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The Dons Have Spirit, Yes They Do

By A. K. Carroll



Acalanes High School seniors celebrate after winning the Oct. 6-10 Student Spirit Competition. Photos Gint Federas

School spirit is an essential part of high school. "Spirit builds up the culture in our school," said Amy Oum, a senior at Acalanes High School in Lafayette. "It makes everyone feel involved and included."

Oum serves as the social secretary of the Associated Student Body, and is part of a leadership class comprised of 40-some students who serve on seven different boards governed by five senior officers. Oum has been in leadership class since her freshman year.

"I'd just changed districts and leadership was a great way to get involved," Oum said. From the very start she looked up to the seniors who served as officers of ASB. Oum hoped to someday make a similar impact herself.

She certainly seems to be living up to that dream - tweeting, texting, and helping to head the Student Spirit Competition that took place Oct. 6-10, the week leading up to Homecoming. During Spirit Week, students participate in dress up days, hall decorating, dodge ball games, skits and various other activities. Classes compete against one another, with points awarded for placement and participation. At the end of the week the winning class is announced.

This year that announcement was made by Don Tatzin, mayor of Lafayette.

According to Katherine Searing, instructional support teacher at Acalanes, the idea originated with the parents, but was taken hold of by ASB.

"We've never had the mayor come and present anything for us," said Oum with a smile on her face. In fact, the mayor had never come for any Acalanes event. If ever there was a time for an inaugural visit, this was it.

Following the final bell on Friday, Oct. 10, Acalanes held a rally, during which Tatzin presented the award for best skit. Later that evening, he announced the overall winner of Spirit Week following Acalanes' first-ever Homecoming Halftime Show. "We've been wanting to do this for a while," Oum said of the show. Keeping with this year's Disney theme, the show took the form of a Disney Parade in which all clubs, sports teams and classes were invited to partici-

pate. As they marched off the field, Tatzin marched on, holding the suspense before declaring the seniors the victors. Following the announcement, the stadium burst with a blur of blue powder and a chorus of cheers."

Spirit Week is just a part of the social activities, events and competitions that take place during the year at Acalanes. At the end of each year a Spirit Cup is awarded to the class with the highest level of participation. "The activities are designed to benefit the students," said Oum. "If we didn't have spirit, it would be a very dull campus."

You can view a video of the blue powder finale online in the story link "The Dons Have Spirit" at www.lamorindaweekly.com.



Lafayette Mayor Don Tatzin arrives on the football field during the Oct. 10 Acalanes High School Dons halftime show to announce the Student Spirit Competition class winner.

Butterflies All Aflutter at 40th Annual Rheem Elementary Parade



Second generation butterflies: Sammie Pertel (left) clings to mom, Kim Pertel, who appeared as a butterfly at Donald Rheem Elementary School in the 1984 parade. Serina Culleton, a 1982 butterfly parade participant, hugs her son Ellis. Photo Cathy Dausman

A predominantly black and orange crowd of winged kindergartners fluttered by family, staff and friends during the 40th annual Butterfly Parade on the grounds of Donald Rheem Elementary School Oct. 17. Kindergarten teachers Bess Inzeo, Cathy Kathan and Laurel Chee led their charges past parents with cameras and fifth grade "big brothers and sisters." Guests of honor included Moraga Unified School District Superintendent Bruce Burns and retired teachers Alberta Svenson and Maryeda Theer. The parade is the culmination of a unit on the butterfly life cycle. Their developed the program for Rheem Elementary in 1974.

C. Dausman



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