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Gentle Warrior Brings Maasai **Culture to Burton Valley**

By Cathy Dausman



Lila Chatterton, 5th grade, listens closely to her Maasai "rafiki", or friend, Salaton Ole Ntutu.

listed on their government IDs.

The Maasai classify themselves simply, as a child, a warrior or an elder. Ntutu is an elder. too!" Villagers carry their "bedding" (a blanket) with them; it is area wrapped around their shoulders and worn as clothing during the day. They bring their cattle inside huts to sleep at night. A typical morning for Ntutu might include a breakfast of maize paste, some work as a medicine man, and some time spent overseeing village affairs.

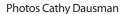
room, Salaton Ole Ntutu laid his tary.

Maasai tie age to events in na- hands atop each student's head ture, like floods or droughts. and bestowed a "sopa" or bless-Ntutu's passport lists his birth ing. Lastly, he questioned his date as Dec 24, 1971. But Ntutu audience: "Do you know what knows that is incorrect, because color a zebra is?" The answers, it would make him older than the both black and white, brought a birth dates his siblings have smile to his face. After interlacing his fingers with those of a fair skinned student, Ntutu proclaimed: "Then we are zebras

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Ntutu was hosted in the Bay by Susan Olofson (http://www.susanolofson.com/in dex.htm)

He was invited to speak at Burton Valley Elementary through his connection with Gail McCormick, a board chairman of the nonprofit Jamii Moja (www.jamiimoja.org). Mc-Cormick has two grandchildren Before leaving the class- attending Burton Valley Elemen-



Ntutu strode into two Burton Ntutu said he has killed seven Valley Elementary classrooms lions, but only in self-defense. on a visit February 21. The "[Maasai] Warriors don't fight," Maasai tribesman had travelled he said simply. halfway across the world to share stories of life in East count in Swahili, how to imitate mote eco-tourism.

he called "a powerful color") and adorned with a sheepskin or sheep during the day. and jewelry made by villagers, tail, and quickly made "rafiki" (friends) with the students.

ith a hearty "Jambo!" rhino, elephant and buffalo. In (hello) Salaton Ole answer to one student's question,

Ntutu taught students how to Africa's Republic of Kenya, the "generous" hyena's call, fundraise for widows and educa- showed them a Maasai dance and tion within his village and pro- reminded each to "listen to your elders". He told them village Dressed in red robes (which children their age (6 or 7) are expected to tend their family's cattle

Fifth graders in Claudia Nor-Ntutu carried a staff and buffalo ton's class inquired about Ntutu's siblings - he is the youngest of six, in a family of In Meredith Dolley's first three boys, three girls-his two grade class he spoke of the Maa- children, and asked him how old sai's coexistence amid legendary he is. "I don't know," he said big game animals like the lion, honestly, explaining that the



Fifth grade students in Claudia Norton's class listen attentively to Salaton Ole Ntutu's stories. The Maasai tribesman from Kenya spent most of February in the U.S. on a goodwill/fundraising mission.



