

Tulare County
Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

news
galleryweek

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2022 Tulare County spelling champion crowned



N-E-O-L-I-T-H-I-C

The word that relates to the later-part of the Stone Age was the winning word in the 2022 Tulare County Spelling Championship, held yesterday. Neolithic was the 22nd word spelled correctly by champion Bryce Melgar, a seventh-grade student at

Ridgeview Middle School in Visalia. Bryce will represent Tulare County at the Scripps National Spelling Bee in May.

Ninety students, grades 4-8, from schools throughout the county competed at Valley Strong Ballpark in downtown Visalia. "It was great to have the Spelling Championship in person at the ballpark," said Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire. "I appreciate our partners the Visalia Times-Delta and the Rawhide Baseball Club for helping us host the event outdoors so that parents, family members, teachers, and coaches could attend."

Yong Lee, an eighth-grade student from Sycamore Valley Academy in Visalia finished second. In third place was Ivan Campos Hernandez, a seventh-grade student from Washington Elementary School in Lindsay.

Photos above:

~ The Spelling Championship winners (l-r) Ivan Campos Hernandez (3rd), Bryce Melgar (1st), and Yong Lee (2nd) pose with judges (l-r) Carlyn Lambert, Andrea Perez, and Tim Hire.

STEAM Expo returns March 12 at TCOE's Planetarium & Science Center

The annual STEAM Expo will return as an in-person event Saturday, March 12 at the Planetarium & Science Center. Organizers have assembled fun science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) activities for Central Valley families and children of all ages. In addition, visitors will have the opportunity to see a free planetarium show, which will run at intervals throughout the event.



“The STEAM Expo is a place where kids can explore the wonderful world of STEAM through hands-on activities,” said Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire. “In addition to all of the activities, we have representatives from organizations available to show visitors how they use STEAM education in their jobs every day.”

Attendees can try their hands at aerospace engineering by designing and launching their own hot air balloons and rockets. A Cardboard Challenge area will be created for families to envision and construct anything they can imagine out of cardboard. Attendees will also have the opportunity to participate in numerous arts-related activities, including shadow pictures, shape bubbles, nature tracing, and chalk drawings. Event organizers are bringing plenty of engaging technology and coding opportunities for children to try, including Cubelets, Artie, Botley, and Dash & Dot robots and robotic components.

The annual Tulare County Science & Engineering Fair will also be held. This year, the event will feature 35 projects created by students to address real-world issues. Judges will select the top projects to advance to the 2022 California Science & Engineering Fair, being held virtually in April.



Among the community organizations attending the event are the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps Flying Eagles Squadron, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, and Sequoia Riverlands Trust. Taquizas Gonzalez will provide on-site food options.

The Peña Planetarium will show its popular CAPCOM GO! The Apollo Story at 10:15 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 11:45 a.m., 1:00 p.m., and 1:45 p.m. CAPCOM GO! is a historical documentary that showcases the achievements of the Apollo program and what it took to put the first human on the moon. It introduces a new generation to the immense challenges scientists overcame, inspiring viewers to become the explorers, designers, engineers, thinkers, and dreamers of the future. Free tickets for the shows will be available at the box office beginning at 10:00 a.m. Doors close at show time with no late seating and no reentry after the show begins.

The STEAM Expo is a free, open house-style event scheduled for 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. on March 12. For more information, visit tcoe.org/STEAMExpo. The Planetarium & Science Center is located at 11535 Avenue 264 in Visalia.

Photos above:

~ Among the many hands-on activities, a variety of robots will be available at the 2022 STEAM Expo for students to code.

~ Students will also enjoy a large Cardboard Challenge area to design and build interactive games and objects.

Support Staff Conference scheduled for May 4



Central California support staff are invited to the 29th Annual Tulare County Support Staff Conference. The conference, which is planned as an in-person event May 4, will feature a fun Mardi Gras theme. Attendees will enjoy enlightening breakout sessions designed to support their personal and professional development, incredible food and prizes, vendors, and the opportunity to network with support staff from throughout the Valley.

Brad Nieder, MD, "The Healthy Humorist®", will be the keynote speaker. Dr. Nieder, described as "Jerry Seinfeld with an MD," is a doctor, funny speaker, and clean comedian. After receiving his medical license, Dr. Nieder began delivering his unique brand of healthcare humor to people from all industries. He has hosted events for Kaiser Permanente, Phillips, CASA Advocates for Children, Tyson Foods, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and Mississippi State University. Dr. Nieder also co-authored the book *Humor Me*.

The Tulare County Support Staff Conference will be held at the Visalia Convention Center with breakfast beginning at 7:30 a.m. Registration is now open at tcoe.org/SupportStaff. The cost to attend is \$55 per person for Tulare County support staff; \$65 per person for staff outside Tulare County. Due to COVID restrictions, registration is limited and must be completed by April 20.

