

# WE HAVE WINNERS: 

"Believe, Dream, Inspire"
EXPLORE the Arts! PARTICIPATE in PTA Reflections

Theme:"Believe, Dream, Inspire" Reflect on the theme. Create an original work. Be recognized.

CCongratulations to the Elk Plain students who submitted entries into the PTA's national Reflections competition for artists! We are proud to announce that four entries have advanced to the Bethel Council level of the contest for their amazing interpretations of this year's theme, "Believe, Dream, Inspire".

Fourth grader Ysabela Hirning choreographed a fun tap dance to the song "Brave" and is our winner in the Dance Choreography category.

Emmaline Schmidt's (5th grade) photo of a magnificent gingerbread sailing ship advances in the Photography category.

We have two winners in the Visual Arts category:

1) Second grader Frances Link used acrylic paint to create a selfportrait of what she believes in... herself!
2) Taylor Babbel from the 5th grade submitted a dream-like colored pencil creation that moves up to the next round.

We wish these Elk Plain School of Choice artists the best as they move up to the next level! Entries advancing to the state level will be acknowledged in the February PTA newsletter.

Thanks to all of our participants!

## I Hearby Resolve...

January 1 - Time for those pesky resolutions. But first, we should know what a resolution really is. Imagine my surprise when looking in the dictionary and discovering resolution is a mighty busy word that can be used in many ways.

Resolution -

1) the act or an instance of resolving
2) the condition or quality of being resolute
3) something resolved or determined; decision
4) a formal expression of opinion by a meeting, by a vote
5) in law: a judicial decision on some matter; verdict; judgment
6) in chemistry: the act or process of separating something into its constituent parts or elements....

And there are four more definitions in medicine, music, physics, and film. Whew! That is some versatile word, busy in all fields of life and expending its energy changing worlds.

Resolution \#1 - This year I resolve to be more like the word resolution; versatile, and busy changing worlds. (But, I am not taking a meeting for my resolutions ~ enough with all the meetings!)

New Year's Resolutions have been around for a long time, since before Roman times. The Romans named the month January for Janus, the two-faced god who looks backwards into the old year and forwards into the new. It is a chance to reflect at what we have done and think about what we want to do next, or differently in the future, at least in the New Year. So, if I look back at last year ...

Resolution \#2 - Don't do that year again. It had a bunch of "issues" and on the whole wasn't fun. Which leads me to ...

Resolution \#3 - Have more fun - do something fun every weekend.

As part of our family tradition every New Year's Eve we draw pictures on a paper bag with images of the past year on one side and drawings of our hopes for the coming year on the other. At midnight we fill the bags with our hot air and pop them thereby releasing last year's realities and next year's dreams. Not a bad symbolic act meant to give us a grounding in those nebulous thoughts for the future and a way to get rid of the past year's moments. I always feel like my bag falls short.

Resolution \#4: Learn to draw better. At least well enough so what I am drawing actually looks like what it is supposed to be! (I was trying to draw a squirrel in science, as an example, and it looked more like a dinosaur $\sim$ Tyrannosaurus Squirrel!)

My last resolution is borne out of looking back at last year's busy and stressful existence. I don't know about you, but when I get stressed I tend to take it out on those around me, as if it were their fault, or being snarky will make things better. There is a reason the old adage, if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all, is an old adage, and still around. It is something people repeat because it is true!

Resolution \#5: Be nicer. Not just when I am happy, or things are going well, but especially when we are all tired, fedup, and dispirited. That is the time to find solace in each other.

Enough. Too many resolutions and I feel overwhelmed; which leads to stress, which makes me not have fun, which causes me to lose all niceness, which creates a bad year, which probably will infuse my drawings with "mean" dinosaurs instead of happy squirrels.

Resolution \#6: Music -the process in harmony whereby a dissonant note or chord is followed by a consonant one.

Moving from dissonance to harmony, that is what I hope my resolutions will aid me in doing this year.

