

SCHOOL CALENDAR

School Governing Board Meetings

Acalanes Union
High School District
Board Room AUHSD Office
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette
Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2009 at 7:30pm

Lafayette School District

LAFSD Office
3477 School Street, Lafayette
Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2009 at 7 pm

Orinda Union School District

OUSD Office
8 Altarinda Road, Orinda
Monday, Sept. 14 at 4:00pm

Moraga School District

Joaquin Moraga Intermediate
School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga

Tentative Date -
Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2009 at 7:30 pm

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Sunday 12-5

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Three Local Students Set Sail with Sea Scouts

Submitted by Miho Tanaka and Carol Lindenhayn



From left, back: Crewmember Brooke Metro, Crewmember Zabrena Rudzitis, First Mate John Chilson, Officer Jeremy Tovar, Officer Lindsey Hardy, Sea Witch Boatswain Taylor Lindenhayn, Crewmember Chad Mandery, Crewmember Alex Phillips, Sea Hawk Boatswain Parker Smith.
From left, center: Crewmember Alyssa Rickman, Crewmember Bianca Marhx.
From left, front: Sea Witch Skipper Mike Duffey, Crewmember Elisha Nunes, Crewmember Hiroshi Redi

Photo provided

Lafayette School District Admits Allen Bill Transfers

By Jean Follmer

After much discussion in many Board meetings, the Lafayette School District decided at its Aug. 19 meeting to admit 15 Allen Bill transfer students throughout schools in the District this fall, said Lafayette School District Superintendent Fred Brill, Ed.D.

Facing a declining enrollment for this school year, the District was able to avoid reduced revenues from the potential shortfall by admitting the Allen Bill students. Allen Bill transfers enable non-resident students to attend school in the district where their parent works, in lieu of their place of residence.

Since the portion of state revenue tied to Average Daily Attendance (ADA) is based on enrollment in the prior year, a declining enrollment for 2009/10 would have resulted in a loss of \$75,000 in state revenue for 2010/11. At \$5,000 per student, the admission of the Allen Bill students preserved this amount for the 2010/11 school year.

"It's phenomenal, it's really phenomenal," Brill said. "I'm really delighted by that."

Brill said the new transfer students are children of "Acalanes employees, (Lafayette) District employees, (Lafayette) City workers and local merchants." The students are dispersed throughout the grade levels: three in kindergarten, three

in first grade, two in second grade, two in fifth grade, four in sixth grade and one in seventh grade.

After admission to a district under the Allen Bill, a student has the right to attend school in that district as long as the parent maintains employment within the district community for a minimum of 35 hours per week. Employment is verified annually.

The District also received 13 interdistrict transfer requests from students that were not employment related, but due to lack of classroom space the District was unable to accommodate those requests and those applications were denied.

Lamorinda Teens Help "B" Corps Win Gold

Submitted by Faith Silvani



Mia Silvani leads the Blue Devil B Corps at the Concord 4th of July Parade

Campolindo senior Mia Silvani, junior Danielle Cortez, recent grad Brianna Cortez and recent Acalanes grad Maxine Brown, all members of the Concord Blue Devil B Drum Corps (BDB) helped earn BDB its first ever Gold 1st place award in the open class category this August at "Drum Corps International" in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Corps members prepared for the famed international competition by practicing twelve hours daily every weekend starting in April and increased to five days a week outdoors in the hot sun as soon as school was out for the season.

"It was the best feeling in the world to win at DCI," said Mia Silvani, a member of the "B" Corps color guard that dance and spin flags, rifles and sabres. "It was my best summer ever. We worked so

hard; we tried our best every minute at practice and in the end, it showed."

BDB competed against other drum corps (including its arch rivals, the Santa Clara Vanguard Cadets) all over California before boarding a train to Omaha, Neb. in July for the beginning of a three week grueling competition tour across country. Traveling by bus from Nebraska through Michigan and Ohio to Indiana, Blue Devil B Corps competed, and remained undefeated, in multiple regional competitions.

"The weather was not my favorite part. It was either very hot and humid, like in the Midwest or freezing at night, like at Mars, our practice field in Concord," said Silvani, who has been a member of Blue Devils since 2005. "The Midwest mosquitoes were nasty.

Once a swarm of bees came at us and we all had to run for cover. It also rained in the Midwest and we had to change our equipment (like our flags) in the middle of practice so they wouldn't get ruined."

