

Acalanes High School • Bentley School • Burton Valley • Camino Pablo • Campolindo • Contra Costa Jewish Day School • Del Rey • Donald L. Rheem • Glorietta • Happy Valley • Joaquin Moraga

Lamorinda Schools

Lafayette Elementary • Los Perales • Miramonte • Orinda Academy • Orinda Intermediate • Saklan Valley School • Sleepy Hollow • Springhill • Stanley Middle • St. Perpetua School • Wagner Ranch

SCHOOL CALENDAR

School Governing Board Meetings

Acalanes Union

High School District
Board Room AUHSD Office
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette
Wednesday, June 3, 2009 at 7:30

Lafayette School District

LAUSD Office
3477 School Street, Lafayette
Wednesday, June 24, 2009 at 7:00

Moraga School District

Joaquin Moraga Intermediate
School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
Tuesday, June 9 at 7:30

Orinda Union School District

OUSD Office
8 Altarinda Road, Orinda
Monday, June 1 at 6:00,
(special Meeting on Budget)
Monday, June 8 at 4:00

Moraga Schools, SMC Remain Open After Swine Flu Cases Confirmed

Last week, Moraga School District Superintendent Rick Schafer announced the District's first confirmed case of H1N1 (Swine Flu) by a fifth grade Rheem Elementary School student. Four

Saint Mary's students were also confirmed to have the virus by the Contra Costa Public Health Department. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates that most U.S. cases are not severe

at this time, and on May 5 changed its policy regarding school closures. Schafer spoke with the Contra Costa County health department, which stated that the Contra Costa Health Services, the State Department of Public Health and the CDC have been constantly monitoring the H1N1 Influenza outbreak, and "while Contra Costa Health Services will continue to closely monitor the situation, we have been advised by Contra Costa Health Services that our schools may remain open at this time," Schafer wrote. Saint Mary's students affected were advised to stay home for seven days, or for one day beyond the conclusion of symptoms, whichever is longer. For information on ways to prevent contracting or spreading the illness, you can visit the CDC Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>. For H1N1 updates, you can call the Contra Costa Public Health Department hotline at (888) 856-0564.

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Please call (925) 708 - 4213 or email mleutza@hotmail.com for details.

Kids N Dance Gives Impressive Performance

Submitted by Sheryl Cardiff



Pictured are: Jenna Kisner, Clara Kobashigawa, Abby Morris (as Annie), Emily Rasmussen (back row); Lauren Kobashigawa and Kara Mickas (front row)
Photo Sheryl Cardiff

A lot of hard work and fun paid off for the actresses performing in the Kids N Dance musical Annie. Girls ages 6 to 12 from the Lamorinda area started rehearsing in January under the guidance of Carol McMackin and Kris Mueller. Practicing one hour a week for five months proved to be ample time for a couple impressive performances, which took place on May 15 and May 16 at the auditorium in the Orinda Library. The Kids N Dance Studio is located in Lafayette on 3369 Mt. Diablo Blvd. and can be reached at 925-284-7388.

Technology Tapped to Teach from Afar

By Jennifer Wake



Millie Tang's fourth grade class (Millie Tang in middle)

Photo Jennifer Wake

Los Perales Elementary students are used to seeing computers in classrooms, and have even teleconferenced on Skype or viewed online blogs with friends and family, but last month they used part of class time to check in online with their teacher, who was beaming stories about her global warming research during a two-week expedition to Nova Scotia, Canada.

Fourth grade teacher Millie Tang set off on this adventure on April 12 as part of an Earthwatch Institute expedition to monitor mammals and climate change on the rugged shore of Nova Scotia, north of the state of Maine. During her stay, Tang communicated with students through video conferencing tools such as Skype and online blogs.

One student, Amanda Dunning, was proud that Tang was chosen to participate in the research, while Gabriella Asuncion said it was fun to interact with her teacher who was so far away.

While Tang said she learned quite a few interesting lessons on this expedition, one work that stood out was tracking down and identifying animal waste – or poop – then physically counting and recording it on a tracking sheet. "Why count poop?" Tang said. "It's an indicator of a specific animal's population density in an area." She and other researchers also trapped animals,

weighing them, checking for age, and marking them, before releasing them.

"We saw a lot of pictures, and heard Mrs. Tang got over her fear of touching poop," Molly Bobrovitch said.

Lauren Williams thought it was interesting to realize how much you can learn from studying an animal's waste, like what they ate and how much of it they ate. Much of what Tang taught her students upon her return revolved around the predator-prey cycle, and its importance when researching how climate change might be affecting a certain species.

Hayden Hunt said he learned that by studying an animal's waste, you can find bones of different animals they ate and learn more about the predator-prey cycle.

Tang learned that it's the smarter animals that survived through the short harsh winter and the lesser weaker animals were either picked out by its predator or died in its 'home.'

"The results we saw out in the field really show glaring data there is climate change affecting the smaller mammals, which are good indicators of environmental change or climate change, and habitat degradation and environmental pollution," she said.

After returning, Tang not only discussed the changes she saw in

Nova Scotia, but how her students can make a difference here in Lamorinda. Tang rallied students together to walk to school, and challenged students to come up with at least one conservation pledge. "This gives them a chance to think of how they want to contribute to a sustainable environment, and be more proactive with what I have taught them."

