

NEWS ASPIRING STUDENTS

School begins on a bus in Grapevine





SPORTS B-BALL HONORS

Post-season awards for basketball

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New Hope CA meeting

All persons with an interest in New Hope Cemetery, near Crossroads, are encouraged to attend the association meeting to be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 5, at the Crossroads Community Building. David Johnson, newly-elected Treasurer of the association, will also be at New Hope Cemetery on May 5 to accept monetary donations for the upkeep and care of the cemetery; or you may mail your donation to David A. Johnson, 1989 Grant 74, Sheridan, Arkansas.

SSD Gifted, Talented Program

During the spring the Gifted and Talented Department of Sheridan School District identifies students for the Gifted and Talented Program. Nominations are accepted from teachers, administrators, and parents. Characteristics of gifted and talented children are in the areas of achievement, intellectual ability and creativity. Report card grades are not considered an indicator of giftedness, but rather, an indicator of achievement. The Arkansas Department of Education's Definition of Giftedness: "Gifted and talented children and youth are those of high potential or ability whose learning characteristics and educational needs require differentiated educational experiences and/or services." Teachers specially trained to meet the needs of gifted students teach these classes. Therefore, gifted students are clustered with both their intellectual and chronological peers. At the Middle School and High School level, we offer GATE Seminar classes for the identified students as well as Pre-Advanced Placement and Advanced Placement classes. If you would like to nominate your child, you may do so by contacting Deborah Mooney at (870) 942-7488 or by emailing deborahmooney@ sheridanschools.org. You can also find a referral form on the school webpage: www.sheridsanschools.org

Leola School Reunion is June 9

The annual Leola School Reunion will be held on June 9. Please meet at the Leola Community Center at 2 p.m. followed by dinner at 4 p.m. at Dorey's

CGWA to meet

Center Grove Water Association's monthly meeting will be held on Thursday, April 19 at 7 p.m. in the water office. Customers and any interested party are welcome to attend the meeting.

Mother's Day Out

Mother's Day Out at First Baptist Church in Sheridan (across from Wal-Mart) is now offering open registration for the fall. Please stop by on Tuesdays or Thursdays between 9 a.m. and noon to sign up.

Red Cross opportunity

The American Red Cross will be at Poyen High School on April 24 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. To donate you must be at least 17 years of age, weigh a minimum of 110 pounds and be in general good health. Please have a blood donor card or picture ID with you at the time of donation. Those interested in donating may call the American Red Cross for more information by dialing 1-800-GIVE LIFE or go to www.givelife.org to schedule an appointment.

Poyen Elementary School registration for kindergarten

Anyone needing to register a child who turns 5 on or before Sept. 15, 2007, that has not already been registered, needs to contact Poven Elementary School at 501-332-2939 ext. 109. It is in the best interest of the student to have them registered as soon as possible. Please have their social security card, birth certificate, and shot record.

Health Fair is May 4

The 2007 Grant County Health Fair sponsored by the Grant County Extension Office, Grant County Extension Homemakers and the Grant County Health Department will be held or Friday, May 4, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Sheridan Recreation Center.

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Aspirnaut Initiative launches

SSD students test 'school begins on a bus' concept

By Melody Moorehouse

The State's first virtual mobile classroom was launched Tuesday, April 10 in the Sheridan School District (SSD) in a pilot project titled the "Aspirnaut Initiative - School on a Bus." The three-year program will test the feasibility of providing high-tech educational tools in a unique setting onboard a designated school bus in an effort to increase student learning and achievement in the areas of mathematics and science. If the project is successful, students may one day also receive course credit for their work during long bus rides within

The Aspirnaut Initiative is the brainchild of Billy G. Hudson, Ph.D., a former graduate of the Grapevine School District in rural Grant County, Ark. The Grapevine School District consolidated with the Sheridan School District in 1985. The Grapevine District itself grew from the consolidation of 11 other small one-room schools in the area, including Ain, Amity, Lamont Lowman, Taylor, Wiggins, Winston, Cedar Branch, Grapevine, Fikes, and Pine Grove.

Dr. Hudson is the Elliot V. New-See Aspirnaut, page 7



STUDENTS IN THE SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT who are participating in the Aspirnaut Initiative are cha lenged by Dr. Billy Hudson from Vanderbilt University during a launch event held last week at the Sheridan School District Administration Building. The students live in the Grapevine Community and ride Bus 46 in the Sheridan School District. The route is the longest in the district and is a 90-minute bus ride one-way for some students, depending upon where they live along the route. Dr. Hudson is also a former student from Grapevine.

