

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Acalanes Union
High School District
Board Room AUHSD Office
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette
Wednesday, June 23, 2010 at 7:30pm

Orinda Union School District
OUSD Office
8 Altarinda Road, Orinda
Monday, June 21, 2010 at 4 pm

Moraga School District
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate
School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga

Lafayette School District
LAFSD Office
3477 School Street, Lafayette
Wednesday, June 23, 2010 at 7 pm



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Troop 30659 Lafayette Girl Scouts Visit ARF

By Sandra Patterson (submitted by Colleen McCarty)



Photo Sandra Patterson

The 2nd grade Lafayette Girl Scout Troop 30659 chose to donate part of the profits the troop made from selling Girl Scout Cookies this year to Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF).

On May 13, 2010, the Girl Scouts visited ARF to deliver their donation. During the visit they met Zev, one of ARF's Therapy Dogs. Therapy dogs are qualified pets that

make visits each month as part of ARF's Pet Hug Pack team to hospitals, rehab centers, schools and adult day care facilities throughout Contra Costa County. The pets, like Zev, provide unconditional love to the people they visit; and provided this to the scouts during the visit. They carried out the part of the Girl Scout Law that day to "make the world a better place."

Submit stories to
schooldesk@lamorindaweekly.com

Meet New JM Principal Joan Danilson

By Sophie Braccini



Picture courtesy of Joan Danilson

It should feel just like home for Joan Danilson when she steps in Bruce Burns' formidable shoes come the summer. Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School's (JM) new principal was vice-principal for eight years at Stone Valley Middle School in Alamo, a school comparable in many aspects to JM. Danilson went through a selection process with administrators, parents and teachers who reviewed over 30 resumes and interviewed six candidates.

"We had selection criteria such as vision, ability to inspire, leadership, instructional leadership; approachability; integrity; knowledge of middle school students," said Burns, who will move to the Superintendent's office and participated at every stage of the recruitment process, "Mrs. Danilson stood out because of her experience and her tremendous knowledge relative to 6-8 students in terms of academic expectations, behavior and social growth."

Danilson is JM's fourth principal in five years. "It is time to get things settled down and I plan to stay a very long time at JM," said Danilson. The mother of three children (one in college, one in high school and one in elementary school), says it was time for her to

get to the next step, after 12 years serving as a vice-principal in Alamo, San Ramon Valley High School and San Lorenzo High School.

The JM community should not expect radical changes, at least not in the short term. "I plan to create connections with the community before proposing any change," said Danilson, "(and) continue the culture of excellence that has dominated JM."

She is somewhat familiar with JM already. She has met JM's vice-principal, Brad Carn, through the middle-school network for co-administrators, and counselor Heidi Felt when she did her internship at Stone Valley. "I had been in touch with Heidi when she proposed the Safe School Ambassador Program at JM," said Danilson, "it is a program that I had been running at Stone Valley for many years."

Burns anticipates both continuity and innovation. "While her current school is similar in demographics, it is different. Stone Valley Middle School has programs and events we do not have. For example, insofar as innovation, Stone Valley has established Professional Learning Communities. Stone Valley manages student discipline, technology, and academic departments differently. Some of the things that attracted us were the differences and innovations. There are programs and services we certainly want to continue at JM, however, we have made several changes and improvements. I do anticipate Joan learning the JM culture next year and then working toward continued improvements relative to the district goals and the new ideas she has positive experiences with," states Burns.

Lafayette Nursery School Reunites

Submitted by Monica Chappell



Photo submitted

In November 1953, six local parents met to discuss the formation of a cooperative nursery school in Lafayette. Fast forward to 2010 and 57 years later, Lafayette Nursery School (LNS) is still a part of the Lafayette community. For the past 35 years, parents of past students have gathered annually at a luncheon to reconnect with LNS friends. This year's gathering, which was held on May 28th and attended by 45 parents and two graduates of the class of 1966, had a special component: Nancy Parry, longtime AM Director, announced her retirement after almost 40 years at the LNS. To send words of congratulations to Nancy, please forward to Lafayette Nursery School, 979 First Street, Lafayette, CA 94549 or via the website www.lafayettenurseryschool.com. Join us in wishing Nancy well.

Eagles of Troop 57

Submitted by David Carter



Bottom Row, Left to Right: Alex Yeh, Zachary Mayeri, Chris Hart
Top Row, l to r: Ross Carter, AJ Buettner, Emmett Jacobs

Troop 57, graciously chartered by St. Mark's United Methodist Church, has been serving the Orinda community for over 46 years and has produced 122 Eagle Scouts over its history. Each Eagle candidate must earn a minimum of 21 merit badges, including 12 Eagle-required badges, demonstrate leadership and scout spirit, and successfully complete a service project to earn the Eagle Award.

This year the Troop has the pleasure of adding six new Eagle Scouts, the highest achievement in the Boy Scouts of America, to that honor roll. These scouts, who all attend Miramonte High School, are: Christopher Michael Hart, Emmett Thompson Jacobs, Alexander James Yeh, Ross Michael Carter, Zachary Cole Formisano Mayeri, and Andrew J. (AJ) Buettner-Fourie. These young men join the approximately four percent of all Boy Scouts who attain the Eagle Scout rank.

The new Eagle Scouts will celebrate their accomplishment at an Eagle Court of Honor on June 12th, 2010 at Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church in Orinda.

Chris Hart: His project was to help the Kindergarten and First Grade classes of Del Rey Elementary School in Orinda. Chris built and installed three ten foot redwood benches outside these classrooms and eight smaller pine benches to be used within the classrooms.

