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O'Neal Elementary Gets a New Principal After 24 Years

MARCH 17TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

O'Neal Elementary Gets a New Principal After 24 Years

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - The 2013-2014 school year will mark the end of an era at O'Neal Elementary School, but members of the community agree that the upcoming principal will keep things running smoothly for years to come.

O'Neal principal of 24 years, Lorenzo Sandlin, will be passing the torch to Angie Rideout after the school board unanimously voted Rideout during their monthly meeting on February 19th.

Principal Sandlin formally requested his retirement this past December will be missed at O'Neal but has decided to stick around and help transition Rideout into the leadership role at O'Neal throughout the next couple of months.

This is not Sandlin's and Rideout's first encounter, however. They have met before in 2001, where Sandlin gave Rideout her first job in the teaching field as he took her under his wing as his aide at O'Neal, the same elementary school where Rideout had completed her student teaching requirements as an undergraduate. She went on to teach at Zalma after graduation and is now back at O'Neal with her upcoming career as a principal.

“To know that I’m returning as an administrator to the place where I started teaching is a big honor for me,” Rideout explained.

Born in Broseley, Rideout earned her bachelor's degree from Central Methodist University in Fayette and her master's from William Woods University in Fulton. After she left to teach fourth grade for three years, she returned to Poplar Bluff as a third grade faculty member at Oak Grove Elementary School the following year.

"I feel she's worked her way up the ladder to this position, which is very important, and will serve her well in meeting the challenges of principalship," Sandlin said. "I'll show her the ropes, and if she chooses to continue operating that way, it's her world to make her own decisions. After 31 years in education, it's time to allow someone else to come in with fresh ideas and new thoughts."

Sandlin began his career in 1982 as a sixth grade teacher at O'Neal for two years before becoming head teacher at then Mark Twain School, which served kindergarten through sixth grade. In 1989, he was promoted to his present title as principal at O'Neal.

For those who worked closest to him, Sandlin will be best remembered for his giving heart and charities. His co-workers claim to be like family with each other, which is one of the reasons Sandlin is so close to their hearts.

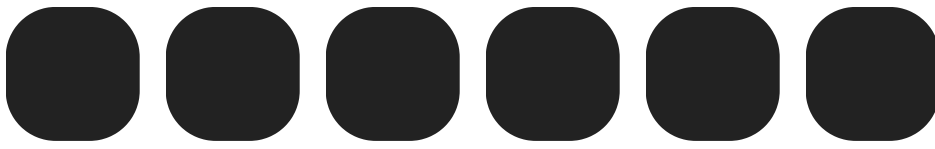
Although Sandlin will be leaving after such a long career he has created for himself at O'Neal, Rideout is anxious to take a step into her own career and hopes to make it as successful and plentiful as Sandlin's.

"You have to have that team atmosphere, where everybody feels that connection or unity," Rideout said. "I've worked with many teachers at O'Neal, all here for the good of the students, and my plan is to just keep growing and learning with them."

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Local Schools Celebrate 2012-2013 Voting Parties

MARCH 17TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Local Schools Celebrate 2012-2013 Voting Parties

Dexter, Missouri - It's that time of the year again, in schools across the state of Missouri, students of all ages will be casting their votes at the Mark Twain, Truman, and Gateway Voting Parties. Each of these Voting Parties is divided into different age groups. The Gateway books are focused on the high school students (9-12th grade), while the Truman books are more associated with the junior high readers (6-8th grade), and the Mark Twain books are more open to the elementary readers.

Each year, the Missouri Association of School Librarians chooses a number of books by some well-known authors and writers to place on these three lists. The books that are chosen are usually of great variety. Some might be coming of age novels while others might be the start of a newer science fiction series.

If a number of these books on the list are read and student or reader successfully passes a computerized test on the Accelerated Reader Program on that specific novel, then they will be signed up for the Voting Party that took place in schools all over throughout the past week. At the Voting Party, the students will vote for their favorite book that was on the list and their favorite author that wrote the book. Students that read all of the books on the list instead of the minimum number required to attend the Voting Party, will receive a special trip at the end of the school year.

