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PTA Starts New Year with Two Bangs

By Jean Follmer

Education Advocacy Day is Coming Up

The 29th annual Education Advocacy bus trip to Sacramento is scheduled to take place Wednesday, February 18, 2009. The event is sponsored by the San Ramon Valley, Las Trampas Creek, Livermore Valley and Alameda Parent Teacher Association Councils. The Acalanes, Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda School Districts are all represented by the Las Trampas Creek Council of PTAs and each school has its own Council Member. Over 200 people boarded buses to attend the event in 2008. Given the current budget crisis, the Council is hopeful that even more people will make the trip to Sacramento this year.

"The point is we wanted to make this trip a bit more educational to get more involved in advocacy and to build more of a commoradory," said Council Member Karen Guthrie. The Las Trampas Creek Council says, "It's an effective way to send a powerful message to our lawmakers. You'll experience briefings with legislative experts and meet with our local legislators and school leaders." The cost of the trip is \$65 and includes transportation and lunch. Attendees will hear moderated discussions on the state budget and education reform basics and have the opportunity to participate in breakout sessions with Superintendents and School Board members.

At press time, Las Trampas Creek Council Co-Chair Sarah Butler said the presence of Assembly Members Joan Buchanan and Sandra Swanson and Senators Mark DeSaulnier and Lori Hancock were already confirmed. The registration form is available at the Las Trampas PTA website at www.lastrampaspta.org/Legislation.html.

Letter Writing Campaign - There is Still Time

The Las Trampas Creek Council of PTAs plans to hand deliver thousands of letters to the legislators in Sacramento late this week and early next week.

Before the winter break, parents in the Lamorinda community schools were strongly encouraged to visit the Las Trampas website at www.lastrampaspta.org/dec08_letters.html to download, print and sign letters to the California legislators regarding the proposed mid-year budget cuts.

Some Council Members printed and passed them out in the carpool lines since families were focused on the pending break. "The holidays is what's putting a kink in this," said Council Member Karen Guthrie. The Council said it's not too late to turn them in before the delivery dates.

The letters urge the legislators "to look at a more balanced approach to dealing with the budget deficit, including additional revenues such as reinstating the Vehicle License Fee," and stress that the proposed \$2.5 billion mid-year cut to education is unacceptable and will be nearly impossible for the districts to digest. Letters can be turned into district offices or faxed directly to the legislators. Fax numbers are included in the letters.

The Council delivered over 7,000 letters to California legislators in 2007.

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