

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 WILL RETURN AFTER THE SUMMER BREAK Rheem School Wins Moraga Rotary Field Day

Submitted by Gary Irwin



Girls compete in sack races

Photo by Gary Irwin

27, with 117 points earned by its students. Los Perales Elementary had the most participants, with 104 of the total 234 students competing, which was a record number of participants.

Caroline King and Daniel Nelson were the High Point athletes. Caroline King is a fourth grader in Mrs. Bowhay's class at Camino Pablo School, and Daniel Nelson is a third grader in Mrs. Berkman's class at Rheem School. The High Point teacher was Mrs. Berkman of Rheem School. The names of the high point individuals, teacher, and school were engraved on plaques which are displayed at the winning schools.

The students compete by grade in sprints, relays, sack races, long jumps, baseball throws, and Rheem, Camino Pablo, Los Perales, and Saklan schools were represented. The event is managed by its founder, Moraga Rotary Past President Al Simonsen.

Rheem Elementary won the High Point school award at the 18th Annual Moraga Rotary

Field Day for third, fourth, and fifth grade students held at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School on May

Acalanes Grads Spend "Night at the Movies"

Submitted by Michele Poloka, 2009 AHS Grad Night Chair



Austin Powers arts and crafts area

Photo provided

It was a night to remember at Acalanes High School's "Night at the Movies" graduation celebration at Acalanes High School on Friday, June 12. Senior Katie Bach was heard saying that she felt as though she was entering a Movie Premier as the graduates were treated with delicious appetizers as

they entered the party through the Talladega Nights Pit Lane winding past Senior Grad parent Chuck Poloka's restored 1968 Chevy Camaro in Victory Lane. Among the movies featured were the Hotel for Dogs message center, Austin Powers arts and crafts area and Hair-spray salon. The Animal House

boy's bathroom won hands down for funniest decorated movie area and the Twilight Tarot Card area, Ratatouille Cafe' and 21 Casino were popular all night long. As the graduates and parents watched the sun come up following the senior slideshow, it was truly a night to remember.

2009 Young Writers Contest Winners



Information and photo provided by the California Writers Club

The California Writers Club Young Writers Contest held their banquet in May where they awarded the middle school winners their framed certificates and cash prizes.

"This year, the Young Writers Contest had 445 manuscript submissions from all over Contra Costa County," said Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff, chairwoman of the Young Writers Program. "This was our all-time, record-breaking number of submissions, which means kids are writing!"

In addition to the contest, each year, authors Sarah Wilson and Koehler-Pentacoff led workshops in January and February for middle school writers. Held at local libraries, the workshops are free. Visit <http://mtdiablowriters.org/> for next year's contest and workshop information.

Local Winners:

The Betty Tenney Memorial Essay/Personal Narrative Awards

Stephanie Sloves (OIS, 6th grade)
"When You Wish Upon a Star" – second place
Carter Broad (OIS, 7th grade)
"Le Tour de Ow" – first place
Caie Kelley (OIS, 7th grade)
"Climbing My Fears" – second place

Short Story

Sarah Sweeney (JM, 6th grade)
"Moonlight" – first place
Sophie Belinn (OIS, 7th grade)
"Time to Wait" – third place

Local Brownies Graduate to Juniors

Submitted by Robin Longchamps



Lafayette Brownie troops 31845, 32050 and 32051 graduated to Juniors on May 15 at the Lafayette Community Park. Congratulations to a bright future in Girl Scouting!

Orinda Idol Auditions Huge Success

By Jennifer Wake



After much preparation, more than 200 hopeful young performing artists, ranging in age from 5 to 18, came to the Orinda Idol 2009 Auditions at the Orinda Theatre on May 29 and 30 in hopes of becoming an Orinda Idol finalist. Forty-six finalists were selected in six groups, according to Orinda Idol chair Steve Harwood.

"The quality of all of those auditioning was very high," Harwood said. "But quite aside from the quality, how wonderful were these young people. Each of them had to put themselves on the line by deciding to audition. They had to memorize their song and work on their presentation, and then come into an empty room and give it their all before a panel of three judges. Each of them was energetic and enthusiastic. Personally, I was inspired."

President of an investment company by day, Harwood is a lifelong singer who currently sings with the Blackhawk Chorus, and who has written and directed musicals for Sleepy Hollow School. He and the other judges (Ralph Severson, Sue Farmer and Daphne Storer) invited finalists and runners-up to return for a feedback session a few days after the event.

"Most took advantage of the opportunity and appeared again with enthusiasm, and listened intently to the comments of the judges," Harwood said. "It would have been nice to give each of those audition feedback, but as it was, the feedback session lasted three hours."

In an email to all who auditioned, Harwood wrote: "If you can do this, you can do anything."

He added, "I think that might be rephrased to: 'If you can do this, why should you be phased by any of the challenges in your life?'"

The Orinda Idol 2009 Finals is scheduled for Sept. 13 at the Orinda Theatre. For more information, visit the Orinda Idol Web page at: <http://www.orindaarts council.org/orinda idol.html>.

