

The Superintendent's Update



March 2015

NEWS FROM KELLY

Passing of Rick Rees: It is with great sadness we report that Rick Rees, former CUSD Board member and husband of recently retired Neal Dow Elementary school principal Marilyn Rees, passed away Friday, March 6, in Chico. He was 63. Rick was born and grew up in Hillsborough in the Bay Area before attending and graduating from Chico State in 1974. After earning his teaching credential in 1975, he began his 37-year career at Chico State where he worked for the Student Development Programs (which later became Student Activities).

Rick will be remembered in CUSD for his never-ending support of our schools. He was an active parent and served two terms on the Chico Unified School District Board of Education, including service as President. Rick will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to his wife, Marilyn, as well as his daughter Alexandra, son Robert, stepdaughter Andrea, and two granddaughters.

A memorial service is being planned for Saturday, March 28 at the California Park Pavilion.

Here are excerpts from remembrances of Rick from his former colleagues, care of the Chico Enterprise-Record:

Andrea Lerner, retired English professor and former Chico Unified board member: "He was always very grounded, and reminded me not to think about what we were losing (with budget cuts) but to think about what we were holding onto. (At that difficult time in school district history, it would have been easy) to become cynical or jaded. But he remained positive and focused on solutions."

Herman Ellis, former director of Student Activities: "He stood tall when there was a crisis from the Pioneer Days celebrations (as well as through) riots, drug busts, student deaths and definitely when advisers tried to take over a student organization. He represented the University, the students and himself with great class and dignity at all times. He made a difference in the lives of so many students. He was my confidante, my sounding board, my strategist and my friend for 25 years. He left us much too soon. I will truly miss his wise counsel."

Paul Zingg, CSU, Chico president: "(Rick was a) tireless and articulate advocate for things that matter: respect, civility, community. ... I will miss his dedication, counsel, optimism and unflagging commitment to make our community and University stronger."

Superintendent's Award for February: The February Superintendent's Award was presented to the Discovery Shoppe of Chico at the February 18 School Board meeting. The Discovery Shoppe raised and donated \$10,000 to the Bidwell Foundation in support of new instruments and materials for the Bidwell Junior High School Band. Mr. **Ryan Heimlich**, Band Director for Bidwell Junior High School (as well as PVHS) and Ms. **Ann Castle**, BJHS Attendance Clerk, spoke about both the donor and the positive impact the donation has made on the music program at Bidwell. Please join me in sending a huge thank you to The Discovery Shoppe!

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR EMPLOYEES

Steve Oberlander Recognized: Neal Dow Principal **Dave Murgia** nominated **Steve Oberlander**, Obe, for *Teachers are Heroes* because Steve does things that are above and beyond besides being a Kindergarten teacher. Mr. Murgia stated "there is a special place in my heart for those that teach Kinder" and Mr. Oberlander makes a positive impact not only on his Kindergarten students, but all of the students in the school. Obe is known by all of the students at Neal Dow for many reasons. He is the lead, with guitar in hand, for the Neal Dow Monday morning sing that brings the school community together to celebrate starting a new week. Many of the parents also stop and enjoy the sense of community and caring. He also volunteers his time to be the Chess team coach. He has over 30 members that compete with schools from as far south as Yuba City. It is exciting to watching students from 5- 13 years of age sitting at a chess board talking about strategies. Obe has a passion for what he does and he challenges his students to be confident enough to take on any challenge and to have a lot of fun while they are doing it. Mr. Murgia further stated that he has known Obe for many years and his passionate approach to everything he does is fantastic. He is a great example of the teachers that work at Neal Dow. Use the link below to see the video of Mr. Oberlander. Congrats Obe! http://www.actionnewsnow.com/player/?video_id=6242

