

School is out - yeah!

Have fun, kids! Lamorinda Weekly team

Technology Camp Offers Kids Creative Conduit

By Jennifer Wake



Adventures in Game Design students - (left to right) James Rokas, Conner Morgan, Sean Mauney, Peter Eisenlohr, Carter Wirtz, and Alex Meyers take a crack at video game design and have fun in the process.



Video Game Creation Xtreme students - (left to right) Stefan El baze and Amanda Griggs click on icons to build their video games for Video Game Creation Xtreme.

Photos by Jennifer Wake

During summer, it is not uncommon to see children of all ages blissfully spending hours playing video games or controlling robotic toys, but how does it all work?

Thirteen Lamorinda kids, ranging in age from 7 to 15, enrolled in iD Tech Camp at Saint Mary's College last week to find out. The weekly camps offered at local colleges and universities teach campers how to create video games, build robots, and develop Web sites.

For 11-year-old Nick Barendregt, from Lafayette, the robotics camp was a far cry from his previous Lego work. "I've always been interested in robots," he said, "but this is hard-core robotics, and a more hands on real-life experience."

Barendregt and six other campers have been building two robots: one being encoded using Easy C programming language, the other using the VEX Robotics Design System. "I've started to get into more robotics languages and coding, and will be able to use it outside the camp," Barendregt said.

Other campers participated in Video Game Creation Xtreme, where they used Clickteam Multimedia Fusion 2 Developer software to develop their own video game animation. It was the third time 12-year-old Amanda Griggs from Moraga has attended the camp, and her first time taking Video Game Creation Xtreme - the more advanced course.

"We're working on making our characters move when you move, so they jump and fly," said Griggs, who developed a game where her creatures collect orbs and bring them back to a specific location. "The hardest part is making each level harder, and to make it go to the next level. I've learned it's really hard to make the complicated video games you buy in stores."

First-time camper, 8-year-old Carter Wirtz of Orinda, built a game called Animal Wars, where animals attack each other. He said the hardest thing was "making the guy move, and stuff and make the enemies bounce around."

"I have kangaroos as some of the enemy and they bounce," he said. His game also includes a scorpion that shoots venom and dragons that shoot fire balls.

Lead instructor Sean Mauney (called "Professor" at camp, who taught the younger campers Adventures in Game Design) expected the class to be a little harder to teach. Mauney, who is a full-time 3-D Animation student at the Academy of Art, was surprised how bright the campers were and how easily they picked things up.

On the final day of the camp, parents get to see their children's work on display. "At the end there's a presentation: every computer shows the project name and they can view the projects," Griggs said. "And then we have a sponge fight."

The final camp at Saint Mary's ends next week. For more information about iD Tech Camp, you can visit www.inter-naldrive.com or call 1-888-709-TECH (8342).

This Friday - Outdoor Theater for the Younger Set!

By Lee Borrowman



The cast of Aladdin, Jr on the Hacienda stage

Photo by Lee Borrowman

If "Man and Superman," the current Cal Shakes production at the Bruns Amphitheater, is a bit too much for your family, head out to Moraga this Friday instead. The heat of Agrabah will fill the air when young performers take the outdoor stage in the Disney musical "Aladdin, Jr." Audience members are encouraged to bring picnic dinners, blankets and lawn chairs to the evening performance at the Hacienda de las Flores at 7:00 on July 27th.

Producer/Director Rachel Pergamit has been teaching children's theatre for twenty years. A veteran performer and director, she founded the After School Drama Club in 1999, adding a Summer Drama Camp in 2006. Pergamit started performing with the Moraga Playhouse when she was seven, later directing for the Children's Theater division and Main Stage. She has worked for theater companies all over the Bay Area, and is currently the Assistant Artistic Director and a member of the Board of the Galatean Players and the Production Coordinator for the City of Walnut Creek Civic Arts Education program.

To prepare for Friday's performance, the cast of chil-

dren, ages 8-13, has spent 3 weeks learning the ins and outs of producing a musical from theatre professionals. Pergamit says, "The kids are learning the basics of live performance -- how to put together a show and perform it for a live audience. But more than that, they are gaining self-confidence and inner strength. They are being challenged in a safe and comfortable environment. We create theatre in a low-key, high energy atmosphere. This isn't about creating a star but instead about teaching the children how to work as an ensemble."

Debbie Parish's daughter Emily has enjoyed performing with the After School Drama Club, and after attending a performance of last summer's production insisted on joining the cast this year. Parish says, "Rachel (Pergamit) is great with the kids. It's wonderful to have a local arts offering that kids can take advantage of."

Drew and Rachel Jackson are in their second year at Summer Drama Camp. Their mom, Mary Cosola, believes that kids respond well to an effective director while giving the kids an opportunity to



Rachel Pergamit

have fun. Additionally, Cosola says her kids get some of the same advantages from being in an ensemble cast that children get from participating in organized sports. "They learn to work as a team, and do their part to support the group effort. Everybody wins in the end!"

What does the cast have to say? "Come see us! We're going to be fabulous!"

Pergamit's production staff includes Music Director Frank Ryken, who is also the Chorus Master of the Moraga Community Chorus, choreographer Nicole McGann, and Brian Pergamit, co-producer and Technical Director.

Advanced tickets are \$6 and can be purchased by calling 925-300-8337. Tickets are also available at the gate for \$7. Gates open at 5:30 for picnickers. For more info, go to www.AfterSchoolDramaClub.com.

Lamorinda 4-H Update: A Youth Fair Snapshot

By Lee Borrowman

In the dusty warmth of the fairgrounds in Antioch, members of Lamorinda 4-H camped out for several days in early July to tend to their animals during the annual Youth Fair. Towards the end of the week, in the heat of the day, small groups of boys and girls lazed under shade trees or around picnic tables as their cows, swine, rabbits, chickens and goats moored, grunted, twitched, clucked and bleated quietly nearby. Looking cool, calm and collected in their smart green and white uniforms, a handful of young women proudly showed their horses.

The edge of the livestock area was dotted with tents. A dog barked from its wire enclosure, and girlish voices floated over the walls of the restroom and shower facility, "The water's not really warm. It's not ice cold, but it's not home! Hey, did you bring a hairbrush?" A patient teenage leader put a young boy wielding a small baton through the drills of properly showing his chicken: "Make sure it's always facing the



Maddy Cleaver, Cami Brisbo, Kathy Simmons (dog leader), Miranda Protzen and Aimee Pearce

judges, and keep your other hand behind your back!" Tired parent chaperones looked forward to the evening's award ceremony, followed on the final day by a livestock auction, the clean up, and going home.

This is an event that 4-H members look forward to each summer, the culmination of a year's work. Youths come from all over Contra Costa County to attend the Fair, reconnect with old friends and display their projects. The kids of Lamorinda 4-H did well at the Fair this year, taking top honors in many of the competitions.

With the Youth Fair, the 4-H year comes to a close for the summer.

If you are interested in participating in 4-H this fall, mark your calendars for the following meetings:

Aug. 23, 7pm, Parent's-only Organizational Meeting and Registration - 3370 Springhill Rd., Lafayette

Sept. 13, 6:30pm - 7pm Registration, 7-8pm Community Meeting - Stanley Middle School MP Room

GOLDEN GATE BOYS CHOIR AND BELLRINGERS



Parents Day Concert

Free and open to the public
Saturday, August 11, 2007
2:00 p.m. in the afternoon

Diocesan Youth Retreat Center
1977 Reliez Valley Road, Lafayette

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For a camp packet, call the GGBC at (510) 887-4311 or view web site www.ggbc.org

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