

The Bitney Express

February 2009

Newsletter of Bitney College Prep High School
11763 Ridge Road, Grass Valley CA 95945 (530) 477-1235 Fax (530)272-1091 www.bitneyprep.net
Bitney College Prep High School is now located next to Nevada Union High School campus!



From Our Editor

Happy New Year Nevada County Parents and Students! At New Year's I always think of fresh starts. With that in mind now is a great time to look at the year ahead. For 8th graders who are wondering which high school to go to, or current highschoolers who want a more personalized education, Bitney is a wonderful option. This issue includes a piece with Bitney facts you may not know. Be sure to also read about our Third Annual BrainBuster Challenge which is sure to be a blast! Once again we have creative writing from some of our talented students. Don't forget to check our Calendar for Upcoming Events. Enjoy!
Shana Lee Parker, editor

Get Ready for the Brain Buster Challenge!

On February 7, 2009, Bitney College Prep High School will hold our Third Annual Brain Buster Challenge. Brain Buster Challenge brings together ten teams of eighth-grade students from middle schools throughout the county to compete in various challenging activities. Past participating students have reported having a great time feeling proud of their efforts at this fun and mentally challenging event.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the event is to create a competition with community-wide appeal where teams of 8th grade students from local schools have an opportunity to showcase their skills, knowledge, and spirit. Success at this event involves sportsmanship and teamwork as well as knowledge in the areas of core 8th grade subjects (mathematics, English, science, history, the United States Constitution, geography, and current events), as well as other subjects (art, music, pop culture, problem-solving, technology, and food).

TEAMS

Each team consists of five students from participating middle schools. Like any spectator event, there is no limit to the number of supporters that can participate in the festivities. Teams are encouraged to create and wear costumes, compose cheers or team songs, and provide a team mascot. Schools will be recognized for their creativity and sportsmanship. The teacher representative will be provided with sample questions. Bitney students and a faculty member will come to the school for an orientation and practice session several weeks before the event.

ATMOSPHERE

All the teams, advisors, and supporters will gather for a welcome orientation and Round One of the Challenge. Rounds Two through Seven will take place in smaller groups in the classrooms. Round Eight brings everyone back together for the final questions, announcement of the results and presentation of awards. Challenges will range in format from paper and pencil questions to group problem solving to physical tests. A Bitney student will mentor each team.

GRAND PRIZE

The grand prize—an engraved trophy—will be awarded to the team that accumulates the most points during the event. The prize will be presented by the Superintendent of Schools Holly Hermansen. The winning school will have the honor of displaying the trophy until the following year's event at which time they will be invited to compete again.

OTHER PRIZES

Currently, Bitney parent volunteers are seeking donations from various community businesses so that all participants leave with a gift bag consisting of items such as movie and bowling passes and gift certificates. A plaque will also be awarded to the team exhibiting the all around best creativity and sportsmanship.



Call Bitney College Prep
for more information, at 477-1235.

Bitney College Prep: A Great Option

By Erinn Ramirez, junior

To the new coming freshmen, high school is just around the corner. I know that right now it still seems far away, but trust me, time will only pass too quickly these next few months. A lot of new incoming freshmen have plans to attend Nevada Union. Now don't get me wrong, it's a great school, but it's not for everyone. You have several options for attending different schools in this area. Let Bitney College Prep High School be one of them.

I am a junior attending Bitney, and this is my first year attending Bitney. My freshman and sophomore years I went to Nevada Union. The main difference between the two schools is the size. There is close to three thousand students at Nevada Union. While at Bitney there are around eighty students. At Bitney you know everyone, and you get to know teachers on a personal level. Class size is another big difference. At Nevada Union a small class is around thirty, but most of the time you have more than that. At Bitney you never have more than 20 students.

Another great thing about Bitney is that everyone there is friendly toward each other, and you don't have any of the cliques that form in larger schools. I can go to any group of kids at Bitney and be welcome with them. Just because we are a smaller school doesn't mean we don't have the same activities of larger schools. We have two sports, Ultimate Frisbee and soccer, as well as off-campus fencing classes. We also have dances and a prom which everyone is invited to, not just the juniors and seniors. Bitney also offers Drivers Education for free, while the program is now no longer offered at Nevada Union.