Linda Johnson Recognized as Health Aide of the Month: Congratulations go to **Linda Johnson**, Health Aide of the Month for CUSD. Linda is a remarkable person who is fantastic at both clinical and interpersonal skills. Linda, having been a respiratory therapist in the past, is calm in emergencies and hardly anything rattles her. She has good assessment skills, acts quickly as needed, and shows complete compassion to everyone she works with. On a day-to-day basis, Linda runs an efficient health office. She is able to multitask, getting the students seen as well as completing all the paper work required of the job and facilitating the School Nurse's job. Linda has worked for Chico Unified longer than any other Health Aide or any of the school Nurses. Linda gives unconditionally of her time and expertise to make the Chico High health office a safe, caring environment. Linda takes the time to know most of the students by name when they come to the office. She may also know about their families having worked in many school sites over the years. With this kind of knowledge and skill she can truly connect with students. She knows which ones need that little bit of extra TLC to make it through the day or which students need encouragement to make it back to class. Linda is a truly remarkable woman and employee. Thank you Linda for all that you do and have done. *Sincerely ~ The School Nurses*

NEWS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Letter from Parent/Community Member regarding Chico Unified Participation in the CMEA Region III Band & Orchestra Festival

Dear Mr. Filpula,

I had a chance to drop in on a few of your performances at last Friday's Band and Orchestra Festival on the CSU Chico campus. A few things stood out for me:

I appreciate the opportunity for our kids to be mentored by the music faculty at CSU Chico. The collaborative time that students had with the faculty judges after their performances seemed to be a real highlight. Kids and their teachers received feedback and encouragement to improve and keep their fires burning. The CSU faculty seemed to REALLY enjoy this part, as well.

Your interaction with students from both Chico Jr and Sr was pretty incredible. When you need them to get down to work, they act as professionals. When they take a breather, you engage them with humor and everyone shares a few good laughs. You are very, very good at what you do. You moved both groups through some of the harder bits swiftly and precisely during warm ups (with reference to hitting very specific, advanced concepts). To me, this seemed to be a reflection of the really good work that takes place in the classroom every day.

The quality of the performances from both the Chico Jr and Chico High bands was off the charts! Wow! Really, really impressive. I used my phone to capture all of your performances and uploaded a single song from each to YouTube – thought you might want to share with your colleagues:

Chico Junior High Symphonic Band:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UoZroT4BKA0&feature=youtu.be>

Chico High Symphonic Band:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9rdull31TY&feature=youtu.be>

I saw a few performances from other groups. I am pretty biased, but no other group displayed the musical ability, knowledge, professionalism, or a connection to their instructor that came anywhere close to your work. Thanks for all you do.

Best, Brad

NEWS FROM BUSINESS SERVICES

Nutrition Services kicked off their spring menu with a bang. The new menu has been very well received by students and staff. Thank You to the Nutrition TEAM for an amazing transition from the winter menu into the spring menu. The TEAM is now getting ready for the annual all school BBQ. Please check with your school Principal for the exact day and time. The BBQ's are a great chance for parents to spend some time with your children at school. Please come and join us.

Our summer feeding program will get under way June 8. We will be open for lunch at the sites listed below. We look forward to seeing you this summer at our summer feeding locations:

- 20th street Park
- Hooker Oak Park
- Chapman
- Parkview
- BJHS
- Boys and Girls Club

NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

First Annual BCOE Superintendent’s Juried High School Art Show: Over 100 gifted young artists from high schools throughout Butte County were honored at the 1st Annual BCOE Superintendent’s Art Show Reception on Thursday night, March 5. The top students’ art works were selected by high schools throughout the county to compete in the first annual show. There were approximately 110 contest entries this year. Winning works of art will be on display in the Butte County Office of Education office throughout the month of March in honor of National Youth Arts Month. Next month, the winners’ art will be on display at the Chico Museum on Salem Street. “I am impressed by the breadth of artistic talent of students in our county,” said BCOE Superintendent, Tim Taylor. “Our student artists brought great creativity, critical thinking, and talent to their art work. I am awestruck! We also are truly lucky that we have such dedicated art teachers who help our students cultivate their talents.” Butte County Office of Education’s Visual and Performing Arts coordinator, **Nancy Silva**, created the art contest to show case the artistic gifts of students in grades 9-12 in the county as part of BCOE’s new Arts Initiative, designed to bring about a renaissance in arts education in PreK-12. On February 24, a panel of Butte County art community members judged the entries based on originality and creativity; composition and design; and artistry and skill. The judges this year included David Tamori–Local Artist, Arts Advocate, Consultant, and retired OUHSD AP Art Instructor, Cris Guenter - CSUC Education Faculty- Art and Linda Watkins-Bennet Action News Now Anchor & Producer.

