

# Small

Spring  
2008

# Talk

## The Road Less Traveled



By: Al Meunier  
OSSA Executive Director

Our small schools have more than survived during the past year. It is through the collective commitment of a dedicated group of administrators, teachers, staff and parents that we were able to complete another year of success. The demise of our small schools has been a yearly prediction, but those who make those predictions aren't the people who live and work in our rural regions.

It has been my distinct pleasure to visit a significant number of the rural districts in our state and in each one you can identify something special that is happening with young people. This year, Lori Luna, the OSSA Teacher of the Year, is from Corbett School District. Corbett was selected as one of the outstanding high schools in the country. As you examine the other high schools on the list, the vast majority were from urban areas and frequently draws from the most prosperous portions of their communities.

I would like to thank all of the small schools and ESDs that are participating in the study being conducted by the Legislative Revenue Office. The OSSA is a major participant in that study. In the fall of 2008, a survey will be sent to the small schools of Oregon to collect data that will be used in the formation of the report that will be presented to the 2009 legislature.

I am completing my first year as your executive director and it has been a pleasure to serve the small schools of Oregon. I have a special place in my heart for small rural areas and the schools that serve those areas. My first eight years of school were spent in a two-room school in Montana. I also spent a year as the superintendent of Athena-Weston School District. I look forward to serving you in 2008-2009.

The official newsletter of the  
Oregon Small Schools Association

## Perrydale FFA wins big at Nationals

The Perrydale FFA Chapter from Perrydale School in Amity won the National FFA Organization's 2007 Million Hour Challenge Award. The award honors the FFA chapter that logged the most community service hours from Oct. 2, 2006, to Oct. 1, 2007. The program is a special FFA national initiative to unite youth across the country and strengthen communities through civic engagement and service learning. It is made possible by Toyota as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

"In addition to a \$1,000 award, Perrydale FFA will appear on FFA Today! television show broadcast on RFD-TV network and on the National FFA

Please see FFA on p.3



### INSIDE

Corbett Represents Oregon in Academic Decathlon .....	4
OSSA Board Election Results .....	5
June Jam .....	6

## OSSA AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE: 2007 – 2008

### Career Related Learning Team – Grant Union High School

*Grades 8-12 Career Related Learning Curriculum:* Grant School District #3 utilizes a team approach to meet career related learning standards. At each grade level students are given a set curriculum with Career Information System being the primary tool. Students are also given opportunities to have job shadows, job interviews with community members, build resumes, learn about their aptitudes, research possible careers, identify training paths and apply for scholarships. Seniors also are developing a career plan that is extensive and is presented to staff and community in an oral presentation as well as a written plan with multiple options. This is a cross curriculum approach that involves multiple staff and allows students significant time understanding their future choices each year. For more information contact Mark Wittly at 541-575-1799 or at markwittly@grantesd.k12.or.us.

### Outstanding Accomplishments in Music Program – Enterprise School District

*Randy Morgan and Music Program:*

- Randy Morgan did not retire after 30 years because. . . "I am still having too much fun."
- Multiple Trips to State Band and Choir Finals
- Choir Performs for Specialty Groups During Holidays.
- Band/Choir went to nursing home to help celebrate a resident's 105<sup>th</sup> birthday
- Recruits Members from all Facets – Athletes, Artists, Drama Students, Home Schoolers
- Receives Grants to Help in Purchase of Extra Instruments & Music
- Works Cooperatively with all Other Programs in School
- Takes Students to District State and Solo Competitions and to Opportunities Beyond School

For more information contact Blake Carlsen at 541-426-3193 or at bcarlsen@enterprise.k12.or.us.

### Earning Exceptional Status three years in a row on the Oregon report card – Santiam Canyon School District

*All Staff – Gates Elementary:* Gates elementary has earned an exceptional status on the Oregon state report card for three years in a row. There are only 54 schools in the state to accomplish this, out of 1262 schools. This places Gates Elementary in the top 4% of schools. This has been accomplished through hard work from all of the staff, parents and most importantly the students.

For more information contact Jack Thompson at 503-897-2192 or at jack.thompson@santiam.k12.or.us.