The fourth and fifth grade students at Central Elementary School just celebrated their Voting Party. To be able to attend the party and cast their vote, the students were required to read at least four of the twelve books on this year's Mark Twain Award Nominees. The first through third grade have also participated in this event and have been reading the Show Me Award Nominees. The twenty-nine fourth and fifth graders that had the privilege of reading all twelve nominees will be rewarded with a trip to Cape Girardeau at the end of the school year.

The Richland students of all different ages and grade levels will be having their Voting Party within the next couple of weeks. The students at Richland will be rewarded with a pizza party thrown by their librarian and a number of their teachers.

The winning book and author of each of the Award Nominee categories will be announced in April at a Missouri Association of School Librarians conference that will take place in Tan-Tar-A.

Congratulations to all of this year's dedicated readers!

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Upcoming Missouri State Archery Tournament

MARCH 15TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Upcoming Missouri State Archery Tournament

Warrensburg, Missouri - Archery is the new hit thing, or at least that is what the numbers produced from the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Conservation Federation of Missouri are saying. Last year, there were around 1,300 archery participants that are training as student archers. The latest reports are saying that there are more than 1,600 student archers that are now participating in competitions.

There are sixty-four different schools around the state that are preparing to compete in the fourth annual state tournament held by the Missouri National Archery in the Schools Program that will take place on Saturday, March 23rd, at the University of Central Missouri Multipurpose Building in Warrensburg. This event was originally planned as a one-day-event but due to the high amount of participants and interest, additional shooting flights have been added on Friday, March 22nd.

This upcoming event is free to attend and is completely open to the public. Student archers with a qualifying score at the Missouri State Tournament will be offered a spot on the National Archery in the Schools Program World Championship, which will take place over the summer in St. Louis at the America Center and the Edward Jones Dome on June 28th through the 30th.

The Missouri National Archery in the Schools Program is coordinated through the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Conservation Federation of Missouri and has many participating schools and numerous supporting organizations throughout Missouri. This program and its many training courses and competitions promotes education, physical activity, and participation in the sport of archery for students throughout the fourth through twelfth grade.

Most practices and training take place during physical education classes during the school day. The program's main idea is to improve attendance, get students interested in the subject matter, increase self-esteem, and get kids to enjoy the outdoors. The archery is an in-school hobby that could become an after-school activity or a weekend event.

More than 58,000 Missouri students from nearly 260 schools participate in this program. Saxony Lutheran High School, Meadow Heights High School, and South Pemiscot High School are all schools from the surrounding area that will be happily participating in this upcoming tournament. The tournament and program has grown tremendously each year and will most likely continue to grow rapidly in the future. This program hopes to grow by offering teacher training and equipment grants to get schools started and teach students of all ages hand-eye coordination and other great skills, both physical and mental.

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Richland Wins Battle of the Belt

MARCH 15TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Richland Wins Battle of the Belt

Essex, Missouri - The Richland High School Library Club supports the Missouri Department of Transportation each year when they participate in the Battle of the Belts.

Richland has been a part of this campaign for multiple years and will gladly continue promoting seat belt and motor vehicle safety in the many years to come.

The Library Club members take it upon themselves to stand outside bright and early on an October morning and wait near the entrance to the high school, where they stop each and every vehicle to check the driver and the passenger for their seatbelts.


In 2006, The Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety, in partnership with American Family Insurance, created a statewide competition: the Battle of the Belts. The Battle of the Belts competition takes place in Missouri during the whole month of October and the first week of November. The participants in this show how much they care about the safety of their fellow students and the importance of buckling up. The idea of the competition will not only promote seat belt and vehicle safety, but will also save lives in the long run.

This year, Richland High School and the Library Club Members were awarded with the Silver Award. To receive the Silver Award, more than 95% of the school's students must have driven into the school with their seatbelts fastened. Richland is proud to receive their award for having 96.8% of their students wearing their seatbelts.

Sandy Tyrone, a representative from the Missouri Department of Transportation, came to the high school to present the award. Tyrone has travelled throughout Missouri and has visited each Missouri district to present multiple awards. In the Southeast Missouri District, only four schools qualified to receive awards. Notre Dame High School and Saxony Lutheran both qualified for the Gold Award while Richland and South Pemiscot received the Silver Awards. In the 2012 competition, only 34 schools in the whole state qualified.