Another large part of Bitney is Wilderness Week. Wilderness Week is in September; during this time the entire school takes off a few days and heads to the wilderness. There are several trips to choose from. This year there was backpacking, kayaking, rock climbing, biking in Tahoe, and for those who don't particularly like the wilderness there is a trip to San Francisco. Wilderness Week is a great way to get to know people who share the same interests as you.

There are lots of reasons to come to Bitney. Here we all know each other and care about each other, teachers become your friends, classes are small, and we all accept each other. At Bitney you'll meet people and have experiences that you'll never forget.

From Our Parent Council Chair, Shari Phillips

Hello Bitney Parents--

As a parent of a senior, I can assure you that your child's high school years will pass faster than you can imagine... Unlike large high schools, Bitney provides parents with opportunities to share experiences with their children...experiences that will build wonderful and lasting memories for your family to reflect upon for years to come. I encourage you to become as involved in your child's high school years as you can be.

Vacancies in Parent/Charter Councils See articles on pages 4,5

* Opportunities are available for parents to serve as **Parent Council Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary** for the 2009/10 school year. There is also an opening for an additional **Parent Representative** to serve on the Charter Council for the 2009/10 school year.

* We currently have a great opportunity for a **Vice-Chair** to serve on Parent Council-I'm eager to pass on what I have learned this year to next year's chair!

See you at the **All-School Meeting** Thurs., **February 5 @ 6:30pm**, following PC meeting at 6pm. Attend both!

Shari :-)

We will be planning great things for the coming year. Please, **mark your calendar**, as it is important that you be there--it's our school!

--DP, Newsletter Production

Support Bitney College Prep!

To do your part, please:

- **Continue to send in your pledges**
- **Use SPD and BriarPatch coupons and register your Safeway and Raleys club cards. Turn in SaveMart receipts to the school, &/or use their SHARES Card.** We have the ability to generate \$2,000 - \$3,000 if the entire Bitney community participates in this free and easy fundraising effort. Please contact Lisa Hooper @ 272-1182 if you need SPD or BriarPatch coupons or have any questions about registering and using your cards.
- Also when shopping on-line: **Sign up with SchoolPop through www.onecause.com/schoolpop**, choose the merchant, and then shop as usual. **Your efforts make a real difference!**

From the Dean's Desk:

By Dave Peterson,
Dean of Academic Affairs

Friday, January 16th was Heather Lee's last day. Heather has been completing her school counseling internship hours for the State of California Pupil Personnel Services Credential with Bitney. While an internship is primarily about learning on an actual jobsite, Heather has contributed in many ways for our school and our students. In addition to being a part of enrollment interviews, student/parent meetings and scheduling matters, Heather has been key in helping us get our student software in order and meeting with seniors to finalize graduation plans. Thanks, Heather, for being a part of our community and we wish you the best.

Calendar

Jan. 30 6:30-10:30 pm	All-School Dance
Feb. 5 6 pm 6:30pm	Parent Council Mtg, All-School Planning Mtg.
Feb 7 2009 12:30p-4:30pm	Third Annual Brain Buster Challenge Nevada County 7 th /8 th graders invited to participate & showcase their skills, knowledge & team spirit.
Feb. 25: 6:30pm - 7:30pm	Information Evening Students, faculty present: Find out why Bitney shines!
March 9	Staff Appreciation Lunch
March 14	Talent Show at Oddfellows Hall
March 19-20	Community Building Activities
April 20	Snow Day cancelled School is in session
May 5-8	STAR Testing Breakfast
May	Roadside Clean-up Date/time TBD
June 5	Graduation
July 4	Nevada City July 4 Parade
July	Roadside Clean-up

Bitney Facts

By Shana Parker, parent, and Michael Freedman, Instructor

Okay, I admit it. I am totally biased when it comes to Bitney. I love how available the staff and administration are. I love that I've heard absolutely no complaints from my son about bullies or feeling excluded. Most of all, I love that my fourteen year old loves it too. He feels happy, supported and challenged yet confident about his studies.

Enough with the subjective stuff, here are some facts for anyone considering Bitney High School.

BitneyPrep is a free public high school where students are known, respected, and educated.

--Bitney is in its tenth year of operation; our students have earned the highest test scores in Nevada County in six of the last eight years.

--Bitney has events and activities you would find in a "big" school like dances, a prom, and school wide spirit days.

--You'll make friends in our fun, safe, and supportive environment to last a lifetime.

--Small class sizes allow all students' needs and interests to be met by highly qualified teachers; over half have advanced degrees.

--Daily study hall allows you to get work done at school with support from accredited teachers.

