

Only in Lee Vining

... where the parents take pride in their kids, and the kids take pride in their town



The Little School That Does

Kids who play sports in Lee Vining have to play for the spirit of the games. Often playing with short sided-teams, and driving hundreds of miles for tournaments they may never place in, these kids hardly ever even get acknowledged in the local newspaper. But things are turning around for the Lee Vining sports teams. In February Lee Vining High School's very own girls and boys basketball teams got some press, the likes of which this town hasn't seen in a while, or maybe ever.

The reporters were spotted at a couple of games, and spent some time with the players and coaches, but no one could have guessed that the Lee Vining Tigers Basketball Teams would end up on the front page of the LA Times Sports Section. On Tuesday February 10th the Sports Section featured a multi-page, six-photo story on the plight of our teams. The story itself was very well done, and accurately spoke of the overriding spirit of sports in this 398-person town.

The day the article hit people were scrambling for copies of the newspaper—as it isn't even available in town in the winter. There were reports of people getting misty-eyed over the article, and

teachers and parents smiled proudly at the thought that people outside of this town would take such interest in our kids, and our school.

Since the article hit, the little high school that could is getting a little help from its friends. Due to the article the school has received calls from other schools, sports programs, and generous individuals who have given much-needed monetary and sports-equipment donations to the school's sports program. Lee Vining High is now the little sister school to Long Beach Polytechnic High School, a 4,700 student school, and there are rumors of a special on TV featuring the Lee Vining sports teams. And with all of the hype the kids just keep on playing their best, the coaches carve time in their busy lives for practice and travel to games, and folks in town keep a close eye on the marquis in front of the school and mark their calendars to turn out for the games.



Hero's Welcome

One afternoon last March white buses from the Pickle Meadows Marine Base drove through town carrying troops shipping off to Iraq. As the buses drove past, the teachers and students of Lee Vining Elementary, joined by community members and passers-by, waved flags and cheered them on. It was a moment right out of an old movie, only this time it was real.

Just months later, one of Lee Vining's own, Michael Wiles was sent notice that he would be heading to Iraq with the 82nd Airborne Division. He was just 18 at

the time. Family and friends around town had Michael in their thoughts and prayers daily—taking pause when the 82nd Airborne was mentioned on TV or radio. The Lee Vining Boy Scout Troop 313 organized events sending 80 boxes full of books, baked goods, supplies, and most-importantly, letters to Michael and his compatriots.

For a couple of weeks we were lucky enough to have Michael back—welcomed by yellow ribbons all over town, a Lee Vining style bar-b-que and potluck at the Community Center, and lots of thankful friends and family. Sure, there are diverse feelings and opinions on the war, but one of the beauties of Lee Vining is that at times like this people can join together to celebrate the safe return of a community member.

In this time of war there are also other honorable Lee Vining locals serving our country in the military. Justina Dore is on the USS Peleliu which just returned from the Persian Gulf, Henry Baer is currently serving in the Army, and the Kellogg's grandson Lauren is also in the service. We thank you for your dedication, and wish you safe return. ❖

—Arya Degenhardt



Michael Wiles surrounded by friends and family looking at a scrapbook made for him by one of his Lee Vining friends.

ARYA DEGENHARDT