

MOON SHADOW



ABOVE, the moon blots out a corner of the sun in Monday's solar eclipse. Patrick Broom photo.

AT LEFT, Mrs. Cobb's and Mrs. Comstock's 2nd graders at Eureka Elementary use special eclipse glasses on Monday, April 8, to try and catch a glimpse of the total solar eclipse. Montana was not in the path of totality, so the entire eclipse was not visible. Cloud cover also made it difficult to see. Traci Street photo.

Four candidates vie for the two contested seats on Eureka board

By Rebecca Nelson
Of the Tobacco Valley News

Four candidates are running for two open three-year terms on the Eureka School Board representing Eureka, while one candidate has filed for one open seat on the Eureka board representing Trego for the high school.

Stephanie Vredenburg, running unop-

posed to represent Trego, will be featured in an article in an upcoming issue. The candidates vying for Eureka's two contested seats follow:

Bob Cuffe emphasized that he doesn't have an agenda when it comes to the school board - he just wants to help. "I'm really just

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Rendezvous brings pancakes to the senior center Longtime volunteers serve up breakfast to Rendezvous-goers young and old

By Traci Street
Of the Tobacco Valley News

Three longtime Eureka locals will be volunteering their time at the Senior Center Pancake Breakfast during Rendezvous again this year.

Donny Stacy and his wife Judy, along with Donna Edwards, will once again be making pancakes the Saturday morning of Rendezvous, as they have in years past.

Judy mixes up the pancakes and makes eggs, while her husband Donny cooks the pancakes. Edwards serves coffee, tea, and juices, and helps clean up, wiping the tables and generally helping as needed. "I get to serve the drinks," she said.

Edwards said she has been volunteering at the pancake breakfast since around 2010, after she retired. She said she enjoys it, because people who are headed off for the day's festivities will usually come by for

breakfast first, and she said she gets to see a number of people she hasn't seen all year. "They all come in groups and get to visit with each other and other people," she said. Edwards said everyone who comes is looking forward to Rendezvous experiences, and they are all upbeat and happy.

"These are the hard workers, here," Edwards said of the Stacys.

It's clear when you see the three of them together that they enjoy helping out and

enjoy each other's company. Judy Stacy said she and her husband have been doing the pancake breakfast since around 1995, and over the years they have also volunteered at the senior center doing other things, like delivering Meals On Wheels. As they've gotten older, they've had to step back a bit, they said.

Donny Stacy joked that his favorite thing

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Spring projects keeping Forest Service busy in Tobacco Valley

By Rebecca Nelson
Of the Tobacco Valley News

Combined Fortine-Rexford district ranger Seth Carbonari recently took the time to share some of the projects that are keeping the U.S. Forest Service busy in the region this spring.

Because one of the top priority fireheds in the nation is situated primarily in Lincoln County as designated by the 2022 Wildfire Crisis Strategy, towns and cities within the county are benefiting from the increased infusion of funds into fuels work. "We continue to get a ton accomplished," Carbonari said. "Most of that was using local contractors and then a lot of our local crews to do additional work."

Fuels treatments on 2,200 acres are under contract in the district this year, with another 1,300 planned with local staff. Those numbers have

been rising but fairly consistent since money from the Wildfire Crisis Strategy started coming in.

"We're working really closely with our partners at the (Department of Natural Resources and Conservation) to the Good Neighbor Authority to accomplish a good number of timber sales and fuels work," Carbonari said.

He said they've also been fortunate to have a "strong local contracting group to get a lot of our fuels projects and timber projects accomplished."

Active timber sales include projects up Pinkham Creek in the Thirsty Lake area, Williams Creek, and in the Trego area. Carbonari said a small sale in the West Kootenai will be advertised, along with some other small sales.

"We've got some deck sales from the East Fork fire salvage, and then we're working hard on the planning aspect of the East Fork salvage project,

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Eureka town council discusses emergency management plan

By Traci Street
Of the Tobacco Valley News

The Eureka Town Council met Monday night, and on the agenda for new business was approval of the Eureka Quilt Show special event, as well as approval of a number of sign permits, a temporary banner and approval of a county emergency plan.

The council didn't have much to update in the way of old business, such as the 6th Street project or the ARPA grant dealing with the asbestos-lined concrete pipes. Mayor LeAnn Schermerhorn said she realized she didn't get an email update from the legal department and would have to revisit the topic. She stated they are still working on the legal and contractual issues surrounding both projects.

Schermerhorn also said she is still working on codifying city ordinances, and stated she had found an old email about how ordinances are codified now, something she would share with the council.

