

SCHOOL ZONE

A Monthly Newsletter for the Siuslaw and Mapleton Schools and Florence Community PTA

SMS 8th-graders to visit Ellis Island at FEC Monday

SEAcost brings "The New American" to 3 shows

Thanks to an arrangement with SEAcost Entertainment Association, Siuslaw Middle School students will experience a live performance about immigration in the early 20th century, titled "The New American," by Rachel Atkins of Living Voices.



COURTESY PHOTO

Rachel Atkins as Bridget Fitzgerald in "The New American"

Three performances are scheduled to accommodate all the students.

Living Voices is a non-profit educational group that presents solo performers and integrates audience interaction to teach history. Oftentimes they use archival film as their stage's backdrop.

SEAcost is the Florence-area nonprofit that brings high-caliber arts and entertainment to the Florence Events Center and contracts with entertainers to do community outreach for schools and senior living communities.

"For me, working with Living Voices is one of the high points for our concert season. They are bringing a dramatic, artistic element to enhance the students' year-long studies about immigration," said Rachel Pearson, SEA's education outreach coordinator.

"They turn history into a moving, personal journey to help young audiences understand and access the past," said Pearson. "The project will further the students' studies this year on the history of immigration, and allow for an informed discussion and comparison of historical immigration to the issues of immigration today."

This will be the second year Living Voices has come to Siuslaw Middle School to augment its history curriculum.

"The New American" is an imaginative story beginning in 1912 rural Ireland, where students meet Bridget Rose Fitzgerald. The Fitzgeralds barely manage to hold onto their farm in bad times.

Her father sends Bridget to America in hopes she will be able to send back enough money to save their home.

Bridget is placed in steerage on a steamship headed for New York. At Ellis Island, she is tagged and numbered along with thousands of immigrants crammed into a huge, noisy facility.

After a barrage of tests and a long list of confusing and embarrassing questions, Bridget is passed through and taken to Manhattan where she begins work at a sweatshop.

After many challenges, and after studying and passing the citizenship exam, Bridget fully embraces her new homeland.

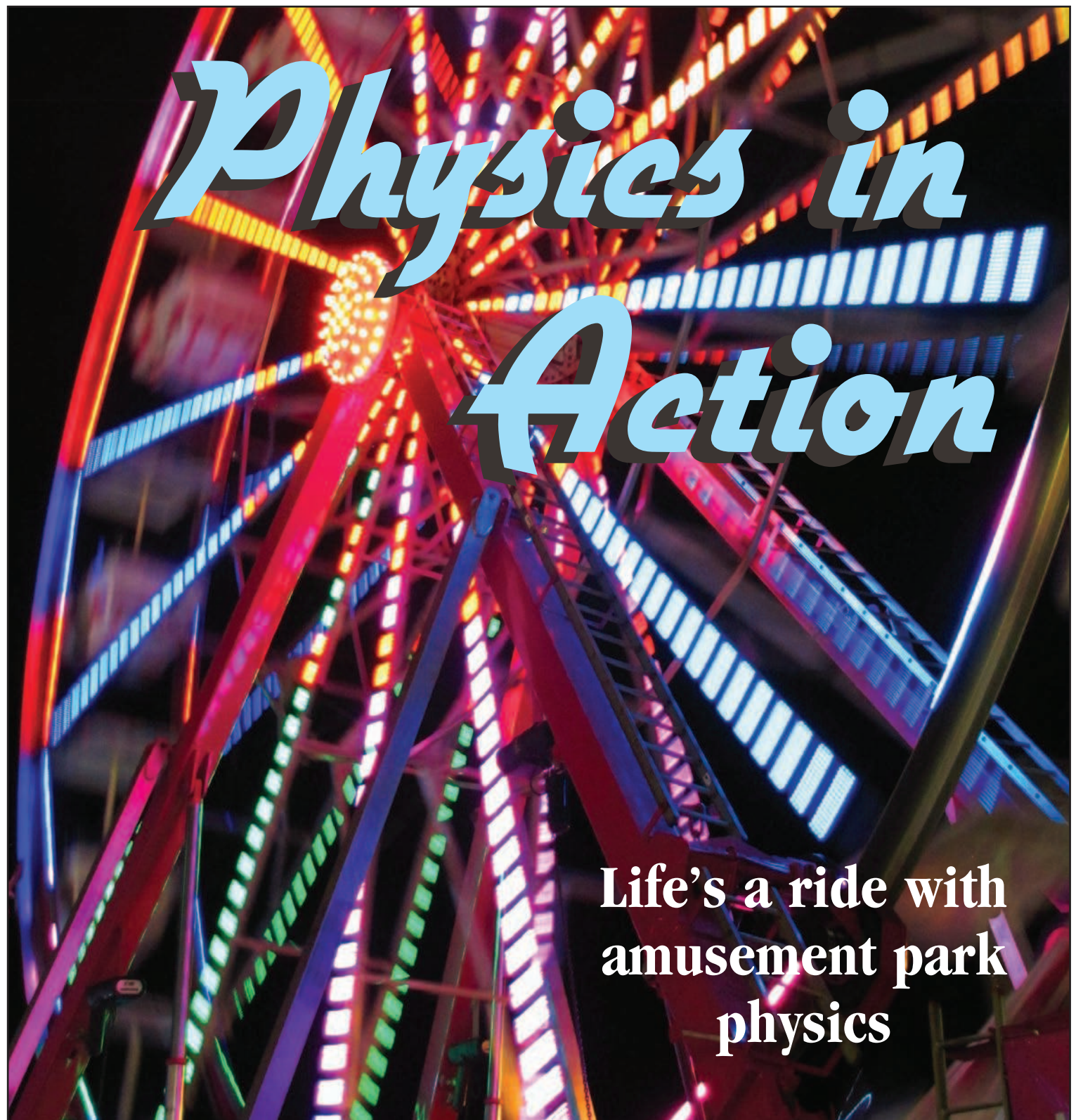
Through it all, students will learn what American liberty and opportunity mean to people around the world.

