

Summer 2022

Edition 1

2021-2022 School Year  
Recap

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Board Meetings

August 8<sup>th</sup>

September 12<sup>th</sup>

Calendar Events are  
updated here by SUSD  
Staff:

<http://www.sierrahighschoolalumni.com/district-calendar/>

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# SHS Alumni Assoc. Newsletter

## Welcome!

This marks our first publication of the SHS Alumni Assoc. Newsletter! Our hopes are to provide you with a glimpse of history as well as a recap of what our school has accomplished during each quarter. This edition will include a recap of the entire 2021-2022 school year.

## A Message from the SUSD Board President

April 2022

Sierra Unified has enjoyed a beautiful and productive spring so far, and now we are in the final stretch! Basketball and soccer have finished their seasons and now baseball, softball, swimming, track, and boys golf are in full swing. Our FFA Parli Pro Novice team finished #2 in the state! The SHS Drama Department just put on its first production in three years, and it was a resounding success under the direction of the new Drama teacher Mr. Hales. Field trips have resumed, expanding horizons for our elementary students, and 40+ Rocket Club students had their final launches.

At the leadership level, our new administration is settling in, now complete with New Sierra Alternative Coordinator Tony Abrams, and they are busy brainstorming the next steps for our schools and students. It is an exciting time! Our board has given direction to proceed with offering the Sierra Elementary campus for lease with an option to purchase. We will examine these options with an

### After School Mural Class



### After School Metal Design Class



### Centennial/Reunion



eye toward what is best for our community and our district. We are proceeding with a proposal to improve energy efficiency and air quality, as well as addressing an antiquated electrical system at the Sierra campus. We also received a grant to equip our school buses with Wi-Fi, which will provide the possibility for students to do schoolwork on those longer bus rides (access will be protected by the same measures as at the school sites).

This is a wonderful and busy time in our district. We are engaged in our planning process for next year (aka LCAP) with many forms of outreach, including surveys, focus groups, and community forums. We take this process and the recommendations that come from it very seriously. It truly helps to shape our actions for next year. We are looking forward to celebrations including the FES Carnival on May 20th, and Senior Awards Night on May 24th. And of course, we are all looking forward to that last day of school, June 6 for Alternative Ed, and June 9 for Foothill, Sierra JHS, and Sierra HS. We are excited to be offering a 4-week summer school for grades K-8, and a 6-week online summer school for grades 9-12.

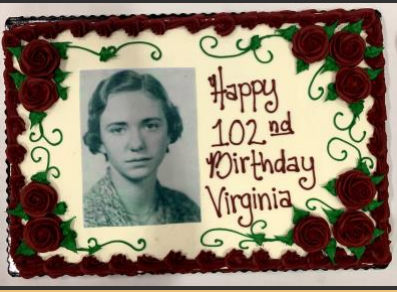
We look forward to celebrating all the wins with our students and families as we wrap up Spring 2022!

Connie Kee Schlaefer

President, Sierra Unified Board of Trustees

## SHSAA

The Sierra High School Alumni Association (SHSAA) under new leadership is here and ready to make some waves by changing up the way we support our students and community. During the 2021-2022 school year we not only hosted the centennial reunion which was the largest in school history with upwards of 750 alumni attending but also



### Autorama



created a new partnership with the High School. The SHSAA Sponsored a Belt Buckle for the Mother's Day Rodeo and selected our scholarship recipient Jonah Collier to receive \$1000 to support him as he pursues his Fire Fighting career. During Autorama members of the SHSAA had the opportunity to speak to most of the senior class, we asked what workshops they would have attended to help prepare them for life after HS and the overwhelming response was help with all things finance! How do we budget, fill out our taxes, buy a car, build credit? All things we know the Alumni Association can help with! So, we are excited to take our partnership with the school to the next level and conduct once a month workshops during the school year to give our students everything they desire to help them once they go out into the real world. And this is where we need your support! We want to be able to do these workshops and even more for our students to develop amazing community members in the future and we need volunteers to do that! If you are an Alumni or a community member that feels passionate about our student's development, please email us at [sierrahighschoolalumni100@gmail.com](mailto:sierrahighschoolalumni100@gmail.com) to join us!