Resolutely yours, Georgina Gryc Park

## JANUARY Events

PTA BOARD Meeting
Wednesday, January 8th, 2pm
PTA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP Meeting Tuesday, January 14th, 2pm

## WEAR-IT-OUT CLOTHING DRIVE January 24th-Feb. 24th

We are giving you a great opportunity to get a jump on your spring cleaning and help out in our community. Our annual clothing drive runs from January 24thFebruary 24th. Please bring in all your gently used clothing and shoes. The clothing will be donated to Wear It Out. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer to help please contact Crystal Green cowgirl_73@msn.com.

## READ AND LEAD IS HERE!

January 6th- March 17th


Race into reading! Pace yourself at 100 min utes per week and you'll reach the finish line of 1000 minutes by March.


100 minutes of reading aloud +100 minutes of being read to $=100$ Read and Lead "minutes"

Contact Tamara at stahancyktl@gmail.com with questions or to volunteer.

## SCIENCE FAIR INFO NIGHT <br> Tbursday, January 16th

Mark your calendars for a Science Fair Information Night which will be held on January 16 from $6-7 \mathrm{pm}$ in the gym. Come with any questions you might have regarding the Science Fair ."What is it, what is involved?" The Science Fair will be held on February 20 and includes "future scientists" projects along with local and community participation.

## Bev Rarey

Science Fair Coordinator

## REGISTER AND VOTE! Monday, January 13 th last day to register

BBallots arrive in your mailbox mid-January. We will be asked to vote on a new School Technology Levy and the renewal of an expiring School Programs and Operations Levy. If you are not registered to vote please take a few minutes to do so, then vote yes on Feb 11th! Levy dollars pay for $23 \%$ of the daily budget used in schools and is the funding we need to make EPSOC a K-8.

## If all BSD staff and parents vote yes it will pass easily!

Go to www.sos.wa.gov/elections/myvote/olvr.html to register online
Or visit your nearest library for more information

...Upcoming

> FEBRUARY Levy Vote Feb. 11th Science Night Feb. 20th

## Where to Earn Volunteer Hours this month:

- attend board meetings
- help count/organize clothing during clothing drive (cowgirl_73@msn. com)
- count minutes and move race cars for Read and Lead every Monday morning for any class (stahancyktl@gmail.com)
- help label and distribute Read and Lead prizes every week
- help plan Bingo Night (portugue.s@ghc.org)
- help with student store on Thursdays (ginasawyer@comcast.net)


## 2014/2015 PTA

## NOMINATIONS Its time to start thinking about the 2014/2015 PTA execu- tive board. All 4 posi-

 tions are open and will need to be filled with new people. Remember all offices can be held as co-positions!$$
\begin{array}{lr}
\text { President } & \text { Vice-President } \\
\text { Financial Officer } & \text { Secretary }
\end{array}
$$

Nominations will be taken at the March General Membership Meeting.

Questions?
christinelink@yahoo.com cowgirl_73@msn.com ginasawyer@comcast.net

## A MEDIUM SIZE HISTORY OF EPSOC

area. They brought horses, cows, pigs, and sheep to graze on the plain. The employees who tended the livestock lived here and settled the area but it was closed to new settlers.

After the Washington Territory purchased the land from PSAS in 1867 for $\$ 750,000$ (that's almost 13 million by today's standards), the area was officially opened to new settlers. The area grew and small settlements sprang up connected by wagon trails. The settlements undoubtedly had children and those children, just like our children, needed an education. They needed a school.

In 1892, 25 years after the land was purchased, and three years after Washington State was admitted to the union, Pierce County Commissioners created the Elk Plain School District. They built a two-room wooden schoolhouse on the site where our historical building exists today. This was the school's first $\overline{1}$ iteration. It was named Elk Plain School. Like many school districts in rural Pierce County at the time it was the only school in its district until the 1940's.