--Bitney is WASC accredited and one of the first high schools to be certified by the California Charter Schools Association.

--Our courses are CSU/UC a-g approved - over 70% of Bitney graduates go to college following high school.

--Students may take courses from Sierra College and have access to the county's ROP programs.

--Community professionals teach electives such as drama, web design, and athletics like Ultimate Frisbee.

So now that you've got the facts in addition to a personal testimonial, think about Bitney College Prep High School for your son or daughter. I'm so glad that I did.



My Name

By Cassie Pellerin

In Greek my name means prophetess. It's like the number 12, a cold winter's eve before Christmas. A deep red. Passionate and powerful. It is the song "Carol of the Bells" by David Foster, a cold winter scene. It is close to the prophetess' name Cassandra. My name is like a rare fine silk, something soft and breathable yet slips from your hands easily.

Devaun Matthew, Adam James, what many delightful names for a boy. Devaun Matthew, sweet at heart and reckless in soul. Adam James, a boy of the winds, you can chase him but he will never be caught.

There is always the need for a girl's name, my desire if to name a child, would be Alice Matrica, she could be beautiful and tiny, like a small purple flower, the first of spring.

Siyu or Matrica, one soft and slippery like wet sand, the other thick and deadly like lava. These names are nice but only one is for me. Yes, Cassandra will do.

Katelyn

By Katelyn Williams

My name will grab your tongue on the first syllable, and let it go on the next. Katelyn. It means pure, it is clear as the blue sky, as the blue ocean. A clean sapphire, my birthstone. Pure. Pure as a soft love song.

My mother gave it to me, the first gift I ever received. It was a beautiful name. A unique name, even. As I grew older, it turned common, dull, not pure in the least. My first gift was no longer special, it was dying.

I then wished for a different name, one that not so many people had, one I could call my own! I knew I could not simply trade it in for shiny new one. No! I had to live with this one.

But I then realized it. My name was pure. Just look at water. All over the place, and yet so pure. I may know a lot of people with a similar name, but this name Katelyn is mine. No one else's. I could call it mine. My own. My gift. I hold it dear to me, although some call me Katey, a shorter name that people use when they chop my gift in half.

When people say my name, the T grabs onto their tongues. They wait second for the L to let it go, and from there it flows until the N stops it and it's done. A lot of people call me Kate, trying to avoid the trouble and limit themselves to one simple sound. But my name is not one simple sound. It is two beautiful sounds. It is not that hard to say. However, you may call me Katey if your tongue is too weak to say the whole thing. Katelyn.

If I had a child, I would give him or her a gift with similar qualities. It would be more unique, however. Perhaps a name that echoes through your head after you say it.

A name that makes you think.

This Is Just To Say

By Athena Knowles, freshman

This is just to say
I have stolen your heart
That was laying in the sun

And which
You were probably keeping
For someone else

Forgive me
It was lovely
So warm
And so free



artwork by Dominique Parducci

Don't Stereotype Me!

By Nick Tippner, freshman

Just because I'm a teen
I'm not a slacker
I'm not asleep in class
I'm not skipping school

Just because I'm a teen
I don't smoke pot or anything at all
I'm not high
I don't skateboard
And I don't say dude all the time

Just because I'm a teen
I'm not drunk
I don't do drugs
I don't play M-rated videogames all day long

Just because I'm a teen
It doesn't mean that you are smarter than me
Kinder than me
Prettier than me
Or even as well-read as me

Just because I'm a teen
Why should it matter, anyway?
What is youth?
What is life without youth?
Just because I'm a teen

Don't Stereotype Me!

Parent Council Vice-Chair: Currently Open

The Vice-Chair executes the duties of the Chair in his or her absence. Duties include presiding over meetings when Chair is absent and assisting the Chair with coordination of fundraising efforts and parent outreach efforts. For purposes of continuity and ease of transition, it is important for next year's Chair to fill the Vice-Chair post as soon as possible.

Filling the following Parent Council Vacancies for the 2009/10 school year before the April Parent Council meeting would help ensure a smooth transition:

Parent Council Chair

Presides over meetings, acts as liaison between Parent Council and Charter Council, oversees Parent Council committees, and reports Parent Council's plans for fundraisers and outreach to the Administration.

