a plastic bag and dropped off at the Clever Cricket.

## Pet of the Month

Columbia Humane Society in St. Helens has a variety of wonderful pets available for adoption. Find the pet that's right for you in the shelter at 2084 Oregon Street. Phone 503-397-4353  
Open Mon - Fri 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, 11 am. to 5 pm.

These adorable puppies are available for adoption.



The Columbia Humane Society is a No-Kill non-profit shelter dedicated to helping friends find each other since 1985.

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