



'Battle of the Books'

After flexing their literary knowledge, four Kelso students proceed to a regional contest

BY LISA K. ANDERSON

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Their cheers included the "Macarena" and the "Chicken Dance," but the most memorable was one they created.

"We're the Ninja Stars and you know it, know it, know it!" the fifth-grade girls sang, displaying their good luck charms of folded paper stars colored in black and blue marker. "We're the Ninja Stars and we're here to show it, show it, show it!"

Fresh off their victory at Kelso Elementary School's Battle of the Books Thursday, the Ninja Stars already were talking about the regional competition they'll proceed to in Canby next month.

The team members, including, K.J. Jordan, Kelsey Wallace, Alex Bond and Sydney Stratton, also were excited about their prizes of Barnes & Noble gift cards.

"It's amazing and awesome," Alex said.

Her favorite book of the 16 she read for the competition was Lois Lowry's "Number the Stars," and she read it within a day.

This was Kelso Elementary School's first year participating in Oregon Battle of the Books, a statewide reading program for students third through 12th grade.

Each battle lasted 15 minutes, with two teams competing to correctly answer as many questions as they could about 16 possible books.

Sheri Zaugg, the library technician at Kelso Elementary, helped implement the school's program beginning last fall. She said 30 students in third through fifth grade made up seven teams and each picked their own adult coaches.

The Ninja Stars were coached by K.J.'s mother, Kate Jordan.

"They were very diligent," Kate Jordan said of the Ninja Stars, who reviewed 195 questions with Jordan besides reading and rereading all 16 books.

Zaugg said this year's Battle of the Books already has students from all grades excited to participate in future events.

Sandy Grade School has participated in Battle of the Books the past four years and will conduct its own book battles the next couple weeks.

The goal of the program is to encourage students' reading for enjoyment, broaden their reading interests, increase their reading comprehension and promote cooperative learning.

For more information about Oregon Battle of the Books, visit oboblsta.pbworks.com.