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Lafayette Celebrates its Good 'Taste' on May 20



Uncle Yu's will be a hot spot during Taste of Lafayette. Photo Andy Scheck

It's a moveable feast on Tuesday, May 20 as the Taste of Lafayette restaurant walk is back with a staggering 22 restaurants, one flower shop and two bakeries, all for residents' enjoyment. There will also be nine other restaurants and caterers serving appetizers, dessert and coffee from 5:30 to 9 p.m. at Lafayette Plaza. Come hungry – the party starts and ends at the Plaza Park. Save \$5 with early-bird tickets available until May 6; after that date, tickets cost \$50. For more information go to the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce website at www.lafayettechamber.org —C. Tyson

A New Bell Rings For Students at Acalanes High

By Cathy Tyson



Travis Bell Photo Cathy Tyson

Current Acalanes High School Associate Principal Travis Bell is being promoted to principal as of July 1 in order to fill the shoes of outgoing principal Allison Silvestri, who announced her resignation in early March. She'll remain on staff for the remainder of the school year to ensure a smooth transition, but is moving on to become principal at San Lorenzo High School.

Acalanes Union High School District Superintendent Dr. John Nickerson announced the leadership change after the district did a statewide search for applicants.

"As we proceeded through a very rigorous interview process, it became more and more clear that Travis Bell would be an ideal fit for the desired profile," said Nickerson. The hunt for a replacement included a stakeholder survey that asked for student and teacher input.

Originally from the small foothill town of Murphys, Calif., Bell has been in the trenches as an English teacher and also served as the Leadership Teacher at Dougherty Valley High School, prior to moving into Acalanes administration in 2012. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from UC Davis and a Masters in Educational Administration and Leadership from Brandman University.

When not busy at school, Bell is plenty busy as a married father of two girls, age 3 years and seven months. The family lives in Danville. He played tennis and soccer in high school and enjoys family hikes along with running and swimming in his spare time.

The staffing change comes after outgoing principal Silvestri was at the helm for a relatively brief two-year stint.

Judge Rules Against Wight House Expansion

By Cathy Tyson

Contra Costa County Superior Court Judge denied a suit brought by landowners Linda and Steven Wight that would have overturned the City of Lafayette's denial of a Phase II permit on their 9,600 square foot home on 13.66 acres at the end of Monticello Road.

As the long and controversial proposed home project wrapped up last year, the Wights promised they would sue the city if the Phase II building permit was denied. In May 2015, after years of meetings, the project's Phase II permit was indeed denied by the Lafayette City Council on the grounds that the property required excessive grading and that the home failed to comply with design guidelines, and that its construction would create health hazards and be a nuisance to neighbors.

The Wights said they were unhappy with the city's decision after spending a considerable amount of time, effort and money — even hiring a new architectural team to draw up a completely fresh set of plans — and agreeing on a number of concessions to mitigate construction concerns.

They filed suit on July 23, 2015, complaining through their attorney David Bowie that the denial of the Phase II application was "an abuse of discretion because the decision was not supported by appropriate findings, and the findings were not supported by substantial evidence."

In a tentative filing April 16, Judge Judith Craddick of Contra Costa County Superior Court saw it differently, stating that the "petitioners' argument does not find support in California law."

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