

The Big Pine Beacon

News from Big Pine Unified School District

May 18, 2016
Volume 7 Number 5

BIG PINE SCHOOL DISTRICT
**WARRIOR
CODE**



Upcoming Events

- May 19 - Celebration of Learning - **MINIMUM DAY**
- May 20 Sadie Hawkins
- May 20 Prom
- May 24 - 9th & 10th Gr. Manzanar Trip
- May 25 - Community Meetings
- May 26 - 9th & 10th Gr. Overnight Camping Trip
- May 30 - Memorial Day - **NO SCHOOL**
- May 31 - Spring Sports Awards Banquet
- June 2 - Alice Piper Day
- June 3 - Yearbook Distribution
- June 5 - Baccalaureate and Academic Awards Banquet
- June 6 - Board Meeting
- June 7 - K-5 Pool Party
- June 7 - **MINIMUM DAY**
- June 8 - **MINIMUM DAY**
- June 9 - **MINIMUM DAY**
- June 9 - Last Day of School
- June 9 - Graduation
- June 14 - Board Meeting
- July 5-July 22 - Middle School Summer School



We Are Crew!

We Remember Alice Piper By Pamela Jones, Superintendent

June 2nd is Alice Piper Day at the Big Pine School District, and this year we will gather the students around the Memorial Statue in order to honor Piper's successful lawsuit to push forward equal education for Native American students in our state and nation, but also to celebrate the planting of a native plant garden at the base of the statue.

The garden was supported by a Mary DeDecker grant from the Bristlecone Chapter of the California Native Plant Society. Our dedicated volunteer, Alan Bacock, wrote the grant and has been collaborating with second and fourth grade classrooms and teachers Heather Burror and Loralee Mairs to create the garden and educate the students at the same time. Recently the fourth graders did field work along with Bacock and Sally Manning. Mrs. Mairs was excited to note that students were able to call the plants by name, without prompting, as they saw them growing in various

Why a Celebration of Learning Matters

By Ed Dardenne-Ankringa, Principal

A Celebration of Learning is more than an open house. While student work is the focus of the event, it is meant to spark meaningful conversations with students, teachers, and families about the standards being taught and the achievement that is observed. So as we mingle with students, staff, and the community during the Celebration of Learning, I hope we can be focused on a few key components of the celebration.

- The high quality products and performances that we are viewing were specifically chosen to represent the content and skills that students have learned. These represent in some instances case studies and expeditions, and all went through multiple drafts or revisions. This in turn was supported through feedback from teachers and peers with high expectations to meet rigorous standards.

- This event was created for an audience beyond the classroom. We are part of the authentic audience! This event is in part a motivational opportunity for students to create with purpose and care about the quality of their work. This demonstrates that a

Superintendent, Pamela Jones
Principal, Ed Dardenne-Ankringa

Yarrow
Achillea millefolium
Blooms: April - August
Fun fact: Yarrow was used for a native medicine



locations in the wild.

The second grade class measured the garden bed and helped plan the planting, the fourth graders studied a particular plant, wrote about it, and created a watercolor picture of their plant. These depictions were professionally imprinted on plant plaques that we will install in the garden next to the blooming plants they identify. The installation of the plant markers will take place at 1:00 on June 2nd, in front of the school. Community members are welcome to join us.

The Alice Piper project continues to inspire collaboration and community support while it honors education for all.

student's work is real and important, as well as engaging to them as learners.

- At this celebration, students are the communicators. Students are engaged in the speaking and listening stands of the Common Core State Standards, articulating their strengths, their struggles, and what they have learned and gained. It's an important opportunity for students to practice being effective communicators and support their own futures through college and career readiness.

- Finally, this is a student's opportunity to reflect on their learning targets. In preparation for this event, students invested time and energy in reflection. A large part of this experience for students is the ability to access and articulate their progress and then transfer this into effective communication about their achievement and learning.

I hope you not only enjoy the opportunity to see your student and their work, but take in all that the three schools have worked on all year. Please celebrate with all students and take advantage of the opportunity for Big Pine schools to make learning public. I look forward to seeing you at the celebration.

Museum of Tolerance

By Tim Steele



The 9th and 10th grade students have been participating in a semester-long learning expedition called *The Human Face of Human Rights*. The expedition is centered around two major case studies on the Holocaust and Japanese Internment. One of the hallmarks of a learning expedition is the chance to meet and hear “expert speakers” and to conduct field work in order to delve more deeply into the subject matter.

