

## Retiring Acalanes Teachers Reflect

By Anna Eames, Intern

Janet and Ramsey Thomas have been teachers in the Acalanes High School Union District for twenty-three years each. Combined, they have contributed fifty-six years towards education, and while they are not retiring from teaching, both are now retiring from this district.

They began working at Campolindo in 1984, Ramsey teaching chemistry at first, and Janet teaching math. Nineteen years ago, Ramsey moved to Acalanes, and Janet, after teaching at UC Berkeley for a time, was asked to start an AP Chemistry course at Acalanes.

Janet eventually undertook biology, as well, and then decided to introduce high school students to the science of a world outside of biology and chemistry: our world. She instituted the now district-wide science course, Environmental Science, which she taught for the past five years.

"It's a class where we look at man's impact on the environment and analyze some of the problems that are present and look at what some of the strategies are to solve those problems," said Janet. "I see those issues as really important, especially to young people who are inheriting a lot of global problems."

The couple seemed to have a thing for adding to the evolution of academics, because Ramsey, who eventually left chemistry behind to become a history teacher, was also able to play a leading role in reintroducing and pioneering curriculum.

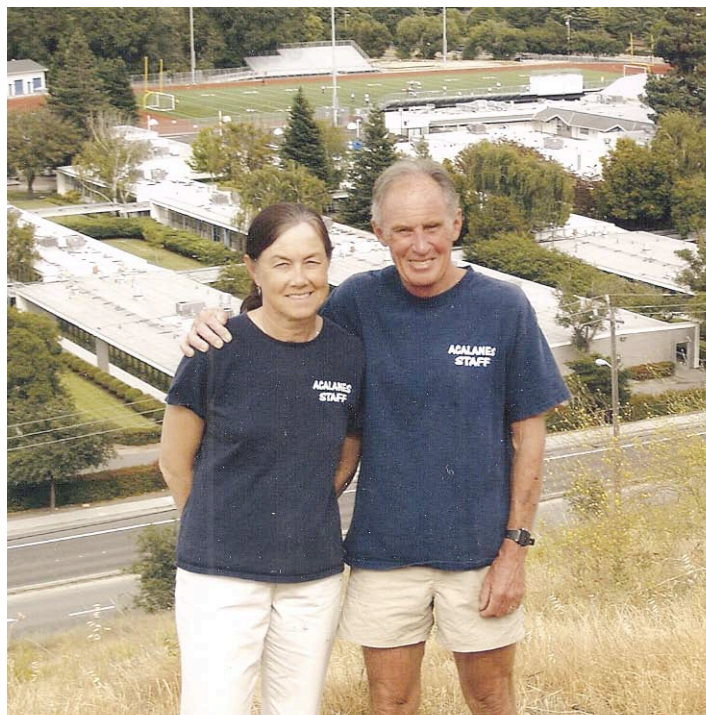
"We were able to bring back AP European History. That was not in the district ten years ago. We [also] started AP Government. It was a big addition, because now everyone in the district has those, but we started them at Acalanes," said Ramsey, who taught these two classes in addition to AP U.S. History.

Ramsey also coached Cross Country and Track & Field during almost every year of his teaching career, as well as leading the Acalanes Model UN team to quite a few championships during his ten years as an advisor of the team.

Both of these teachers left their mark on literally thousands of students, many of whom have entered the adult world by now. Furthermore, they have claimed a role in the life of every future Environmental Science student in Lamorinda and many future history students.

"I have found teaching very rewarding," said Ramsey. "Certainly, at some level, it has been a passionate interest in learning, which I suppose is one of the main reasons I was interested in teaching; because learning is one of the most important things that I enjoy doing, so I think that some of that has gotten transferred in the classroom.

Janet shared this notion. "I always loved school myself...I've always enjoyed the process of learning. I love adolescents," she said. "I saw it as a career where I could serve, challenge, be creative and do something that I felt had a real effect on those around me...I love that you can always do some-



Janet and Ramsey Thomas, both teachers

thing better and more creative to enhance your teaching practice. I've loved many of the colleagues I've worked with, as well."

While they are leaving us for now, this is not retirement. Janet is going to take at least a year off to focus on the many organizations and projects that she is a part of, leaving open the possibility of returning to teaching, and Ramsey has decided to teach chemistry and AP U.S. History at Pittsburg High School next year.

The Thomas' agreed that their students were a wonderful focal point for their careers. "What I've gotten to take [from teaching] is a positive feeling about kids. Twenty years ago, I wouldn't have said that," said Ramsey. "But the past twenty years, it's been very fulfilling living in the Lamorinda community."

"I wouldn't say that there are [favorite] moments, but just feelings at the end of the day that I have enjoyed my work - days where being with the students is just wonderful...It's really felt like an extension of who I am in my own community," said Janet.

### Law Office of Radcliffe & Radcliffe

455 Moraga Road, Suite A  
Moraga, California 94556  
925.376.2325 925.376.2328 (fax)

Serving Lamorinda for over 30 years.

*Martha C. Radcliffe – Estate planning*

*Lisa J. Radcliffe – Family Law, custody, support and visitation*



## Orinda Optometry Group

Dr. Kristine M. Eng • Dr. Weylin G. Eng • Dr. Kelly S. Shintani

Newly remodeled office & expanded frame selection  
Total eyecare for infants to adults • Glaucoma, cataract & diabetic eye evaluations  
• Urgent eyecare available • Contact lenses including Bifocals  
Laser surgery consultation • Most insurance accepted

20 Orinda Way • Orinda • 925.253.1320

# ORINDA ACADEMY summer school 2007



Session 1: June 18 - July 10  
Session 2: July 12 - August 3  
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

- Earn High School Credit
- Algebra 1 & 2, Geometry
- English, U.S. History
- Basic Skills Review for Middle School
- College Prep Requirements
- Yoga Focusing Class
- One-on-One Interaction with Teacher
- Small Class Size

**Limited Openings  
for Fall '07**

College Preparatory • Grades 7-12  
Fully Accredited  
Music, Art, Sports, Drama, Computers

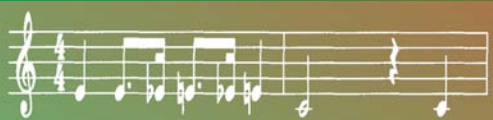
**Celebrating 25 years  
in Orinda**



## ORINDA ACADEMY

19 Altarinda Road, Orinda (925) 254-7553 x305  
[www.orindaacademy.org](http://www.orindaacademy.org)

### GOLDEN GATE BOYS CHOIR AND BELLRINGERS



**Summer  
Music  
Camp**

**Resident and Day Camp Programs  
July 29 - August 11, 2007**

Diocesan Youth Retreat Center  
1977 Reliez Valley Road, Lafayette 94549

- Choral music
- Orff instruments, handbells, chimes

*Full afternoon swimming & sports  
program, arts and crafts*

**For a camp packet, call the GGBC at (510) 887-4311  
or view web site [www.ggbc.org](http://www.ggbc.org)**