

A New Face at Stanley Middle School

By Lee Borrowman

Students arriving at Stanley on the first day of school will be greeted by the smiling face of new principal David Schrag. When the Lamorinda Weekly caught up with Schrag in early August, he was already hard at work preparing for the all too rapidly approaching school year. Classroom assignment charts dot the walls of his office, and teachers and parents alike drop by to offer greetings.

"I'm just amazed at the quality of the programs that exist here at Stanley," says a delighted Schrag. "The administrative team is unbelievable, and the fact that Stanley has retained such outstanding teachers year after year speaks volumes about the caliber of the school."

Although kids of this age can be a challenge to parents and teachers alike, Schrag likes working with middle school students. "You don't work at a middle school unless you enjoy the age group," says Schrag, continuing, "I'm excited about working with

kids at this at transition age; it's an incredible opportunity for enrichment when you can set high goals for students and see them achieve; it's a golden time in their lives, when kids really come into their own."

Schrag brings to Stanley a collaborative approach to management coupled with emotional intelligence and the desire to build strong, respectful relationships with teachers, students and parents. "I have always been an accessible and visible presence, whether it's in the classroom or supervising the playground. To be effective, a principal needs to know the teachers' programs, know what's going on in the classrooms and be in touch with the pulse of the school."

In announcing Schrag's appointment, the Lafayette School District said, "David was an essential member of a school leadership team that focused on using data to improve student achievement." Schrag discussed this data



David Schrag

Photo by Lee Borrowman

management tool which he says, "Allows us to break down and disaggregate information about students' progress, strengths and weaknesses; in short, who's doing what well." Accessible from a workstation, a teacher can pull up data from this year and last. Its framework is STAR test-based, but other external data can be uploaded as well. "We are also developing collaborative assessment tools to measure students' progress in the areas of critical and creative thinking."

Schrag is a graduate of UC

Davis and Stanford, and was an Assistant Principal at Ralston Middle School in San Mateo County. He lives in Walnut Creek with his wife and two young children. And yes, the rumors are true – in addition to his many strengths as an academic administrator, Schrag is also an accomplished hip-hop dancer. The Stanley community will be looking forward to his first performance, and your friendly neighborhood newspaper hopes to be in attendance (camera at the ready).

Orinda Academy Celebrates 25 Years

Submitted by Orinda Academy Staff

Orinda Academy, a fully accredited college preparatory school located in the heart of downtown Orinda, is celebrating its 25th year of helping students, 7th through 12th grade, discover a love of higher learning in a safe and nurturing environment. Orinda Academy challenges every student to reach their full potential, academically and individually. In celebrating its success, Orinda Academy is proud to announce the addition of several new faculty and staff members.

Robyn Lindner joins Orinda Academy after



Elaine Hester

Elaine Hester will be Orinda Academy's Computer Teacher/Technology Coordinator. Elaine's extensive computer background has supported her role as a digital artist in various projects including feature film animation in The Matrix Re-



Debbie Parish with daughter Emily

teaching for several years at Mt. Diablo and San Ramon High Schools. Robyn will be teaching dance, English I and II, and ESL. Robyn attended St. Mary's College and received a BA in Communications and Performing Arts, with an emphasis in dance. She also earned her single subject teaching credential in English and dance.

Elaine Chu comes to Orinda Academy from previously teaching at Galileo High School in San Francisco. She will be teaching Geography, Modern World History, and Women's Literature. Elaine has a B.A. in History from UC Berkeley and a social studies single subject credential from San Francisco State.

loaded. She earned a BFA in Computer Arts from the Academy of Art in San Francisco and an MS in Educational Technology Leadership, magna cum laude, from California State University East Bay.

Debbie Parish, a resident of Moraga, joins our staff as Director of Admissions. Debbie has previous experience in independent school admissions and has an extensive background in educational sales and marketing. Debbie received a BA in Marketing from Northeastern University.

Orinda Academy is excited to welcome these new additions to the school and is looking forward to another 25 years of success and growth.

Neighbors React to Allegations of Coach's Bad Behavior

By Cathy Tyson

Recently Acalanes Varsity Basketball coach Russ Scheibley found himself the subject of two players' family's claims. John Clouse, one of the disgruntled parents, is quite open about what he wants to see happen. "I hope he gets fired. You don't need to abuse them every day to motivate the players. The school is condoning his behavior." Mr. and Mrs. Clouse along with Mr. and Mrs. Hampton allege coach Scheibley has a history of throwing basketballs at players and being verbally abusive.

Other players on the team signed a letter in support of the coach. Where does the truth lie? On August 15th, a third party investigator is scheduled to report to the school board with its findings. "This is a personnel issue, and employees have a right to privacy," says District Superintendent Jim Negri. "We are

currently working through our complaint policy." The Board will issue a response upon completion of the investigation. In addition to filing complaints, the two sets of parents also filed Tort claims. The District has taken no action on those, as it is still within the 45-day window to accept or reject the claims.

Coach Ken Nelson, who is currently the Campolindo Junior Varsity Coach, had worked with coach Scheibley in the past said, "He can be very loud at times. I never personally heard him use foul language. I never saw him cross the line. The problem is the parents don't see the kids during practice." Campo wrestling coach Bob McLaughlin states, "Why would you subject yourself to the long hours and low pay if you didn't love to work with kids and enjoy being a mentor? There's more to coaching

than helping with athletic skills, you teach right and wrong."

