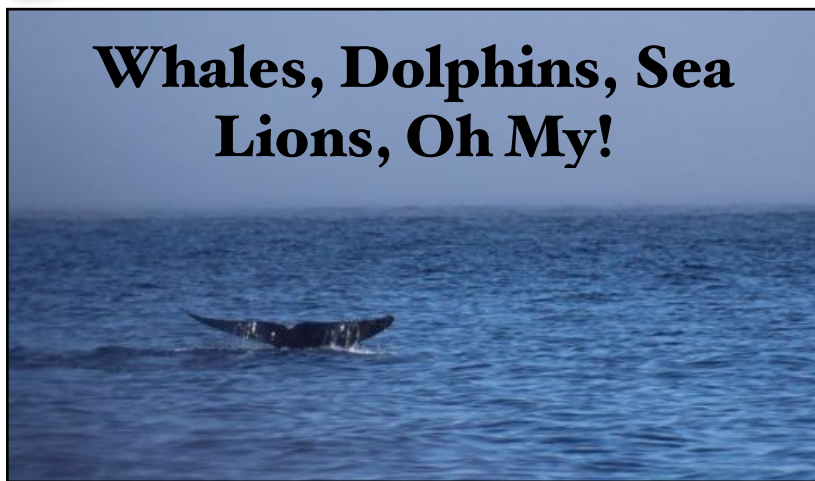


The Independent



Barbara Harrison, Editor

Whales, Dolphins, Sea Lions, Oh My!



OPIS families were in for a treat as they ventured to the Channel Islands Marine Sanctuary on a picture-perfect day in February. With sunny skies and calm seas, Island Packers took us on a memorable half-day trip in which we were fortunate to see an abundance of wildlife. Shortly after our launch we came across two enormous stellar sea lions sunning themselves on a buoy. It is a rare sight to see these largest of the sea lion species in Southern California. The males can reach 11 feet in length and weigh up to 2500 pounds! Continuing our journey, we were often surrounded by hundreds of dolphins, swimming, jumping, and playing in the boat's wake! As our boat approached the islands we fulfilled the objective of the trip - observing three gray whales for about thirty minutes as they migrated south to Mexico where they will give birth and then return on the 5,000-mile trip back to Arctic waters. Thanks to Laura Payne for the whale photo and Ty DeLong for the dolphin picture.



Message from the Principal

The new year has gotten off to a wonderful start! I know that you will enjoy reading about all of the wonderful opportunities our school has to offer and seeing everything our students have been working towards throughout the school year. In the near future, we will be asking all of our parents, students, and staff members to participate in our Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) surveys. Next year, we are very fortunate to be able to collaborate with a WASC team that will be visiting our campus in March of 2019. They will be particularly interested in the thoughts and comments of all who participate in the surveys. I want to thank our site council team members and staff

members who helped to create our surveys.

In closing, I know that our students are heavily involved with outside activities, but I would like to remind you all to view our website and check out our wonderful opportunities including field trips, OSB activities, and additional labs. Hope to see you all on campus.

Thanks,

Stew McGugan



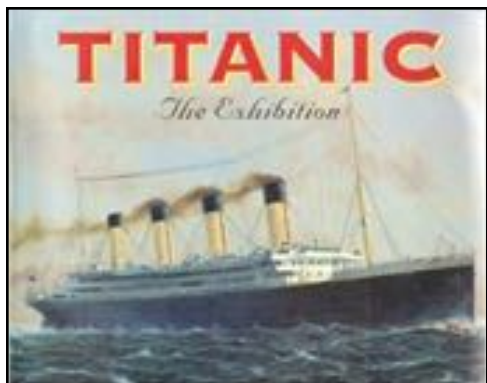
Field Trip Added

Mark your calendars for Thursday, April 12. The field trip to the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District, which was originally planned for October, has been rescheduled. Our group will tour the Tapia Water Treatment Plant on Malibu Canyon Road and then visit the nearby composting facility in Calabasas. The trip is free but you must sign up with Barbara Harrison in room R-2 by March 29.



Please bookmark the OPIS website at <https://www.oakparkusd.org/Domain/1068>. Here you will find answers to many of your questions: Are there labs today? When is my child scheduled to test? When is spring break? How do I contact my child's teacher? What do I need to know about graduation?

Field Trips: Reagan Library



The Titanic Exhibit at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley was the destination for our November field trip. Here we saw artifacts from the ill-fated 1912 voyage that have not been seen together since the ship's maiden voyage, as well as items from the 1997 movie. On display was "Alvin" the submersible that Dr. Ballard took to observe the wreckage, an original deck chair, the sheet music of the song, "Narcissus" which the band leader refused stop playing as the ship sank, John Jacob Astor's pocket watch, and much more!

In addition to the Titanic artifacts, we saw the library's annual Christmas tree exhibit called "An American Christmas." 25 trees with decorations depicting American history from 1700 - 2010 were on display. And, of course, no trip to the Reagan Library is complete without a walk through Air Force One.