### Overall Excellence – Waldport High School

*Staff, Students and Community:* Waldport High School was named by U.S. News and World Report as being in the top one percent of high schools nationwide. This "silver rating" is based on test scores, in addition to how well the school serves each and every student. Waldport enjoys tremendous community support and volunteerism, and has received a "met" AYP rating the last four years.

For more information contact Tom Rinearson at 541-265-4403 or at tom.rinearson@lincoln.k12.or.us.

### The Students, Staff and Community – Perrydale School District #21

*School-Wide Improvement Day:* School-Wide Improvement Day has been held at Perrydale School for 10 years now. It has been a very successful event which has made some positive impacts on our school. It is a day where the whole school spends a good part of the morning brainstorming about ideas on how we can make Perrydale School a better place for all. Ideas can range from a zoo from the Kindergarten class to new computers from high school students. Other ideas generated are topics of healthy living, service learning and school climate. The day starts out with the whole school, as well as community members, meeting in the new gym where we view a PowerPoint presentation of all the items on the lists from the past year that have been accomplished. After that, students return to their assigned classrooms for their brainstorming sessions which are led by staff members. Later, the lists of ideas are discussed at Site Council and staff meetings and it is decided which items are possible and of most importance.

For more information contact Janet Person at 503-835-3184 or at jperson@perrydale.k12.or.us.

### Taft Construction Co. Mrs. Taft and her 5/6 class – Powers Elementary School

*Taft Construction Program:* Children in Mrs. Taft's 5/6 class entered the beginning of the 2007-08 school year as students and were immediately transformed into 22 construction workers for Taft Construction. Their job was to construct knowledge and add reinforcements to their brain so they could be successful as they progressed through the school year. They were given a Building Code handbook on the first day of school that outlined the whole program. All employees get paid an hourly "wage" in classroom money. They receive a bank statement twice a month on payday, and they even pay rent for their desks, just as they would in the real world.

Taft Construction was created to give the students an opportunity to experience "real world" economic concepts, like saving, spending, earning a living, balancing a checkbook, and budgeting for future spending. It also has the added bonus of natural consequences. Students also have to pay fines when they miss

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FFA ... continued from p.1

web site,” said Damon Spight, National FFA program manager. “They not only had the largest number of service hours logged, but also organized more than 20 quality community service activities.”

Small but mighty, Perrydale School is a rural school in Oregon with 325 students K-12, 115 of them high school students and 65 students in agriculture education classes. This national award is not their first. They also won second place for the National FFA Week contest in 2007. Agricultural science and technology teacher and FFA advisor Kirk Hutchinson says the biggest community impact is made from their Food for All project.

“This year, the Perrydale FFA Chapter – assisted by the Amity FFA Chapter – amassed 130,000 pounds of potatoes, onions, apples, oranges, parsnips, carrots and other produce, making it the biggest food drive in any school in Oregon,” said Hutchinson. “Students learn how to market the program to prospective donors, coordinate distribution and delivery of food and work as a team.” More than 3,250 families were served by the program in 2007.

The Homeless Dinners program is another rewarding chapter activity. Chapter members take food to Salem and give it to people in homeless shelters, offering them food and encouragement. The members meet people from all walks of life, learning what misfortunes others have experienced and what hardships they have faced.

In addition to these programs, Perrydale FFA Chapter organizes tree plantings, blood drives, activities for the elderly and education programs for children. Ag Olympigs and Jr. Ag Olympigs teach younger students about agriculture with a variety of games and fellowship activities. PALS-Boat Buddies is a program where freshmen are paired with kindergartners to build small wooden boats.

Members of Perrydale FFA Chapter attended the 80th National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Ind., last October and participated in the National FFA Days of Service activities held throughout the city.

The Million Hour Challenge awards program will expand in 2008 awarding \$12,500 to the top five chapters (\$2,500 each) having the greatest number of community service hours in the following categories – environment, government, social/human service, healthy lifestyles and education. Eligible project hours are those earned during Oct. 2, 2007, to Oct. 1, 2008.

The National FFA Organization, formerly known as the Future Farmers of America, is a national youth organization of 500,823 student members – all preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture – as part of 7,358 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The National FFA Organization changed to its present name in 1988, in recognition of the growth and diversity of agriculture and agricultural education. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. Visit [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org) for more information.