More information, contact Marlene Moreno at marlenem@tcoe.org or call (559) 733-6102.

Around the County

Three county wrestlers place at state championships

Last weekend, 22 wrestlers from Tulare County competed in the CIF State Wrestling Championships held February 24-26 at Rabobank Arena in Bakersfield. Three of the 22 wrestlers finished the three-day tournament as state medalists.

Jacklyn Green from Golden West High School (Visalia) was the county's highest placer, after taking fifth in the girls 170-pound competition. Green, who entered the championship meet seeded No. 3, made it to the championship semifinal rounds before losing to eventual state champion Mariyah Casados (Vista Murrieta High School - Murrieta).



Green lost her first match in the consolation semifinals but pinned Angelina Renteria (Hueneme High School – Oxnard) in 4 minutes, 17 seconds to win fifth place.

Placing sixth in the girls 160-pound competition was Audrey Segura of Redwood High School (Visalia). Segura lost her first match but made it all the way to the consolation semifinals before losing her last two matches to finish sixth.

In the boys 138-pound bracket, Thomas Thongseng of Exeter High School became the school's first state placer in nearly a decade after placing eighth.

For complete results of from the state championship meet, visit cifstate.org.

Photo above:

~ Golden West High School's Jacklyn Green competes at the CIF State Wrestling Championships over the weekend. Photo courtesy of Gary Kazanjian / Visalia Times-Delta.–

Mt. Whitney, Central Valley Christian basketball win section championships



Mt. Whitney High School (Visalia) and Central Valley Christian High School (Visalia) boys basketball teams lost their opening-round games of the CIF State Basketball

Regional Championships but finished their respective seasons as Central Section champions.

Mt. Whitney won the program's first section title in 32 years with a 54-51 win over Frontier High School (Bakersfield) in the Division II CIF Central Section championship game Thursday, February 24. Carter Glick led the team with 17 points while Keith Bailey Jr. had 10. Zachary Scattareggia finished with nine points and made two crucial free throws in the final three seconds of the game to secure the team's section title.



In the opening round of the Division II state tournament, No. 4 Mt. Whitney lost 61-57 to No. 13 Rancho Cucamonga High School and finished the season with a 30-3 record. Mt. Whitney's 30 wins are a Tulare County, single-season record. They were led by first-year head coach Jeff Lynch, a prevention/intervention education facilitator at TCOE's CHOICES Programs.

Central Valley Christian defeated Kennedy High School (Delano) 60-40 for the Division V section championship Thursday, February 24. Justin Stroud led the team with 23 points.



Facing No. 4 Villanova Preparatory School (Ojai) on the road in the Division V state tournament, No. 13 Central Valley Christian fell 62-57. Central Valley Christian finished the season with a record of 10-18.

Photos above:

~ Mt. Whitney High School boys basketball team poses for photos before receiving their Central Section championship plaque.

~ Mt. Whitney High School head coach, Jeff Lynch, cuts down the net after the team wins the Division II CIF Central Section championship.

~ Central Valley Christian High School poses for photos after winning the Division V CIF Central Section championship. Photo courtesy of Central Valley Christian Schools Facebook.

Granite Hills, Redwood soccer seasons come to close after section wins



Granite Hills High School (Porterville) boys soccer team won the program's first section championship with a 2-1 win over Sierra Pacific High School (Hanford) on Friday, February 25. Goals were scored by Yadir Ramos and Alder Morales. The victory was the first section title for the Granite Hills boys soccer program and the second in school's history since boys tennis won in 2012.

In the first round of the Division IV CIF Southern California Regional Championships, No. 4 Granite Hills lost 4-2 to No. 5 Wiseburn-Da Vinci High School (Hawthorne) Tuesday. The team finished their season with a record of 22-9-2. Redwood High School claimed a Division II section title with a 2-0 win over



Golden Valley High School (Bakersfield) Friday, February 25. Gavin House and Jacob Mccullough both scored for Redwood.

On Tuesday, No. 3 Redwood lost 4-3 to No. 6 Pacifica High School (Oxnard) in the first round of the Division II CIF Southern California Regional Championships. Redwood finished the season with a record of 22-6-1.

Photos above:

~Granite Hills High School boys soccer poses for photos after winning the CIF Central Section Division V championship. Photo courtesy of Porterville Unified School District.

~ Redwood High School boys soccer celebrates after winning the Division II CIF Central Section championship. Photo courtesy of Ron Holman / Visalia Times-Delta.

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To receive the News Gallery Week, sign up [here](#), or contact Jennifer Fisher at jenniferf@tcoe.org or (559) 733-6172.