

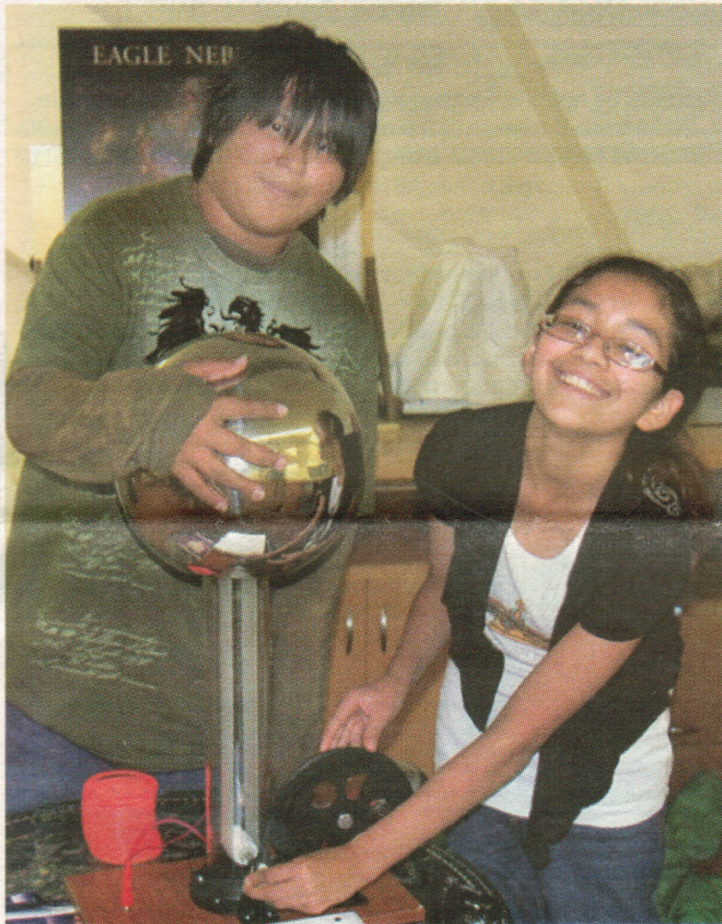
# The Runner

Tohono O'odham Nation

Volume 16 Number 12

Sells, Arizona 85634

## *O'odham students get hands-on opportunity to study astronomy*



Alan Francisco, 13, of Sells, and Dayanara Sixkiller, 11, joined 18 other students from around the United States for a week-long science camp atop Kitt Peak. Here they toy with a Van de Graff generator, used to safely demonstrate an electric charge using high voltage and low current.

**Kitt Peak-** Dayanara Sixkiller had the time of her life attending a science camp with students from around the U.S., but spending a week away from home left her a little homesick.

She is the daughter of Jason Sixkiller and Crystal Manuel. She spent June 10-16 at the Astronomy Camp on Kitt Peak that was sponsored by the Travel Program of the Univer-

sity of Sells. Francisco and Richelle Robles of Sells.

The number of applicants to the camp far outnumbers the 20 available slots, so the application process can be grueling. Like other campers, Francisco had to write a 500 word essay to get his foot in the door. He said he simply stated that he wanted to learn about the stars, the constellations, and about

## Voters will soon how much council

**Sells-** On July 11, Tohono O'odham voters will have an opportunity to vote on legislation that will set the pay for the Tohono O'odham Legislative Council.

The special election will be held throughout the Tohono O'odham Nation, and is the result of a petition drive by the Sells District Council.

When the petition drive started last January, Sells District Chairwoman Barbara Javier explained that constituents grew frustrated with efforts by

members of the Legislative Council to vote themselves a raise in pay. Two separate pay increase plans were presented to the council representatives, and both were voted down by the legislature, but only after community members loudly criticized the council.

Havier said at that time that the voter initiative and its required petition drive was in response to those two pay raise efforts, one of which would have almost doubled the current pay for the council members.

## *District 40's middle school undergoin*

**Sells-** The failure of Indian Oasis-Baboquivari School District's middle school to meet No Child Left Behind's Adequate Yearly Progress standard for the past five years has prompted a restructuring of the middle school that is taking place this summer.

According to Crystal Redgrave, Curriculum Development specialist with the school district, this failure has caused the school district to lay off staff, teachers, and restructure its middle school over the summer break.

"Most of the teachers for the middle school will be coming back," said Redgrave, "the State of Arizona is requiring very highly qualified teachers and staff, which is why some of the staff have been laid off."

The middle school will now consist of grades six through

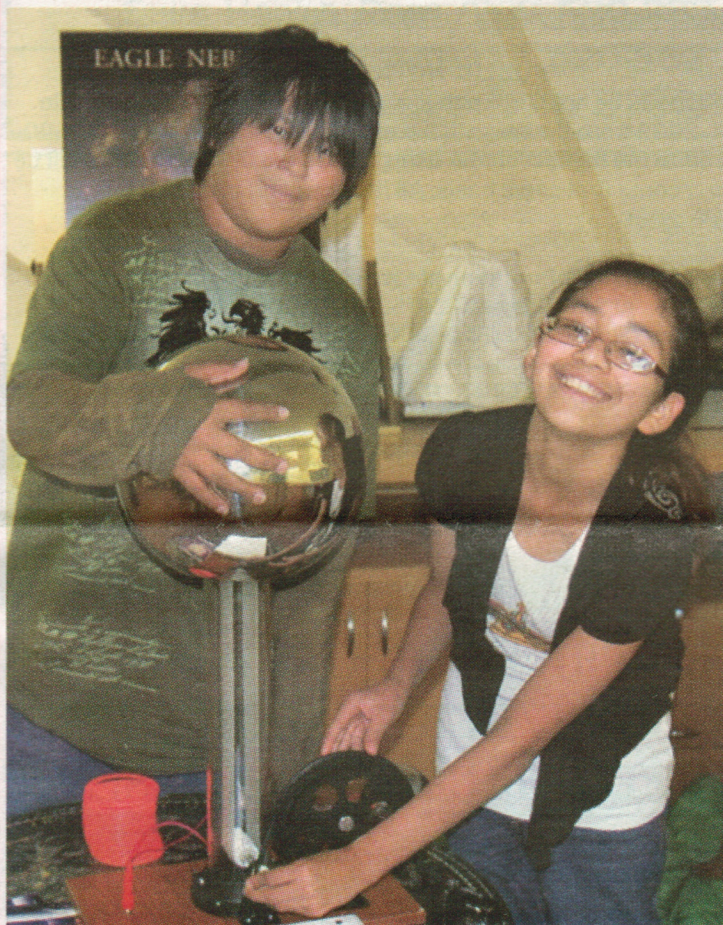
Tohono O'odham students," said Redgrave, "(and teachers) will be using more cultural materials in core classes to identify more with the students."

