

Acalanes High School • Bentley School • Burton Valley • Camino Pablo Campolindo • Contra Costa Jewish Day School • Del Rey Donald L. Rheem • Glorietta • Happy Valley • Joaquin Moraga

# Lamorinda Schools

Lafayette Elementary • Los Perales • Miramonte • Orinda Academy Orinda Intermediate • Saklan Valley School • Sleepy Hollow Springhill • Stanley Middle • St. Perpetua School • Wagner Ranch

## Troop 30378 Moraga Girl Scouts Appreciate Nature

Submitted by Jenny Moreau



Troop 30378, (front row, left to right): Paige, Abby, Remi; (Back row, left to right): Lauren, Jacqueline, Fiona, Amanda, Ally, Emma, Isabel, Carolyn, Sophie. Photo provided

Moraga Girl Scout Troop 30378, composed of 5th graders from Camino Pablo Elementary School, explored a fabulous East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) trail. On September 22, 2010, the girl scouts met at nearby Rancho Laguna Park to begin their hike on EBMUD's Kings Canyon trail. This is a wide, fairly flat trail--

easy for a first-time hiker. Along the way, they saw and took pictures of a flock of pelicans, a lizard, a small snake, and flowers. At the half way point, the girls sat down to eat apples and draw in observation journals. Local trails enable scouts to connect with nature, observe wildlife, and learn about watershed and reservoirs. Family per-

mits are easy to obtain on EBMUD's website: <http://www.ebmud.com/recreation/trail-use-permit/east-bay-trails>. The hike offered the opportunity for scouts to practice Leave No Trace principles and fulfill the Girl Scout slogan, "do a good deed daily," by picking up trash.

## Long-awaited Upgrades at Two District High Schools

By Diana Stephens

The Acalanes Unified High School District's Governing Board approved construction projects at Campolindo and Las Lomas high schools. Financed through Measure E funding, the projects will include upgrades in technology, electrical systems, and energy management.

Phase One of the construction at Campolindo will include the conversion of three classrooms, storage areas made into office space, the modernization of the Video Production

classroom, and the renovation of a women's restroom.

Las Lomas will have its plumbing upgraded and add two bathrooms, replace aging canopies, repair siding and some roofing, while also expanding its 3D Art classroom, as well as renovating the Culinary Arts classroom and the tennis courts.

According to Dave Humphrey, the Director of Facilities and Construction for the District, these projects will be completed during the summer

of 2011. In addition, the community can anticipate a new roof to be installed at Campolindo High School in the summer of 2012, and the multipurpose room/cafeteria/choral area to be renovated in the summer of 2013.

The current improvements to Campolindo High School are anticipated to be in excess of \$3.5 million while the improvements to Las Lomas High School are expected to come in just under \$3 million. Let the bidding begin.

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## OUSD Candidate Forum

By Andrea A. Firth

Sarah Butler, Tyson Krumholz, Julie Rossiter, Chris Severson, and Bekki Van Voorhis-Gilbert, the five candidates for Orinda Union School District's Board of Trustees, met before an audience of about 70 residents, teachers, and administrators last week to answer questions posed in a forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley. Three of the five will replace departing Board members Jack Bontemps, Riki Sorenson, and Pam West.

The three female candidates presented resumes replete with volunteer experience in the classroom and parent clubs; the men had more limited on-site school involvement. The candidates' responses were consistent on some issues including the support of small class sizes, the need to improve communication, and the problem of bullying and the need to address it.

The candidates did not, however, agree on everything.

In response to why they want to serve on the Board: Butler and Rossiter stressed their experience as legislative representatives and their focus on the budget process. Krumholz cited his professional background as a civil engineer and desire to encourage participation and listen as he leads. Severson, who was typically concise in his answers, said he was invested in the tradition of excellence in the OUSD school system, which he attended and will educate his five children. Van Voorhis-Gilbert identified herself

as a new voice, one that was ready to infuse a little more debate. She described the addition of three new members as an opportunity to change the complexion of a board that has had a number of the same trustees for a long time.

