

SCHOOLS BRIEFLY

■ University hosting physics show:
The University of Wisconsin-Rock County will present "Wonders of Physics" at 7 p.m. Tuesday. The show will be held in Room 106 of Allen Hall on the campus at 2909 Kellogg Ave. UW-Madison scientists will conduct a host of demonstrations and interactive experiments related to motion, heat, sound, electricity, magnetism and light. The event is open to all ages as part of the Performing Arts and Lecture Series. The cost is \$6 for the general public and \$4 for UW-Rock County students. For advance tickets, call (608) 758-6565, extension 100.

■ Application period open now for military academies:
Young adults wishing to enter a U.S. military academy next summer with the class of 2014 must submit their applications by 5 p.m. Oct. 15 to U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin's Madison office, 10 E. Doty St., Suite 403, Madison, WI 53703. Application forms and fact sheets can be found on www.tammybaldwin.house.gov or by contacting Cathie Trevallee at (608) 258-9800. Baldwin's academy selection committee, comprised of area business, civic and education leaders, will interview qualified applicants in late November. A congressional nomination is required for students wishing to enter the U.S. Air Force Academy, the Military Academy at West Point, the Naval Academy or the Merchant Marine Academy. Successful applicants must have a strong academic record, strong leadership potential and be able to pass a physical aptitude test. Applicants must also be U.S. citizens, high school graduates between 18 and 23, have no dependents and be of high moral character.

CLASS SCHEDULE

- MONDAY:**
■ Edgerton:
6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Back to school night, Edgerton High School.
■ Evansville:
6 p.m. Panama trip meeting, Evansville High School.
■ Janesville:
6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. PTA meeting, Madison Elementary School.
6:30 p.m. PTSA meeting, Parker High School.
7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Back to school night, Craig High School.
- TUESDAY:**
■ Janesville:
3:05 p.m. to 3:50 p.m. Runner's Club, Kennedy Elementary School.
4 p.m. to 7 p.m. PTA walk-a-thon, Washington Elementary School.
6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Kindergarten ice cream social, Van Buren Elementary School.
■ Milton:
7 a.m. Photo retakes, Milton Middle School.
- WEDNESDAY:**
■ Evansville:
3:15 p.m. to 8 p.m. FFA leadership workshop, Evansville High School.
■ Janesville:
4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Cougar Credit Union open house, Craig High School.
- FRIDAY:**
■ Janesville:
1:45 p.m. PTA family fun run/walk, Adams Elementary School.
7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Rec night, Franklin Middle School.

TIME FOR 'TEA': Community project urges Edgerton residents to read man's amazing story of building peace through schools

By LISA M. SCHMELZ
FOR THE MESSENGER

EDGERTON — Sometimes, in the middle of grief and lost on a mountain halfway around the world, life has a way of working out better than could ever be planned.

Just ask Jerene Mortenson, the mother of bestselling coauthor Greg Mortenson, whose true story "Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Journey to Promote Peace . . . One School at a Time" is helping build schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"I think if he would have made it to the top, the rest of the story would have been very different," said Mortenson, 76, from her Minnesota home during a recent phone interview. "He would have come back with the group, not gotten lost, gone back to San Francisco and back to his nursing (career)."

Jerene Mortenson will talk about her son's book, the selection of Edgerton's first Community Reads, at a presentation Oct. 17.

Greg Mortenson decided in 1993 to climb Pakistan's K2, the world's second-highest mountain, to honor his sister, Christa, who died at 23 after a massive seizure and lifelong battle with epilepsy.

But Greg Mortenson wasn't able to lay his sister's amber necklace on top of K2, and coming down the mountain, he got separated from his guide.

Disappointed, he stumbled into a village where local schoolchildren had a field for a classroom. Their lessons were written in the dirt with sticks.

"Could you help us build a school?" a little girl asked him.

Greg Mortenson, who grew up in the shadow of Africa's Mount Kilimanjaro with his



TERRY MAYER/STAFF
A display at the Edgerton Public Library encourages patrons to get involved with the communitywide reading of "Three Cups of Tea."

missionary parents, couldn't refuse.

Fast forward 16 years, and the results are truly astounding.

Selling everything he owned, and with the pennies of school children, he came up with the \$12,000 needed to build that first school.

Not long after it went up, Greg Mortenson cofounded Pennies for Peace and the Central Asia Institute. Both raise money for schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan, particularly schools for girls. Proceeds from "Three Cups of Tea" also support school construction.

To date, 78 schools have been built.

At Edgerton Middle School, sixth-grade students are seven chapters into the 23-chapter

book.

"I want them to know that education for most children of the world is a privilege, even though it's a given for them," said social studies teacher Dave Caulkins. "They can't always understand that, but this book helps."