Part of the plan behind the restructuring is to integrate technology into the student's education, focus on the student's writing strengths, and link the school with the community through presentations.

According to Redgrave, community and parent involvement in a child's education is paramount to success. She noted that there is currently a lack of parent involvement with schools in the community, which can cause student truancy, a leading factor in academic failure.

"One thing I know is attendance issues are very poor," said Redgrave, "meaning that the kids cannot learn if they are not (at school)."





**Alan Francisco, 13, of Sells, and Dayanara Sixkiller, 11, joined 18 other students from around the United States for a week-long science camp atop Kitt Peak. Here they toy with a Van de Graff generator, used to safely demonstrate an electric charge using high voltage and low current.**

**Kitt Peak-** Dayanara Sixkiller had the time of her life attending a science camp with students from around the U.S., but spending a week away from home left her a little homesick.

She is the daughter of Jason Sixkiller and Crystal Manuel. She spent June 10-16 at the Astronomy Camp on Kitt Peak that was sponsored by the Travel Program of the University of Arizona's Alumni Association.

Sixkiller, 11, said the camp was the first time she'd been away from home and the first time she had stayed in a dormitory with other students, so though she had fun she also was a little homesick.

The activity she most enjoyed was looking at stars through the large telescopes located atop Kitt Peak National Observatory.

Alan Francisco is 13 years old, but he packed a lot of learning into his week's stay at the camp. His parents are Nate

Francisco and Richelle Robles of Sells.

The number of applicants to the camp far outnumbers the 20 available slots, so the application process can be grueling. Like other campers, Francisco had to write a 500 word essay to get his foot in the door. He said he simply stated that he wanted to learn about the stars, the constellations, and about astronomy in general.

One of the cool things he remembers most is a demonstration of dropping freezing liquid nitrogen on his hand and watching it slide off. The chemical is used to keep cameras cold so they work optimally to photograph stars.

Katy Garmany, Senior Science Education Specialist with Kitt Peak National Observatory, said the elite science camp sought out O'odham participants, and if enough interest is shown, participation if future camps is possible.

**Sells-** On July 11, Tohono O'odham voters will have an opportunity to vote on legislation that will set the pay for the Tohono O'odham Legislative Council.

The special election will be held throughout the Tohono O'odham Nation, and is the result of a petition drive by the Sells District Council.

When the petition drive started last January, Sells District Chairwoman Barbara Havier explained that constituents grew frustrated with efforts by

members of the Legislative Council to vote themselves a raise in pay. Two separate pay increase plans were presented to the council representatives, and both were voted down by the legislature, but only after community members loudly criticized the council.

Havier said at that time that the voter initiative and its required petition drive was in response to those two pay raise efforts, one of which would have almost doubled the current pay for the council members.

## *District 40's middle school undergoing*

**Sells-** The failure of Indian Oasis-Baboquivari School District's middle school to meet No Child Left Behind's Adequate Yearly Progress standard for the past five years has prompted a restructuring of the middle school that is taking place this summer.

According to Crystal Redgrave, Curriculum Development specialist with the school district, this failure has caused the school district to lay off staff, teachers, and restructure its middle school over the summer break.

"Most of the teachers for the middle school will be coming back," said Redgrave, "the State of Arizona is requiring very highly qualified teachers and staff, which is why some of the staff have been laid off."

The middle school will now consist of grades six through eight, and the students will attend school from 8:15 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. with the school year beginning on Aug. 3.

According to Redgrave, the new philosophy for the middle school will focus on the students' culture by integrating it with the core curriculum. It will allow the school to build around what the students know and are familiar with.

"We worked toward building a mission, a vision, and a philosophy," said Redgrave. "Culture is the biggest part of an O'odham student's life."

"(We are) making core curriculum more relevant to the

Tohono O'odham students," said Redgrave, "(and teachers) will be using more cultural materials in core classes to identify more with the students."

Part of the plan behind the restructuring is to integrate technology into the student's education, focus on the student's writing strengths, and link the school with the community through presentations.

According to Redgrave, community and parent involvement in a child's education is paramount to success. She noted that there is currently a lack of parent involvement with schools in the community, which can cause student truancy, a leading factor in academic failure.

"One thing I know is attendance issues are very poor," said Redgrave, "meaning that the kids cannot learn if they are not (at school)."

One of the more controversial arguments that the Federal government brought up was that the school failed to meet AYP because the staff failed. According to Redgrave, there were some students who had very low-level reading skills and the Federal government blamed the middle school teachers.

However, Redgrave believes that the blame is misplaced. "If the students are reading at a low level, those are skills that should be acquired during the student's primary years," said Redgrave, "so, as they (go) through the school system, the students normally get to seventh grade