Chico High School	Inspire School of Arts & Sciences	Pleasant Valley High School
<p><u>Art Teachers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PennieBaxter • Shannon McLean • Nancy Skadal • Paul Stephens <p><u>Student Artists:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julia Coons • Alexis Heyman • Dani Martin • Serena Myers • Erica Placensia • Letty Pierce • Callie Robinson • CeciTareh • LaineWood • Simeon Wortham 	<p><u>Art Teachers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linnea Smith • Erin Hall <p><u>Student Artists:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KaeliBecvar • Alex Soren Hilsee • Camille Mavis • Dora McKenzie • SheaO'Sullivan • RysPritchett • AloraSalgado • Taylor Shuman • Maya Sousa • CloeeThomas 	<p><u>Art Teachers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cindy Hopkins • Reta Rickmers • Nancy Ritcher <p><u>Student Artists:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicole Dully • Victoria Felix • Rebecca Harbert • Ka Lo • Adriana Long • Angelique Muniz • Maiying Thao • Garrett Vasconcellos • Tyra Victor-Rosenbalm • Ryann Woods

The “Best of Show” award was given to the student whose art submission garnered the highest score from all of the judges. Ryann Woods, a 10th grade student from Pleasant Valley High School, earned the “Best of Show” award for her piece entitled “Self-Portrait” in the high school Pencil/Ink/Charcoal category. Woods received a beautiful personalized plaque for her award. BCOE Arts Education Foundation contributors co-sponsored the event with BCOE. First, Second, and Third place awards were given to the student winners in five categories: Pencil, Ink, and Charcoal; Paint & Pastel; Mixed Media; Digital Photography; and 3-Dimensional Art.

BEST OF SHOW: Ryann Woods, sophomore at Pleasant Valley High School
Teacher: RetaRickmers
Title: Self Portrait in the Category of Pencil, Ink, Charcoal

Congratulations to all of our student artists and a huge thank you to the art teachers that prepared and encouraged our students to participate in the First Annual BCOE Superintendent's Juried High School Art Show.

CHS Ag Showcase: The CHS Ag Showcase was held on Friday, March 6. Approximately 150 MJHS, BJHS, and CJHS students attended this fun filled day. They began the day in the Williams Theatre with a welcome and overview of events. The students then split into four different groups to tour the Ag department and participate in agriculturally related activities. Students cycled through four different rotations: 1) Horticulture; 2) Welding and farm equipment; 3) Animal Science/Intro to Ag; and 4) the FFA Leadership team (FFA and how to be involved). This event was a positive collaboration between Chico High School and the district Junior High schools and modeled the spirit of students teaching students. Thank you to CHS Ag teachers Sheena Sloan and Ronnie Cockrell, CHS Ag Boosters, and the Friends of Ag for their support of this event. Also a huge thank you goes out to the CUSD Junior High Principals, counselors and staff for their support of this annual event.

PVHS IB Students: Seven IB students from Pleasant Valley High School are flying to Peru and will be spending their Spring Break volunteering in schools and the local communities of Lima and Cusco. **Amy Besnard** is leading the students and the volunteer opportunity is coordinated by the Bright Lights Volunteer organization.

Inspire's Southern Sojourn: The pace of this journey has been breakneck with highlights including meeting and even singing with Congressman John Lewis in the basement of Martin Luther King Jr.s Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, GA. Congressman Lewis talked with our kids for two hours, hugged them all and left them with pearls of wisdom gleaned from his pioneering efforts in the Civil Rights Movement. Our kids were reminded that only 25% of Americans vote. This whole trip is about the prices people paid to have a voice in America. Our kids are continually reminded to honor the past efforts of these activists and participate in the process. John Lewis reminded our kids that we're not done yet. One of his best quotes to them was a reminder to 'get in the way' when they see injustice. Many of our kids are now fired up to fight on behalf of gender identity and LGBTQ+ recognition and rights. But they're finding the tools of the Civil Rights work to help them in their quest.