Edgerton students at all levels are being introduced to "Three Cups of Tea" at the same time community members also are reading it as the first selection of Community Reads.

"We're hoping we'll get the whole community involved in reading this book and other books that are selected," said Karin Jordan, a Community Reads organizer. "'Three Cups of Tea,' though, is available in versions for all ages and that's why we felt it would be appropriate for our first book."

Read on

Community Reads

Edgerton's Community Reads first selection is "Three Cups of Tea." The book is available at the Edgerton Library in regular print and large print and on CDs. Additionally, it's available in a specially adapted version for adolescents, and comes in a version for young children titled "Listen to the Wind."

To learn more about Community Reads, visit als.lib.wi.us/EPL/.

To learn more about "Three Cups of Tea," visit threecupsoft-ear.com.

Author's mother featured

Jerene Mortenson, the mother of "Three Cups of Tea" coauthor Greg Mortenson, will speak at 9:30 a.m. Oct. 17 at the Edgerton Performing Arts Center. In addition to discussing her son's book, she will also discuss the Central Asia Institute and Pennies for Peace, organizations her son cofounded to build schools in the Middle East. Schools for girls are a particular focus of the organizations. There is no charge to hear Mortenson speak. Mortenson will be accepting donations for Pennies for Peace.

Community Reads culminates with an appearance by Jerene Mortenson at 9:30 a.m. Oct. 17, at the Edgerton Performing Arts Center. The event is free.

"Three Cups of Tea" has been on the bestseller list for more than 100 weeks. So what does the mother behind the author attribute its staying power to?

"I think because we want hope, and fighting terrorism is based on fear," she said. "Education and promoting peace is based on hope and I think people are really looking for hope."

JPAC: A five-year celebration of the arts, community

What purpose does the Janesville Performing Arts Center serve? That is a weighty question the board and I have been exploring as we celebrate the fifth anniversary of JPAC's opening this month.

Whether or not you attend arts events, a performing arts center provides tangible community benefits. Centers support the local economy by providing jobs, purchasing supplies and services, encouraging tourism and promoting patronage to other local businesses, such as restaurants and shops.

In a broader scope, a performing arts center can help make a community appealing to new businesses searching for a location that will provide their employees with an attractive, active place to live.

But the heart of a performing arts center is what happens within the walls.

JPAC was created to provide a central, professional home for local arts groups and it serves as that home for 15 community arts groups. In this way, JPAC goes beyond stimulating the local economy or providing entertainment by giving citizens the opportunity to express themselves through artistic endeavors in music, dance, visual art and theater.

JPAC relies on the arts groups to produce its seasons, which sets it apart from other performing arts centers. Many centers present a series of events they market to the public and facility rental by local arts groups serves as a supplement to their seasons. At JPAC, our arts groups are at the forefront of our mission to provide profes-



EMILY GRUENEWALD
GUEST COLUMN

sional assistance, equipment and services for our arts groups to support the artistic and creative fabric of our community.

The center serves as a gathering place for people of all ages to experience and enjoy a diverse roster of arts and community events. Over the past five seasons, 127,191 people have attended 451 events at JPAC. That's roughly one-third of the Janesville population attending an event each year.

Since September 2004, more than 13,000 children have participated in arts education activities either at JPAC or in school programs sponsored by local arts groups including educational performances, workshops with professional artists, demonstrations, tours and classes. Most of my career has been spent working with youth arts organizations and I have seen firsthand how the arts support classroom activities and encourage students to act with empathy, gain self-confidence and develop important life skills such as responsibility, teamwork and time management. Plus, it's fun!

Adults experience the same joy we see in the children when they hear an exceptional artist, find a new type of music they enjoy, laugh or cry through a play or musical they

can relate to, or learn an unexpected fact. I love to see how the arts bring people together when they are sharing a common experience. It's not unusual to see new friendships form as patrons share their favorite moments from the show at intermission or after a show.

It is important to everyone involved at JPAC that events are reasonably priced. Events range from free to \$35 per ticket, with a few exceptions for fundraising events. Each arts group sets its own ticket prices, trying to strike that delicate balance between meeting its budget and ensuring the programs are financially accessible to audiences.

Like any service, there are costs associated with producing an artistic event, but because we believe deeply in the benefits of the arts, JPAC and the arts groups strive to sponsor a number of free events, like the monthly JPAC Your Lunch series, to ensure everyone has the opportunity to experience, appreciate and enjoy the arts.

The first five years have proven that Janesville can support a performing arts center. In fact, we set the second-highest attendance record in the 2008-'09 season, confirming that even in tough economic times, our souls still need to be lifted. The sky is the limit for JPAC and our local arts groups and I look forward to shaping that vision with the community over our next five years.

Editor's note: Emily Gruenewald is the executive director of the Janesville Performing Arts Center.