Fourth grader Russell Alger is planning on recycling more, instead of "throwing away everything since it's a long walk to the recycle bin." Hayden Hunt plans to turn off lights and unplug computers not in use that are using "ghost power."

Justine Bon now has a better understanding of how climate change is affecting animals in Nova Scotia and Antarctica, and Sara Ryerson wants to work harder to help the environment.

"The student pledges are not a promise to their teacher, but more to their own environment," Tang said.

Each year, Earthwatch recruits close to 4,000 volunteers to collect field data in the areas of rain-forest ecology, wildlife conservation, marine science, archaeology, and more. Through this process, they educate, inspire, and involve a diversity of people, who actively contribute to conserving the planet. Tang's fellowship was sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank.

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Moraga Education Foundation Presents Fun-Filled Musical Evening



Families came out to enjoy beautiful weather and great performances by choruses from Moraga's three elementary schools and the Campolindo Chamber Singers, as well as by the JM Symphonic Band and chamber groups from the Campo Instrumental Pro-

gram. The audience was also treated to short performances by the Campo Beginning and Advanced Drama classes and a display of student artwork and crafts. Two renditions of "The Hills of Moraga" -- an original song by K-5 music teacher Carol St. Claire that several years

worth of Moraga students know by heart - floated happily over said hills. JM's Director of Musical Program, Adam Noel, said it was "a pleasure to see so many in the Moraga community out on the lawn during the MEF Showcase concert." Photo Andy Scheck

Four Lamorinda Students Recognized as "California Arts Scholars"

Submitted by Robin Moore

David Beal and Caety Klingman of Miramonte High in Orinda, Jason Long of Acalanes High in Lafayette, and Ruthie Shapiro of Campolindo High in Moraga are among 13 Contra Costa County students recognized as "California Arts Scholars" by the state's InnerSpark program.

The California State Summer School for the Arts (InnerSpark) is

a rigorous, pre-professional, month-long training program in the visual and performing arts, creative writing, animation and film for talented artists of high school age. InnerSpark provides a supportive environment in which students hone acquired skills and explore new techniques and ideas for an intense and exciting learning experience.

Many of the students will

participate in an intensive pre-professional training program at the California State Summer School for the Arts which will be held at the campus of the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia.

The Contra Costa County students recognized were Acalanes High School students Christianne Burns (Music-Vocal & Theater) and Madeline Sharafian (Animation).

Peace through Art & Writing Challenge—2009

Five students from Acalanes High School and two from Miramonte were among 70 middle and high school winners of the Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center's "Peace through Art and Writing Challenge." The Center held its 12th annual awards dinner at the Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church on May 2. Students were asked to write or create art on the following topic: "President Obama

inspires hope, calls for change, and advocates unity of all people. With these ideals in mind, if you were the President, what measures would you implement to advance world peace?"

Lamorinda winners for Creative Writing were Joshua Bulos (Acalanes - 2nd place) and Aaron Plotkin (Acalanes - 3rd place). Essay Awards winners included Devin Finzer (Miramonte - 2nd

place) and Clara Tsao (Miramonte - 3rd place) and Art Awards went to these ideals in mind, if you were the President, what measures would you implement to advance world peace?" Lamorinda winners for Creative Writing were Joshua Bulos (Acalanes - 2nd place), Jill McGlynn (Acalanes - 3rd place) and Jen Reich (Acalanes - 4th place). The challenge winners were awarded cash prizes contributed by the Schmidt Family, the George Miller Youth Fund, David and Barbara Johnson, Mountain Camp II inc., and Peace Center Donors.

Local Teams Head to 'Odyssey of the Mind' World Finals

Submitted by Joni Binder Shwartz



Glorietta Elementary School Odyssey of the Mind coaches Kent Grelling and Chow Chen stand behind fourth grade teammates Eli O'Brien, Maia Shwartz, Christian Schillinger, Andrew Chow, Dylan Wallerstein, and Jordan Grelling
Photo provided

After winning regional and state Odyssey of the Mind competitions, local students will head to the world finals at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa on May 27 to compete against teams from across the country.

Three Orinda teams from Glorietta Elementary, Orinda Intermediate School, and Miramonte High School as well as one team from Lafayette's Happy Valley El-

ementary School qualified for the World Finals.

Odyssey of the Mind is an international educational program that "provides creative problem-solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college. Team members apply their creativity to solve problems that range from building mechanical devices to presenting their own interpretation of literary classics. They then

bring their solutions to competition on the local, state, and world level."

Thousands of teams from throughout the U.S. and from about 25 other countries participate in the program.

The Glorietta team chose to engineer a structure made from just eight grams of balsa wood that was able to withstand "shockwaves" of weights being dropped onto it. The structure held 280 pounds before it collapsed.

The OIS and Miramonte teams both competed in the "Superstition" Problem where students created and presented a performance that included two documented superstitions, an original superstition created by the team, and the events that caused the original superstition to come to be.

In order to qualify for the World Finals, teams had to place first or second in the state. Competitive teams are judged on their solution to questions that are standardized internationally as well as their inventiveness in presentation, style, execution, and originality.