Planning meetings for the Bethany Lutheran Church were held by lamplight in the wooden schoolhouse as well as meetings of the Elk Plain Grange before it had its own building. In 1901 the recently demolished Elk Plain Café was built as an eatery and gas station with small cabins in back for travelers on their way to Mt. Rainier via horse or carriage on dirt roads. By pioneer standards, this was a busy corner.
In 1935 two more rooms were added to Elk Plain School by the Works Progress Administration (a job creation program created by the Roosevelt administration during the Great Depression) at a cost of $\$ 800$. Two short years later, in 1937, the wooden schoolhouse was torn down and the brick, historical building currently on our campus was built for $\$ 19,000$ with tax money and funds from the Public Works Administration (also a Roosevelt relief pro-- gram). This was the school's second iteration. 2 The building is now 86 years old and listed on the Pierce County Register of Historic Places. By 1949, there were "nearly 50 independent districts, some with only one school..." (see sidebar) in Pierce County. Ruth Bethel, the Pierce County Superintendent of Schools at the time, saw the inefficiencies of trying to serve these districts individually and took on the monumental task of consolidating them into fewer, larger districts. "The most difficult was district \#403." It was Ruth Bethel's persistence that eventually lead to merging Rocky Ridge, Elk Plain, Kapowsin, Roy and Spanaway school districts into the singular, sprawling district
we now call the (Ruth) Bethel School District. Elk Plain School then became Elk Plain Elementary. This was its third iteration. The BSD student $\overline{3}$ population was 1,154 . By 1990 it would be almost 10 times that size at 11,274 . It is currently 17,500.

Between 1949 and 1980 Elk Plain Elementary underwent 5 construction projects with a modern school building erected in 1953 and additions or updates done in 1960, 1965, 1979, and 1980. In 1989 the school was again slated for modernization but with three new schools built in the area (Rocky Ridge 1985, Graham 1988, and Camas Prairie 1988) and the already sparse neighborhood population aging out of elementary school, enrollment was dwindling. As Mrs. Park tells it, "The school was dying." What to do with Elk Plain Elementary became a conundrum that Don Berger, the new superintendent of Bethel Schools, inherited. So he "authorized the administration to engage in a study of the long-term utilization of Elk Plain Elementary."

Happening simultaneously in Olympia was the introduction of the Learning by Choice Law (passed in 1990) which introduced the concept of "choice" to Washington state public education. It states: "The legislature finds that academic achievement of Washington students can and should be improved. The legislature further finds that student success depends, in large part, on increased parental involvement in their children's education...In order to take another step toward improving education in Washington, it is the purpose of this act to enhance the ability of parents to exercise choice in where they prefer their children attend school..."

This change came at the tail end of the first bloom of "magnet" schools opening around the country in the 1980's. At the time, magnet school themes (arts, technology, college prep, etc.) were intended to "attract" students from a wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds district wide. This model gave parents and students more "choice" and control over their education based on interests and school success, not by address.

With all of this influencing the Elk Plain Study Committee, in December of 1989 they recommended three uses for the school. One of which, of course, was to house the district's first magnet school as it was referred to at the time. This answered so many questions of what to do with Elk Plain Elementary. It brought students back into the building, took advantage of the new freedoms afforded by the Learning by Choice Law, and began testing the benefits a magnet-style school within
the struggling Bethel School District.
Representatives from OSPI came in for school board meetings, visits were made to magnet schools around the country, feedback was solicited from teachers, parents, and advisors, and a special meeting of the school board was called. By August of 1990 the school board had appointed Carl Peterson (affectionately known as Mr. P to students and staff and for whom our Performing Arts Center is named after) planning principal. In March of 1991 he presented the board with a preliminary draft of the proposed school now called a "school of choice" and how it would be different from a traditional school.
Although certainly patterned after magnet schools EPSOC did not become an official magnet school. It became the simpler, more nimble "school of choice" or "choice school" simply meaning parents could choose (and continue to choose) to send their children there (or any school in the district) based on the Learning by Choice Law.
It just so happens that our school was designed around the proven benefits of an arts/science integration theme and received special permission to draw students from the entire district. It's a simple concept with huge benefits. In the Jan/Feb 1992 Bethel's Pride newsletter Mr. P defined a School of Choice (now capitalized) as having a "special focus and attracts students from all schools in the district. Our special focus is Science and Fine Arts".

