

## Springhill Principal Retires

By Cathy Dausman



In his teaching career Bruce Wodhams has served under several school district superintendents, worked with at least two office managers and three different school mascots, and endured two years of whole school remodeling—and that’s just at one school. In June Wodhams will retire after twenty four years as principal at Lafayette’s Springhill Elementary. Not bad for someone who only expected to be in the district for “just a few years.”

Wodhams’ successor is Heather Duncan, the principal at Walnut Creek’s Buena Vista El-

ementary. Duncan’s appointment was announced May 2 during a special meeting of the Lafayette School Board. “We are delighted to welcome Heather to the Lafayette community,” says Lafayette School Superintendent Fred Brill. Duncan says she is “thrilled to be coming” and can’t wait to get started. She has been in education for 18 years – in Walnut Creek for 12 years, five of them at Buena Vista.

Wodhams’ teaching career began in Clover City. A graduate of University of the Redlands, he earned his master’s in teaching from USC and admin-

istrative certificate from Chico State University.

He taught for a while in Stavanger, Norway at a K-12 school with an enrollment of some seven hundred students. He was principal for three years in the Sierra Foothills town of Marysville at its smallest elementary school-- a school with five teachers and 150 students. Wodhams did a brief stint as a high school assistant principal, but found he missed the elementary school environment. In 1987, Wodhams relocated to the East Bay, accepting the job at Springhill. He’s been there ever since.

## SCHOOL CALENDAR

**Acalanes Union High School District**  
Board Room AUHSD Office  
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette  
Wednesday, May 18, 7:30pm

**Lafayette School District**  
LAFSD Office  
3477 School Street, Lafayette  
TONIGHT Wednesday, May 11, 7pm

**Orinda Union School District**  
OUSD Office  
8 Altarinda Road, Orinda  
Monday, June 6, 4pm

**Moraga School District**  
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium  
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga  
Tuesday, June 14, 7:30pm

Wodhams recalls fellow principals at Happy Valley and Burton Valley working over twenty years at their respective jobs, so longevity in the position is “kind of the expectation.” After all these years, the work sometimes makes him “tired, but never bored.”

Wodhams has many admirers. Jean Follmer is Springhill Elementary Parent Faculty Club President. Follmer says Wodhams “has made a significant impact on our community. He’s been incredibly supportive of our special education program and was instrumental in the solar panel installations and All Things Green in our district. He sings and plays the guitar with our children (“that’s my therapy,” says Wodhams), is an avid supporter of Scouts and piloted the Character Counts program for the district.”

David Gerson is a Springhill parent and member of the Governing Board of Lafayette School District. Gerson says Wodhams

has been “as concerned about what happens on the playground as he is about what happens in the classroom. He has focused not only on the district’s academic curriculum but also on teaching lessons about life...tolerance, compassion, respect, fairness and empathy.”

Brill echoes that thought, calling Wodhams “a dedicated educator who has transformed the culture of Springhill School...and models what it means to be a life-long learner.”

Wodhams’ last official day in district is June 30; Duncan expects to get started in July. Wodhams travels to Norway (yes, Stavanger) after school lets out. His advice to Duncan is “Enjoy the kids. That’s what it’s all about.” Eventually Wodhams hopes to return as a Springhill volunteer, “When the new principal is comfortable having me here.” But for now it seems he will be taking David Gerson’s last bit of advice to heart:

“Relax and have some fun!”

## TEEN SCENE

### Prom, Anyone?

By Courtney Cheng



Prom Promenade: Lauren, Courtney, Faithlina, and Megan Photos courtesy Cheng family

In the land of high school, where chivalry is mostly dead but relationships still bloom, prom probably ranks as the second-most anticipated event of each [female] student’s high school career.

As junior and senior classes prepare for their own prom experience, there are numerous, perhaps too many, challenges encountered. It’s not about the dresses or the limos; it’s about the dates and the asking, as portrayed in Disney’s newest film, *Prom*.

Almost every girl wants to go to prom with a date. This is to be expected, but there is a problem: these girls aren’t always asked. A few years back, a female student at Acalanes had so many date plans fall through she almost completely opted out of going to prom. Her friends finally set her up with one of her best guy friends, and they both ended up having a great time.