Our team spent the night in Selma, Alabama earlier and two by two, retraced the steps of 1965's Bloody Sunday March of which John Lewis was a 23 year old leader. The police blocked the road as they silently re-crossed that bridge 50 years later. There were a lot of cameras. As always, combined with Jeff Steinberg's historical background lectures, it was a stunning experience. Our students very much feel like Selma is the birthplace of democracy and independence now, as this was the place that reaffirmed the strength of 1964's Civil Rights Act and led to LBJ's ceiling shattering Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Inspire is now well known among Sojourn participants. We have by far the largest group of 33, who continually stand up and speak with every opportunity. They are so knowledgeable, thoughtful and passionate. They really represent our school of arts and sciences so well. Much love from Montgomery, Alabama, ~ Marysol Dela Torre Escobedo, Debbie Travers and 33 Inspire Students!

The California Music Educator's Association Northern Section Band Festival at Chico State University. There were 28 school bands performing from 17 schools from our local area. Each group played a few pieces and then worked with an adjudicator. Schools watched each other perform (where a lot of the learning occurred), and were able to watch and listen to the Chico State Wind Ensemble, a very special treat. Music educators consider this the most important performance of the year. Following is a list of participating Chico Unified Schools:

- Chico Jr. High School Beginning Band, Mr. Filpula
- Parkview Elementary Band, Mr. Johns
- Chico Jr. High School Concert Band, Mr. Filpula
- Bidwell Jr. High School Concert Band, Mr. Heimlich
- Chico High School Concert Band, Mr. Filpula
- Pleasant Valley High School Concert Band, Mr. Heimlich
- LCC/McManus/Parkview Beginning Bands, Mr. Johns

Bidwell Jr. High Band: Congratulations to the Bidwell Jr. High Band for demonstrating excellence at the festival. Schools are rated on a scale of 1 to 4, one being the highest. Bidwell was rated with a one score. Way to go **Mr. Heimlich** and the Bidwell Band.



6th Grade Honor Band

Marsh Jr. High Wrestling Students Win the North Section 2015 Championship: MJHS had 10 finalists in the 20 weight classes and all their wrestlers competed fiercely with the hearts of CHAMPIONS!! They finished a perfect season! Along the way they won every team tournament they participated in; seven events including two TOC qualifiers. They won every League Dual Meet and claimed the East League title by qualifying an astonishing 21 wrestlers for the North Section Championship. Finalists included: Section Champions at 135lbs: **Jalen Johnson**, 142 lbs; **Bobby McCoy**, 205 lbs; and **Taylor Hyatt**. Runners up included: **David Rudkin**, 62 lbs; **Kyle Vittitoe**, 95 lbs; **Hunter Landingham**, 103 lbs; **Zach Soto**, 116 lbs; **Austin Moreno**, 128 lbs; **Tanner Goodwin**, 168 lbs.; and **Isaiah Villiacana**, 185 lbs. MJHS was represented by Consolation finalists **Ethan Jones**, 70lbs taking 3rd and **Alex Pimentel**, 108 lbs, who finished 4th. The students will finish the season by taking 11 wrestlers to the Nor Cal Tournament of Champions.



County Spelling Bee



Alec Angel, a 5th grader at Hooker Oak, just won the County Spelling Bee! Alec will be going to the state finals in Stockton on April 18.

Congratulations to all the students who entered!

Parkview's Science Fair: Below is a picture of the 115 projects that Parkview entered in the Science Fair.



Marigold's TK Spaghetti Dinner a Great Success: Parents and students commented to **Shawneese Heath**, Marigold's Co-Principal, that they loved the dinner and had a lot of fun. It was certainly a TK community builder. The families appreciated the long list of activities from, a delicious Panighetti's catered dinner, face painting, coloring and decorating placemats, a cupcake walk, educational handouts, door prizes raffled off, to family photos with props. It took a village last night and they pulled it off with flying colors!

Spring is in the Air: Below are pictures from the gardens at Little Chico Creek thanks to **Tim Aldrin** and **Alyssa Rilinger**, the **UC Cooperative Extension program**, and the **Worm Farm**.



NEWS FROM HUMAN RESOURCES

CUTA Negotiations Update: CUSD and CUTA have been involved in Fact Finding to assist in resolving the negotiations impasse for the 2014-2015 school year. Per the request of the Fact Finding Panel, CUSD will maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings while continuing work to find a positive resolution to the negotiations process.