Medieval Times

Dozens of OPIS students visited Medieval Times, the 11th Century-style castle in Buena Park, to view knights in shining armor ride their stalwart steeds in an exciting competition of jousting, sword play, and horsemanship. Sparks and hooves flew as we cheered on our beloved knight as he performed great feats of daring in battle in front of the Royal Court. We learned about the knights' Code of Chivalry and were quizzed on how we could apply the same principles to our lives today. In addition to epic entertainment, we were served a four-course meal which we ate with our fingers. What a fun way to step back and experience history!





Body Worlds Pulse

This humorous scene at the **Body Worlds Pulse Exhibit** at the California Science Center was a crowd favorite. We see two poker players (who've seen better days) exchanging a card under the table as another suspicious player looks on. The exhibit by Gunther von Hagen showcased the human body in health and in distress. His aim in creating the show was to allow people to see *from the inside* health conditions which we normally see only on the outside. It taught us a powerful lesson on how we can lead a healthy life with proper nutrition, healthy habits, and awareness. After our tour through Body Worlds we visited the Space Shuttle, Endeavor.

Students Helping Others by Jennifer Vrooman



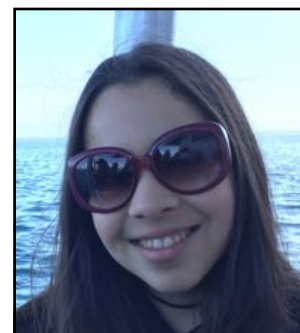
The **Solis Family Reading Festival** was held in Calabasas on December 6, 2017. The goal of the festival is to collect books and funds for the Children's Hospital Los Angeles and their Literally Healing Program. The event features child actors that read children's books to all who attend. Arts and crafts tables are set up and special guests arrive throughout the afternoon. Some of the special guests include miniature ponies, celebrity chefs and even celebrity YouTubers!

OPIS 7th grader, **Molly Vrooman** greeted the attendees and answered questions about the Jr. Ambassador Program at CHLA. Other OPIS students that participated were **Matthew and Benjamin Royer** and **Dallas Young**. They were very much appreciated for bestowing the gift of reading to other children in the hospital at CHLA and for honoring the memory of Mary Solis, the founder of the event.





by Alexa Geyser, 7th Grade



I was first introduced to the Thirst Project by a friend. The Thirst Project is a charity that raises money to drill wells in Africa. There are over 663 million people who don't have access to safe drinking water and there are girls as young as eight who don't go to school because they have to walk miles each day to get water. When I read about the water crisis in 2014, I wanted to help. In a month, I raised \$8,000 to build one well in Africa. About nine months later, I started raising money again and was able to raise \$24,000 to build three more wells.

The Thirst Project is the largest youth water activism organization. In order to make sure that all of students' money goes straight to building wells, the board of directors donates the money needed for administrative costs. Over eight years, the organization has traveled to 320 schools and informed over 300,000 students. They also have built 920 wells and given 280,000 people clean water. The Thirst Project was founded in 2008 by seven 19 year-olds. I have had the opportunity to get to know one of the founders and it's great to see how passionate he is about ending the global water crisis. For anyone interested in donating or learning more about the cause go to www.thirstproject.org.



Coffee and Chat With School Board Members

Come enjoy coffee with two OPUSD Board of Education members on February 28, 2018 from 6:00 pm - 7:00 PM at the Oak Park Library Conference Room. The intent of the coffee is to increase communication with our broader community, including parents, students, and residents who live within district boundaries but do not have children currently attending district schools. Trustees will be available to answer questions, receive input, and discuss topics of interest.

OSB Supports Hope of the Valley



The OPIS Student Body group, OSB, has been very busy this fall giving back to their community. They collected hats and socks and distributed them to people in need at Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission which serves people in the San Fernando Valley. At a free Thanksgiving dinner that served hundreds of meals on November 22nd, our OSB manned just one of several booths where people could help themselves to warm socks, hats, toiletries, and other donated items. See pictures above.

Also in November the OSB raised money to purchase pizzas. Several of our members volunteered their time to serve it to appreciative recipients at Hope of the Valley. Thanks, OSB for your great community service!



Taking a break from serving are Matthew Komins, Benjamin Royer, Jasmine Alveran, Matthew Royer, Dallas Young.

Sign up NOW

Wednesday, March 7, 11:00 - 12:00
Room R-1 Grades 5-12 \$15
Bring donations payable to OPIS to
Barbara Harrison in room R-2



What is a Drum Circle?

According to Wikipedia, "In 1991, during testimony before the United States Senate Special Committee on Aging, Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart stated: Typically, people gather to drum in drum "circles" with others from the surrounding community. The drum circle offers equality because there is no head or tail. It includes people of all ages. The main objective is to share rhythm and get in tune with each other and themselves. To form a group consciousness. To entrain and resonate. By entrainment, I mean that a new voice, a collective voice, emerges from the group as they drum together." Don't miss this rare opportunity for a shared group experience with your fellow classmates! It's going to be GREAT!