## **Perrydale Schools receive Oregon Creative Ticket awards**

Each of the schools in the Perrydale School District received the Oregon Creative Ticket Schools of Excellence Award from the Oregon Alliance for Arts Education during a ceremony April 1.

Launched in 1999, the Creative Ticket School Awards Program recognizes schools that have done an outstanding job of making the arts essential to the education of their students. The state-level awards provide an important opportunity to honor schools and the role they play in providing a creative learning environment for outstanding student achievement. This award is presented to individual schools which have arts education programs that include two or more of the following components:

- Teach all the arts as specific disciplines;
- Provide imaginative learning environments;
- Include parental involvement;
- Promote learning about other cultures; and
- Encourage community connections.

Recipients of the award are chosen by each Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network State Alliance, of which the Oregon Alliance for Arts Education is a member. State alliances may recognize as many state-level award winners as they wish for each school year.

Perrydale Elementary, Perrydale Middle School, and Perrydale High School all were honored with one of these Creative Ticket awards.



*Robin Stoutt (right) receives Creative Ticket Awards for all three Perrydale schools during a ceremony in April.*

# Corbett High School represents Oregon in Academic Decathlon National Finals

By: *Christian Cerone*

*State Director, Oregon Academic Decathlon*

Corbett High School represented Oregon at the United States Academic Decathlon national finals in Garden Grove, Calif., April 30-May 3. The six-member team finished 31<sup>st</sup> in a field of 41 state champions from across the nation, and 9<sup>th</sup> out of 14 in the small schools category.

Academic Decathlon is a nationwide scholastic competition in which teams of students take objective tests in math, language & literature, art, science, history, music, and economics. They also deliver prepared and impromptu speeches, sit for professional interviews, and write a critical essay. Teams of up to nine students must consist of equal proportions of A, B, and C-level students, based on a computation of GPA.

Despite their modest final standing, the Corbett team had a lot to celebrate at the awards ceremony. They were the most improved team in the nation between the state and national competitions. After winning the Oregon state title with a score of 32,621 out of a possible 60,000 – the lowest known score of any other state champion – the team improved by more than 4,000 points at nationals to finish with 36,820, and placed higher than anyone expected in the final rankings.



Junior Lara Dunton led the team in scoring with nearly 7,000 out of a possible 10,000 points, thus earning a \$500 scholarship from United States Academic Decathlon, the governing body of the national competition since 1981. Sophomore and C-student Morgon Purvine earned the fourth-highest score in his GPA category for the interview event, missing the bronze medal by only 5 points. Other top-10 finishers included junior Matt Hammel in Interview, junior Tyler Jones in Math, and Dunton in both Science and Language and Literature.

Jones and junior Joe Perry were awarded one-year subscriptions to Scientific American magazine for their high scores in Math, while Dunton earned a subscription for herself with her high science score.

Another noteworthy feat came in the Super Quiz Oral Relay event – the only event open to the public. Before hundreds of cheering parents and representatives from many of the participating schools, the short-handed Oregon team correctly answered 21 questions on Civil War history. Their score matched or surpassed teams of more students from 17 different schools.

“That performance totally amazed me,” said Oregon state director Christian Cerone. “Most teams consist of nine students, and each student answers five questions, so most teams have the opportunity to score as many as 45 points, while the six from Oregon could only reach 30. They outscored a lot of schools despite this tremendous disadvantage.”

Corbett is the first team to represent the newly-founded Oregon Academic Decathlon at the national competition. With five of the six students returning to compete next year (senior Jeff Monroe will move on to Oregon State University), further improvement is anticipated.

“They got off to a very slow start this year,” said Cerone. “None of them had even heard of this before. I’m very proud of the progress and potential they showed in the end.”

“I now realize why people enjoy doing this so much,” Hammel said. “The sense of accomplishment when one does well is totally cool. Woo hoo! We look forward to next year in Memphis!”

More information about participating in the Oregon Academic Decathlon can be found at [www.orad.us](http://www.orad.us), and by contacting state director Christian Cerone at [ccerone@orad.us](mailto:ccerone@orad.us) or 503-347-5757.

