

# Acalanes Presents 'The Drowsy Chaperone' March 3-5

Submitted by Mandy Chivers



Acalanes High School students at a recent rehearsal of "The Drowsy Chaperone"

Photos Rick Sasner

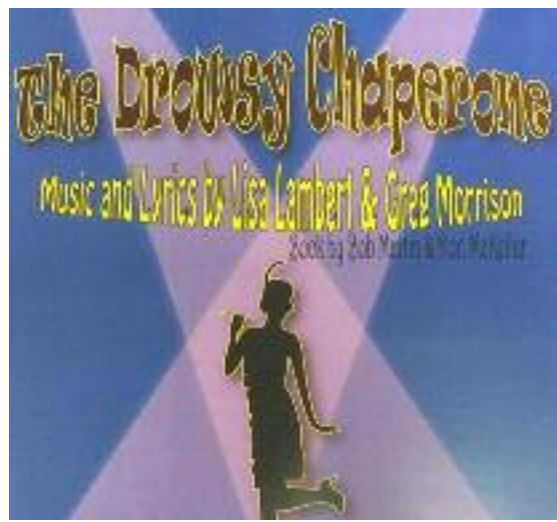


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Acalanes High School's spring production of "The Drowsy Chaperone" – a Tony award-winning farcical play within a comedy by Lisa Lambert and Greg Morrison – is sure to delight. The "Man in the Chair" is your guide as you navigate his favorite musical from the '20s: "The Drowsy Chaperone."

The tale is one of slapstick comedy, improbable situations, and a wedding that may or may not happen. The show travels in and out of the Man in the Chair's imagination, strung together with snappy, upbeat '20s-influenced song and dance.

"The annual spring musical is a total Performing Arts collaboration," says Bruce Lengacher, director of choral activities and Acalanes Performing Arts Department chair. "The Drama department contributes set design, set construction, some advanced drama students, and the technical crew. Instrumental Music provides the musicians for the pit orchestra for every performance, and some of the top players in the program are

in the pit. Choral Music provides the bulk of the cast and production company, which is made up entirely of students."

This year's production has a student director, producer, publicist, and make-up key, Lengacher says. "In a mere nine weeks, we go from table read to three full-scale performances and conclude with an empty theater waiting for next year's adventure!"

You can see the production of "The Drowsy Chaperone" at 7 p.m. March 3-5 at the Acalanes Performing Arts Center. For more information, visit [acalaneschoral.org](http://acalaneschoral.org). Tickets are open to the general public: \$18 for adults; \$16 for seniors (60 and older) and students, and are available at the Acalanes Webstore, <https://acalaneshs.revtrak.net/tek9.asp?pg=products&grp=38>.



Acalanes Choral Director Bruce Lengacher with Student Director Charlie Manzano and Student Producer Taylor Wondolowski

## The Four Must Dos on Campus Visits

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

Among the most exciting parts of the college search, and certainly one of the most important, is the campus visit. There is no better way to find out if a college is the best fit for you than to register for an information session and arrange a campus tour. Today's busy families make sacrifices in time and money to tour campuses, so make yours count by planning to do four things that help ensure a successful visit.

### 1. Work closely with the admissions office.

The student should register for the visit using his or her dedicated college email account (one used only for college admission purposes so nothing gets lost or missed). Registering allows the admissions office to record your interest in their school and to properly schedule your visit. If you have questions in advance, contact the admissions officer assigned to work with students who live in your home county or state. Send questions in advance. Ask if she or he can make arrangements, for example, to meet with students who share your interests, speak with faculty in your intended major(s) or to meet with a counselor in the career development center. Most admissions officers will take the time to answer all of your questions and help you to make these appointments. They also keep detailed records of each visiting student's interests. These records might make a difference in an admissions decision or result in an invitation to become part of a unique living and/or learning opportunity, such as an honors program or scholarship.

### 2. Take the campus tour, then tour some more.

When you take a campus tour, you are most likely to see a dorm room, the library, athletic facilities, the recreation center, the dining hall, the

student union/center, classrooms, labs and performing arts facilities. You might receive invitations to attend events on campus or a discount to shop at the campus store. But there's a lot more to a college campus than you will see on the formal tour. It pays dividends to walk around, and find out where students go to socialize, take breaks from classes and eat meals off campus. You will want to try a meal in the dining hall, and if you have special dietary needs, find out if the school can meet them. You should also find out where students go to receive medical care. At some colleges the answer is easy; the school has a health center, maybe even a hospital on campus. At other schools, you might need to go off campus for medical care. Also, notice how students get around campus. It's easy to walk around a school that occupies only a few city blocks. But you will need to take shuttles to get around campuses at many larger, more spread-out universities.

### 3. Get the scoop from the college's students.

You will get first impressions on the campus tour. But you get only a small number, at best, of student impressions and then only from students who are among the happiest on campus. If your tour guide offers you a business card, take it. That person could be very helpful as you make your short list of schools as well as your final decision. But as you venture on your own, stop and talk to students. Ask them if they like the school. Was it easy or hard for them to get into the major that they wanted? To transfer to a different major? To see a professor for help on a paper or exam? What is the social center of the campus? Where do students live after the first year? Take and read a copy of the campus newspaper, so you get a

sense of hot topics on the campus, cultural events, athletic spirit and guest speakers – and add it to the other information you gather.