Emmett Jacobs: His project was done for Temple Isaiah in

Lafayette. His project was to design, build and implement a compost system. This included the creation of a power point presentation that was used to instruct classes and various employees at the Temple, where he explained the importance of "going green."

Alex Yeh: His project provided first aid kits, medical stations, and basic first aid demonstrations and information to the residents and staff of SHELTER, Inc.

Ross Carter: His project was building an address wall for the City of Orinda Community Center. The project was designed to reduce confusion of people looking for the Community Center as its address was unmarked. The project included removing/replacing landscaping to build a footing and foundation wall, then placing stone veneer and lettering on the wall to match that of the community center and library complex.

Zachary Mayeri: His project was the restoration of the bleachers at the Miramonte High School tennis courts. This included temporary removal of the bleachers to build a new foundation, replacement of the bleachers wood components, and resetting the structure in place.

Andrew (AJ) Buettner-Fourie: His project was to refurbish the entry area of the Orinda Intermediate School education garden to make it wheelchair accessible. The project also included the building and replacement of several old benches and table.

7 Steps to Success: The College Transfer Path: Part II

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

Each year I receive calls from high school seniors who want help with the transfer path. Although I have been an advisor for years, my heart still skips a beat when I get this type of call, particularly when it arrives at the tail end of the student's senior year, or worse, mid-summer. Thanks to the California budget crisis, my heart now skips two beats. The benefits of attending community college, such as smaller classes and lower tuition, are most beneficial if you can enroll and progress through the system in a timely way. And that has become a challenge.

Part I of this series, (in the April 28th issue, <http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0404/The-Transfer-Path-in-College-Admissions-Part-I.html>) emphasized the critical role of California's Community Colleges (CCCs) to a healthy transfer function between the junior colleges and California's public four-year institutions (nine University of California campuses, UCs, and 23 California State Universities, hereafter, CSUs). The CCCs represent the single largest system of higher education in the nation; this system is suffering a huge blow from cuts in state funding. The UCs and the CSUs have shifted towards far more competitive admissions, and this year many boosted admission of non-residents and international students in order to generate revenue. Fewer seats were available for California residents and wait-lists were instituted at seven UC campuses. The only guaranteed space for UC eligible students was at UC Merced. These factors, along with the economic

downturn, increased the numbers of students trying to enroll in CCCs, thus compounding the effects of the budget crisis.

Nationwide research shows most students who begin at community college do not transfer or earn a degree (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Still, everyone knows a story about a student who transferred successfully in just two years and went on to earn a four-year degree. Here are my recommendations for how to beat the odds and be one of those success stories:

1. Don't Make Community College an Afterthought. The community college option should not be a late addition to your college admissions plan. Transfer to a 4-year school is a process that is ideally planned well in advance. Now more than ever it takes MORE planning to be a successful transfer student.
2. Go Beyond Your High School's Requirements for Graduation: If you meet minimum requirements for the UC/CSU at the time you graduate, you are guaranteed admission to at least some universities, after completion of 60 transferrable semester units (or 90 quarter units) and a specific GPA. Earning a grade of 'C' or better in UC/CSU required coursework in high school will also increase your chances of passing the required assessment exams that place you in college English and math coursework. That could mean skipping over remedial classes which have no transfer credits. Finally, if you decide to try and transfer early (lower division transfer is the technical phrase), your high school tran-

script will still be reviewed. So don't slack off!

3. Identify Your Transfer Path in High School: At the end of your junior year or early in your senior year begin to research both the CCCs as well as the 4-year public or private universities you are interested in attending to complete your degree. Visit the campuses and make appointments with the counseling departments. Then really zero in on the schools that make it to your final list.
4. Discover Articulation Agreements: Most CCCs have what are called articulation agreements in place, often with both private and public 4-year schools. These matriculation agreements specify the required general education courses as well as prerequisites for your intended major. Select classes with your articulation plan clearly in mind. But BEWARE! Many universities, especially state schools, change their transfer requirements on a regular basis. Staying up-to-date on the changes is your responsibility. And now with the state's budgetary challenges, the transfer path can become a moving target. Your best bet is to identify a counselor you can work with at the CCC early. Then stay in touch by meeting regularly.
5. Take A College Success Class: Learning how to balance academics with the other obligations in your life is critical. Taking a college student success course during the summer before you start classes will focus your attention on the development of an academic plan with associated milestones. These classes are becoming more popular, although they are called by differ-

ent names. If your CCC does not offer one, find one at a different school and enroll. New evidence indicates that students who take such a course have more success.

6. Don't Let Life Get in The Way: Students who can attend CCC full-time are more likely to earn a degree. Try to build your life around your academic priorities.
7. Your Grade Point Average (GPA) Is the Best Predictor of Success: Just as in high school, your GPA (in classes that have transfer credits) is the single most important factor in the transfer admissions decision. Study hard and get tutoring help early. Don't wait to fail or drop a class. That only delays your transfer plans. This past admissions cycle witnessed a 20% increase in UC applications and a 32% increase in applications to the CSUs. Minimum eligibility will no longer make the grade.



Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D. is an educational consultant and certified college admissions advisor. Her goal is to help students and their families understand the admissions process, research college and career options, create a customized college list and submit a strong and cohesive application. Dr. LaScala is a member of NACAC, WACAC, and HECA and earned a certification in College Admissions and Career Planning from University of California at Berkeley. Contact her at (925) 891-4491 or elizabeth@doingcollege.com.