Grant County Health Fair to be held May 4

The Grant County Health Fair will be held at the Sheridan Recreation Center on Friday, May 4, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free preventative health screenings that will be performed at the health fair are blood sugar, blood pressure, percentage of body fat, body weight bone density, cholesterol, colorectal screening kits, massages, oral cancer screenings, pulse ox, pulmonary testing, triglycerides and

The Health Fair is being sponsored by the University of Arkansas Grant County Cooperative Extension Service, Grant County Health Department, Grant County Extension Homemakers and Grant County Hometown Health Coalition.

St. Joseph's Mobile Mammogram will also be conducting mammograms at the Health Fair. Medicare and insurance will be accepted as payment. To make an appointment please call the Extension office

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Board oks student drug testing policy, proposed salary increase

The Sheridan School Board implemented a student drug testing policy within the Sheridan School District and endorsed a proposed salary increase for certified and classified staff members during its regular monthly meeting held on April 9 in the boardroom of the 1913 Administration Building.

A draft of the policy was proposed to the board in March and was created by a committee comprised of Dr. Phil Clark, Principal at Sheridan Freshman Academy, and a number of parents representKim Crosby, Tami Blakemon, Bruce Bennett, Teddy Cole and

Leslie Brown. The original proposal sought to conduct random drug-testing of students involved in extra-curricular activities within the school system. Students who do not consent in writing to be tested would not be allowed to participate in any extra-curricular activities. However, upon the board's desire last month to expand the policy to include as many students as possible, Superintendent Scott Spainhour said the student drug testing mandate presented on Monday night has been revised to allow for the inclusion of all students who park on campus.

Spainhour noted there are approximately 1,200 students in the seventh-12th grades involved in activities with an additional 400 students who park on campus.

ing various campuses, including Therefore, he said the student pool eligible for testing would be approximately 1,600 students. He said if 60 students are randomly selected each month then a significant portion of the students would be tested. An outside agency would be contracted to select the students, conduct the tests and handle all aspects of the procedure. At a rate of \$18 per test, he said the expense would total about \$10,000 per year. The district is seeking grant funds to help cover the costs associated with the drug screening.

Board member Jeff Lisenbey said he would like for all students who fall under the policy to be tested initially before the random testing would begin and Board member Lee Henson inquired regarding which drugs would be screened.

Spainhour said he realized some prescription drugs may produce See School, page 6

Sheridan unit identified in ANG official alert notice

By Melody Moorehouse

Approximately 60 members of Sheridan's Arkansas Army National Guard Unit, Company D, 1st Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment within the 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, has been placed on an official alert for a second possible mobilization to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi

In a press conference held last week, ANG Maj. Gen. William Wofford said the alert order does not mean the 39th Infantry BCT will be mobilized, but means the team has been identified and will 'probably" be included in a mobilization order when it is published. The entire brigade, which is under the command of Col. Kendall Penn, is currently on alert status.

The brigade from Arkansas is one of four that has been identified. The other three are the 45th Infantry Brigade from Oklahoma City,

Okla., the 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team from Indianapolis, Ind., and the 37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team from Columbus, Ohio. There are approximately 13,000 personnel in the four brigades. If a mobilization order is approved it would mark the first time full Guard combat brigades were sent for a second tour to Iraq, according to Department of Defense information. They are expected to serve as replacement forces in the rotation of troops.

Maj. Gen. Wofford stated current priorities for the 39th Brigade will be on soldier readiness processing, individual training and meeting warrior tasks. He said the brigade with 3,000 total soldiers is the largest unit in the Arkansas National Guard and "obviously draws more attention than our other units." He added that the Arkansas Guard currently has other Guard members who are already

deployed with others preparing for deployment.

He emphasized that in contrast to previous deployments, the mobilization that potentially includes the 39th Brigade is limited to 12

"That's 12 months as opposed to the 16 to 18 months that we have experienced in the past," he said. "Within that 12 months that they'll be mobilized definitely includes two to three months of training at the mobilization station with the remainder of that time being spent

in Iraq." The mobilization station is to be determined by the Department of the Army. Maj. Gen. Wofford said training prior to any mobilization would be conducted at either Camp Robinson, Fort Chaffee or at local armories, depending on a specific

See Guard, page 5

Victoryfest is April 21

The Keeping the Faith shelter for victims of domestic violence in Grant County will be holding Victoryfest 2007 on April 21 at the Sheridan Recreation Center from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Victoryfest is a Domestic Violence Awareness celebration and the community is invited to attend.