So often these days, teenage guys don’t realize that their “perfect date” is right in front of them. From a girl’s perspective, it seems that some boys will refuse to go to prom if they can’t go with their crush. Chances are, though, if the boy asked a friend, things will be less pressured at the actual event and both parties will have more fun.

Miramonte junior Lisa Chang agrees. “I wanted to go with someone I knew I was going to have fun with. Not necessarily a romantic interest, but just someone I know I’m going to be comfortable with the day of prom.”

Other times, guys try their best to “outdo”

everyone else in the way they ask. There’s no need to find the most romantic way to ask someone. Keeping things simple often works best.

For her own prom on March 19th, Lisa took matters into her own hands and asked her date herself. “My date and I are math partners in our Calculus class. Whenever we didn’t get the score we wanted on partner quizzes, he would jokingly blame me and tell me to bake cookies to repay him. I took that idea and baked five cupcakes spelling out ‘Prom?’ in frosting letters accompanied by a poem.”

*Prom* is perhaps Disney’s most realistic movie to date. The film encompasses all the drama of asking someone to prom. Five different stereotypical couples’ scenarios are played out: the dateless loser, the perfect couple gone wrong, the dateless pretty girl, the perfect “for show” couple, and the beautiful girl caught between two possible dates. There is, of course, a happy ending – one that may actually be achievable in real life. Every high school student should be able to look back on prom with a smile, recalling funny stories and laughing at photos. The only thing that would make the night even better is being able to reminisce on the memories twenty years later with the same friends in those (cheesy) photos.

If all goes well, the senior ball attendees from the Acalanes Union High School District will have just that this May.

*Courtney Cheng is a junior in high school. She enjoys playing violin, writing poetry, and reading fictional novels.*



Courtney Cheng, 11th grade, getting ready for the big night



Lisa Chang’s Prom Cupcake invitation to Miramonte’s big dance

Ask Dr. Harold –

## Summer Time

By Harold Jules Hoyle Ph.D.

Did a parent talk at a local school this week and parents were asking what they should do to have a psychologically healthy summer for their kids. So here are some things to think about when setting up the schedule for your family this summer.

### Perspective

Remember how long summer seemed when you were a kid? Here is what is going on. If you are nine you are about to embark on a summer that comprises 2% of your life. My summer this year will account for 1/250th of my life. So when they say they just want to chill or hang for the summer you can say “no.” I am sure that for kids learning how to properly chill and hang is an important skill set to have. Many of my teen clients with anxiety have “learning to chill” as a treatment goal. What is important for us as parents to teach is that even an important activity like hanging with your friends is not the only activity of the day or week or summer. No one gets to take the summer off. Responsibilities continue in the summer. The family still needs to run and they are part of the family.

### Vacationers and Travelers

Many of us use time in the summer to go on vacation. The reality is that parents and kids have very different views of what vacation means. When you are a kid you are much more of an adventurer or traveler. Kids find and create new identities, they build things that can be seen from space, and they don’t understand why you want to relax and read a book. For crying out loud there is a waterslide over there! They think you are crazy. Even if you tell them you need to do their favorite homework behavior of chilling and hanging. Make sure you spend some time in travelers’ land and you carve out time for you to relax. If you carve out time for yourself you might be better at helping them carve out time for their important activities.

### Dynamics and Activities

I tend to begin summer with a trip to a bookstore where I finance my kids’ picking out summer books. My daughter traditionally loaded up on books and my son would

say, “Dad it is summer, you’re not supposed to read in summer.” To which I say, “not true,” and here is why. If we let kids turn summer into a zone where they return to every bad habit they can think of we have lost the battle. When summer hits there are still bed times, chores, reading, writing, reflecting, and so many others. The areas that kids need to balance can be thought of in many ways but here are the psychological basic dynamics, thinking, emotion, physical, spiritual, and aesthetic. Make a list and encourage you child to do something from each of these areas each day. You can expand your list to social areas like their room, the house, the yard, and something nice for a family member. They will need to fit their preferred activities in and among these activities.

### Road Trip

I am not sure about the psychology on this but people in a car for a long time tend to have good conversations. Even if the don’t, they often think they do. The bay area may be one of the best areas on earth for a road trip with the kids. Have a family dinner with the expressed purpose of coming up with some road trips for this summer, sand between the toes, towers of granite, fresh oysters, cousins.....whatever it is, give your kids something to write about when they get back to school in August.



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