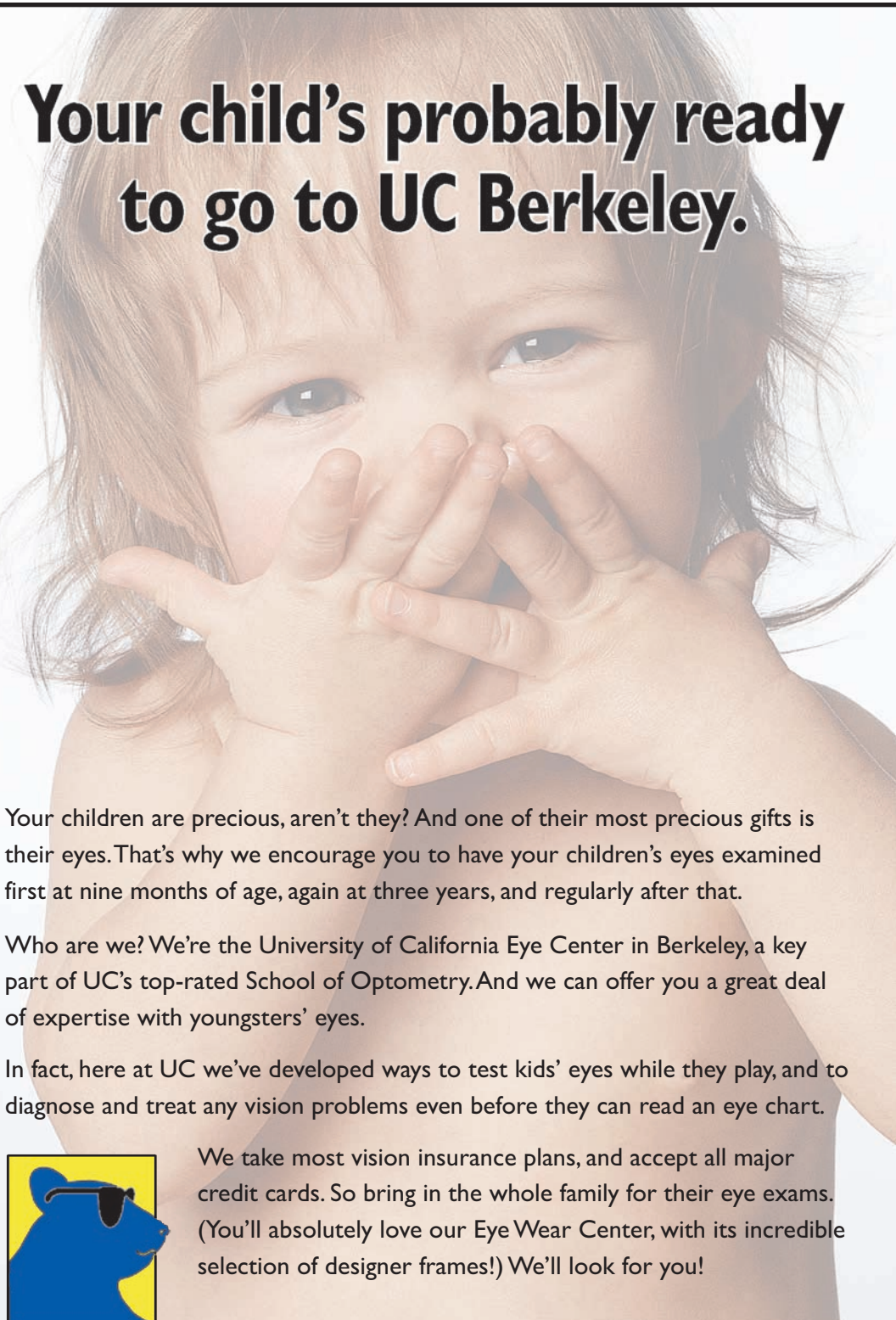
In the meantime, parents throughout Lamorinda have definite opinions about what's going on. In a very unscientific poll, Lamorinda parents I spoke with had comments that fell into two camps, coaches can definitely be abusive or parents are way too involved in their kids' teams. Of the many parents I spoke with most seemed to agree with parent micro-management. One parent and long time coach echoed these sentiments, "Coaches haven't changed much, it's the sensitivity from the parents that has changed. 'Can't be my kid, must be the coach.' Lamorinda parents are just more involved, there hasn't been one sport without controversy." He went on to name several high school coaches who have been the subject of parental

complaints.

In the alternative, a concerned mom stated, "My son couldn't stand to be the object of his anger. (This particular coach) turned him off to sports entirely. He certainly is abusive, at times choosing to humiliate players." Lately some students have quit high schools sports teams because they felt the coaches were mean or abusive or both. Mr. Clouse clearly falls into this school of thought, "As a father, I'm not going to sit back and let my son take that kind of abuse."

Where is the line between constructive criticism and abuse? How loud is too loud? No one seems quite sure at the moment. When the Acalanes Union High School Board holds their regular meeting on the 15th, perhaps at least Mr. Scheibley will find out.

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