The goal of Victoryfest is to educate the community regarding the dangers of domestic violence that exist in Grant County, according to a spokesperson for the shelter, Keeping the Faith will also hold a candlelight vigil to remember the lives lost in 2006 due to domestic violence. A Tree of Life will be on display during the event to represent each form of abuse and the number of Grant County victims affected in 2006.

The Arkansas Coalition Against Domestic Violence will be sponsoring the Silent Witness Project, which consists of wooden silhouettes that also represent victims from 2006. Another activity during the evening will be the Clothesline Project, which consists of t-shirts that victim's families have designed in remembrance of them.

See Victoryfest, page 4

Serving Sheridan and Grant County Since 1881



A WEBCAST involving Dr. Billy Hudson at the Sheridan School District Administration Building and a laboratory at Vanderbilt University Medical Center demonstrates the technology and access that students will have to scientists and mentors in the fields of mathematics and science.

Aspirnaut

Continued from page 1

man Professor of Medicine and Biochemistry and director of the Center for Matrix Biology at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn. The Aspirnaut Initiative partners Vanderbilt University Medical Center with the Sheridan School District, the Grapevine Historical Society, and the Grapevine community, which is served by four school district buses that make morning and afternoon routes within the community. The program is currently being funded by Vanderbilt University and through private donations.

The project involves the selection of one school bus, No. 46, which has been outfitted with mobile broadband internet access via cell phone towers and the latest technology, including laptop computers and iPods, to provide virtual classroom instruction to the students onboard. The vehicle is driven by bus driver Vera Launius. Brenda Haynes, Assistant Superintendent for the Division of Learning in the SSD who also moderated the launch's events, noted School Bus 46 was chosen for the project based primarily on two reasons. Students aboard the bus, which follows what is termed the Garden Seed Road Route, have the longest bus ride in the district, up to 90 minutes one-way depending upon where the students live along the course, and the route also coincidentally serves the area in which Dr. Hudson and his siblings grew up within the community. The first students on the bus are picked up in the mornings at approximately 6:15 a.m. and arrive back home in

the afternoons after 5 p.m. Moreover, with an April 4, 2007 enrollment of 4,271 students - not including the 80 children involved in the pre-kindergarten program and 46 daily bus routes covering 622 square miles, the Sheridan School District is one of the larger rural school systems in Arkansas. Haynes

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noted that in an era of long bus rides that "school begins on the bus" and a goal of the Aspirnaut Initiative is to motivate and elevate student achievement with constructive activities. All students aboard Bus 46 will have access to the technological equipment. Haynes said 27 students are being supplied with iPods to receive "Podcasts" and 15 upper-level children identified as possessing "high ability" are being furnished with notebook computers supplied through donations by Vanderbilt University. The University will also be providing technological support and the recruitment of scientists to participate in the program and in Webcasts. Students will be able to log in to an individualized computer-based curriculum that allows access to interactive software and curriculum-related websites to provide individualized learning at any place and any time. Five additional computers are being furnished to the program's support staff. Haynes said all grade levels kindergarten through 12th grade with the possible exception of the sixth grade are rep-

resented by children on Bus 46. Dr. Hudson emphasized in an overview of the program on Tuesday afternoon that rural students are at risk of being left out of the latest technological advances and educational opportunities, and that it is time to propose an action step — the Aspirnaut Initiative. During the first part of his presentation, Dr. Hudson held a United States flag to emphasize his point that the U.S. is in danger of falling behind and losing its status as a world leader in the fields of mathematics and science.

"This flag is a symbol we are the greatest country in the world, but there are a lot of changes in this world and we stand to lose part of our preeminence and our standard of living and our jobs, our national security, and our economics, they are based on education. Everybody knows that, but there are challenges with it and at the highest level our government has made statements

that we need to improve education. In particular there are priorities in math and science," he stated in explaining the purpose of the Aspirnaut Initiative. "So today, we're proposing an action step, not just rhetoric about improving education but attempting to do something about it from the grassroots level.'

He then picked up a primitive slate board that was over 100 years old followed by a spiral notebook. He said in over 100 years that a major educational tool, the slate board, had advanced to the notebook. But now, he noted, the United States is trading the notebook for the laptop computer that will bring the world to the fingertips of students.