### 4. Check out the community off campus.

The campus is not the complete picture of a college community. There are many differences between a school that's in a large city versus one in a smaller "college town." The college town is more likely to look to the college to be the cultural center of the community; a large city will have a cultural life that is not over-dependent on the college for support. You're more likely to find more "school spirit" in the college town. But you're also likely to find more cultural and entertainment options in the larger city. In either case, be sure that you see how easy or hard it is to get into the community surrounding campus. Can you walk right into town? Or do you need to rely on public transportation or a car to get around?



Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D. is an independent college advisor who draws upon 25 years of higher education experience to help guide and support the college admissions process for students and their families. Dr. LaScala is a member of NACAC, WACAC and HECA. She can be contacted at (925) 891-4491 or [elizabeth@doingcollege.com](mailto:elizabeth@doingcollege.com). Visit [www.doingcollege.com](http://www.doingcollege.com) for more information about her services.

# The Chabad House of Lamorinda Helps Locals Explore Their Jewish Identity

By Sophie Braccini



Children learn how to make olive oil used in an oil lamp at the Chabad. The olive press is shown on the left. Photo provided

A new community center in Lafayette, steeped in the Jewish tradition, aims to provide educational and outreach activities for people of all ages with Jewish roots. Rabbi Yisroel Labkowski, who recently opened the Chabad House, follows the words of the founder of the Chabad movement, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, who said that "(a Chabad) should serve as a key to open the hearts of all who will visit it and all who will come under its sphere of influence – open their hearts to the very core of their Jewishness."

Labkowski says that Jews are equal, regardless of their circumstance, and therefore everyone is welcome in the Chabad. "A Jew is a Jew regardless of his affiliation, regardless of his observance; he is born Jewish and will always be a Jew," he says. "The idea is to awaken the Jewish identity everyone born Jewish has. There is no idea of membership into the Chabad, it is a place open to everyone interested."

Labkowski was born into a religious Jewish family with Russian origins in Brooklyn – the 11th in a family of 12 children. He studied in Canada, Israel and Los Angeles. He and his wife, Tzipora, were both raised by parents who were part of the Chabad movement. "We were both raised with the idea that it's not just important to live your own life, and mind your own business," he says, "but with the idea that a Jew's mission in life is to help out another Jew." Therefore rather than staying in their

comfort zone, they decided to venture west. There are about 4,500 Chabad Houses throughout the world. The Labkowski asked friends and family for seed money so they could start their service.

One of the first steps the Labkowskis took was to ask the Lafayette City Council to let them install a menorah on the Plaza during the eight days of Hanukkah. "This was a symbol of light, warmth and beauty that we wanted to share with the community," says Labkowski. "Now we have started to offer classes and activities for all ages and open to all. The activities are for people to be involved; we are not preaching. For the children, it is very hands-on, teaching by feeling." For example, children made candles for Hanukkah or they made their own lamp, learning to press olives that produced the oil that burned in the lamp.

There are many classes and activities offered: Mommy and Me, Hebrew school, monthly community Shabbat dinners, Torah reading, Jewish history, and many more. There is also a special class for women, challah bread making, which provides an opportunity of women to socialize and reflect on the meaning of challah. The next challah bread making class is scheduled for Tuesday, March 1. The Chabad also organizes celebrations for each Jewish holiday, the next one being Purim March 23-24.

For more information, go to [www.chabadoflamorinda.org](http://www.chabadoflamorinda.org).

## Campolindo High School Named 2016 East County Regional Academic Decathlon Champion

Submitted by Jonathan Lance



Campolindo's Academic Decathlon team Photo Diane Morrell, CCCOE

Campolindo High School won the 2016 East County Regional Academic Decathlon Feb. 10 for the sixth straight year. Along with being the East Bay Regional winner, the team will also represent Contra Costa County in the California State Academic Decathlon competition. Following Campolindo were Las Lomas High School (Walnut Creek), second place; and Dublin High School, third place. Teams from Acalanes and Miramonte also participated in the event.

Directed by the Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE) and with the assistance of community volunteers, the Academic Decathlon provides an opportunity for high school students to compete as individuals and teams in a series of 10 academic tests and demonstrations. The subjects in the competition include art, economics, literature, mathematics, music, science, social science, essay, interview, and speech

(prepared and impromptu) – plus the SuperQuiz.

Approximately, 120 participating high school students have been studying and preparing for this event with their coaches since September. This year's Academic Decathlon theme was "India."

Along with earning their sixth consecutive year as Contra Costa County's Academic Decathlon champion, Campolindo was also last year's national Academic Decathlon winner in the Medium School Category. High school teams are made up of nine students, grades 9-12, with a maximum of three students in each of the following divisions: Honors (3.75-4.00 GPA), Scholastic (3.00-3.74 GPA) and Varsity (2.99 GPA and below).

The Campolindo team will represent Contra Costa County at the California State Academic Decathlon, to be held in Sacramento, March 17-20.