On curriculum decisions: Van Voorhis-Gilbert was supportive of more teacher input and control in driving the curriculum, noting that her impression has been that the District administration has taken a top-down approach and provided limited ways for teachers to provide feedback on what is working in the classroom. Krumholz felt teachers should be using technology in a more integrated way. Butler, Rossiter, and Severson agreed that teachers are a valuable resource to curriculum enhancement and identified open communication as the answer.

On budget cuts: Krumholz and Van Voorhis-Gilbert both supported incremental reductions across the budget versus the elimination of entire programs. Van Voorhis-Gilbert added that she would support the elimination of administrative bonuses over other budget cuts. Rossiter stated the current school board has done an amazing job of handling the cuts given the significant budget shortfalls, and she anticipated more difficult budget decisions in the future. Butler concurred that further budget reductions by the State were likely and emphasized that she has followed the budget issue closely, adding that the decision between incremental reductions

and eliminating a program can be difficult and multi-factored. Severson would look to first go leaner with support staff and maintenance and work to keep cuts away from the classroom.

On changing the Board's meeting time: Van Voorhis-Gilbert was outspoken, stating, "A 4:00 meeting is a staff meeting, not a Board meeting. It's inconvenient to both working and stay-at-home parents." She advocated moving the meeting to the evening. Butler, Krumholz, and Severson were amenable to a meeting time change; Rossiter said she was not sure that a later time would work well for teachers and staff who live outside of Orinda.

On a new parcel tax: Severson stated that parent contributions already cover 30% of the OUSD budget, and he would not be in favor of an additional parcel tax at this time. Krumholz was not sure residents would accept another parcel tax and felt the District needed to explore other options. Rossiter noted that the community is very generous to the schools and a survey to gauge residents' views was needed. Butler felt that the potential for budget reductions was quite real but that consideration of a new parcel tax required a thorough review process. Through her own informal survey, Van Voorhis-Gilbert said she believed that residents would support a parcel tax if they believed the District was spending well, but that a new tax should have a two to three-year sunset.

Submit stories to [schooldesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:schooldesk@lamorindaweekly.com)

### Family Focus

## Date Rape

By Margie Ryerson, MFT

Date rape is a difficult, uncomfortable topic for many reasons. It involves a violent act, usually perpetrated on a young person. The victim experiences an enormous sense of betrayal and personal self-loathing because she actually knows her assaulter and usually feels responsible for getting herself into a bad situation. Too often the victim does not report the rape to anyone. She is fearful that she will not be believed and is too ashamed to acknowledge what happened. Sadly, the victim doesn't obtain the compassion and vindication she desperately needs to deal with the rape and to eventually have some closure.

Date rape is all too prevalent on college campuses. In one study at Cornell University, twenty percent of women claimed they had sex forced on them. According to another survey, four out of five college students who were raped knew their attackers. Usually drugs, alcohol, or both are contributing factors. Some experts estimate that only about ten percent of all rapes are reported to police. Fewer still make it to court.

Unfortunately, most local therapists see victims of date rapes from our high schools. Fifteen years ago I saw an 18-year old girl who hadn't told anyone that she had been raped a year earlier. When "Caroline" was a high school junior, she was at a

party where everyone got drunk. She went off into a bedroom with a boy she knew casually, just to "fool around." However, the boy forced himself on her despite her loud protestations and attempts to physically escape from him.

After this incident, Caroline became depressed and bulimic. She didn't realize all the implications of the date rape until a few years later when she heard about the subject during her college orientation. She joined a rape support group on campus and told her parents. When she came to see me for treatment Caroline was embarrassed, guilt-ridden, and depressed. Caroline had thought highly of the boy who raped her because he was an athlete and popular. She blamed herself as much as him. But being drunk and going into a bedroom with someone did not at all excuse the fact that she was raped, a criminal act. Ultimately, Caroline was able to realize that the rape was not at all her fault. As we worked together, she was able to become angry that someone violated her in this way. Her depression lifted as she stopped turning her anger inward towards herself.