Orinda Idol 2009 Finalists

GRADES K-2:

Glorietta:
Niamh Akazawa
Layla Wright
Sleepy Hollow:
Malin Glade
Dylan Smith
Wagner Ranch:
Alex Meckes

GRADES 3-5:

Del Rey:
Tessa Viola
Glorietta:
Joe Metheny
Mary Rockwood
Michael Sorenson
Lara Waibel
Sleepy Hollow:
Ryan Ford
Ellie Glade
Kate Marvin
Saklan Valley:
Amanda Bosovo
Wagner Ranch:
Eleanor Roeder

MIDDLE SCHOOL:

Orinda Intermediate School:
Sophie Belinn
Maritza Grillo
Tosca Maltzman
Sarah McCaffrey
Sean McFeely
Julia Meckes
Emily Mikes
Amrita Newton
Emma Patton
Stephanie Sloves

HIGH SCHOOL:

College Preparatory School:
Matthew Barber
T.J. Barber
Campolindo:
Erika Henningsen
Miramonte:
Tatyana Belinsky
Elizabeth De Luna
Lindsay Ford
Jacqueline Garell
Neris Newton
Steven Patton
Ilene Rosas

GROUP CATEGORY K-5*:

Glorietta:
Quartet 1: Sofia Kavanaugh, Lauren Bond, Kate Partington & Beth Huelsenbeck
Trio 1: Wylie Hughs, Joe Metheny & Michael Sorenson
Happy Valley:
Duet 2: Samantha Martin & Isabel Mueller
Sleepy Hollow:
Duet 1: Malin Glade & Ellie Glade
Duet 3: Jocelyn Purcell & Casey McGonigle

GROUP CATEGORY 6-12*:

Acalanes:
Duet 3: Kate Avery & Audrey Vogel
Glorietta & Miramonte:
Duet 1: Jackie Patton & Steven Patton
Orinda Intermediate School:
Trio 1: Haley Reardon, Stephanie Sloves & Maddie Wheeler
Trio 2: Emily Fuhrman, Isabelle Johannessen & Tosca Maltzman
Orinda Intermediate School & Miramonte:
Trio 3: Amrita Newton, Jacqueline Garell, Neris Newton
Sleepy Hollow & Orinda Intermediate School:
Duet 2: Aaron Baum & Nathan Baum

* order by age of youngest group member

JUDGES NAMED RUNNER-UPS** AS FOLLOWS:

GRADES K-2: Julia Bond-Glorietta
GRADES 3-5: 1st Leah Woodcox-Wagner Ranch, 2nd Aaron Baum-Sleepy Hollow
MIDDLE SCHOOL: 1st Isabelle Johannessen-OIS, 2nd Connor Holton-OIS
HIGH SCHOOL: 1st Melanie Jones-Miramonte, 2nd Sofie Woodlee-Miramonte
GROUP CATEGORY K-5: 1st Grace Baer & Ophelia Luchin-Happy Valley, 2nd Elizabeth & Emily Fabian-Sleepy Hollow
GROUP CATEGORY 6-12: Tara Bagdassarian-Miramonte, Melanie Jones-Miramonte, Katie Marino-Campolindo & Sophie Woodlee-Miramonte

**Runner-Ups serve as alternates in their grade group for finalists who choose not to compete September 13, 2009.

Bar Mitzvah Project Offers Hope to Richmond School

Edited by Jennifer Wake (information provided by Sheryl Cardiff and Norman Plotkin)



Corey Plotkin stands next to teacher JG Larochette, with his students, and Coronado principal Linda Cohen (far right)

Photo provided

Despite Coronado Elementary School's recent academic achievements, and even before the recent economic downturn, the Richmond school's budget was cut several times and the school struggled to survive. A Bar Mitzvah project by Lafayette seventh grader, Corey Plotkin, offered hope.

Plotkin heard about the school through Temple Isaiah, which has had a long relationship with Coronado, sending volunteers to tutor students there for the past ten years. His father contacted Coronado's principal, Linda Cohen, who sent a list of what the school desperately needed: pens, pencils, and basic sports equipment for the kids to play with during recess and after school.

A letter outlining his project as well as a request for donations was included in Plotkin's Bar Mitzvah invitation. "The response was overwhelming," said Plotkin's father, Norman.

On a bright morning in May, after loading his parents' van with

supplies including pencils, markers, paper, post-its, Kleenex, portfolios, glue sticks, sports equipment like soccer balls, volleyballs and basketballs, as well as a significant portion of the money he had received from friends and family, Plotkin set out for the elementary school.

Not only was Plotkin able to meet many students in classrooms, the principal introduced him to the Coronado students at a special assembly.

"The Principal explained what Corey had done. The principal, teachers, and kids were very appreciative," Plotkin's father said. "The kids were especially excited by the sports balls, colored pencils, and markers. Corey was touched by the kids' enthusiasm for the things that he and his peers take for granted."

During classroom visits, Cohen told students how Plotkin was a role model and connected his effort to the school's own project to raise money for kids in Kenya through a reading program.

"The Coronado students raised \$1,500 for orphans in Shisari, Kenya," Plotkin's father said. "One of the teachers, J.G. Larochette, gave a rousing talk about the cycle of giving and how every penny makes a difference. The dedication of the principal and the teaching staff is amazing and inspiring."

Although Coronado is in a lower socio-economic area, its students continue to succeed. They have the third highest test scores in math and science in the West Contra Costa Unified School District, according to Cohen.

As for Corey, the seventh grader plans to continue his relationship with Coronado School. Plotkin, his older brother, and several of their friends will begin tutoring Coronado students at the Richmond library starting today.

If anybody would like to donate school supplies, Plotkin can arrange to have them picked up and delivered to the school. Email guzuguzu@sbcglobal.net.