"During the production, students will become so engaged in the dramatic telling of Bridget's personal story, they won't realize all the lessons they're absorbing about history, cultural differences, character development and the immigration process," says Pearson.

Eighth-grade social studies teacher Heather Wiggins was provided a teacher's guide for pre- and post-performance instruction to assist students in gaining a greater understanding of the process of immigration and assimilation of the early 20th century, and then to draw parallels between then and now.

Included are hands-on activities to reinforce new concepts through a mix of writing, art, presentation, and discussion on topics emanating from the presentation.

For more information about SEAcost Entertainment Association and the remaining performances of their 2015-2016 concert series, visit www.SeacostEA.org.



Life's a ride with amusement park physics

Science students research Laws of Motion



SIUSLAW NEWS FILE PHOTOS

Teens ride the Pharaoh's Fury at a recent Rhododendron Festival, where Newton's Laws of Motion reign supreme.

What do bumper cars, Pharaoh's Fury and roller coasters have in common? Physics! And, of course, they can all be found at amusement parks.

Eighth grade science students recently finished up a unit where they applied their understanding of Newton's Laws of Motion and the energy of motion through a variety of amusement park ride simulations.

First, students simulated pendulum rides, like Pharaoh's Fury, which many have ridden during Rhody Days' carnivals.

Students performed two different tests on pendulums. One was to determine whether or not string length made a difference on how fast a pendulum swings. The other was to determine whether or not

additional mass made a difference on how fast a pendulum swings.

Students concluded a shorter string (or rod) makes the pendulum swing faster, but that adding mass to the pendulum string did not have an effect on the pendulum's swings.

Next, students simulated bumper car rides by causing marble collisions at varying speeds and angles.

Students demonstrated the conservation of momentum by transferring momentum from one marble to another much like bumper cars bumping into each other.

They observed how the marbles moved when hit at different angles and inferred how their bodies might move if they were in a bumper car collision.

Finally, students used the concepts of kinetic and potential energy to create marble run roller coasters.



COURTESY PHOTO

Alexis Wells' eighth grade students create roller coasters during a lesson on amusement park physics.

Students designed their roller coasters to include an initial hill, a loop and additional hill, while ensuring that their marble made it all the way to the end of the track.

Students made tracks using half pieces of foam pipe insulation, which easily twisted and bent to form loops and hills.

Some students added additional loops and even created gaps where their marble jumped from one

piece of track to another.

Students realized during the design and test phase that the initial hill had to be the very tallest in order for the marble to have enough potential energy to make it along the entire length of the track.

While we couldn't take a field trip to an amusement park, students can't wait for the Rhody Days carnival to see more physics in action. —Submitted by Alexis Wells