

ADE DAILY NEWS CLIPS

March 3, 2013

Little Rock School District notebook (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

LITTLE ROCK — LR district offers computers, cheap

The Little Rock School District is once again making low-cost refurbished computers available to families who have students in the school district but no access to computer technology at home.

Large-screen computers are \$40. Computers with flat screen monitors are \$50. About 400 machines are available.

To register for a computer by the March 13 deadline, parents must fill out an agreement form that is available at the schools. The form must be signed by the student's teacher and principal.

Each family can prepay for a computer at school or pay when they pick the computer up on Computer Power Day, March 16. The Computer Power Day event starts at 8:30 a.m. and goes to 1 p.m. at Henderson Middle School, 401 Barrow Road.

The event is sponsored by the school district, Comcast, Acxiom, the city of Little Rock, Central Arkansas Library System, ParentLink, and the Coalition of Greater Little Rock Neighborhoods.

3rd-graders raise counseling money

Kids Stick Together, a duct-tape craft project initiated by Jennifer White's third grade class at Gibbs Elementary School in Little Rock, has raised nearly \$2,000 so far to benefit survivors of last December's Newtown, Conn., school shooting.

The Gibbs pupils cover items such as bookmarks, pencils, pencil holders, wallets, hair bows and even backpacks with decorative tape and then sell the items.

Money raised by the sales helps provide counseling services at the Healing Hearts Center for Grieving Children and Families in Danbury, Conn., for students, staff and families affected by the shooting rampage that killed 26 students and educators at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown.

Williams' student wins science fair

Heartley Meyer, a student at Williams Elementary School, was the overall winner of the Little Rock School District's second annual Elementary School Science Fair.

Heartley's project dealt with the nesting practices of adult bald eagles, including the time of year and time of day that eagles were most likely to be in their nests.

Molly Johnson, a pupil at Otter Creek Elementary, received second place overall honors. Nand Mehtta of Carver Magnet Elementary won third place overall and honorable mention went to Joey Samuels, a pupil at Jefferson Elementary School.

About 200 pupils from 28 schools participated in the science fair.

Higher Education notebook (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

LITTLE ROCK —

JBU's Pollard new council chairman

John Brown University President Chip Pollard was elected chairman of the board of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities in Washington, D.C., in February.

The council is an international association of Christian colleges and universities with 18 members in North America and 54 affiliate institutions in 20 countries. Member institutions teach nearly 400,000 students. Chairmen of the 14-member board serve two-year terms.

"Dr. Pollard brings to our board great wisdom, strong leadership skills and the discernment of a true man of God," council President Edward Blews said in a statement. "He has been elected as one of the preeminent leaders in all of higher education, chosen by his presidential peers. I look forward to working with him as our chair."

UALR dean gets national award

Angela Sewall, dean of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's College of Education, received the 2013 Edward C. Pomeroy Award for Outstanding Contributions to Teacher Education from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

The award, also given to Virginia McLaughlin from the College of William & Mary, recognizes service to teacher education for the development and promotion of outstanding practices at the collegiate, state or national level.

Sewall, a professor in educational administration, is sought after by districts across the nation for her expertise in the areas of school law and desegregation.

She is active in community service, including service to the state as a member of the Arkansas Leadership Academy executive committee and the Arkansas Education Deans' Council, as well as the Arkansas Public Policy Panel.

The association's Committee on Professional Preparation and Accountability chose two winners this year.

White receives Bumpers award

Don White and White Commercial Corp. have been recognized as the first recipients of the Friend of Bumpers College award for outstanding commitment and dedication to the College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, Dean Michael Vayda announced.

White Commercial Corp. offers several opportunities, including an annual Master Management Conference, which focuses on issues and challenges related to building a successful grain-elevator business, UA said in a news release.

The company also sponsors the Grain Sellers' Retreat, regional action meetings, trading workshops, a grain buyers' boot camp, grain accounting courses and lender financing workshops.

State adds workers earning six figures (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

LITTLE ROCK — The number of state employees making at least \$100,000 increased this year by 139 over a year ago to 2,304.

Most of those employees work at the state's higher education institutions, where the ranks of employees making at least six-figure salaries grew by 122 to 1,998.

At the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, the number of state employees paid at least \$100,000 a year is up by 46 to 1,102.

Virtually all of the increase at UAMS stems from the hiring of 42 new faculty members, who are doctors, said Leslie Taylor, a UAMS spokesman.

Democratic Gov. Mike Beebe, in that office since 2007, said he assumes that most of the employees making at least \$100,000 a year at the state's colleges and universities are scientists, professors and/or doctors, which require competitive salaries "if you want those kind of people."

Senate President Pro Tempore Michael Lamoureux, R-Russellville, views the increase in UAMS' six-figure employees this way: "At UAMS, there is not a lot of \$50,000-a-year doctors. They tend to make a little more than that when they get out of medical school."

