

NEXT GENERATION | SCHOOL NEWS

Applegate, Williams schools rise to the challenge

BY JEAN HALL

After six months of distance learning, Applegate and Williams School students may have the opportunity to meet their teachers and other staff members in person later this year. Applegate students will also see the finished mosaic mural they helped create with local artist Jeremy Criswell. Williams students will see and enjoy the grassy expanse of the newly completed track and field.

The closing months of the spring semester highlighted the creativity and dedication of the staff at both schools. Unable to teach in the usual classroom manner, they used online resources such as Google Classroom and Google Meets. Both schools provided Chromebooks to students who needed them and posted online resources for parents. Class chats, phone calls, emails, and even some home visits helped staff members stay in touch with their students and provide them with encouragement.

Because the usual moving-on ceremonies were canceled, the eighth graders at Applegate School and the fifth graders at Williams School enjoyed the creative efforts of their school staffs to provide “drive-through” ceremonies. At Applegate School the staff made posters for each of the eighth graders. Balloons decorated the campus and a photo-op stage provided a space for those special memory pictures. On June 9, fifth graders and their families at Williams School shared in a drive-through moving-on ceremony. The staff handed out end-of-the-year awards and certificates. Both of these

ceremonies reveal the care with which the school staffs regard their students and the dignity with which they exercise their profession.

Originally scheduled for August 31, the opening of school has been pushed back to September 8 to allow for additional training for staff members in this time of pandemic. School weeks in the new school year will be four days long—Monday through Thursday.

Applegate School’s day will go from 7:50 am - 3:10 pm. Parents can drop off their children beginning at 7:30 am.

Williams School’s day will begin at 7:20 am and end at 2:25 pm. Parents can drop off their students beginning at 7:00 am.

Guidelines and requirements from the governor and the Oregon Department of Education arrive on a weekly basis. We notify parents weekly with our Monday Morning Update. We are continuing to make plans for the start of school. Patience and the combined desire of everyone for the safety of our students and all those involved in the school scene will certainly help in making the process as smooth as possible.

The new school year will see differences. However, with the creativity and dedication of the staffs at both Applegate and Williams Schools and the cooperation of parents and the wider community, this can be a safe school year and a successful learning experience for all our students.

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■ THREE RIVERS

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The community have gone down enough to allow the district to have onsite classes for the older students. With time needed to transition, November 9 is the earliest possible date for grades four through 12 to return to school campuses.

For distance learning at home, a new learning management system called CANVAS will replace Google Classroom, used last spring. CANVAS blends scheduled “live” internet instruction from the teacher with independent work from the district curriculum. The state requires 13-14 hours a week of interaction with teachers and peers for all distance learners. CANVAS uses the traditional grading system (A, B, C, P, and F), rather than the simple pass/fail used last spring.

Every Three Rivers student will have a Chromebook or other internet device provided on loan from the school. The district is also working to establish cellular hotspots to provide remote Wi-Fi access, necessary for successful distance learning. In addition to technology support, all students will have access to daily meals (breakfast and lunch), counselors, English language and special education services, mental health resources, and regular peer-to-peer interactions.

A third learning model is available for students whose parents are not comfortable

with the return to onsite instruction or with the distance learning model. The Three Rivers Virtual Online School (TVOS) is an option for any district student, regardless of grade level. For more information, email the TVOS administrator, Travis Osborne, at travis.osborne@threerivers.k12.or.us.

The district is asking all parents to register students for the fall semester, designating the instructional model preferred, by completing a registration form online. The link is on the district’s homepage (threerivers.k12.or.us). Plenty of useful information is available online, and parents are encouraged to stay up-to-date by checking often on the district’s and the schools’ websites.

The district has approximately 4,700 students in 14 schools scattered over 1,200 square miles stretching from Applegate on the east to Cave Junction on the west, and north to Merlin. It’s named after the Illinois, Rogue, and Applegate rivers.

“Though we don’t know when this disruption will end, it will end,” Superintendent Dave Valenzuela notes in the district school plan update dated August 12. “For now, we must do all we can to ride these rapids of uncertainty. If we come together and paddle as one, we will prevail and be a stronger community for it.”

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■ VANDALISM

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The motivation for Pacifica’s vandalism is unclear, but the perpetrator of the malicious acts against the English Lavender Farm states clearly that he is angry about the traffic the business brings to Thompson Creek Road.

Sue acknowledges an increase of traffic while the farm is open to the public. “If we were not open to the public at all, it would remove the traffic issue,” she says, “but without the visitors and their cash injection we would not have a business. For 11 months of the year the area is peaceful and tranquil. For six weeks, between 10 am and 4 pm four days a week, we are providing (for free) a beautiful space where people can enjoy nature. A lavender farm is a lovely thing to see. It baffles me that someone would be so mean-spirited about it.”

After the theft of the water tank from APWC, Rogue Basin, a nonprofit that funds fish passage work, donated the cost of replacing the equipment.

Ray Pragg rejected the idea of installing a locked gate at Pacifica. “There is value to the community in having Pacifica here and open to the public,” he said. “People come here star-gazing, to see the comet. We just have to take a big gulp and move on.”

He sees such violations as a part of the business of being open to the public. “You can’t lock things down,” he says. “People who are intent on doing something malicious will find a way.”

Pacifica Gardens, the Applegate Watershed Council, and the English Lavender Farm are nonprofit organizations and businesses supported and loved by most Applegaters.

“Once the shock wears off,” Sue says, “I remember that these acts are likely just vitriol thrown out by a few individuals. They don’t represent the feeling of the majority in this valley.” In spite of the meanness, she says that neither she nor Derek “has ever lived anywhere where we felt so supported.”

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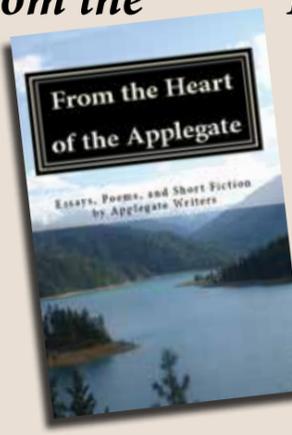
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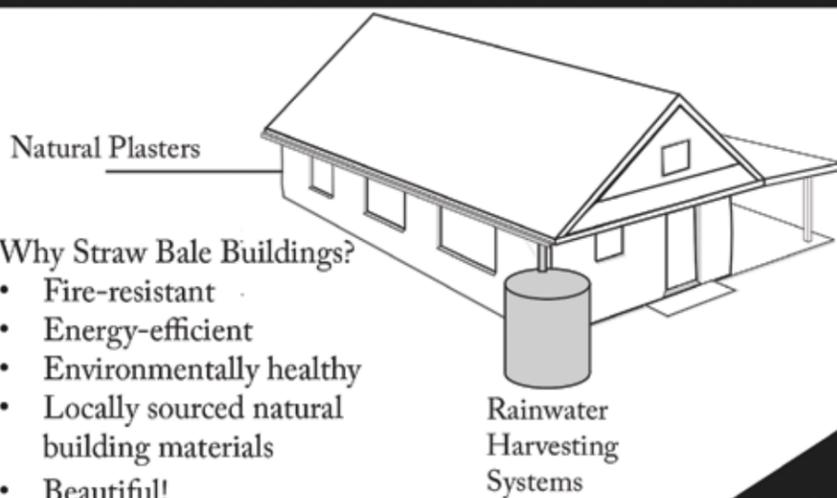
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