In the summer of 1992 the 1953 building was torn down. The remaining brick buildings (including the historical building) were remodeled and a new main building was built. "A new entry, administration area, library and multipurpose area will tie the building together to make a more unified campus. The new area will also contain special areas unique to Elk Plain such as art/science lab, drama/ dance/music/photography/pottery areas, etc... All classrooms will be paired with common folding walls to allow flexibility and team teaching opportunities".

In the Fall of 1992, one hundred years after the wooden schoolhouse was built, the school reopened as the much anticipated Elk Plain School of Choice emphasizing the arts and sciences, using multi-age classrooms and accessing student learning through multiple intelligences. This $\boldsymbol{4}$ was our school's fourth iteration. Among the distinguished teachers and staff to populate this new school were Principal Carl Peterson, Beverly Hance, Mrs. Stickle (retired), Mrs. Coleman (retired), and Mrs. Beaudoin (retired). Mrs. Colyer joined in its second year and Mrs. Sherrod in its
third. In February of 1993, 6 months after the school opened, Mr. P returned to the school board reporting of the "many accomplishments and the high level of parent support and involvement".

For the most part EPSOC looks and feels the same as it did in its early years. Mrs. Hance recalls that "kids wanted to be here; their parents wanted them to be here." Kindergarten was full day, students had specialists every day, parents were required to volunteer, and teachers were excited and dedicated. From the beginning, team teaching was at the heart of it all. Mrs. Hance remembers, "Mr. P said it was fine to start the year on your own, but by January the room dividers needed to come down."

There were a few things that were different. The school opened with 376 students, P.E. happened 3 times a week, and Spanish was taught by a native speaking classroom teacher with the hopes of adding Japanese. First and second grades were multiage classrooms, as well as third and fourth, and fifth and sixth. There were plans for an Artist in Residence and parents had to submit a statement of purpose to be on the Site Council.

After Carl Peterson left in 1994, Paula Fascilla (now Bond) took over and eventually went on to open Bryant and Geiger Montessori Schools in the

Tacoma School District. Machelle Bielke was next, followed by Mike Merrin in 2005. His eight years is the longest principal tenure at EPSOC to date. He has served on the Partners in Education Washington Team and currently serves on the Partners in Education Advisory Board. EPSOC received a Gates Foundation grant spanning from 2004-2007 and earned a Kennedy Center School of Distinction award in 2012.

## \&

By passing the levy in February we can propel EPSOC into its fifth iteration as the first K-8 $\overline{\boldsymbol{F}}$ school in the Bethel School District. We would join the ranks of only two or three others in the South Sound area. At a recent PTA meeting Mrs. Sherrod noted that becoming a K-8 school has been the staff's dream since she began teaching here in 1994.
Hopefully people will take notice as they did when the school reopened as Elk Plain School of Choice. Reporters visited and even snapped a photo of families camping out under the shed one February morning to pre-register their children on a first-come-first-serve basis.

If we do attract some attention, at least now we are informed about the school's history. And more importantly we have an answer to the question: What exactly is a School of Choice? Maybe you'll give the stock answer, "It's like a magnet school, but different," and hand them this article. Or maybe you'll say, "It's a school I choose to send my child to because of its arts/science integration, mandatory parental involvement, high
standards, and school spirit."
Either way, make sure to walk them over to the old, front doorway of the historical building facing what used to be a busy corner one hundred years ago. Take a moment to breathe in its 86 years of history; each brick carefully laid by depression-era masonry workers. Imagine the demoted façade wondering where its old friend the Elk Plain Café is; why the post office is called Bethel Station, not Elk Plain; why no one uses it as a backdrop for class pictures anymore, and why no one uses its front doors as a threshold to an education anymore. Standing in front of the historical building, or studying it from your car in the parent pickup line, one can't help but be reminded, even as we look upon the school's next chapter, that it still has meaning.