In early April, students were given the fantastic opportunity to travel to Los Angeles to visit the Simon Wiesenthal Museum of Tolerance. Students toured two major exhibits including the Anne Frank special exhibit as well as the main museum which explores a broad history of civil injustices, racism, and intolerance while challenging students to be “up standers” of human rights rather than passive bystanders. Many students were deeply affected by the experience. Jamie Robinson, a sophomore commented that, “This trip made me appreciate what Holocaust victims had to go through and I realize how fortunate I am to have the things I have and the life I live.”

Another sophomore, Lauren Simpson said, “Visiting the museum was very life-changing; it made me very appreciative of being alive right now. I am very thankful.”

Perhaps the most powerful moments of the visit came when students had the rare opportunity to meet Holocaust survivors and hear their heart-wrenching stories. Mrs. Eva Katz, a Hungarian Holocaust survivor, recalled the day the Nazi’s showed up at her house and she was forced to hide while her mother was captured, never to be seen by her again. She

related her struggle to survive the ensuing ordeal without a mother or any family at age seven. She left students with a “homework” assignment to remember to tell their parents that they love them because she wishes she had had the chance to tell her mother she loved her one last time.

Big Pine students were originally slated to hear one survivor speak, but after making their way through a life-scale model of a gas chamber, they were greeted on the other side by Mr. Amram Deutsch, an Auschwitz survivor. Mr. Deutsch impressed upon visitors the importance of not spreading hate beginning with yourself. “Don’t hate others,” he said.

The classroom cannot replace the genuine experience of being fully immersed in a topic and having the rare opportunity to meet the human victims of genocide. “I really enjoyed going to the Holocaust museum. I would not have traded that experience for anything in the world,” says Clarissa Benbrook, a sophomore. “The first speaker really inspired me to not take my family or anything for granted and the second taught me to never say ‘I hate you’ because you never know when you’ll need a friend.”

The highlight for me as a teacher was witnessing a normally quiet student hang out after the others had left so that she could speak with Mr. Deutsch in private. “I just want to give you a hug,” she said to him. And that is the real lesson of this expedition: that love and compassion are the forces that we must use to shape our future in this brave new world.

Native Wildflowers

by Loreale Mairs

One exciting part of being in fourth grade at Big Pine Elementary is that you get the opportunity to embark on an adventurous expedition to the past while deeply studying the Paiute peoples’ way of life many years ago. This year’s expedition has us exploring more deeply the local peoples’ use of native plants as a resource. Earlier in the year we asked for assistance from experts Sally Manning, Environmental Director, and Alan Bacock, Water Program Manager, from the Big Pine Paiute Tribe of the Owens Valley. They have visited our classroom several times and greatly enriched the engagement and learning of the students through hands-on, real world learning experiences.

In the fall, Alan and his crew guided the Second and Fourth grade classes in planting native plants around the Alice Piper statue. Each fourth grade student then researched and drew pictures of one of those native plants. Their work has been placed on a permanent garden marker that will be situated for public viewing in the near future.

As a culmination to our year-long work, Sally approached me with the idea of taking the fourth grade on a trip to closely examine blooming native wild flowers out in the field. What an experience that was! You could hear cries of, “That’s my plant!” and “That is Prince’s Plume! It looks just like my drawing,” or “Here’s my plant, Western Blue Flax.”

We began the day with a stop about 4 miles out of town on the Death Valley road to take a look at the plants blooming beside the road. We saw Apricot Mallow, Prince’s Plume, and several others. And what a great place to observe layered rocks



Rose Penstemon by Dakota; *Penstemon floridus* var. *floridus*; Native American tribes used it as medicine.



Bush Sunflower by Vanessa; *Encelia actoni*; Honey plant, meaning bees collect nectar or pollen from it.

to follow up with our recent rock study. I had a difficult time getting the students back on the bus without pockets full of rocks. Next, we traveled south to Independence taking a “long cut” around Aberdeen to view the yellow fields of Desert Dandelion through the bus windows. In Independence we stopped at the Mary DeDecker garden where we witnessed more native species from our study, along with some new species, and weeded out some non-native invasive plants. Lastly, we continued south to the Lone Pine Visitors Center where park ranger Richard Potashin guided the students through two desert plant habitats, the Mojave and Great Basin. Mr. Potashin allowed the students to smell, feel, and really get up close and personal with the plants.

It was a fabulous field experience that couldn’t happen without the volunteer time and passion of our experts. The students were delighted and cooperative, and much learning took place.



Door decorating winners: (lft to rt) Mrs. Dossey's 1st Grade, Mrs. Jennings' 5th Grade, Mrs. Marsh's Crew and Mr. Schlieker's Crew.



Big Pine Tribe presentation to eager learners.