The tour finished in Indiana on Aug. 8 after the week-long Drum Corps International at the Lucas Oil Stadium. "We performed inside the Stadium which had a removable roof, said Silvani, "so there was no wind or rain (or bugs.) It was the perfect venue for colorguard."

Further making history, later the same day that BDB took their Gold, Concord Blue Devil A Drum Corps, also following an undefeated season, earned their unprecedented 13th Gold 1st place award in the world class category. This was the first time the same parent organization fielded two first place winners at the same time.

"I learned so much," Silvani said. "I learned to push myself beyond what I thought I could do. I learned that each individual is important because together we make a great show. If we want to accomplish something great, it takes a lot of hard work and dedication from everybody. I just can't describe in words what drum corps means to me but I feel sorry for anyone who does not do drum corps."

Silvani plans to march until she "ages out" when she turns 21 years and is no longer allowed to compete.

Laura Shumaker Speaks

at New Parent Support Group Meeting

Submitted by Jodi Binder-Shwartz

A newly formed parent support group, POISE (Parents of Individuals in Special Education), will kick off the 2009-2010 school year with its first monthly meeting from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 17 at Orinda Books, featuring Laura Shumaker -- author of *A Regular Guy: Growing Up With Autism* and contributor to several anthologies, including *Voices of Autism*, *A Cup of Comfort for Parents of Children with Special Needs* and *Writin' on Empty*.

A regular contributor to NPR Perspectives and a columnist for *5 Minutes for Special Needs*, Shumaker's essays have appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle, the Contra Costa Times, the East Bay Monthly, The Autism Advocate and on CNN.COM.

POISE was founded by a partnership of parents, including Anna Tague and Joni Binder-Shwartz, and OUSD's Director of Special Services, Robin Reves. Despite previous attempts, OUSD did not have any institutional network for parents of children in the Special Education program. Parents' strong desire and the partnership with the school district and community members finally brought this group to fruition last year.

POISE is born from a need that is both growing and hidden in our community and in communities all across the country. Many parents are secretive about their children's academic, social, health, or developmental challenges and a byproduct of that secrecy is that families often end up feeling alone and like

there is no one else out there with similar challenges. POISE's objective is to give parents not only opportunities to meet and talk to other similarly situated parents, but also to give them resources for support. At meetings, parents will share information on topics ranging from therapists to books to summer camps and strategies.

Since POISE anticipates a large turnout, since Shumaker is a popular and powerful voice in the autism community, they asks that if you would like to come, please RSVP to 254-5084. This meeting is free and open to the public, and refreshments will be served.

For more information about Laura Shumaker, you can visit her Web site at www.laurashumaker.com.

Far From Home

"The Inevitable Goodbye"

By Tommy Miers

Tommy Miers is a 2009 Miramonte grad at Chapman University; the following is the second in a series of columns sharing his experiences as he begins an adventure 'far from home.'

It is 4 a.m. and I'm jolted awake by the sounds of blow horns tearing through the walls all around me. As I sit up in bed, my eyes adjust to an unfamiliar sight of bare walls that seem to be closer to me than they have been for the past 18 years. But as my mind calms, I realize for the first time, that this place is nothing to be afraid of, it is simply my new home. However it is a home where the upperclassmen have apparently decided to run down every single freshman dorm hall in the school with bullhorns at four in the morning. The cacophony was our unofficial welcome to the first week of school. While I was welcomed with blow horns, many of my friends had much different experiences: Whether it was An-

drew who is adjusting to University of Arizona without knowing anyone or my friends back at DVC learning what it's like to be so close to home but feel so far away, every freshman experience is unique.

People claim that saying goodbye to your old friends is the hardest part about beginning college. But probably the most daunting task of them all is simply reaching across the dorm hall to introduce yourself to new ones. "Move-In Day" was a definite leveling of the playing field: no one here really has a "past" and we all start without a reputation following us from elementary school.

Every freshman got to see every other freshman with overstuffed Target bags filled with the essentials of college life, and of course the parents who are biting their lips to keep from crying. Regardless of the dorm or the room our faces all turned red with either embarrassment caused by our over-concerned parents or the 98-degree heat and broken elevators.

Now that the parents are finally gone, things have calmed down and the true personalities are starting to show. Groups of friends are inevitably forming, but we all know that this is just the beginning and that it will take a while to form real friendships. Making these new friendships is equally as important as keeping in touch with the old ones. Whether it be through text, Facebook, or one of Colin Cramer's video messages it's always nice to have that reminder that I'm never that far from home.



Please send story ideas to
schooldesk@lamorindaweekly.com