Another teenage girl I saw several years ago, "Julia," did report her date rape to her parents and the police. She stood up for herself admirably. The problem was that the perpetrator and his

family and friends tried to turn the situation around to make Julia into a liar and a troublemaker. The boy's reputation and future was on the line, and his supporters closed ranks around him. Most of Julia's close friends wouldn't support her for fear of reprisal. As Julia said, it felt like an attack all over again since she was so deeply hurt by so many in her community. Her trust in people was severely damaged. She did get to see who her true friends were, but it took Julia many years to recover from this trauma.

All too often friends fail to rally behind victims of date rape. These friends are often torn between loyalty to the victim and concern about their social standing with their peers. They usually experience guilt and anxiety if they fail to support their friend in her ordeal. To a much lesser degree than the rape victim, of course, her friends may also go through a great deal of torment.

One particularly horrifying situation was the case of a 29 year-old client whom I was seeing for depression. "Shelley" and some female friends went to a bar in San Francisco one evening and met some cute guys there. They talked and flirted and then went to one of the guy's apartments to continue partying. Unbeknownst to Shelley someone drugged her by putting something into her wine. She didn't

remember much after that. She later thought that she must have drunk too much and passed out. Unfortunately her friends were too inebriated to know what was happening to her.

A month later Shelley discovered that she had a case of gonorrhea. Several weeks after that, she found out that she was pregnant. Naturally, she was horrified. Shelley was Catholic and the idea of an abortion went very counter to her beliefs. She had no idea who the man was who raped her, and no one could remember where the apartment was located.

Some people would judge Shelley harshly for her actions - drinking too much and then going to a stranger's apartment with her girlfriends. But the fact is that she was raped. She did not consent to having sex, and didn't even know anything was happening to her at the time. Shelley acted stupidly, but the person who did this to her acted criminally.

Unlike Shelley, most victims of date rape know their attacker and often have some kind of relationship with him. They can be friends, casually dating each other, or romantically involved. Women need to know how to protect themselves from the possibility of date rape. They can avoid drinking too much and make sure that they have one or more designated friends who will watch out for them. They

need to be sure to keep any alcoholic beverages under their control. They need to give clear signals to males at all times, and establish their boundaries ahead of time. They must avoid putting themselves into compromising situations where there is no escape.

Males need to respond appropriately when they hear the word "no" from a date or a girlfriend, even if they think they received prior encouragement. Too often in these situations, males are inebriated and irrational. They need to realize the critical implications of their behavior.

It is important for rape victims to tell those close to them and to seek help and support. Our community has services available through the Rape Crisis Center in Concord, a 24-hour rape crisis hotline, and the Contra Costa County Crisis Center. Supportive individual therapy is also an essential part of the recovery process.

What can parents do to help prevent their children from experiencing this devastating situation? When your child reaches puberty, it is time to discuss sexual issues, including date rape. You will need to explain things on a level in accordance with your child's age and maturity. Young girls need to be taught to always say "NO" and "STOP" loudly if they are uncomfortable in any situation and to avoid let-

ting potential embarrassment interfere. They can benefit from self-defense classes in case they need to use physical force to protect themselves.

Young boys need training in responding to girls saying "no" to them. Even if he receives a mixed signal from a girl that she may want him to, say, kiss her, if she says "no" or "stop" in the process, he needs to immediately respect her wishes.

Parents need to repeat these messages periodically until they are well-established guides for behavior. It is never too early to discuss the issues associated with date rape, but unfortunately it can sometimes be too late.



Margie Ryerson, MFT, is a marriage and family therapist in Orinda and Walnut Creek. Contact her at 925-376-9323 or [margierye@yahoo.com](mailto:margierye@yahoo.com). She is also available for parenting consultation.