'Rabbits reign

A team of Victor Valley High School students took first place Thursday at the inaugural High Desert Chopped, a culinary competition featuring eight local high schools. Inspired by the cooking show “Chopped,” the contest was held at the VVHS culinary center and put

The Victor Valley High School team (back row, from left) including teacher Kelli Valencia and students Gialani Shannon, Jennifer Hernandez, Juan Garcia and Jonhatan Yanez were awarded first place at High Desert Chopped by judges (front row, from left) Perry Shaw of Sonic, Falan Grunert of Starbucks and Judy Islas of Chili’s. The regional culinary competition was held Oct. 27 at Victor Valley High and featured teams from eight schools.

District saves taxpayers $130M

The Victor Valley Union High School District has announced the refinancing of its existing capital appreciation bonds (CABs), a move that will save local taxpayers more than $130 million. The significant taxpayer savings were part of a presentation delivered by VVUHSD Assistant Superintendent Ron Williams, Ed.D.

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James, Bershee earn honors

Cobalt Institute of Math and Science swept the Victor Valley Union High School District Employees of the Quarter awards for the opening quarter of this school year.

Bernard James (classified) and Bryan Bershee (certificated) were honored at the Oct. 19 board meeting.

VVUHSD Human Resources Director Daryl Bell announced that the department had received 77 total nominations (45 classified and 32 certificated) in the first quarter. Both James and Bershee received multiple
VVUHSD IN THE NEWS

• The Great American Rivalry features the Axe Game and names Victor Valley's Efren Gomez the MVP: http://greatamericanrivalry.com/category/mvp/page/3/

• Cobalt Institute of Math and Science, Silverado, University Prep and Victor Valley are among the competitors in the county’s Mock Trial competition starting Tuesday: http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20161028/mock-trial-competition-to-start-tuesday

• Victor Valley High staff are on hand as Hesperia Christian School unveils its new scoreboard and thanks Victor Valley for donating its old scoreboard decades ago: http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20161021/major-upgrade-hesperia-christian-school-unveils-new-football-scoreboard

From left to right: Victor Valley Union High School District Human Resources Director Daryl Bell, Superintendent Dr. Ron Williams, Board President Penny Edmiston, Employees of the Quarter Bernard James and Bryan Bershee, and board members Rosie Hinojos, Barbara Dew and Tim Norton at the Oct. 19 board meeting.

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nominations.

Bell read excerpts from the nominations for each of the winners.

Nominators said James, a security officer at CIMS, is the “first person on campus, last one to leave. Always goes above and beyond. Organizes lunchtime activities, a staunch supporter of all clubs and activities on campus, willing to help out any and all staff members.”

“(James) does not have ‘no’ in his vocabulary,” Bell added. “He is helpful, fun, funny, kind, respectful, respected and stern. He genuinely cares about students and staff, and everyone can see that.”

Bershee is a P.E. teacher at CIMS who stepped up to help with administrative duties when CIMS Principal Dr. Melda Gaskins took a recent medical leave.

“(Bershee) helped keep the school running smoothly,” Bell read at the meeting. “He assisted teachers, helped students and oversaw duties outside the realm of a teacher while still fulfilling his duties of his assigned position. He assumed the reins of the school with professionalism, dedication, hard work, and an upbeat and positive attitude that was needed through the challenging time. Just knowing he was the ‘captain of the ship’ helped the staff to keep going strong.”

The Employee of the Quarter nominations (with names redacted) are read by a committee of district certificated and classified staff members who vote on the winner. Anyone who notices an employee going above and beyond to serve students and staff is encouraged to nominate that employee.

Second quarter nominations close Wednesday, Nov. 30 at 4 p.m. Visit https://goo.gl/forms/XIOOd89uMvhJWhY52 to nominate.
The Big Game
Silverado defeats VVHS for league title

Thousands of fans gathered at Silverado High School's football stadium as the Hawks defeated cross-town rival Victor Valley by a score of 35-8 in a big matchup Friday night.

The victory guarantees Silverado at least a share of the Desert Sky League Championship. The loss was only the second of the season for the Jackrabbits, who still have a shot at a playoff berth.

For more about the game, check out the story in the Daily Press and more coverage in the Sun.
STATE OF EDUCATION

Students featured at county event

Victor Valley Union High School District students were featured Oct. 21 as San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools Ted Alejandre delivered his State of Education Address at High Desert Church in Victorville.

