

# SCHOOLS

## WILLY WONKA AND THE "CHOCOLATE OLFATORY"

Campos' class learns about water, waste and "poop pancakes"

By Geisel

“It's like 'Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory,'” opined High Sierra Energy Foundation Special Projects Director Leslie O'Berry.

Though I kind of understood what she was talking about - the MCWD water treatment plant is, after all, a seemingly complex and labyrinthian place. But ... I'd like to think chocolate comes from someplace else.

Do you know how the cycle of water works? No? Well, if your kid is part of Gil Campos' 6th Grade class, chances are they do now. Not only do they know how it works, but they're also hip to how and why it's important to conserve it, from beginning to end. Literally.

Thursday's field trip, the third time it's been conducted, was part of the "Living Wise" program, co-sponsored by the High Sierra Energy Initiative and the MCWD. During the multi-stage supplemental course, students learn the basics of energy efficiency,

recycling and saving water.

Most of the time they're in or near the classroom, but when it comes to water, O'Berry and the District adopted a "boots on the ground" philosophy, letting students see first-hand how the whole cycle works. First up, water ... where we get it and how it's treated. (You didn't think they were going to show them sewage treatment first, did you?)

MCWD Resources Manager Clay Murray showed the students flows coming down from Lake Mary and illustrated the big difference between harvesting surface-originated water (which is most of what Mammoth uses) and pulling water out of the ground. Mammoth supplements its supply with ground-source water, but it takes 8 times the energy. Our little town goes through about 4 million gallons of water daily, just 75% of which comes from surface water. (I didn't know that ... bet you didn't either.) Starting to get why conservation is important here?

Once seasonal irrigation starts, water use triples, which is why the district is now making a push to use "gray water" for watering golf courses and other similar applications.

Along the way, students learned the buzzwords: watershed, chlorine, turbidity, contaminants. They also talked about the role of the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency, and why some of our water here is forwarded to Los Angeles. (The historical politics of the topic were left for when they get a little older. Note to students, for future reading: "The Water Seekers" and "Cadillac Desert.")

The real drama, however, was found at the sewage treatment plant. Every-

body poops, right? And it all has to go somewhere. Most held their noses as Operations Superintendent Karl Schnadt helped students follow the "chocolate" through the "factory."

It's actually an impressive process, involving tiny bacterial microbes, large clarifying machinery, a "digester" and a Belt Press, which essentially makes "poop pancakes," as Murray called the solids separated from the water. (The press is basically the same as those used in making wine ... Chateau Excremente, anyone? Didn't think so.)

Kidding aside, the field trips are fun and informative, but O'Berry and MCWD Environmental Specialist Irene Yamashita hope the experience resonates with the students.

"The field trip was conceived to show the students where our water supply comes from and that it isn't infinite," O'Berry said.

"Unlike Los Angeles, we get to see where our water comes from," Murray pointed out. "The kids get that they're part of our watershed."

"It starts with the kids," Yamashita said. "They'll be the future policymakers. It's vital they realize how important water is to us and that we need to wisely use what we have."

The smell, you ask? That's where the written word fails to convey the treatment plant's "pungent perfume." My advice? Ask your kids to describe it.

Just try to avoid talking about it over dinner.

## MAMMOTH TAKES OCEANSIDE BY STORM

On May 16 and 17, the Mammoth Storm Girls U16 Soccer Team, ventured to Oceanside to participate in the country's second-biggest beach soccer tournament. Played 5 against 5 on a 25 by 30 yard field, the girls were in the sand for three 11-minute periods — and barefoot.

The 8 girls who traveled along with some very supportive parents were Cassie Burgenbaugh, Jackie Leary, Sam Knadler, Rebecca Cage, Kristin King, Sierra Stapp, Jiselle Kenny and keeper extraordinaire Bailey Morley.

Saturday morning started with 6-3 win. The team then lost 4-2 to a tough Thousand Oaks team of 15 girls that usually plays 2 levels higher than the Mammoth Storm. Mammoth won its third game, however, setting the team up as 2nd place in its flight.

On Sunday morning, a rematch

against Thousand Oaks. Although the game was close in the first 2 periods, this time it was the Storm that dominated the 3rd period, walking away with a decisive 4-1 win. This led to a championship match with the 18-member Moorpark team, one so daunting, their scheduled opponent on Sunday morning didn't bother to show up. Moorpark's lineup boasted 3 girls in the over-6 foot, 180 pound range. The Storm battled intensely for 33 minutes, but at the final buzzer, the score was 4-3 Moorepark.

According to one of the coaches, "It was tough to lose such a close match and we had one questionable call on a shot that we thought went in." After an impressive showing, a few twisted ankles bruises and a concussion, the team took home 2nd place ... and a "well done" from the coaches.



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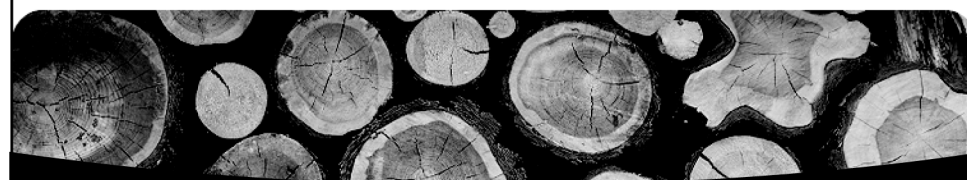
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