

At a summer camp, children get to hear lessons on Chinook history and culture

Junior naturalists at the wildlife center

By ALEXIS WEISEND
The Astorian

Don Abing, of the Chinook Indian Nation, tapped his chin so the children would remember to pronounce “Chinook” with a “chin” and not a “shin.”

He told them that Chinook people used Oregon ash trees for canoe paddles, never hunted spiritually important brown or white pelicans, fashioned tools out of elk and deer bones and kept dogs as pets.

Abing’s lessons on Chinook history and culture were part of a junior naturalist summer camp for third-through-fifth graders at the Wildlife Center of the North Coast.

“They’re our neighbors ...,” he said of the children. “We need to make sure that our original culture, as well as our contemporary culture, is knowledge that is shared so that there would be peace and cooperation and understanding of values.”

Abing explained the Chinook Nation’s connection to nature and how they cared for the land for thousands of years.

“The Chinook Indian Nation were, for millennia, the original caretakers and stewards of the soil you are now sitting on ... of the trail you just came from, of the air you’re just now breathing,” he said.

He advised the children



Don Abing, of the Chinook Indian Nation, talks with children at a summer camp at the Wildlife Center of the North Coast.

Alexis Weisend

to leave no trace where they walk. He said after the Chinook would hunt and gather, the last people to leave would look to make sure the trail was not disturbed.

Abing also shared the Chinook Nation’s effort to restore federal recognition, which would give the roughly 3,000 members access to federal programs and resources. He asked the children to speak to their parents and gave them a link to a petition, which they scribbled down in their notebooks.

The Chinook were recognized by the federal government in 2001 at the end of the Clinton administration,

but the status was rescinded under the George W. Bush administration in 2002.

“Our lands were taken away from us, our resources were taken away from us,” Abing said. “That’s one reason why I shared that website with you.”

Abing brought a book that translates English to Chinuk Wawa, the Chinook language, to show the children the language is not dead despite few people speaking it.

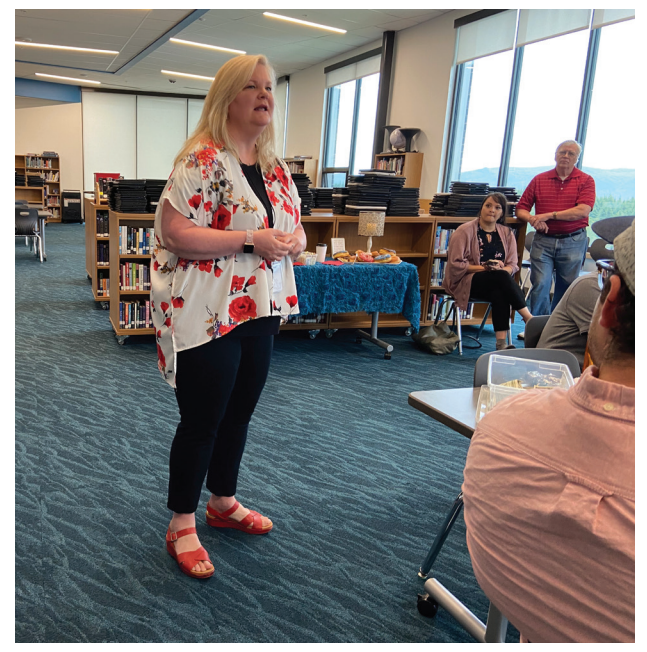
Wesley Maier, one of the campers, said he can relate to some of what Abing said about the Chinook Nation because he is Navajo. He said he feels sad that

there aren’t many people who speak Chinuk Wawa because he worries the Navajo language is dying.

He liked hearing about how the Chinook do not hunt pelicans, because it reminds him of his own culture, where he cannot touch or look at snakes to avoid an evil spirit and bad luck.

Another boy told Abing his parents said he is part Native American, but he didn’t know where exactly he was from.

“It’s important that you reach out and find that identity, keep that identity and be proud of that identity because it has a connection,” Abing said.