...I am happy to say that this Aspirnaut Initiative, and partnership, is bringing high-tech laptop computers, Internet, and digital information to rural Arkansas as a prototype for the way of the future in educating our children and placing emphasis on math and science as the key ingredients. And one of the key elements of this plan is to identify high ability students for math and science, it's a priority. It's also a priority to elevate math and science for all kids," he said.

"With the technology it is incredible what can happen," he added. "One gentleman here today, Charlie [Charles Cutsforth from Internet in Motion in Illinois] has helped link the Internet to the computer on the bus. I think we may look back on this someday as a historical point in the United States..., but history will tell us if that is true or not."

According to the Aspirnaut Initiative's outline and a November 2005 report from the National Academics, U.S. seniors performed below the international average for 21 counties on a test of general knowledge in math and science and just 41 percent of the country's eighth grade students received instruction from a mathematics teacher who specialized in mathematics — lower than the international average of 71

The report stated that less than one-third of the nation's fourth and eighth grade students performed at or above a level called "proficient" in mathematics and about one-third of the fourth graders and one-fifth of the eighth graders lacked the competence to perform basic mathematical computations.

Another novel aspect of the Aspirnaut Initiative, Dr. Hudson said, is to bring the "one-room schoolhouse" back to the community to revitalize the community's involvement in the education of the youth. A "one-room schoolhouse" has been designated within Grapevine in the fellowship hall of Sardis Missionary Baptist Church to serve as a "satellite school." The Sardis site will enable students to meet on Saturdays, evenings and/or during the summer for Webcasts and Internet ess if they don't have their homes due to remote locations within Grant County.

"So we are trading in this slate board and this piece of paper in for laptop computers. That happens today and the children will become 'aspirnauts' — those who aspire, seek and achieve. And let it be said that technology itself will not make it all happen. It requires teachers, teachers, and teachers," he emphasized. "And it requires families to make it happen and friends of the community.'

Dr. Hudson also later demonstrated a two-way Webcast organized by the Vanderbilt Center for Science Outreach to illustrate the access that students will have to leading scientists in the fields of mathematics and science.

Besides the virtual classroom aboard Bus 46 and the one-room Sardis satellite site, the Aspirnaut Initiative also involved earlier activities, including the presentation of two teaching honors - the Opel Reynolds and Robert Theus Teaching Excellence Awards, a one-week science camp at Vanderbilt University for 12 Grapevine students during the summer of 2006 and professional development activities at Vanderbilt for six teachers in the Sheridan School District. Professional development activities at VU will be expanded this summer to include 15 teachers within the

school system. Prior to the official launch, which began at 1 p.m. with the introduction of special guests followed by the presentation of equipment to students along with a personal challenge issued by Dr. Hudson, Haynes noted that the district had conducted trial runs of the bus route and equipment in order to prepare for the take-off. She said several issues had to be addressed prior to the start date including where the equipment would be stored while students were in their respective

on the equipment. Haynes further explained the term "Aspirnaut" (as'-per-not) was created by Dr. Hudson and his family and is defined as "one who climbs the educational ladder of K-12 and university or vocational school to reach his or her star."

how to keep the batteries charged

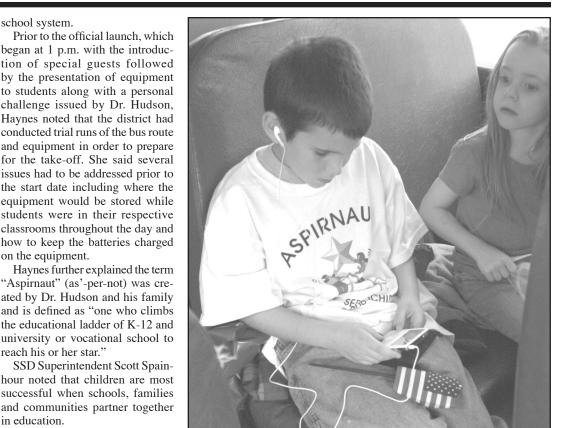
SSD Superintendent Scott Spainhour noted that children are most successful when schools, families and communities partner together

"That's what we're here to do today is to celebrate that partnership. This partnership does not happen by accident, it does not happen merely by an invitation, but by strategic organized planning, and that is what has happened over the past year," he said. "What we're seeing today is the culminating events of many, many hours on the behalf of Dr. Hudson, his family, the staff at Vanderbilt, and district personnel... they have worked extremely hard to put this program together."

"But it's more than a program, it's a learning opportunity for kids in a particularly rural section of a rural state that travel long distances to get to school. So it's an exciting opportunity for those students and I can't stress how happy we are to partner with the community of Grapevine, with those families and also with Vanderbilt," he said.