The council discussed a proposed emergency management plan from Lincoln County Emergency Management Agency. Mayor Schermerhorn mentioned that the person responsible for the report didn't seem to be aware of what was available in Eureka, and noted that Rexford and Troy

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Candidates

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hoping to serve," he says. He sees the facilities issue as related to school safety, and has voted for the bond each of the four times it's been up for election.

Cuffe's kids attend Lincoln County High School. Cuffe's roots in the community go all the way back to the 1890s when his grandmother first settled in the valley. Community members have been asking him and his wife to consider running for school board for around 11 years, he says. He decided it was finally time.

One strength he could offer as a board member is an ability to communicate with the community about the school's needs, helped by his strong ties here, he says.

Cuffe has been a long-time volunteer, especially as a head or assistant sports coach for various sports at Eureka Public Schools for several years, "just trying to stay involved," he says.

Cuffe volunteered for "something like 25 seasons of sports in seven years between girls basketball, boys basketball, softball, baseball, even football," he says. "I was an athlete in high school and college and so I saw that as a way to be able to continue to contribute." Now he'd like to shift gears, step back from coaching, and focus on parenting and serving on the school board.

Cuffe doesn't think the school system is necessarily in need of change. "I believe that our school system does a pretty darn good job," he says. But safety is something he thinks about. "I'm sure there's a safety program in place, but I wouldn't mind

sort of trying to figure out if there's ways we could make our schools a little bit safer," he says.

Cuffe owns businesses in the valley which employ between 22 and 25 people, and he has a lot of management experience, which he thinks might be helpful.

Years ago, he served on a facilities committee formed of community members to advise during an earlier attempt to pass the bond.

"I'm really open-minded about serving," he says, emphasizing he doesn't see anything wrong with how things are currently running.

Ultimately, it's about the students. "They're the future of our town," he says. "I just want to, overall, see kids doing well, and having as many opportunities as they can. If me serving somehow helps, that's great. I recognize I would just be another cog in the wheel."

Ben Goodrich has three kids in Eureka public schools, which gives him "skin in the game" in running for the trustee position, he says. He also brings a "unique intersection of experience and talents that I think could be used here in this community."

Goodrich works in the tech industry. He put himself through college, earned a master's degree, and has worked as an electrician and general contractor. "I tend to see the world in many shades of gray versus black and white," he says.

His family lived in various locations around the Pacific northwest before moving to Montana a few years ago. Goodrich has served on many boards, and through business, has had many long term partnerships. "I tend to build



BOB CUFFE



BEN GOODRICH



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these relationships that need to stand for decades, potentially," he says. His experience running multi-million dollar construction projects and managing risk might be useful in assessing a new facility, he says.

When the most recent bond was presented to the public, there was room "to tell a clearer story," he believes. Financial accountability is important to Goodrich, and he thinks the public should have access to information about how the district is using its funding. "There's certain financial diagrams that can show the starting input all the way to the end, that breaks it out in really clean and clear ways all the way down to salaries and bus fuel," he says.

"I think they're doing okay," Goodrich says of Eureka's school system. "An institution like a public school system is never going to be perfect," he says. "But you can expect that there's opportunities for improvement." He'd like to find out more about how Eureka compares with other schools of similar demographics and community, to inform goal setting. Goodrich would like to look at how extracurricular opportunities can be improved. "Can we take what we've done with the robotics team and do that for other things next year?" he asks. Leadership development and attracting top teacher talent is another area he's interested in.

Goodrich mentions he's a Christian conservative which provides underpinnings for his ideals, though he says, "I think idealism increases with distance from the problem." He also says he's guided by common sense and seeks to find "the right decision for the moment."

Should he be elected, his approach to the school board would also be informed by his work in the scientific field, where "you often try to present the negatives, maybe even stronger than the positives so that you never give the impression that you are trying to bias a decision," he says. "And so I carry that kind of ethical code with me wherever I go." He'll seek to un-

derstand by asking lots of questions, "and then give them an informed opinion, as part of a team," he says.

Amber Li-Aneka Emery is running for the school board a second time, after first running last spring.

Emery says she's committed to providing trustworthy representation of kids, families, and educators. "I think there needs to be balance across the board, to be honest," she says. "Putting the needs of children and their families first is paramount. But that means advocating for policies and initiatives that promote their well-being, academic success, and overall growth," she says. To do that means "supporting the teachers in that process."

Emery aims to "approach every decision with practicality and pragmatism" and hopes to "ensure that our schools are run more efficiently and effectively" to the benefit of families of staff, she says.

Issues of importance for Emery include addressing infrastructure needs like renovating or rebuilding facilities, supporting innovative teaching methods, and enhancing support services.