R.J. Marx

Susan Penrod addresses members of the Seaside Chamber of Commerce at the high school library.

School: A three-week summer school starts this month, down from six weeks last year

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may receive “hot spot” wireless connections to enable online use. A small number of students — three or four families — have no internet access at all.

A three-week summer school starts this month, down from six weeks last year.

“Last year, we received about twice the funding from the state that we have this year,” Penrod said. “So we ran two, three-week programs. But this year, we’re still able to run a really robust program. For K-8, it’s a little bit more of an enrichment program and for our high schoolers, it’s an opportunity to recoup lost credits.”

The kindergarten-through-eighth grade program runs from Aug. 1 to Aug. 19 with no on-campus learning Fridays, said Sarah Shields, the assistant superintendent of curriculum. Lunch and transportation will be provided. About 125 students are signed up.

The high school program runs Aug. 1 to Aug. 26 with no on-campus learning Fridays. Transportation and lunch are also

provided.

About 50 high schoolers are enrolled, including students who will be taking the credit recovery independent class.

Penrod guided members of the Seaside Chamber of Commerce through the high school and middle school at the chamber’s July 13 morning meeting. District enrollment fluctuates from between 1,550 and 1,600 students, she said, with Pacific Ridge Elementary School, the middle school and high school and the Cannon Beach Academy, a charter school with 40 to 45 students.

The district’s geographic area stretches from Cullaby Lake in the north to Arch Cape in the south.

Penrod’s first two years as superintendent came with a new campus and remote learning as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Along with students, the new campus has brought some other surprises, Shields said, from a bobcat to swarms of caterpillars on the driveway.

“You want to see the world’s largest collection of caterpillars?” she said. “Come up here.”

Chalk art: Artists to show off their skills on the Prom

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Friday at the Sunset Recreation Center. Portland artists and art educators Bev Cordova and May Wallace will teach contestants how to create chalk art using pastels.

They instruct newbies who haven’t used pastels and also give advice to those already familiar with the medium. The idea is to make the contest accessible to participants of varying ages and skill levels. Last year, among the 21 contestants, the youngest was 5 years old and the oldest was in their 80s.

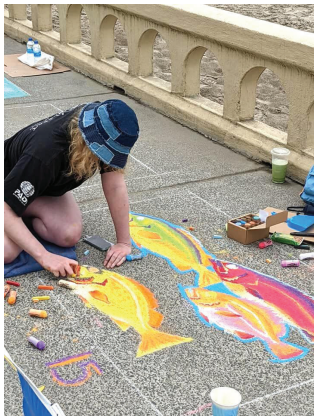
“We had quite the range,” Ousley said. “You don’t have to be this incredibly accomplished artist to do it.”

During the class, contestants can develop a mockup of their artwork and practice on the sidewalk outside the recreation center. They will then transpose their ideas onto the hard-surfaced Prom on Saturday morning, followed by judging and an awards ceremony in the afternoon.

The panel of judges includes City Councilor Steve Wright; Katie McCloud, interim CEO of the Seaside Chamber of Commerce; and Ken Heman, with the Seaside Visitors Bureau and Seaside Downtown Development Association.

They will select a winner in each of the categories, which include best representation of the Prom; best representation of marine life; best representation of the spirit of Seaside; best kid entry; and best adult entry. During the day, organizers also will collect votes from passersby for the People’s Choice award.

“Our idea is just to make it fun, make it accessible and something everybody can enjoy,” Ousley said. “The mission of Sunset Empire is to extend these opportunities for recreational programming to anybody in the community. For us to be able to



2021 contestant Kelsey Potter works on her creation on the Prom. She was recognized for Best Representation of Marine Life.



Portland artist and educator Bev Cordova instructs contestants during last year’s class held in conjunction with the Chalk Art Contest.

interested in participating can register at sunsetempire.com or call 503-738-3311.

Through a grant from the Juan Young Trust, the recre-

ation district was able to purchase supplies for the artists and fund the class and contest. The grant will cover the 2023 event as well.

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