Mrs. Tyrone was also accompanied by a Missouri State Trooper, Officer Clark Parrott, who is a member of the Public Information and Education Division. Officer Parrott created a presentation to show both the junior high and high school student the importance of driving safely. Although more than 96% of the students were securely buckled into their vehicle, there was still 4% who refused to.

“There are many excuses to give people to explain why you never wear your seatbelt,” Officer Parrott explained, “But none of those excuses will save you in the end.”

Officer Parrott continued to speak about  topics that each of the students are familiar with and that have been addressed in recent or previous assemblies. Texting and driving, driving while intoxicated, and driving while under the influence are all major dangers to

not only the students, but also to the other drivers on the road.

Officer Parrott confirmed that fatal car wrecks happen on a daily basis and he has seen numerous deadly accidents throughout his career. He told the students a heart touching story about his daughter’s best friends who were lost at a young age due to not wearing their seatbelts when they were driving. He encouraged the students to not only buckle up, but encourage the ones around them to buckle up as well.

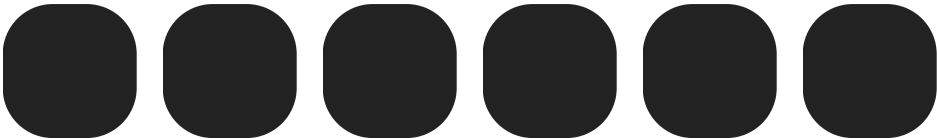
When the students received the Silver Award from Officer Parrott and Mrs. Tyrone, they also agreed to take another pledge called Safe and Sober. When the students signed this pledge, they promised to not drink and drive or to be under the influence of any drugs while operating a vehicle. Earlier in the year when the Battle of the Belts was still going on, the students also signed a pledge to not text and drive.

With these pledges, promises, and inspirational stories, the students make it a new goal to receive the Gold Award next year, where they will have 99% of their students wearing their seatbelts.

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Southeast Missouri Beta Clubs are On the Move

MARCH 14TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Southeast Missouri Beta Clubs are On the Move

The recent Missouri State Beta Club Convention in Branson, Missouri that took place last weekend must have created a spark throughout the Beta Club members from the Bootheel area. Many of the Beta Clubs have been participating in service projects and are already planning fundraisers and activities to take place in the near future.

Beta Club is a nation wide organization that offers opportunities to both junior high and high school students that excel in academic excellence. The requirements for Beta Club are a 3.5 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) and numerous service hours and/or projects that are completed yearly. The Beta Club motto is “Lead by serving others” which is why all clubs create service projects.

Beta Club members and sponsors try to focus on creating a better environment for the citizens in the community. The Poplar Bluff High School Beta Club spent their Wednesday afternoon on the highway and decided to help clean it up and keep it clean for their service project this year. The members picked up trash along a 3.6 mile stretch all the way down U.S. 60 South. The group completed their attire with bright orange vests and signs for their protection and safety. The club helped out the Missouri Department of Transportation and became a part of the Adopt-A-Highway Program, where they will continue to keep their part of the highway litter-free.

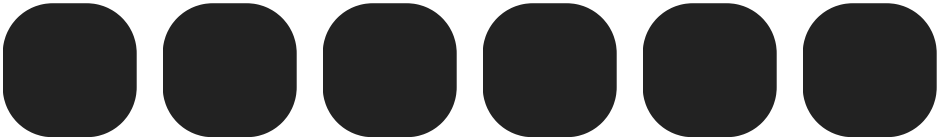
The Richland High School Beta Club is also preparing to take a trip to Mobile, Alabama to compete at the Beta Club National Convention in the middle of June. The members are currently working on fundraisers and are planning a car wash. With the spring weather coming around the corner, they will also be starting a service project of their own. In the previous years, the club participated in a City Clean Up Day, where they were taken into Essex and helped elderly or disabled citizens clean up their yards. They have also held a 5K run and donated all of the proceeds to a local family in need. Throughout the winter months, they have had canned food drives, frozen food drives, and Adopt-A-Family project where they supported a local family and bought them a Christmas tree, presents, and food for the holidays.

More spring service projects will be taking place throughout the next few weeks and months while the weather warms up and more opportunities arise for the club members to participate within their community.

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