Spainhour said the program is the first of its kind in Arkansas, and possibly the nation, and if the project produces positive measurable results then the Aspirnaut Initiative may be expanded to include other bus routes within the district. Depending on the project's results at the end of the three-year period, he stated in the future students may one day receive course credit for the schoolwork completed onboard lengthy bus rides enroute to and from school.

He acknowledged earlier that the "Aspirnaut Initiative" has required the district to "think outside the box" in terms of educational opportunities for students and in the area of technology. He concluded that the project's success may also result in additional partnerships and funding opportunities in the future. including from grants, companies and the State of Arkansas. He also applauded the Hudson family, Var derbilt University and the district's staff for the program's fruition.



TOMMY TRAYWICK aboard Sheridan School District Bus 46 uses his iPod equipment to see and hear an educational Podcast.

The Aspirnaut Initiative has been endorsed by former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee and by distinguished scientists around the world, including two Nobel laureates. By improving K-12 education in rural areas, Hudson said the program can help the United States retain its stature as a math and science powerhouse.

In addition to Dr. Hudson, and his wife Dr. Julie Hudson, an Associate Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology and Pediatrics at Vanderbilt University, special speakers on Tuesday included Dr. Joe Lopez, Associate Director of the Vanderbilt University Center for Science Outreach; Shelba Bradford, president of the Grapevine Historical Society; and Johnny Hudson, also a member of the Hudson family and a certified public accountant. He is the managing partner of the firm Hudson, Cisne & Co. LLP in Little Rock. He addressed the financial set up of the Aspirnaut Initiative and the Grapevine Historical Society, a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization that will be able to administer tax-deductible gifts, donations and grants.

Dr. Bill Freytag, Senior Advisor for Gilead Sciences in Colorado and former student of Dr. Hudson, spoke to the audience regarding the role of high ability students in the area of biotechnology and private funding. Ann Kincl, former Director of Gifted Education for the North Little Rock School District and the current Associate Director of the Aspirnaut Initiative, provided a demonstration of the electronic devices and curriculum applications. Kincl is also a member of the Hudson family.

Dr. Hudson and his siblings,

Johnny Hudson and Ann Hudson Kincl, were raised on a farm, located on Garden Seed Road. Their standard of living was near the poverty level, according to information included in the Aspirnaut Initiative report. With a busy farm life, there was little time for academic work, but despite the family's hardships, seeds were planted by their parents and by the community that "the road to a better life was a high school education." According to the report, their way to college was paved by a Grapevine teacher and coach, Robert Theus, who knew that Billy Hudson had begun to drop out of school in his junior year in high school to leave home and work on a cotton plantation until he was old enough to enter the Army. Coach Theus arranged for Billy to take a summer course at Henderson State Teacher College in Arkadelphia. Billy never returned to high school, but received his high school diploma after one year of college. Ann followed in his footsteps the next year and then Johnny entered college after graduating from high school in Arkadelphia. The Hudsons noted their college degrees became the foundation for their graduate work at other universities, as well as serving as an entrance into educational

Special guests at Tuesday's event also included Ed Staley of Staley Inc. of Little Rock; Chris King of ALLTEL; Bill Snyder, Editor of Lens Magazine at Vanderbilt; Mike Simmons, Director of Transportation from the Arkansas Department of Education; State Representative Bobby Pierce; and Jeff Lisenbey and Michael Mosley, members of the Sheridan School Board.

and business professions.



Cutsforth from Internet in Motion at a satellite classroom created at Sardis Missionary **Baptist Church in the Grapevine Community.**



AMANDA BENNINGS receives an iPod from Sheridan School District Superintendent Scott Spainhour and Dr. Billy Hudson from Vanderbilt University.

Second Semi-Annual RALLY AND POKER RUN Benefiting The American Cancer Society's Relay for Life Saturday, April 21, 2007 at Old Wal-Mart Parking Lot Hwy. 270 in Malvern, Arkansas - Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. , start time at 9:30 a.m. -\$10 per rider which includes one paker hand, \$10 each additional hand. 200 mile ride to Old Worthington State Park, winner determined at Malvern Wal-Mart Parking lot at end of ride. Best hand wins 40%, worst hand wins 10%, American Cancer Society wine 50% of the pot. For more information contact Larry Shuff at (870) 917-5768 or Mike Smith at 870-942-9511. Complete rules and directions

are available upon request.

