

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

Acalanes Union High School District
Board Room AUHSD Office
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette
Wednesday, May 4, 7:30pm

Orinda Union School District
OUSD Office
8 Altarinda Road, Orinda
Monday, May 9, 4pm

Lafayette School District
LAFSD Office
3477 School Street, Lafayette
Wednesday, May 11, 7pm

Moraga School District
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
Tuesday, May 10, 7:30pm

The Vocal Chords of Victory

By Steven Zhou



The Miramonte State Championship Tournament team waiting at the awards ceremony. Photo Guita Bahramipour

San Diego State University was the location for the annual California High School Speech Association's State Championship over the weekend of April 15th-17th. For three straight days, more than a thousand teenagers from hundreds of high schools around California, debaters, interpretive actors, congressmen and women, orators, and speakers worked skillfully from dawn until dusk, competing for the title of "State Champion."

These participants, having won local State Qualifying Tournaments, are touted as "the best of the best" with Orinda's Miramonte High School boasting twenty-four qualifiers. Parent volunteers and the team's dedicated teacher and coach, Kristen Plant, share in the students' success; fourteen Miramonte candidates made it to the semi-finals, and six advanced to the final competition.

Top scorers included Cecily Schmidt who won 3rd place in Thematic Interpretation, Conor Bean with a 3rd place in Student Congress, and Ross Andrews who garnered 4th place in Original Advocacy.

Plant proudly exclaimed, "In addition to public speaking skills, students learn to be graceful in victory or defeat, to represent Miramonte with pride, and to enjoy pushing themselves to achieve at the highest level of their craft - to accomplish those feats, while having fun, is to have succeeded."

Although it was necessary to focus on the challenges, between competition rounds, the students enjoyed the warm Southern California weather, socializing in the food courts, and cheering on the opposition. The finale of the three days culminated with a costume dinner dance. The Miramonte team chose "beach bums" as their theme, rocking the night away in Hawaiian gear, swim-suits, and sunglasses.

The event was a bonding experience for the group. Lisa Chang, a state qualifier for the past three years, remarked, "We've always been a family, but I think our team got even closer this year. Whether someone did well or badly, everyone felt that person's joy or pain and empathized. The camaraderie makes our team stand out. We always carry so much energy and excitement that other teams notice us."

Steven Zhou is a junior at Miramonte High School.



Kristen Plant, teacher and coach of the Miramonte team. Photo Nora Conklin

Del Rey Team Heads to World Championship

By Eric Pawlakos



Photo E. Pawlakos

When the winners of the Odyssey of the Mind State Competition were announced, the team of six Del Rey fifth-graders was ecstatic. Only the two top teams in each division would advance to the World Finals in Maryland, and the Del Rey team had just been awarded second place. "The feeling was amazing!" exclaimed Avery Maybury, the team narrator.

With its exciting win, the Del Rey team will soon be heading to the University of Maryland, where it will compete in the Odyssey of the Mind World Championships taking place May 27th through May 30th.

Odyssey of the Mind is a worldwide competition that introduces students to the art of problem solving using creative methods by thinking 'outside the box.' When the school year begins, each team (up to seven

members) must choose one of five pre-defined problems from a variety of categories. They then work on creating an eight-minute presentation that demonstrates their solution to the problem in an entertaining and creative manner. At the competition, judges grade the performances based on imagination, creativity, style, the use of props, backdrops, and costumes, and how well everything blended together. Team member Edward Anaya believes that the key to winning Odyssey of the Mind is to, "always be creative, take your time, stay committed, and believe in your team."

The fifth-grade Del Rey team chose the Rube Goldberg problem that had the stated goal of over-complicating a simple tool. The team took the idea of an alarm clock and turned it into an elaborate contraption. Doing away with the annoying alarm

sound, their alarm clock ultimately lowers a food item close to the sleeping person's nose, allowing one to wake happily to the smell of his or her favorite food. With this innovative invention the squad won first place in the regional competition and advanced to the state finals where they finished in second place. Team member Nick Luckenbach said, "I have never been to a World competition before. I'm interested in seeing all the creative ideas that others have come up with."

After a team finishes with the presentation of its chosen problem, they are then asked to respond to a completely spontaneous prompt from the judges. Teams never know in advance what they might be asked to do during the competition. They are given one minute to think of a response to the prompt and four minutes to act out their response. The prompt given to the Del Rey team was, "The last thing I remember was..."

Thinking fast on their feet, some of the responses included, "eating noodles on mars," "a cute guinea pig in the sky," and "somebody saying, 'Look out!'" The creativity and number of their spontaneous responses earned the team first place in the state competition.

Kirsten Theurer, principal of Del Rey, said, "It's just so wonderful to see kids work hard together to get them to the place where they are today."

Eric Pawlakos is a junior at Miramonte High School.

No Shot, No School - Whooping Cough Booster Now Required

By Cathy Tyson

Attention all students entering grades seven through twelve in the fall - or more likely their very responsible parents - California has a new law, AB 354, that requires students to be vaccinated against whooping cough, also called pertussis, before school starts this August. Commonly called Tdap, this one booster shot, protects against tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough. Parents may be familiar with the tetanus-diphtheria booster shot or "Td," but starting with the 2011 - 2012 school year, it doesn't meet the requirement.

Proof of Tdap immunization is required during the residency verification process in August for all California students, although some local schools are accepting proof now

for those currently enrolled. Getting the vaccine now or during the summer months will help avoid the inevitable rush shortly before school starts.

"Your immunity wanes," says Dr. Sam Lewis, a pediatrician who practices in Orinda. "You still need a booster for two reasons, one - to keep kids from getting it and two - to keep from passing it on to little ones." He describes the symptoms as terrible and semi-serious, a choking, gagging cough for six to eight weeks. He recently had a one month old patient who ended up in Children's Hospital with whooping cough for almost a week.

Cases of whooping cough are on the rise in the U.S. According to the

California Department of Public Health it's a highly contagious bacterial illness spread by coughs and sneezes. They reported 8,000 cases of pertussis in California in 2010, the most in over sixty years - including ten infants who died and hundreds more who were hospitalized.

You can't start school if you don't have proof of immunization. For more information, go to www.shots-forschools.org. For those without health insurance, help may be available via the Vaccines for Children Program, a federally funded and state operated program, information available on the shots for schools website. Children enrolled in California's Healthy Families plan receive free immunizations with no copayment.

Daisies Bloom at Rancho Laguna

(Information submitted by Jennifer Gerst)



Moraga's Cadette Girl Scout Troop 30734 recently hosted a Daisy Play Day at Rancho Laguna Park. Over 80 Daisies, from eight troops in Orinda and Moraga, attended the event. The Cadettes chose the theme of "Friendship" and led the younger girls through a series of fun activities and songs, and presented short skits related to their theme. The Daisies were given special patches by the Cadettes, and the activity helped the Cadette troop complete its Amaze Journey, a prerequisite for starting work on the Silver Award.

Lamorinda Weekly
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