2nd Grade Fieldwork at Eureka Dunes By Heather Burror, 2nd Grade Teacher

From the conservation work of John Muir to the unique desert and mountain habitats that make up our Eastern Sierra home, Big Pine's second grade students have been learning to respect and appreciate our natural world. The second grade class's latest learning adventure was a trip to the Eureka Dunes.

The Eureka Dunes are located in the northwest corner of Death Valley National Park, about 50 dusty miles from Big Pine along a bumpy dirt road. At more than 680 feet tall, the Eureka Dunes are the tallest sand dunes in California. They provide a unique desert habitat for several plants and animals that cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

Even before we reached the Eureka Dunes, students were awed as we passed through a huge Joshua tree forest. Students sketched and wrote about the Joshua trees, cacti, and other desert plants during a brief stop along the way. Then they piled back on the bus and settled in for the rough ride to Eureka Dunes, where students met Death Valley National Park ranger Sarah.

Students recognized erosion at work when they identified the colors of the surrounding mountains in the grains of sand at the dunes. Ranger Sarah talked about how the wind formed the sand into the ever-changing dunes at the head of the Eureka Valley. Students also dug into the sand to feel the water in the cool, damp sand below the surface.

Ranger Sarah also led the students on a hike to identify animal tracks and desert plants. Students identified Eureka Dunes Evening Primrose, Shining Milkvetch, and other plants unique to the area. Students spotted tracks from coyotes, jackrabbits, roadrunners, lizards, and snakes. Then students ran, rolled, and somersaulted back down the steep sand dunes to the bus for the long, bumpy ride home.



2nd Grade class identifying animal tracks on their hike with Ranger Sarah.



Earth Day - 2016

By Amanda Marsh, Teacher

Earth Day began in 1970 and is celebrated every April 22nd. This year the 6th grade class decided that they wanted to do an activity that would reach every student in the elementary school. Each 6th grader worked to create an activity that they would present to the elementary students. They worked about 3 weeks in science class, developing their activity, getting supplies, and practicing how they would present it to the younger students. The 6th graders worked to host 9 stations, consisting of: a water relay, a recycle relay, an eco-inventory, the "Earth Is In Our Hands" activity, amazing tree facts, an activity booklet, and two stations with donated items from Vons and Starbucks. If you drive thru Starbucks and get a hot drink, you might end up with a hot-cup sleeve designed by one of our students. Or, if you have your groceries bagged in paper bags at Vons, you might get an Earth Day message created by one of the students. The Big Pine Tribe also hosted a station, focusing on composting and gave each elementary student a snack! Along with these activities, the 6th grade class hosted an Earth Day themed door decorating contest. Each Crew participated and all the doors turned out very creative! The winners are: elementary school - Mrs. Dossey's 1st grade class and Mrs. Jennings' 5th grade class; middle school winner - Mrs. Marsh's Crew and high school winner - Mr. Schlieker's Crew. All-in-all, the Earth Day activities were a huge success; the students were extremely engaged and the 6th graders enjoyed teaching the elementary students how valuable our Earth really is. Remember - Every Day is Earth Day!!

First Scholarship of the Year!



Emilio Flores, of the CFW Foundation, presenting Kaylee Simpson with a \$2,500.00 scholarship to be used at the physical therapy institute of her choice.



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 760/938-2005.

On the Crystal Geyser Tour

A message from George Castaneda, Crystal Geyser Manager to the students and teachers of the Big Pine Middle School:

"Dear All, Especially the Students,

Water has been taken for granted for so long like many things. Family, work ethic, simple courtesy, and love, are all examples of things we have and may sometimes take for granted. Your willingness to come and learn some of what we know here at Crystal Geyser shows that you care and this gives me hope for the future of our world. It is important not only to enjoy all these things we have been given but to be good stewards of them and take the necessary steps to make sure we have them for centuries to come.

All of you made my day! Thank you for coming and enjoying the day with us!"



Crystal Geyser tourist: (lft to rt) Jan Hart, teacher; Jessamine Turner; Rainah Dewey; William Vance; Sonny Richards; Kobe Talamantes; Arthur Richards; Sierra Keller; Bodie Steinwand; Rocko Moore; Tom Stone; Anicia Fimbres; Ciera Peterson; Giovanni Talamantes; Tanya Bigpond; Paige Vance; Amanda Marsh, teacher; Ariana Majerus; Noelani In the Woods; Angelina Mendez; Shaylynn Benbrook; Lauren Loy; Juan Gutierrez, Crystal Geyser HR/Safety Manager; and a lot of extra happy hands!

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