He said he doubts that the chiefs of the state's two- and four-year colleges are hiring \$100,000-a-year employees who "are walking around with nothing to do."

"You don't want that number to grow any more than necessary, but when an institution is growing in enrollment, they are going to have a growing [number of faculty and staff]," said Lamoureux, who formerly was co-chairman of the Legislature's personnel subcommittee.

"You have to have some faith in the leadership and also look out for abuses," he said.

Personnel Subcommittee Co-Chairman Rep. Mark Biviano, R-Searcy, said the growth in the number of higher-education employees making at least \$100,000 isn't "a bad thing."

"I continue to believe we need to invest in higher education, as long as we are starting to see a correlation of increased graduation rates, improvements in scores and people staying in the state to create jobs," he said.

The top-paid state employee is Bret Bielema, head football coach at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. His salary is \$3.2 million this fiscal year.

UA hired him in December from the University of Wisconsin, where he coached for seven years and led the Badgers to three-consecutive Rose Bowl games.

The salary of the previous noninterim Razorback head football coach, Bobby Petrino, was \$2.95 million. Petrino was fired in April after trying to cover up his relationship with a 25-year-old female employee of the football program.

Mike Anderson, UA-Fayetteville's head men's basketball coach, is the second highest-paid state employee with a salary of \$2.2 million.

Formerly head coach at the University of Missouri and the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Anderson was hired in March 2011 to succeed John Pelphrey, whose salary was \$1.245 million before he was fired.

The third-highest-paid state employee is Michiaki Imamura, chief of pediatric and congenital cardiothoracic surgery at Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock, at \$1 million.

He began working at UAMS in the fall of 2010, succeeding Robert Jaquiss, whose salary was \$1.1 million before he left to take a job at Duke Children's Hospital in North Carolina.

Fourth on the list is Arkansas State University head football coach Bryan Harsin at \$700,000. ASU hired Harsin, who was the University of Texas co-offensive coordinator, in December to succeed Gus Malzahn, who left after one season as the Red Wolves' coach to take the head coaching job at Auburn University.

Malzahn's ASU compensation package totaled about \$850,000 a year.

The 2,302 employees who make at least \$100,000 a year are paid from various sources, sometimes a combination of sources, including state tax funds, other state funds, federal tax funds distributed by the state, tuition and fees, grants, contracts with the state, state hospital revenue and private sources.

STATE PAYROLL GROWTH

According to the most up to-date information available on the number of full-time state employees, the state had 56,502 full-time employees as of Sept. 30 - up by 16 from 56,484 on Sept. 30, 2011 - according to state budget administrator Brandon Sharp.

The number of full-time employees at the state's higher-education institutions increased by two to 24,625, and the number of full-time employees at the state's other agencies increased by 14 to 31,877 during this period, he said.

The cost of the state employees' salaries and benefits totaled \$3.743 billion in fiscal 2012, Sharp said.

He said he's unable to project that total cost for fiscal 2013 "with any confidence" because of several uncertainties. But, he said, the salary and benefit cost for the first six months of fiscal 2013 was \$1.671 billion, compared with \$1.617 billion for the same period in fiscal 2012.

Beebe has proposed a 2 percent cost-of-living increase for about 30,000 state employees who don't work at the higher-education institutions in fiscal 2014 and haven't received such raises in fiscal 2012 and 2013. The total cost for the raises would be about \$30.3 million, including \$11.9 million in general revenue, in fiscal 2014, according to Sharp.

The colleges and universities decide on their own whether to grant employees pay raises and can tap various funding sources, including state funds, tuition and fees.

The state's general-revenue budget is \$4.727 billion in fiscal 2013, which ends June 30. Beebe has proposed a budget of \$4.947 billion in fiscal 2014, including \$10 million in rainy-day funds.

UAMS

The school's number of employees increased from 10,497 to 10,771, and the number of employees who make at least \$100,000 a year increased from 1,056 to 1,102 over the past year, according to Taylor.

Thirty-six of the 42 new faculty members, who are doctors making at least \$100,000 a year, are former residents at UAMS who became faculty members when they completed their residencies, Taylor said.

Some of the faculty members were needed to replace doctors who had left UAMS or cut their workloads, she said. The school also needed more doctors to serve patients, she said.

In addition to the new faculty members, UAMS recruited two new department chairmen to replace their predecessors, she said.

They are Rodney Davis, chairman of the department of urology in the College of Medicine, whose salary is \$545,000, and Eric Johnson, the chairman of the department of epidemiology in the College of Public Health, whose salary is \$278,760.

This fiscal year, UAMS' budget totals \$1.27 billion, Taylor said.

Clinical revenue provides \$901.6 million of the budget, grants and contracts total \$155.2 million, and state appropriations are \$115.2 million, she said.