## BETHEL SCHOOL DISTRICT

 \#403 an Illustrated History> Historical accounts of the making of the Bethel School District came from Bethel School District \#403, An Illustrated History written by retired Bethel Junior High School librarian Carol Neufeld in 1999. With first-person interviews, photographs and historical findings it gives a rare and comprehensive description of the areas and schools currently within the BSD from the 1850 s through 1999.

## PIERCE PRAIRIE POST \& THE POST OFEICE

All of the facts (and much of the wording) used to describe the early years of the Elk Plain area came from an article by Marianne Lincoln, managing editor of the Pierce Prairie Post, a blog serving all areas from Spanaway to Midland and out to McKenna. When I contacted her for permission to use the article she agreed and said she was also a graduate of Elk Plain Elementary (1969) and her children were in the first class of EPSOC in 1992! She also served on the BSD school board from 2009-2012.

Google "Elk Plain History" and her article is one of the first results. Also, search for her entry asking everyone to email the Postmaster General to have the Bethel Station Post Office renamed Elk Plain.

Riding instills balance, correct posture, focus, and confidence. Working with horses promotes trust, compassion and forgiveness. The end result: self esteem.

Based on Pony Club principles, activities include riding lessons, horse management and safety, stable management, grooming, games, and crafts.

## All levels welcome!

Chris Katzer
Owner

# ESPOC General Membership Meeting October 15th, 2013 

Meeting called to order at $2: 08 \mathrm{pm}$. Quorum: yes

Minutes were reviewed, Michelle Davis motioned to approve September minutes, Marilyn Fangman seconded. Minutes were voted on, approved and filed.

The budget was reviewed and filed.

## Principals Report:

- Kindergartens "Evening of the Arts" is this Thursday from 6-7:30.
- November 7th is the 4th grade Veterans Day Assembly. There will be a daytime and evening performance.
- Thank you to all of our Volunteers!

Committee Reports:

- We have 24 adults signed up for the "Love and Logic" class.
- The "Save Around" fundraiser is doing well. Orders forms are due on Monday 10/21.
- The Book Fair will run next week during Conferences. It will be held in the Gym. We could use some more volunteers for afternoon shifts. Please contact Kirsten Bowie.
- Fall Carnival planning is on track. We still need a couple table games. We will have a costume contest. The winner of each category will receive a free month of popcorn. If anyone would like to help out or could donate cornstalks, straw bales or pumpkins please contact Jennifer Grant.
- The Food Drive will be November 1st-22nd. We need volunteers to help count donations. There will be a pizza or ice cream party for the class that collects the most food.
- Holiday Shop will be in Room 10 this year.
- The November and December Newsletter will be combined. It would be a great opportunity for Committee chairs to send out "Thank you's" to their volunteers.
- The Reflections theme is "Believe, Dream, Inspire." Entries are due Nov. 18th.

New Business:

- Karla Moriarty made a Grant Request for money to throw a Pizza Party for the first class that turns in all of their Federal Forms. Georgina Park motioned to approve the grant. James Warnke seconded. Motion was voted on and approved.
- Christina Gries spoke about the program, "Honor Flight, One Last Mission" that gives veterans the opportunity to visit the WWII memorial in Washington DC. While the PTA wouldn't give money to the fund she wanted to see how we would feel about raising awareness of the program through emails or newsletters. Christine Link made a motion to approve the support of Honor Flight. Melissa Pate seconded. Motioned was voted on and approved with one "Nay".
- The PTA is in need of a larger storage unit. We currently have a $5 \times 10$ unit and would like to upgrade to a $10 \times 10$. This will cost an additional $\$ 558$ yearly. Staci Sherrod motioned to increase the budget for storage. Crystal Green seconded. Motion was voted on and approved.
- We have had sold 190 classroom Emergency Kits and need to add $\$ 350$ to the budget to buy more supplies to meet the demand. Melissa Pate motioned to add $\$ 350$ to the budget. Michelle Davis seconded. Motion was voted on and approved.
- Next general meeting will be November 26th at 6:30pm. Open Floor:
- We have 123 PTA members so far this year.