A total of about 40 University Prep students delivered a stirring rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner" to open the event. Teacher Matthew Orane's Chamber Orchestra performed the anthem along with Luke Kelly's Madrigals choir group.

Also, Hook Junior High School 8th-grader Joslyn McSwain was chosen to read one of her own poems as part of the event.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Find VVUHSD on Facebook and Twitter!

Like our district Facebook page for district news updates. Click this link or search for "Victor Valley Union High School District" on Facebook. You can also follow @VVUHSD on Twitter. Note: Facebook is not accessible from school networks.
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together by the Mountain Desert Career Occupational Pathways JPA along with culinary arts teachers across the High Desert.

With pre-selected ingredients, students were given a limited amount of time to prepare a dish that was judged by local industry professionals.

The Victor Valley team of Gialani Shannon, Jennifer Hernandez, Juan Garcia and Jonhatan Yanez celebrated with their instructor Kelli Valencia after the judges awarded them first place for their chicken pita bread sandwich with cranberry garlic salsa, sweet potato chips and vegetable soup.

Teams from Adelanto, Apple Valley, Barstow, Granite Hills, Hesperia, Serrano and Silverado high schools also competed, and each team got positive feedback from the judges.

Each judge is a manager for a Victorville food establishment, including Judy Islas of Chili’s, Falan Grunert of Starbucks and Perry Shaw of Sonic.

The Jackrabbits took home a trophy depicting a butcher’s knife created by Barstow metal shop students, and they plan to paint it green to celebrate their victory.

Valencia said the event is not only a fun competition for students; it also helps prepare them for the SkillsUSA national competition later this school year.

Mountain Desert Career Occupational Pathways JPA also plans to host a regional baking competition called “Sweet Genius” on Dec. 8 at Silverado High.
COMMUNITY

Turkeys needed for charity effort

Each year, Victor Valley High School culinary arts students under the guidance of Kelli Valencia prepare hundreds of Thanksgiving dinners for people in need.

Sadly, the turkeys donated to the Victorville Rescue Mission this year were lost due to a power outage.

Anyone who would like to donate turkeys to the Rescue Mission to help this worthy cause can email VVHS principal Nancy Noyer at nnoyer@vvuhsd.org.

You may also call the Rescue Mission at 760-955-5958 or visit www.vvrescuemission.org.

The Thanksgiving Banquet is set for Nov. 22 at VVHS.

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Superintendent of Business Services Brian Hawkins last week at the most recent meeting of the VVUHSD Board of Trustees.

As VVUHSD received an upgraded credit rating from Moody’s in the spring, VVUHSD fiscal staff was able to refinance existing general obligation bonds for $6.6 million in taxpayer savings, then saw an even bigger opportunity for savings with the CABs.

“Due to the low interest rate environment and the district’s increased credit rating, district staff began exploring the possibility of reducing other outstanding debt obligations of the district,” Hawkins’ presentation stated on Oct. 19.

The CAB bonds, taken out by the district in 2013, were refinanced and converted into current interest bonds (CIBs). This not only takes $130.3 million off the overall amount that property owners in the district boundaries will pay, it also cuts 14 years’ worth of debt service payments.

“Mr. Brian Hawkins and his staff are to be commended on what they have achieved for our district, as well as our taxpayers and property owners,” board member Rosie Himnojos said after the meeting. “This is certainly good news not only for our district but also for our community.”

Before the refinancing, the bonds would have been paid off in 2052. They will now be paid off by 2037, district officials said.

Board President Penny Edmiston said the financial accomplishments of the past year show that VVUHSD “continues to move in a positive direction,” and she praised VVUHSD fiscal staff for “putting students first” by also finding funding for a new gymnasium at Hook Junior High School and a new multi-use building at Victor Valley High School.

“The entire board is very appreciative of Mr. Hawkins’ efforts,” Edmiston said.

COLLEGE AND CAREER FAIR

This month’s District-Wide College and Career Fair was a success, with juniors and seniors from across the district visiting the Silverado High School gymnasium to get information from dozens of colleges and universities across the West. Vocational programs and military recruiters were present as well. The fair was organized by Silverado’s Vicki Archer (pictured).

BOARD RECOGNITION

At a recent board meeting, teachers Jeremy Cornell, left, and Breanna Hunt, right, were honored for their outstanding work during summer school. Extended School Year Coordinator Ron Veach commended the teachers, who were then presented with district excellence coins by board members Barbara Dew, second from left, and Tim Norton, second from right.