We are also building our Alumni Database and will begin accepting dues in January of 2023. After joining our database, you will receive a quarterly Newsletter highlighting our current students, sharing some notable history, and maybe a where are they (Alumni) now. We have high hopes for our Association and with yearly dues we can properly plan out how we will use our funds to support our students year over year! We will always prioritize Scholarships and we want to be able to select at least one candidate each year, but if the funds allow for it, we want to add more recipients. After we set aside funds for scholarships we also want to continue creating "grab bags" for our graduating seniors! These bags include SHSAA Memorabilia; drawstring sports bag, padfolio (for school or

## Boys Basketball



## Boys Swimming



## Baseball



## Trinity Ross



interviews), a pen, and maybe even a t-shirt. The bags also include information on the Alumni Association, how we can support them and how they can support us in the years to come. These bags were a great surprise this year for our Seniors! Next are our workshops for the students as we will need some supplies for these each month. We will also continue to host the All School Reunion every 5 years with our next one to occur in 2025. These plans are just the beginning, from here we will use any remaining funds to support the needs of the school in any way possible and we are open to your ideas! To be added to our Alumni Database please click [HERE](#) or email us your contact information at [sierrahighschoolalumni100@gmail.com](mailto:sierrahighschoolalumni100@gmail.com) or write us at SHSAA PO Box 624 Prather, CA 93651

## Sports

The 2021-2022 school year for Sierra Sports resulted in multiple sports competing in playoff games exceptionally well. Our 8-man Football team, Volleyball, both Boys and Girls Water Polo, and Girls Soccer fought hard during the first round of playoffs but were unable to come out on top this time. Basketball competed strong this year with both the Boys and Girls making their way to their division semifinals! For the first time since 1978 the Boys Swimming team won the NSL Championship. And to finish out the year Baseball made it to the Valley Championship game vs. Mendota which was played on Pete Biden Field at Fresno State! Such a great opportunity for our baseball team!

We also have a few key individuals to highlight! Haylie Lee and Logan Kilbert were NSL League MVPs for Basketball. Timber Stoops and Katherine Hernandez we're NSL league MVPs for Water Polo. And Trinity Ross broke the school woman's pole vault record with an 11' 3" vault. Some fantastic accomplishments!

## Paige Beard



## Novice Parli Pro



## Advanced Parli Pro



## Graduation



# FFA

## Fresno Fair Highlights

Adie Glass 2021 Champion Market Hog

Hannah Thomason Breed Champion for her Market Steer (AOC)

Makayla McGrath Reserve Grand Champion Feeder Steer

Paige Beard Supreme Grand Champion Market Lamb, Supreme Champion Production Ewe, Novice Showmanship Champion, and Novice Round Robin Champion

## Speaking Contests

Both Advanced and Novice Parliamentary Pro Teams competed at the State Finals. The Novice Parli Pro Team Placed 2nd!

Macy Lloyd was one of the top 24 speakers in the state with her Prepared Speech on Responsible Forest Management.

And as always, our teams represented well at the East-Fresno Madera FFA Section Opening and Closing Contest!

## Natural Resources

The Natural Resources team competed in the State Finals and placed 5<sup>th</sup> Overall.

## Seniors

69 Seniors graduated from Sierra High and an additional 38 graduated from Sierra Alt Ed on Thursday June 9<sup>th</sup>. A total of 93+ local scholarships were awarded. There were 16 valedictorians. And many students also received University Scholarships including:

Mackenzie Wait- Baylor University Distinction Award \$96,000

## Kids Day



## Valentines Day



## 1935 EJ Prather



Megan Parks- Boise State University Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) Scholarship \$58,644

Sienna Blair- Cal Baptist University Dean's Scholarship \$54,000

Abigail Schlaefer- Colorado State University WUE Scholarship \$44,000

Kaysea Rose- Eastern Gateway Community College Scholarship \$18,215

Trinity Ross- Fresno Pacific University Pole Vault Scholarship \$96,000

Emma Jensen- Fresno State Smittcamp Family Honors Program \$46,000

Shelby Dozier- Grand Canyon University Academic Scholarship \$TBD

Maya Tovar- Stanford University Academic Scholarship \$303,688

Faith Dunn- University of Oklahoma Academic Scholarship \$40,000

Elizabeth Ramirez- Vanguard University Academic Scholarship \$86,000

## A Glimpse into Sierra's History

### By Wes Qualls

On the retaining wall just south of the front entrance of Sierra High School there is a brass plaque with the year "1935". Since that date is literally anchored in stone it is a good reference point, as the wall is nearly the same age as the construction date of what is now referred to as the "small gym."

