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Triple Golden Birthday for Miss Sydney

By Sophie Braccini



Sydney Bagley arrives in her class at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School. Photo Sophie Braccini

Since she was very young, Sydney Bagley knew that her golden birthday would come and that her parents would make it special for her. Bagley was born Dec. 12, 2000, and last Wednesday she turned 12.

The day started early with her best friends coming to her home for a traditional 'Shanghai' wake-up call. First period for Bagley was Lisa Gruen's sixth grade core class. There, the Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School student was totally surprised by what awaited her: balloons, whistles, and a lot of excitement before the class broke into a joyous Happy Birthday song.

"This is a very well-behaved class," said Gruen, "so it made sense to give them a little party time. This triple golden birthday is a rarity, the next time someone will be able to celebrate his or her 12th birthday on 12/12/12 will be in 2112."

The teacher sat everyone down and took the opportunity to quiz the class about the different meanings and symbols of the number depicting a dozen. "What element has the atomic number 12?" she asked. "Magnesium," answered a young girl - pretty good for a sixth grader! "What is 12 dozen called?" "One hundred and forty-four," answered a boy.

"Yes," added Gruen, "but it has a specific noun associated with it; do you know what it is?" The answer is a 'gross.'

Bagley's parents were there as well because, after the core class period, the family headed to the airport. Destination: New York City. "We had been talking about this for a long time," said Bagley's mother, Renée. "Sydney is a real theater buff so we decided on New York."

"I will never forget this day," Bagley said.

12-year-old Singer Inspired to Make a Difference

By Jennifer Wake



Samantha Anne Martin sits at the piano in the video *Ricochet*. Photo provided

One simple act can affect the world. It's one of the lessons Samantha Anne Martin learned in her sixth grade class at Stanley Middle School in Lafayette.

Martin was taking a course on adversity, learning about homelessness and bullying, when her teacher had the class read an article and showed them a video about Malala Yousafzai, the 15-year-old Pakistani activist who was shot in October by Taliban gunmen on her way home from school for promoting girls' rights.

Inspired by the teen's courage and plight, Martin decided to write a song about Malala. She and her father, Dan, wrote the lyrics, a friend of her father's wrote the music, all of them collaborating on the harmonies

and melodies. The group produced a video of the song, *Ricochet* (Malala's Song), which was posted on the Change.org website.

The video includes clips from news reports about the Pakistani teen. "I have a right to sing, I have the right to talk, I have the right to go to market, I have the right to speak," the activist is shown saying.

In the video, Martin, who is a three-time group competition winner of Orinda Idol and who performed in the lead role of Annie at Berkeley Playhouse last year, sings of the little girl like her who lived under siege. The final lyrics of the song ask for the world for support and to help

Malala make a stand.

When word about the video reached Malala's family, Malala's father watched it together with his daughter who is still recovering from her injuries in England. In an email to Martin Dec. 8, Malala's father said they could not control their tears when watching the piece.

"When my dad told me that Malala's dad had emailed us I was beyond excited," Martin said. "What touched me the most was how grateful he was for what we did. Reading that he cried while watching the video brought tears - joyful ones - to my eyes."

Knowing that her video had such an effect on Malala and her dad made Martin want to help her even more, she said. "It's a great feeling to know that my video made it halfway around the world and 'ricocheted' back to California in such a strong way."

The video ends with a plea to nominate Malala for the Nobel Peace Prize due to her efforts to speak out for girls' rights everywhere, risking her life in the process. *Ricochet* (Malala's Song), which has already been played on the radio, is available on iTunes and all proceeds go to MalalaFund.org. The video can be viewed at www.change.org/malala or on YouTube.

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TEEN SCENE

Recent Storm Affects Teens

By Konnie Guo

While all residents of Lamorinda were hit hard by the storm of a few weeks ago, teens were especially affected by the heavy rain and strong wind. Widespread power outages left many unable to complete their schoolwork.

Samuel Shain, a student at Miramonte High School, experienced unfortunate consequences from the rain. He says, "Our house sprung about four different leaks. The walls were peeling, and mud was coming in. The damage is enormous and is going to be very expensive."

Rain also created low visibility, slowing down traffic and covering the area in muddy puddles. As a result, many teens had to rise earlier in the morning to go to school despite the dark weather - not the normal routine for most adolescents.

A sinkhole occurred in Orinda near Tarabrook Drive, restricting cars to one lane of traffic. The road collapsed after a storm drain failed, leaving a large 15 by 20 foot gap. In Lafayette, a similar, but more serious sinkhole opened up on Mountain View Drive, measuring 15 feet deep and 40 feet wide. The street was seriously damaged, requiring drivers to seek a detour.

The slippery state of the roads required careful navigation when driving, and some students couldn't make it to class because of the incessant downpour and flooding. Many students on their way to school were

required to don protective coats and other accessories to keep themselves dry. Becoming soaked with rain was extremely inconvenient, leaving teens with no choice but to shiver in the unrelenting cold for the rest of the school day.

However, there were some who actually enjoyed the rain. Fifteen-year-old Alexa Clark says, "I got to curl up in a blanket and watch Christmas movies. It was fun!" Clark was glad that staying indoors gave her more time to connect and bond with her family.

Now that we have a break in the weather, it's a good time to repair the damages, take stock of what we need to do to prepare for other storms, and make arrangements for food, warmth, and light so that we can continue our studies despite a power outage during the winter months.



Konnie Guo, a Club BSYA, is currently a sophomore at Miramonte High School in Orinda. She is an avid reader, and during her spare time, enjoys playing the piano and doing volunteer work.

Teen Scene is YOUR voice. If you have something to say or have writing skills and want to be part of our Teen Scene team, email our Teen Coach, Cynthia Brian, Cynthia@CynthiaBrian.com.