She believes it's important to support programs like robotics. "When I found out that the robotics team had won nationals, I was absolutely ecstatic," she said. "There are other teams and other areas that are starting to receive recognition. I think it's important that we continue to foster that."

Emery says it's important to listen to the kids, educators, and the community. "I think advocating for the kids is to give them space to really vocalize what their hopes and dreams are, what they see needs to be addressed," she says. "I think that it's important that they're seen and heard." To support teachers, it's important to sit down and speak with them, she says, "finding out where there's discrepancies" in their needs being met.

Enhanced support for extracurricular and alternative programs "like the sports teams, and the dramatic arts, the art students, and the kids that are learning all of the practical skills too" is

another interest of Emery's. She's happy to see the tiny house building program and other skills being taught.

Emery moved to Eureka eight years ago with her daughters, who graduated from LCHS. Now retired and serving as Senior Vice President of the Women's Auxiliary of the VFW, Emery spent 23 years in the nursing field and five years in the mental health field. She's worked with kids with developmental delays and/or behavioral issues. "I have a pretty in-depth background with regards to mental health and mental wellness," she says. She also recently became a certified instructor of Teen Mental Health First Aid through a course provided by a county partnership.

Emery believes "transparent accountability" is important, as well as "listening to concerns and feedback and helping to make decisions that are in the best interests of all who have a stake in our future leaders," she says. "These kids, they're the ones that are going to be stepping out into the world soon. I personally believe trust is earned through integrity, and I pledge to uphold those values in every aspect of my role as a trustee, should I be voted in."

Michael Sage is running for a seat on the school board because, he says, "I feel like I have a need to continue to give to the community and to the public in general."

Sage has two kids, a first and third grader, in Eureka Elementary, and he says that contributes to his motivation. He's noticed that people "gripe and complain about things, but will never do anything about it, and have something bad to say about somebody without ever being in that person's shoes" he says. "I don't have anything negative against the current school board at all. But I feel like I can't really have much say if I'm not willing to do that."

Sage says he'd like to learn more, but from his view, management and school policy could have room for improvement. "Is the syllabus reviewed by management and the board?" he says. "Things like that." Cur-

riculum and policy could possibly use more review, Sage posits. "I don't want to dictate what the syllabus is, but just more review, just to ensure that the school doesn't get put in a bind for doing something that they probably shouldn't," Sage says.

Sage has been following the facilities issue, and is concerned. "Definitely, we need to come up with a different plan," he says. "If school bonds have been just shut down like crazy, you know, what options do we have?"

He supports the most recent facilities proposal more than previous ones. "I didn't really care for the first time it went out - I didn't vote for it. But then I voted for it subsequently," he says. He didn't have kids when he voted "no."

"But now I do," he says. "And now they're in school, and I'm like, Yeah, we need to do something about this and give our kids a healthier environment."

Sage grew up as a military brat, but now he has a pay-it-forward attitude when it comes to education, and providing facilities for the next generation. "I'm not from here, but somebody's done it for me. Somebody did it for my parents. It's my turn. It's my turn to give back."

Sage is currently the chair of the Policy Council, a parent group partnering with Head Start in northwest Montana. "I started that when my youngest daughter was in Head Start," he says. He's been on the council for four years and chair for two, even after his daughter moved on.

He fell in love with Eureka and moved here with his wife in 2009, finding the surroundings beautiful and the people kind and generous. Sage currently works as an engineering technician for the Forest Service. "I'm hoping I can translate my time on the policy council with Head Start," he says. He doesn't want to make waves on the board with big changes. "I just want to make sure that my kids and my friends' kids and the community's kids have a good school board and just want to take care of people."

PET OF THE WEEK



ANGEL

Angel is a 9 month old husky mix who absolutely adores people! She has lived with other large dogs in the past but would prefer a cat and small dog free home. She loves being outdoors and would make an excellent hiking and camping partner this summer!

**Tobacco Valley
Animal Shelter
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GREAT NEWS EUREKA!

OrthoRehab Physical Therapy has expanded our team and warmly welcomes our new Clinic Director Jared Winslow, DPT. A Libby native and Director of OrthoRehab in Troy, he is well-respected as a Physical Therapist, and highly requested by doctors and patients alike. Jared joins Eureka's own Tayler Featherly, DPT, and Cole Davis, PTA on the PT provider side of our clinic, and Larissa, Lori, and Nicole, who keep our office running seamlessly.

This expansion of our team reflects our commitment to providing prompt, effective Physical Therapy services to all Tobacco Valley communities.

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Our priority is to ensure our patients have access to care promptly, to overcome pain or injury, so they can return to reaching their full potential.

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