

Siuslaw Schools

ARTIST OF THE MONTH Billy Jones — Drama

BY BENJAMIN CAHOON
Siuslaw High School Student

It has been five years since drama was taught at Siuslaw High School. Then, Ed Mielke, who was a performing arts major in college, came to Siuslaw Middle School as a social studies teacher this year and has been given drama as his elective course. He also teaches Siuslaw High School students during seventh period.

Billy Jones, a senior at Siuslaw High School, has drama seventh period at the middle school.

"I love getting to spend the last period of my day with Mr. Mielke and the other students," he says.

Billy also describes the atmosphere of the classroom as "always very energetic and fun" with a lot of "laughing, smiling and lots of interacting."

His favorite part of the class is that "you get to meet and know all sorts of different students and interact with them in ways you wouldn't any other place."

He loves Mr. Mielke's teaching style and says it is "very relaxed yet pushing and helpful. He is always open to help you, no matter what it is. You can ask him and he will jump right to it."

Billy mentions how he learns a lot more things than just drama in Mielke's classes.

He says, "In drama class, you have to be so many different things and people, but before you can be any other character, you have to find your own character."

Aside from acting, Billy is a four-sport athlete, he leads worship at Florence Christian Church and he plays the piano and guitar. Son of Johnnie and Sandy Jones, Billy intends to



PHOTO BY CAROL JOLLEY

attend George Fox University and graduate with degrees in elementary school education and youth ministry. He wishes to settle down and find his own small community.

Billy says he would like to thank his "friends, family and the whole Florence community for all the support."

On May 22 and 23, there will be two one-act plays at the Siuslaw Middle School theater in the commons. The plays are "10 Ways to Survive a Zombie Apocalypse." One play will be performed by the middle school students, and the other play will be performed by the high school students.

Student attendance improves at SHS

Following is an excerpt from a letter sent home with students on March 13 from Siuslaw High School Principal Kerri Tatum:

By the end of March, our students will have had the opportunity to attend 126 days of school. As you know, we have pushed attendance hard this year. The link between attendance and graduation is clear. Thanks to the hard work of families, students and teachers, our school attendance is steadily improving.

Through the end of February last year, 218 students were attending school "regularly;" this means no more than six absences.

This year we have 246 stu-

dents attending "regularly."

That's 28 more students learning to write at high levels, investigating science and doing algebra or geometry.

Thank you for making attendance important. We can't do any of this without you.

On Thursday, May 7, during Pride and Lunch, we will be having a free barbecue for all staff and students to celebrate the gains we have made as a school in attendance this year. It's also Spring Spirit Week.

The menu will include a choice of either hamburger or hot dog, mac salad or potato salad, carrots sticks, watermelon, chips, punch, milk or water and a surprise dessert.

Auto Shop students to compete at state



SHS Auto Shop Program teacher Travis Blake with students Kyle Jones and Michael Hancock

The Auto Shop Program has been invited to take part in the Ford AAA Hands-on Challenge (state finals).

Schools are selected by receiving top scores on the state entrance exam that consists of all ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) standard questions.

For Siuslaw, two students, Kyle Jones and Michael

Hancock, qualified by receiving scores on the test in the top 10 percent of all Oregon schools.

These two students will spend many hours in the next month preparing for the finals on May 7 and 8 at Mount Hood Community College in Gresham. They will be one of 10 teams competing.

—Submitted by Kerri Tatum

MODULAR IN MOTION



PHOTO BY BONNIE COLE

Myson Soiseth and Kilian Smith spent much of Thursday morning, April 23, with their classmates watching their new kindergarten building at Siuslaw Elementary School being put into place. Head Start children have enjoyed watching bulldozers, dump trucks and cement mixers as the site next to their playground has been prepared for the new building that will house kindergarten in the fall.

School garden continues at elementary

Siuslaw Elementary is proud to announce the third year of our School Garden. We are particularly excited by the prospect of student-raised produce being made available in our cafeteria next year. Plans are currently underway for all 12 of the existing beds. We are also planning to add four additional beds.

The School Garden provides more than fresh fruits and vegetables for our students. It also provides opportunities for teachers to enhance curriculum with learning activities in the garden. The addition of a large composter this year allows us to complete the loop by recycling garden materials and potentially food waste from our cafeteria.



Siuslaw Elementary School is seeking donations from the community to expand its garden, potentially adding a greenhouse for large plants.

We have had tremendous community support for the garden. Florence Food Share,

Homegrown Public House, and the Real Food Co-op have all donated time, materials or

expertise in starting the garden.

We have had successful fundraising efforts and have received donated garden tools and gloves. Most recently, an anonymous donor contributed \$1,000.

Now we are looking to take our garden to the next level.

We would love to add a greenhouse large enough to house plant starts and serve as a learning space for students.

The cost of the greenhouse is well outside of instructional budget. However, we are registered with the "Seeds of Change" grant program, which included voting online for the project to win. Results will be announced at a later date.

—Submitted by Michael Harklerode, SES principal

Bands seek instruments

Siuslaw school bands will happily provide a good home for any unused trumpets, clarinets, trombones and flutes from the community.

Students are filling up Siuslaw Middle School's Beginning Band and are ready to learn — but they still need a

few more playable instruments.

Donations are tax-deductible and may be dropped off at Siuslaw Middle School, 2525 Oak St., during school hours (8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.). Call 541-991-1019 for more information.

School

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• Increasing awareness of opportunities for families to be involved in decision making and improvements at the school by highlighting ongoing volunteer committees and openings, and planning to add a suggestion box both at the school office and on the website;

• and strengthening partnerships with business and community organizations by identifying a school liaison as a one-stop-shop for community interactions in order to increase widespread communication outreach — including upcoming publication of a PTA Report to the Community, and planning for a Junior Ambassador program allowing students to regularly present school updates, lead the Pledge of Allegiance and assist civic groups.

All of these efforts work together to eliminate barriers and open up new ways for families to support students through increased engagement.

•PTA and community vol-

unteers, along with our school staff, are making a positive impact on student success," said Mike Harklerode, principal at Siuslaw Elementary School. "The School of Excellence program is a terrific example of what can be accomplished when schools and families work together."

Florence Community PTA will redistribute the survey to school families within the next month to measure improvements in engagement.

"We want to encourage our school families to complete the survey," said Monica Cape-Lindelin, Florence PTA president. "This feedback is important to the school and the community. And we really hope the steps we've taken will lead to Siuslaw Elementary being recognized as a School of Excellence."

PTA volunteers will analyze survey results and submit a summary report to the National PTA office by Monday, June 1.

Notification of School of Excellence awards will occur in August.

For more information, visit www.florencepta.org.