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*Awards ... continued from p.2*

a deadline (don't complete an assignment on time), are late for work (tardy), need new blueprints (new assignment or supplies), and for breaking a code of conduct. By having clear expectations and “real” consequences in place, referrals to the office have been dramatically reduced. The amount of late assignments has dropped off considerably as well. Students have really bought into the money concept and it is often interesting how they choose to spend their money! When students have to write a check they are documenting the event in their own handwriting and the “canceled checks” are then available to show parents at conference time or whenever they want to see them. It has been a learning process for Mrs. Taft as well. There is a little additional bookkeeping on her part, but the benefits far outweigh the extra time it takes. While it is a new program at our small elementary school, Mrs. Taft plans to continue with it indefinitely in the future. For more information contact Beth Taft at 541-439-2281 or at [btaft@powers.k12.or.us](mailto:btaft@powers.k12.or.us).

# OSSA Election Results

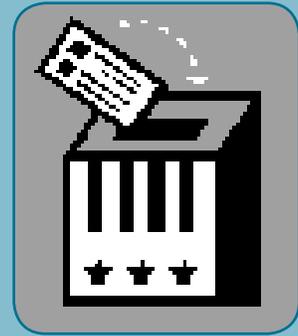
## Oregon Small Schools Board of Directors Election Results:

*Region 2: Janelle Beers*, Dayton School District

*Region 4: Dan Forbess*, Oakland School District & North Douglas School District

*Region 5: Raymon Smith*, Arlington School District

*Region 7: Dave Courtney*, Harney County School District



## Differentiated learning supports the individual student



By: *Lori Luna*  
*Corbett Middle School*  
*OSSA 2007-2008 Teacher of the Year*

At Corbett Middle School, classes are designed to promote a model of continuous improvement. We believe deeply in each child's potential, but recognize that each is an individual with varying strengths at different times in their individual development. In order to address the needs of many individuals collectively, our program provides multiple points of entry into curriculum, uses project-based learning, and allows for differentiation by allowing each individual to begin where they are at and move forward over the course of two years. One of the areas where this is most evident is in our reading "program."

I hesitate to use the term "program" because there is nothing boxed or packaged to describe it. Each classroom has an extensive library of young adolescent literature, and students are encouraged to borrow books as they choose. This is a natural tool for differentiation, as each child chooses what interests them and books that are at their own level. There is time set aside for silent reading every day – at least 20 minutes in each classroom. When students want to celebrate at the end of a unit or before a long break from school, they often choose to have extended reading periods.

In addition to silent reading time, every teacher in our building sets aside 20-30 minutes each day to read aloud. The read-aloud choices range from books that support current curriculum content, interesting new award-winning titles, old-time favorites, non-fiction, challenging classics and more. During this time, we can choose books that students might not ordinarily choose for themselves because of the challenging or obscure nature of the material. It allows for a collective discussion of a single title without leaving anyone out because of reading ability.

The next most important part of our reading program is how it is integrated into almost everything else we do. Many of our large social studies units are centered on student research, so students spend time reading from a variety of sources – both print and electronic – to become experts on their subjects. Although most students probably do not recognize this as part of their reading instruction, they are learning one of the most complex reading skills of all: to read widely, synthesize and create their own interpretation of what they have learned. When we do research units, the teachers collect books from all sorts of sources, especially the county library, in a wide range of reading levels to accommodate all learners. Again, this allows for easy differentiation. Students are all tackling similar content while learning at their own level.

The beauty of all of this? Students leave Corbett Middle School with a deep love of reading. Not only do they love reading, they are also quite good at it. All students at our high school are expected to take AP English as juniors and seniors – and they are ready! In addition, our state test scores on reading exams support what we do as well over 80% of our students meet or exceed the benchmark in 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades regularly.

Differentiated learning supports the individual, and encouraging self-selected reading supports readers.



**Oregon Small School Association &  
Eastern Oregon University Present**



# June Jam June 16-17

at Eastern Oregon University, La Grande

## Literacy in a New Key

Monday Keynote  
**Murray Banks**  
*Motivation and  
Inspiration!*

Tuesday Keynote  
**Kieran Egan**  
*Imagination in  
Education!*

Morning breakout sessions led by EOU faculty ●

Afternoon professional learning communities  
led by small-schools teachers ●

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*An Expanded view of literacy that embraces all subjects and all grade levels!*

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