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# Lamorinda Schools

Joaquin Moraga • Lafayette Elementary • Los Perales • Miramonte • Orinda Intermediate • Sleepy Hollow • Springhill • Stanley Middle • Wagner Ranch

## Los Perales' 10th Annual Science Fair

By Lee Borrowman, with Bruce Burns

Under the watchful eye of school mascot Pouncer the Panther, Los Perales students proudly displayed their scientific experiments on March 26. With everything from the construction of a

of M&Ms, this year's event was described by Principal Bruce Burns as, "A very kid-oriented science fair!"

We asked Burns to explain the value of the science fair: "Elementary school sci-

entists to use their life skills of curiosity and problem solving in answering typical kid-like questions such as 'I wonder how that works?' or 'I wonder what would happen if...' and then turn that into a project."

"The projects require the students to be real scientists. They must do research to find and develop their projects, and implement the scientific process. Students working with a partner have the added benefit/challenge or learning opportunity to use the life skill of cooperation - figuring out who is going to what - when - and how," Burns continues.

"The science fair also provides student scientists a wonderful opportunity to show off their work to the school community. Their work is displayed and viewed and they are asked by visitors to explain their projects - and in some cases - defend their work! (They have the opportunity to be) creative in developing their boards/displays, use their math and writing skills to prepare their reports, and use oral language and higher level thinking skills to discuss their work. The science fair provides students an opportunity to use all learning modalities in a hands-on way," Burns finishes.

When questioned as to identity of the volunteer in the panther costume, school secretary Chris O'Connell said, "It's real, okay?!"



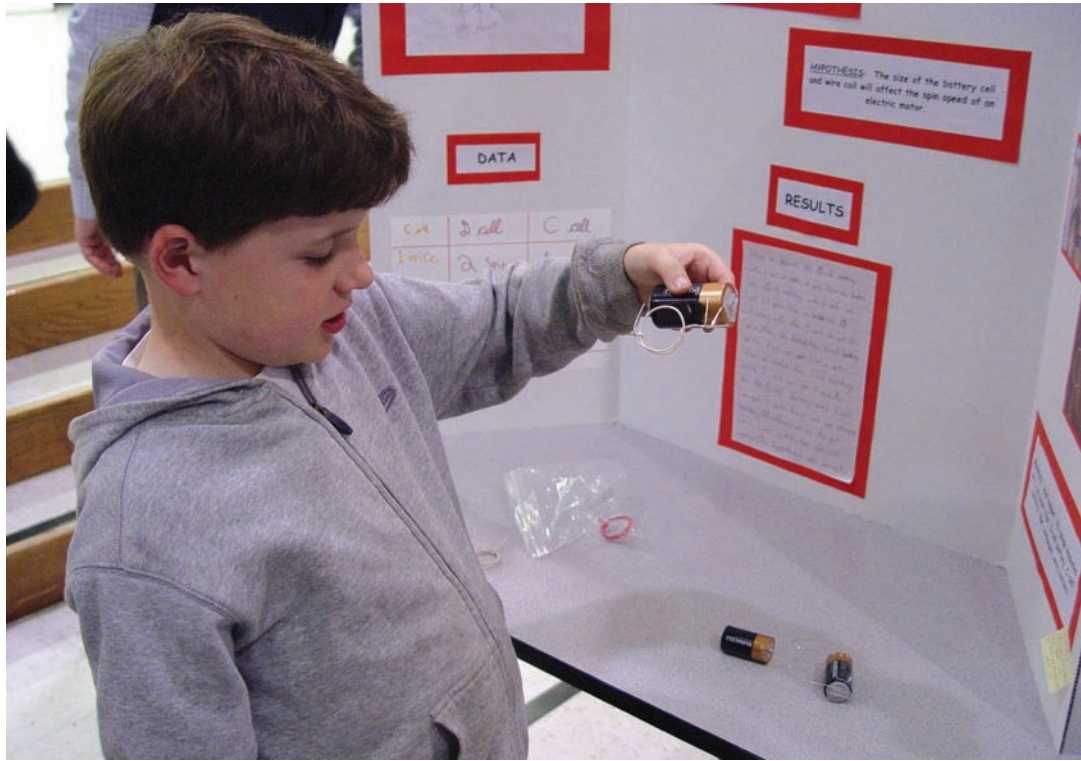
The true identity of Pouncer remains a mystery