The functions and duties of this post are intended to be shared with the vice-chair. While this position does require an investment of time and energy, more importantly, it provides great opportunity to connect with other parents, the administration, faculty and students. Serving as Parent Council Chair will be a very rewarding experience. I, Shari Phillips, will happily continue to serve as a parent representative on Charter Council and will be available to assist with fundraisers and provide general support to next year's chair in an effort to ensure the smoothest possible transition into this position.

Parent Council Vice-Chair

The vice-chair executes the duties of the Chair in his or her absence. Duties include presiding over meetings when Chair is absent, assisting the Chair with coordination of fundraising and outreach efforts.

Parent Council Secretary

The secretary takes minutes for all parent council regular and special meetings, and he or she maintains records pertaining to membership.

Charter Council Parent Representative

Charter Council is the acting school board of Bitney College Prep High School and is comprised of three parents, two faculty members, one student and one alternate student, two community members and the Dean of Academic Affairs. The Charter Council Parent Representative reflects the interests of the parent body with regard to decisions pertaining to curriculum, administrator review, employment issues, budgetary matters, and all other considerations brought before the Council.

Please contact Shari Phillips at 265-6290 for questions about volunteering in any of these capacities!

A Personal View:
Serving on Parent Council

By Shari Phillips, Parent Council Chair,
PC Rep for Charter Council

When my son began attending Bitney in his freshman year, I was certain that the small school setting and supportive community was just what he needed in order to thrive. I had always been very involved in the schools that both of my children had attended, and had in fact started the Parent Teacher Council at the elementary charter school my son attended years prior. But now my eldest was in high school and like many parents, I initially thought that during the high school years, parents should step back some and allow their children independence and room to grow.

At the first Back to School Night I attended, I chatted with the teachers about my son, and I realized how connected they were to him, how well they already knew him and how much they appreciated his unique and wonderful attributes. My child's teachers saw in him not only the qualities I observed, but also qualities I hadn't yet discovered. Because of them, I saw my son through opened eyes. I knew at that moment that my son's experience at Bitney would be very rewarding and memorable, as I had certainly never witnessed that level of dedication from teachers at any other school he had attended.

At the end of my son's freshman year, I attended an all school meeting where I met many other parents who also cared deeply about the education their children were receiving at Bitney. In attending Charter Council meetings, I found faculty and community members who were incredibly dedicated to making a difference in the lives of the students at Bitney. Having had experience with charter schools in the past, I knew parent participation was crucial to the viability of the school, and I came to realize that being more involved in my child's high school and contributing more would not detract from his experience, it would instead enrich his high school experience.

I had certainly never witnessed that level of dedication from teachers at any other school he had attended.

As I became more involved in Parent Council and attended Charter Council meetings, I got to know many of the faculty members and the administration and became very aware of the personal sacrifices they had all been making (for nearly a decade) to ensure that Bitney was a place where students felt safe, appreciated, known, respected and educated. These individuals were giving so much of themselves to our children, and my child was reaping the benefits of their hard work. With the intent of making my own contribution to Bitney, I volunteered to serve as Parent Council Chair and Charter

Council Parent Representative. What I have received in return is immeasurable. Working with others at Bitney to ensure that students continue to receive the educational experience of a lifetime has been one of the most rewarding experiences in my life. I'm thankful for the opportunities I have had to get to know the students while volunteering at Bitney, as these very bright, creative, insightful, passionate and thoughtful young adults have made a significant impact on my life.

As my son prepares to graduate this year, I am grateful for the education that he and I both have received at Bitney. I feel privileged to have been part of Bitney for the past four years, and I am very proud of what our community has accomplished. I look forward to serving on Charter Council next year and remaining involved in Bitney for many years to come.

Shari Phillips ☺

Charter Council: 8 Years Later

By Lora Willis, Parent Rep to Charter Council,
Charter Council Secretary

As I was writing, I remembered why I got involved in the first place and how much more I got back than my original reason for going to the first parent meeting. My oldest was a freshman and Wilderness Week was underway. I was very unhappy with the way it was being run and was ranting and raving about writing a complaint letter one night at dinner. Then I stopped and listened to myself and realized this was not how I wanted to teach my kids to resolve issues, so I went to a Parent Council meeting to help with Wilderness Week and I'm still going 8 years later.

My work with Bitney gave me a connection and line of communication with my boys that strengthened our relationship during their turbulent teen years.