CUSD IN THE NEWS

[Chico Country Day School moves forward on charter renewal bid](#)

[Pink Shirt Day in Chico schools fights bullying](#)

[Letter: Join students, wear pink in anti-bullying effort](#)

[Celebration supports the arts in Chico schools](#)

[Chico school district, teacher's union at a standstill](#)

[Chico Unified increases surveillance after string of break-ins](#)

[Collaborative leadership in the Chico community](#)

[Burglaries lead to security increases for school district](#)

[Rick Rees, former Chico school board member, university leader, dies](#)

[Editorial: Classrooms are no place for union gestures](#)

[Read Across America: Special day in Chico brings books to children's hands](#)

[Letter: Tell us more about Chico teacher salaries](#)

[Parkview Elementary in running for 40K grant](#)

[Letter: CUSD board members should investigate morale](#)

[Letter: Chico Unified teachers don't want to strike](#)

[Chico Unified School District readies for teachers union strike](#)

[District prepares for looming teachers union strike](#)

[At an impasse](#)

[Chico Unified to identify procedures in case of strike by teachers](#)

[Chico Soroptimists celebrate 85th anniversary](#)

Friends of Bidwell

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BAND ON THE RUN!

Four years ago, the Bidwell Band ceased to exist. The elementary instrumental music program had been canceled several years before and there were no entering 7th grade musicians. Eventually, there were not enough student musicians at Bidwell to warrant even one period of band in the regular school day. That was the day the music died at Bidwell, or so we thought. Furthermore, the Pleasant Valley High School Band was in danger of being eliminated. Without incoming 9th grade musicians from Bidwell, band sign-ups would fall below 35 and the CUSD would not fund a period of band at PV.

When news of the impending demise of bands at Bidwell and PV became public, many community and school people found that to be unacceptable.

No solutions were evident. What could be done? Who would do it? Where would the funding come from? All this became the main topic of discussion at a monthly meeting of the Bidwell Junior High School Foundation Board of Directors. It was concluded that somehow there would have to be a way to teach beginning band at Bidwell and recruit enough student musicians to restart the Bidwell Pioneer Band. The Foundation Board and the Bidwell Staff got creative.

Phase One of re-establishing the Bidwell Band: Although there was no money available to fund a beginning band during the school day, there was an existing non-music afterschool program which was funded. The Bidwell Staff arranged for one of the activities to be learning how to play an instrument. Dan Holmes, PV Band Director, agreed to come to Bidwell after the regular school day to teach this class and he recruited 7th and 8th grade students from Bidwell and 6th graders from McManus Elementary. This new instructional program received modest funding from BJHS Foundation. Monetary donations and used instruments were solicited from *Friends of Bidwell*; the *Chico Community Band* donated several sets of surplus sheet music from its library.

The following year, Beginning Band was re-established during the regular school day and eventually there were enough promoted 8th grade musicians to keep the PV band alive!

Phase Two: After decades of service at PV and Bidwell, Dan Holmes moved on to other pursuits in the CUSD. His replacement, Ryan Heimlich, has taken the starter Bidwell Band and continued to make it grow in quality and quantity. In the 2013-14 school year, the Band had 25 members and began to perform for school and public events. It became obvious that Mr. Heimlich does know his craft and is an excellent teacher and motivator.

Phase Three: The Bidwell Band sent several new ninth grade musicians to PV to continue populating the Viking Band and assure its viability. Mr. Heimlich continued to recruit and teach 7th and 8th grade students so that the Pioneer Band had grown from 25 to the amazing total of 45 members. As might be expected, this growing bunch of footers, tweeters and thumpers was short on usable instruments and sheet music. That need was partially filled by a \$2,000 grant from the BJHS Foundation for instrument repair and purchase. The band is making progress and is well on its way to great achievements. At year end they put on a wonderful Winter Concert featuring the full Pioneer Band and the newly formed Jazz Band at the PV Performing Arts Center.