Tuition and fees total \$32.4 million, and gifts and other sources total \$64.1 million, Taylor said. Imamura's \$1,000,072 salary is financed with \$27,562 in state funds and the rest through professional fees, Taylor said.

COACHES

Bielema receives \$2.95 million from the University of Arkansas (\$2,776,510 from private funds and \$173,490 from athletic department funds), said UA athletic department spokesman Kevin Trainor.

He also receives \$250,000 from the Razorback Foundation under a separate personal-services agreement, and in return, he makes speeches on behalf of the foundation and does other assignments, Trainor said.

Anderson gets \$1.5 million from UA (\$1,327,500 from private funds and \$172,500 from athletic department funds), according to Trainor.

He also gets \$700,000 from the Razorback Foundation under a separate personal services agreement to make speeches, appear on television and radio shows, and do other assignments, Trainor said.

Neither coach receives tax dollars, UA officials said.

At ASU, Harsin gets \$160,896 in athletic department funds and \$539,104 in private funds provided through the Red Wolf Club, said ASU spokesman Jeff Hankins. Harsin has a personal-services agreement with the Red Wolf Club.

NONHIGHER-EDUCATION EMPLOYEES

The number of state employees making at least \$100,000 a year who work for agencies other than the higher-education institutions increased by 17 to 306 over the past year.

State Education Commissioner Tom Kimbrell is the highest-paid of these employees, at \$224,399.

In September 2009, the state Board of Education approved Beebe's recommendation to hire Kimbrell, a former superintendent in the Paragould and North Little Rock school districts and executive director of the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators.

LR girl wins top prize at state bee (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

LITTLE ROCK — A Little Rock seventh grader who beat 54 other Arkansas students in the state spelling bee Saturday will advance to the national bee in Washington this spring.

After 4.5 hours and 14 rounds of competition, 12-year-old Chythanya Murali became the victor by correctly spelling sebaceous, which means fatty or greasy.

"It was kind of nerve racking," said Chythanya, a student at Lisa Academy charter school in Little Rock.

The Arkansas State Spelling Bee, hosted and sponsored by the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, took place at the University of Central Arkansas with spellers in third through eighth grades from 55 counties. About 300 people attended.

"The participants won their school bee, then their county bee, then came here," Event Coordinator Alyssa Caparaso said.

The newspaper has sponsored the bee for more than 20 years.

This was Chythanya's second time competing in the state bee and first time winning. She's won her school bee four times and the county bee twice.

"Well, it's something I've been doing for a long time, so over time you are more committed to it," she said. "I study every day, sometimes an hour, but it can last a lot longer than that. I just kind of spend time looking at whatever I could find. I would search for words I could find."

A native of India and an only child, she moved to Little Rock with her parents when she was 2.

She and her parents - Murali and Vineetha Elambilan - will travel to Washington for the Scripps National Spelling Bee May 28 through May 30.

Chythanya, whose interest in spelling started at a young age when she began doing well on spelling tests, will try not to be nervous for the national bee, she said.

"You're always going to be nervous when you go for a competition, but yet I have to keep that in check," she said.

Her father, Murali Elambilan, said his daughter motivates herself. And though he helps her study, it's her own initiative to study more than an hour each day.

"She needs to be on top of it if she wants to make an impact at the national level," he said. "We just help her practice."

Coming in second place in the state competition was Mark Dufek, 13, an eighth grader at Bryant Middle School in Saline County.

He spelled *melee*, which means a scuffle, to finish in second.

Leslie Paul, 13 and a seventh-grader at Malvern Middle School in Hot Spring County, came in third by correctly spelling *acuminate*, which means pointed.

Along with an all-expense paid trip for two to the national spelling bee, Chythanya won a Kindle Fire, a Webster's collegiate dictionary, a Webster's international dictionary, a one year subscription to the Encyclopedia Britannica for kids and a \$150 Amazon Gift card.

Mark won a Kindle Fire, a Webster's collegiate dictionary and a \$100 Amazon gift card. Leslie won a Kindle Paperwhite, a Webster's collegiate dictionary and a \$50 Amazon gift card.

For Mark, it was the last year he could compete.

"I was glad that he made it in the top three. He had made it second in the county in third grade and in fifth grade he went to state and finished 11th," his father, Frank Dufek, said. "This was the last year he could do it and it was a good way to go out."

Studying for the bee had been taking up most of Mark's time for the past several months.

"It was pretty hard preparing because I had to read all of these different lists of words and stuff," he said. "It was pretty annoying, but I guess it paid off."

Leslie studied for the bee by practicing with her younger sister, who came in second in the county bee. Their older sister competed in the state bee last year.

"They kind of have a sibling rivalry, so that helps," said their father, Steve Paul.