I have served on Charter Council for the last 7 years as the Secretary. I have served on Parent Council in one capacity or another for the last 8 years. I have enjoyed having a say in how the school operates and doing what I can to help Bitney remain viable for the future. This council took a hard look at our graduation requirements and meeting the needs of our college bound students without excluding those who are served by Bitney but are not necessarily college bound, and made the necessary (and sometimes hard) changes. I feel we have done a good job creating an environment which meets the mission of the school given our limited budget. One of our greatest accomplishments (along with help from the staff) was obtaining WASC accreditation, with high accolades.

Bitney was the first time I was involved in my children's education beyond homework and cupcakes. Learning how a school is run has helped me meet the educational needs of all my children, especially those not currently at Bitney. Getting to know and listening to the needs of our faculty has been very educational - what an interesting group of people! Seeing first hand the dedication of all those involved, many with personal sacrifice, has humbled me.

Working with the entire Bitney community has allowed me to get to know a wide variety of people, some of whom I am a better person for knowing. I was able to stay connected to my teenage boys through my work with their school and by getting to know the families of their friends. My favorite memory is from a few years ago - I was at the school for some reason or another and my then Sophomore son saw me from across the lawn and came running over and gave me a hug! How many teenage boys would be comfortable doing that at high school? Mine are never embarrassed when they see me at school and usually come over to talk. My oldest always said Bitney was a place where he could be smart and cool. As a parent, I loved that. My work with Bitney gave me a connection and line of communication with my boys that strengthened our relationship during their turbulent teen years.

I can't sugar coat it: sometimes it feels like a lot of WORK, yet it is always worth it. I hope the new parents serving our community on either council enjoy the work as much as I have and that it helps them with the difficult job of staying connected, and letting go, of their young adults. I plan to stay connected by working on the Foundation. Remember, I have a ten year old who wants to attend Bitney.

Lora Willis

Want to help, but don't have a lot of time?

Serving as secretary of the Parent Council (for two years!) has given me a chance to serve my son's school without over-commitment. Every group needs a secretary, and most people just hate taking minutes. But it's really easy if you have a laptop computer. I go to the meetings, start with the president's agenda (saved on my Desktop from an email), fill in what happens, and then e-mail the minutes to the president after I get home that evening. Voilà, you're done! I have always been someone who likes to be involved and help make things work, especially in the area of communications, and in a school of this size, it's vital that parents get involved, otherwise the school couldn't exist. It's also a wonderful way to meet some of the other parents and teachers. Feel free to give me a call if you have any questions about what's involved in being Secretary. Call 271-1311.

Susan Rogers, Parent Council Secretary

From Our Website

<http://www.bitneyprep.net/why.html>

Why Bitney College Prep High School?

Students are Known.

Because enrollment is limited, classes are small. Teachers are able to closely monitor the needs, interests, and progress of each student, offering guidance and support along the way.

Students are Respected.

At BCP, the prevailing attitude is one of mutual respect.

We recognize the richness and diversity of ideas, attitudes, and backgrounds students bring to our school.

Students are challenged to respect themselves and others.
Students are Educated.

We graduate students who

- * are aware of themselves and the world around them,
- * are skilled in the latest communication tools,
- * possess an understanding of the environmental, historical and cultural issues in the world,
- * are equipped with a strong base in science, mathematics, and literature,
- * are familiar with and appreciate the arts, and celebrate their own creative talents.

Above all else, we strive to imbue our students with a love of learning, a profound curiosity, an uninhibited sense of questioning and examination, and a powerful sense of direction.



For Valentines, this is the Chinese Character translated as 'LOVE'

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Thanks to all our writers and contributors!

Contact Shana Parker @ sparker@foothill.net with your submissions for 'The Bitney Ex-Press'

From Our Students: Why Bitney?

I appreciate the individuality. You can be yourself and people won't judge you. It's a small community and you aren't just one of the kids. You are actually known.

--Ashley Harper, 9th grade

Above all, I appreciate the fact that Bitney offers small classes so I am able to interact very personally with the teachers and students.

--Charlie Martin, 12th grade

The thing I appreciate the most about Bitney is the people. Everyone is very nice to each other and we all take care of each other.

--Athena Knowles, 9th grade

It's a great school. It's so much fun, you can be who you are and not be bossed or judged.

--Cassie Pellerin, 9th grade



Some of our students take advantage of the opportunity to be in fencing classes!

Questions? Want to Enroll?

Check us out!

Call 477-1235 for info or to set up an appointment.

Bitney College Prep High School is a tuition-free public charter school and is accepting new students for enrollment.