Child Care and Learning Center
Corrie Robbins Betty Goins

## ELK PLAIN SCHOOL OF CHOICE PTA

| OFFICHRS 2013-14 |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| President | Melissa Pate | (253)861-5226 | mpatenkl@gmail.com |
| President | Christina Gries | (253)221-3263 | gncgries@gmail.com |
| Vice President | Kendra Williamson | (253)847-4297 | kand3bees@hotmail.com |
| Treasurer | Naoko Geforos | (253)846-1044 | witnit@msn.com |
| Secretary | Michelle Davis | (253)537-3216 | closer919@msn.com |
| COMMTTHECHATRS |  |  |  |
| Beautification | Debbie Townsend-Schmidt | (253)843-0747 | rockola@q.com |
| Bingo Night | Sheila Portugue | (253)381-6954 | portugue.s@ghc.org |
| Book Fairs | Kirsten Bowie | (253)254-2949 | kirsten_bowie@yahoo.com |
| Box Tops and | Dione Savage \& | (253)375-7579 | dionesavage@gmail.com |
| Campbell's Soup Labels | Carrie Hughes | (253)312-9133 | starcarebear@yahoo.com |
| Fall Carnival | Jennifer Grant | (253)380-7400 | jgrant@bethelsd.org |
| Families in Need/Food Drive | Crystal Green | (253)875-8657 | cowgirl_73@msn.com |
| Family Fun Nights |  |  |  |
| Field Day | Gina Sawyer \& Lisa Beck | 253-686-8368 | ginasawyer@comcast.net |
| Fundraising | Stacy Legg | (858)204-8049 | stacylynn12925@yahoo.com |
| Golden Acorn | Debbie Townsend-Schmidt | (252)843-0747 | rockola@q.com |
| Holiday Shop | Bev Rarey | (253)847-4297 | bjrgrandma@aol.com |
| Laminating |  |  |  |
| Legislation | Stacy Legg |  | stacylynn12925@yahoo.com |
| Memberhsip | Noreen Kim | (253)875-1405 | kmakalanik@hotmail.com |
| Newsletter | Christine Link |  | christinelink@yahoo.com |
| Popcorn | Shannon Gregory | (253)227-1226 | epic@qwiknet.com |
| Programs/Assemblies | Georgina Park | (253)683-7900 | gpark@bethelsd.org |
| Proof Reading | Georgina Park | (253)683-7900 | gpark@bethelsd.org |
| Read \& Lead | Tamara Stahancyk | (253)376-8369 | stahancykt1@gmail.com |
| Reflections | Debbie Townsend-Schmidt | (253)843-0747 | rockola@q.com |
| Safety Committee | Naoko Geforos | (253)846-1044 | witnit@msn.com |
| School Pictures | Johanna Clark | (253)846-2965 | wannajd@live.com |
| Science Night | Bev Rarey |  | bjrgrandma@aol.com |
| Staff Appreciation | Elizabeth Custodio | (253)330-6582 | er_custodio@hotmail.com |
| Hospitality/Baking | Becky Ortega | (253)843-2129 | becca619@live.com |
| Student Store | Gina Sawyer | (253)686-8368 | ginasawyer@comcast.net |
| T-Shirts \& Logo Wear | Stacy Legg | (858)204-8049 | stacylynn12925@yahoo.com |
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