simple electric motor to measuring the fizz in soda pop and floating the "M" off

ence fairs such as ours provide students a non-competitive opportunity



Ava Tajbakhsh and Danielle Norris make soda pop fizz



Evan Amsden rues the loss of battery power

## Joaquin Moraga Intermediate: Respect All Differences

By Lee Borrowman

The Respect All Differences program at JM is week-long celebration of respect and tolerance. During the week of March 19, students participated in lunch-time activities that included a game of Cultural Jeopardy, a tie dye project, a high school student panel discussion on cliques, and the opportunity

Anna Schoenbrunner and Katie Mitchell, whose STAND project was developed to increase awareness about issues surrounding the civil war in Darfur, said, "It's a great challenge to explain in simple terms about what is a very complex situation." Through the use of a Powerpoint

students attempted to resolve their conflicts. The conflicts revolved around such issues as race, gender, and the bullying of students who are academically-inclined or have learning disabilities. There was also an interesting skit about what the world would be like if everyone and everything were exactly the same. Through the use of music and humor, the actors attempted to hold up a mirror to intolerant behaviors, and suggested, "If you don't like what you see, then change." The message on the idea of respect was, "We all want it, but first you have to be willing to give it."



The Educational Theater's "Same-ites"

to view cultural dance performances. The week was capped by a day-long Friday program during which students attended two assemblies, one presented by students from the Campolino STAND (Students Taking Action Now for Darfur) group, the other a performance by The Educational Theater Group called "Respect, Tolerance and Understanding."

presentation and "thought-talk" discussions the group made a big impression on JM students, who asked questions such as "Why is the government doing this?" "Why can't they compromise?" and "What's happening to the refugees?"

The Educational Theater Group's play, "Respect, Tolerance and Understanding," was set in a peer mediation session in which four

### What we heard from JM students

Justin Archangel: "I never heard of Darfur until today. I'm thinking about writing to the President."

Samir Shetty: "I didn't know what genocide was." Amanda Griggs: "What's going on (in Darfur) is really bad, but it was fun to learn about it."

Jack Hassler: "It's good to know people are doing something about (Darfur). The cultural dancing this week was cool, too."

Shayan Tajbakhsh: "The play was a funny and not boring way of teaching a lesson."



JM students enjoyed RAD week

## API Scores: Lamorinda Schools Continue to Dominate

By Cathy Tyson

The recently released Academic Performance Index shows that on the whole, California schools are doing better than ever, and Lamorinda schools are doing exceptionally well.

With a scale of 200 - 1,000, a score of 800 is considered officially "successful" by the California Department of Education. Among high schools, middle schools and elementary schools, Lamorinda elementary schools fared the best with an average score of 925 for Lafayette, 956 for Moraga, and 965 for Orinda. Scores for OIS were unavailable, but our two Middle schools that had scores, Stanley and Joaquin Moraga

were neck and neck with 914 and 920 respectively.

For the second year in a row, Campolino came in first place of Lamorinda high schools with a score of 901. The others were not far behind; Miramonte scored 893, Acalanes scored 889 and Las Lomas scored 839. Principal Carol Kitchens could not be more proud. "It proves what I have always known about Campolino students, that they are both talented and hard-working. This would not have been possible without our dedicated teachers and supportive parents."

While Cupertino's Faria Elementary was the top scoring school in the state with a perfect score of 1,000, in

Contra Costa County, only San Ramon Valley Unified School District's elementary schools came close to Lamorinda's numbers. Their 18 elementary schools scored on average 927. The combined average score for the 11 elementary schools in Lafayette, Orinda and Moraga is 948.

The good news is 27% of California's schools scored 800 or more, that is 2,389 out of 8,851. The bad news is a shocking 73% scored below 800, making the majority of schools in our state, "unsuccessful." No child left behind? Clearly a preponderance of children are being left behind.

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