For the entirety of my life the Prather family has lived just across the fence from the Qualls family. The three generations of Prather's who I have known have all proudly told the story of their father, grandfather, or great grandfather having built the small gym at Sierra High School. I am in

### 1935 The Original Small Gym



### 1937 Additions



full agreement with this assessment but when I read in one of the early yearbooks that the Works Progress Authority (WPA), which was part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal Public Works Program, had built the small gym I did want to investigate.

If you go to page 2 of Volume I of the 1935 Sierra High yearbook you will find a picture of Mr. J.E. Prather. The yearbook was dedicated to Mr. Prather as a member of the Board of Trustees and someone who (showed unselfish interests in our welfare and progress during our school career.) This quote indicates his years of service even in 1935. A very good picture of the completed new gym also appears in this 1935 yearbook.

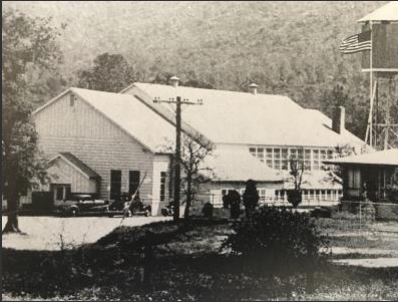
While the 1936 yearbook does not have a picture of the gym, the 1937 yearbook has a raft of pictures of the construction on both the east side with its iconic high-pitched roof and high rock work and the south end of the building that was extended for the stage and locker rooms. In the middle of these snap shots of construction Mr. Prather appears again in his work clothes with the caption (do you work here?). Quite obviously he did.

There are clues in the 1938 yearbook as to construction progress showing new roofs for seating along the west side of the building and a small kitchen. Seating for lunch was still provided on the gym floor.

In 1939 construction moved to the Administration, entrance, and classroom wings. This new construction now makes use of the retaining wall built in 1935. A snapshot here catches Mr. Prather having moved to "caretaker."

The last time that I find Mr. Prather in his caretaker garb is in the 1941 yearbook. That is also where I find a snapshot caption "new addition" showing completed construction on the north end of the gym that was to serve as the cafeteria for the high

## 1941 "Mirror Room" or "Cafeteria"



school until a new cafeteria was built in 1948. The "mirror room" as it was named later continues to serve our students in a variety of ways.

So, these are some of the facts gleaned from early Sierra High yearbooks and a little bit of Prather family history. Do I have all of the information? Surely not! Have I misinterpreted some information, could be? Are there other sources of information? Maybe. So, if you can correct or add to my store of information, please give me a call.

The small gym has been important to Sierra High School for 87 years. It needs to continue to fill an important role for the foreseeable future. The core of the gym is still sound as I understand it. However, windows, roofs, and restrooms will need attention in the near future.

So, did Mr. J.E. Prather build the small gym? I think we can say that he did. The School Board recognized the need. They also recognized that they had someone sitting beside them who had the talent and passion to complete the project. This project would begin work with the design and oversight phase utilizing the Work Progress Authority and running through the last major addition to the gym in 1941.



## Contact Us

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SHS Alumni Assoc.

PO Box 624

Prather, CA 93651

[sierrahighschoolalumni100@gmail.com](mailto:sierrahighschoolalumni100@gmail.com)

[SierraHighSchoolAlumni.com](http://SierraHighSchoolAlumni.com)

## Thank you!

We hope this Newsletter gives you an idea of all the great things that are happening at Sierra High. We truly have an amazing community and school that cares deeply for the students. We wouldn't be where we are today without the foundation of our Alumni.

We look forward to connecting with all of you! If you didn't receive this newsletter directly from the [sierrahighschoolalumni100@gmail.com](mailto:sierrahighschoolalumni100@gmail.com) account, then we do not have your information! So please fill out the form [HERE](#) or email us your contact information at [sierrahighschoolalumni100@gmail.com](mailto:sierrahighschoolalumni100@gmail.com) or write us at SHSAA PO Box 624 Prather, CA 93651

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*Sincerely,*

*Dallas Costa – President*

*Monica Renna – Vice President*

*Shannon Ledbetter – Secretary*

*Audra Falk – Treasurer*

*Wade Kimbler – Correspondence Secretary*

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