Phase Four: The calendar year also ended with an amazing surprise. Ryan Heimlich made a presentation to the Board of the Discovery Shoppe which was arranged by Foundation President, Ann Castle. The Discovery Shoppe is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that has been doing good work in Chico for many decades. They accept donations of clothing and household goods, which are then sold locally at their thrift shop. All profits are returned to the community in the form of grants to needy organizations and causes. In recent years, these grants have averaged about \$80,000 annually.

Mr. Heimlich requested a grant to support the growing Bidwell Band and its need for instrument repair, additional instruments, sheet music and other supplies. The surprise? In December, the Discovery Shoppe presented a check to the Foundation for \$10,000 -- to be used as needed for the Bidwell Band.

Phase Five: There is no stopping the Pioneer Band now. It is firmly re-established and growing. With the help of the adults mentioned above, the music is back! It should be noted that success is also due to the hard work and dedication of the Bidwell students and the parents who encourage their participation in band. Learning to play a musical instrument can be a formidable task, requiring many hours of individual practice in addition to daily class time. All those individuals and organizations involved deserve congratulations.

THANK YOU DISCOVERY SHOPPE!

If you would like to support the Discovery Shoppe, you may donate items or shop at 315 Flume Street or calling 530-343-1326.



Endowment Continues to Grow

The John Schulz Memorial Endowment Fund was established in 2007 with a \$2,000 grant from the BJHS Foundation General Fund. The purpose of the Endowment is to establish a permanent source of funding for Bidwell Junior High School. Eventually, we expect to be able to make annual grants to Bidwell classrooms and educational programs with Endowment interest and dividend income, without reducing the Fund's capital value.

The BJHS Foundation is affiliated with the North Valley Community Foundation which manages our accounts. That service includes investing the JSM Endowment funds primarily in a combination of interest bearing accounts and stock mutual funds. Since 2007, the Endowment has grown with these investments and with donations from the many Friends of Bidwell. The Endowment value has now exceeded \$25,000.

BJHSF Annual Report

In 2014, the BJHS Foundation continued its support of Bidwell classrooms and educational programs at an accelerated pace. We have been busy making grants since the establishment of the Foundation in 2005. To date, we have placed over \$35,000 into the hands of professional staff at Bidwell to support and enrich the education of thousands of Bidwell students.

The mission of the BJHS Foundation is to provide supplies, materials and equipment for Bidwell classrooms and educational programs. By 2005, cuts in school budgets left teachers and staff without sufficient funds to provide quality educational opportunities. For example, classrooms were being left short of books, teaching supplies, science lab equipment, technical hardware and software and physical education equipment. Needy students were without basic school supplies.

One semester, the entire school was unable to purchase paper or other basic materials. For the past seven years, we have been able to fill these needs, thanks to our donors, the Friends of Bidwell. In 2014, your Foundation again participated in the annual Annie B's Fund Drive. This fund raiser is sponsored by the North Valley Community Foundation. In addition to administering our bank accounts, the NVCF granted a 7% bonus to the funds we received during the Annie B's drive. Due to the generosity of the Friends of Bidwell and the generosity of the Discovery Shoppe, 2014 donations increased to \$14,000. We will be able to continue supporting the students of Bidwell in 2015 and the Endowment will continue to grow.



2014 FOBS \$\$\$ AT WORK

- ✓ Sets of 5-Star notebooks for English classes
- ✓ Backpacks for kids who can't afford them
- ✓ Musical instrument purchase and repair
- ✓ Street music from Disney's Frozen for the BJHS Concert Band
- ✓ T-shirts to tie-dye for Track & Field event
- ✓ Computer program for practice and assessment of basic skills in math, language, reading, writing, vocabulary and test prep

BOARD MEMBERS AND OFFICERS FOR 2015-16

Mike Christensen President
 Betty Boreglia Vice President
 Marsha Sanders Secretary
 Linda Wilbur Treasurer
 Ann Castle Classroom Grant Coordinator
 John Watson Publicity Director

Members: Debbie Aldred, Dick Cory, Bill Dixon, Teresa Doyle, Ramona Flynn, Juliet Hauser and Carol Watson.

Associate Members: JoAnn Brooks, Bill Carter, Dan Nguyen-Tan, Judi Roth and Mike Schulz

If you would like to support the Discovery Shoppe, you may donate items or shop at



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