



Battle Ground Public Schools

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Battle Ground Bits and Bites

An occasional roundup of news you can use -- or cheer

BGSD nurse in Afghanistan: *'I did not know until the next morning . . . It made my heart ache'*



Julia Scott, in photo, is a Prairie and Summit View school nurse on leave to serve in Afghanistan. She had an eye on history this week that struck poignantly and sadly close to home. The Air Force lieutenant colonel was at a ramp ceremony as the bodies of nine U.S. troops who had perished in a helicopter crash were transferred. She later learned that one of the nine was Chief Warrant Officer Jonah D. McClellan, a 2002 graduate of Summit View High School. Excerpts from Julia's emails follow.

Julia to Bits & Bites: "I'm the Chief Nurse at the 451st Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, which covers the southern half of Afghanistan. I supervise and coordinate the aeromedical evacuation crews and make sure they have all the training and supplies they need to provide expert care in the air. I also oversee the combat aeromedical staging facilities that hold the patients between the field hospitals and aircraft while waiting for transport. I am in the thick of the war and have daily reminders of that fact. My days are long (12-16 hours) and I rarely have a day off but it's the best job in the Air Force. I am very proud to do the job.

"It was just happenstance that I was at the Ramp Ceremony for CWO McClellan. We always have very dignified ceremonies for the fallen heroes and we all are honored to pay respects to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. I did not know until the next morning that one of the caskets I watched go on that C-17 was a graduate of Summit View. I have been the nurse at Summit View since 1991 so it made my heart ache to know that he was a former student."

Julia to the Summit View staff: "I attended the ramp ceremony yesterday where 1,000

coalition military members paid their respects to the fallen on the first leg of their journey home. Ramp ceremonies are extremely emotional for me and if I had known that one of the caskets held an SVHS student, I don't know how I would have held it together."

The Battle Ground City Council has ordered that flags at City facilities be lowered to half-staff in honor of McClellan. In accordance with this, Superintendent Shonny Bria has asked that all school district buildings and schools also lower their flags until sunset on the day of the memorial service, which has not yet been set.

Art projects finished at Tukes Valley and BGHS



New and eye-popping works of art work are now permanent fixtures at the Tukes Valley and Battle Ground High School campuses. **Left:** Seattle glass artist Cappy Thompson and just a few of the 32 panels in her project, titled "They Sailed Away for a Year and a Day" in the media center at Tukes Valley. She was here for the Sept. 1 dedication under the state's Art in Public Places program, attended by scores of parents. **At right,** BGHS parent Andrea Johnson puts finishing touches on her murals depicting a tiger's lair. She volunteered her time and talent for the project, which includes side wall murals not visible in this photo.

No 'outside' experts at PHS's Fall Conference

It is sometimes said, with a degree of cynicism, that "An expert is anyone who comes from more than 50 miles away." But the expert speakers and discussion leaders were from much closer than that at the first-ever Prairie High School Fall Conference in advance of the new school year. PHS and the Fort Vancouver Regional Library System presented 33 diverse concurrent sessions covering topics such as differentiated teaching strategies, classroom use of a document camera, useful and not-so-useful Websites, mobile technology in the classroom, and dealing with sensitive issues in the classroom.

PHS faculty and administrators who conducted sessions during the two-day event included **Rick Boehm, David Richardson, Richard Jones, Jason Perrins, Tom Wolverton, Dawn Rowe, Dora Swart, Christy Sloan, Jennifer Havig, Kristin Wennerlind and Annie Lamberto.** Conferees also heard welcoming addresses from **Perrins** and Superintendent **Shonny Bria.** The theme was "*Education is a Journey; Don't Stop Believin'!*"

Assistant Principal **Slade McSheehy**, chairman of the organizing committee, said the conference “reflected the reality of what it takes to strengthen student achievement. The impact of our teaching hinges on our ability to initiate, foster, and sustain effective teamwork.”

Honors, awards and other nice things

National Merit semifinalist has eyes on the stars - and on Cal Tech



Peter Senchyna credits the Science Olympiad program at Maple Grove Middle School for his interest in astrophysics, which he plans to study in college after graduating from Prairie High School next June. Peter has been named a semifinalist in the National Merit Scholarship Contest, based on SAT/NMSQT scores. He hopes to attend the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena and has chosen the University of Washington as his No. 1 backup. Peter, who is one-fourth Ukrainian, cites the Maple Grove Science

Olympiad as providing the “A-ha!” moment in his career path. “It definitely was a catalyst,” he said, adding that the program’s faculty advisor at that time was **Ronald Wright**.

Maple Grove Middle School continues to produce gung-ho Science Olympiad teams, now advised by teacher **Barry Hoffman** and with considerable support from parents, says Principal **Bill Penrose**. Peter is also community-minded. He’s part of a group of about 10 high school students – most of them from Prairie – who call their effort the Vancouver Burrito Project. They make burritos every Friday afternoon and give them to homeless and hungry people at Esther Short Park. Besides six classes at Prairie, including three Advanced Placement courses, Peter, who has a freshman brother at PHS, is taking a calculus-based physics class at Clark College.

Here’s another Falcon whose head is figuratively in the clouds

Prairie High senior **Austin Dougal** was among 160 students from the state who attended the Washington Aerospace Scholars summer residency program at the Museum of Flight in Seattle. Participants were guided by professional engineers and scientists, university students and certified teachers as they collaborated on the design of a human mission to Mars. Austin was among 257 students across the state who applied back in November 2009.

August was ‘Play ball’ time south of the border

Don Freeman, out of retirement and teaching PE this semester at Prairie High, had a heckuva summer doing what he loves: coaching baseball. Freeman, who taught in the district from 1972 to 2004, was selected last January by USA Baseball (www.usabaseball.com) to coach the U.S. women’s national baseball team. After invitation-only tryouts in North Carolina, coaches and the 20-woman team (ages 16-40) traveled to Caracas, Venezuela, for a 12-team international tournament. Freeman’s squad finished third, playing its final game against the host Venezuelan team in front of 18,500. And, yes, it was baseball – not softball.

Senior named to local Red Cross Board

Prairie High senior **Lauren Smith** has been named to the Board of Directors of the Southwest Washington chapter of the American Red Cross for this school year. She is one of three youths on the board. She was already the president of the Southwest Washington American Red Cross Youth Council.

Mark Your Calendar

Oct. 16 – North County Community Food Bank dinner auction: Royal Oaks Country Club, \$50. Information at 687-5007 or www.nccfoodbank.com and click on “News.”

Oct. 23 – Battle Ground School Board meeting: 9 a.m., Amboy Middle School.

Oct. 23 – Prairie High Boosters annual dinner auction: Vancouver Hilton. Early bird ticket price of \$25 until Sept. 30, when it is bumped to \$30. Proceeds go to all manner of extracurricular activities and classroom needs. Information: www.prairieboosters.org.

Oct. 26 – All-district, Drug Information Night for parents: 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., Media Center, Prairie High School. More information: Sharice Lee at 885-6579.

Clamor for grammar

Fewer describes people, objects etc. that can be counted separately. **Less** and **more** are used for amounts that cannot be individually counted. Correct: We had fewer parents at last night’s meeting than we had at last year’s. Correct: The new portables require less maintenance than the old ones. Wrong: Jefferson High School had less students who made AYP this year.

Comma needed: Those posters in gyms and stadiums (or, stadia) that are supposed to spur teams to great things should say “Go, Falcons,” “Go, Tigers” etc. But without the comma, the sign is instructing the players just to go, as in leave the premises.

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