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Song, solar and social activism at Campo

By Cathy Dausman



Drummer Ben Ebert of Trapdoor Social.

Photos Cathy Dausman

Lafayette native Ben Ebert still talks and sometimes jams with friends and old band mates from Acalanes High School, but now calls Los Angeles home. Ebert is a professional musician — a drummer for the five-member band Trapdoor Social.

Recently the band brought its music and its message to Campolindo High School. It was almost 90 degrees when Trapdoor presented their lunchtime concert on the Campolindo quad. They liked it — “they” meaning both the 80 to 100 students who sat listening to the set, and the band itself.

The band uses its six-panel solar generating trailer to power their electric guitars, amps, mics and speakers. After the concert, Ebert and band mates Merritt Graves, Skylar Funk, Louie Gonzalez and Patrick Griffen obligingly posed for photos before the aptly named Skylar Funk gave an AP environmental science class a peek into the workings of Trap-

door's 1.64 kilowatt capacity solar trailer.

In this and other ways the band promotes its social activism. They also produce a clean-

energy concert and fundraiser for charities. Last year they produced Sunstock Solar Festival, a charity benefit arts and music fest; it returns this year June 18.

Trapdoor Social has appeared locally at Saint Mary's College and UC Berkeley, but the Campolindo show was only their second high school venue. Performing at his crosstown rival “was just a coincidence,” Ebert said. “Our agent happened to come across the school without knowing I was from Lamorinda,” he said. One Campolindo fan even suggested the group perform at their school's 2018 Senior Ball.

As for his alma mater, Ebert says he would definitely love to play at Acalanes in front of his past teachers. “I have a lot of fond memories at that high school,” he said.



Trapdoor Social

Teen Writes

Away and apart: The odd time of year

By Alexandra Reinecke

Recently I went to Senior Ball with my journalism friend. People wore fruit-colored gowns and skin-tone eye shadow and the restlessness which has plagued the upperclassmen — seniors and juniors alike — since the onset of May. With AP weeks over, gone is the substance which once occupied their classrooms, their 50 minutes designated academic expedition.

In APUSH — AP U.S. History — we research conspiracies where we once sat agape over footage of 9-11. Where a week ago AP Calculus poured over limits, derivatives and integrals, they now play kickball and plan “teach-how-to” projects for which the rules of poker and the steps in the assembly of a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich are topics neither of exception nor rebuke.

Students in AP Psychology research topics of choice; one friend researches psychopaths, another the case of a woman who, placed under hospitalization for said ailment, could only view one half the tiramisu on the hospital tray placed before her. AP environmental science is doing something related to the plastic which shackles Diet Coke cans and the polar ice caps; AP chemistry is a room kinetic only with the motion which dominates the projector screen pulled down for a series of Neil deGrasse Tyson and like-hosted movies.

We don't have direction. We are, however, under the guise of assignment sheets with steps and bolded words “still learning.” The seniors look forward to polyester robes and white lace; the juniors to a year in which sleep runs like water and nerves aren't pulled like bungee cords. And yet we sit in classrooms empty with a lack

in substance, a lack in order, being told to pay attention. Remain involved. But we are restless. As stressed as we are, with the concern we hold no less now than yesterday for our futures we are tired.

Bare legs and shoulders and the backs of necks flirt with heat. But we are contained in school. Removed, as we are always when college is in the question and SchoolLoop active, from full-fledged participation in the world's less-than-scholarly facets. We are trapped. Trapped in a version of academia which, in its weakness and indirection we would, if we had the privilege of caring any less, would disregard as absurd. With APs over, substance is gone, though stress remains. June is a word we reiterate covertly, a word covered with just one more set of chemistry problems, just one more essay, and yet as perceptibly absent as a jacket against the wind, as distant a scenario as trenches we've seen only in photographs or the grainy surface of mars.

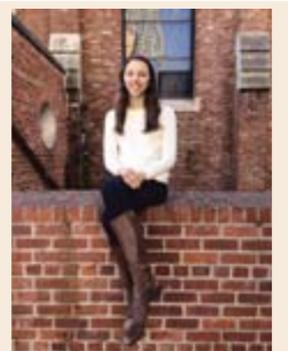
When I got home from ball I found the kitchen door locked so that the room — island block, cabinets, the quiet squares of Dad's Buddhist prayer flags — despite the clarity and proximity with which I viewed it through the door's glass, was one to which I lacked access.

I had to go in through the screen door in my parent's bedroom, an entrance to our 1970s-windowed, Cape Cod-shingled anomaly of a house I considered a sort of metaphor.

A metaphor for the fact that we can meet summer, but not shrug off the final vestiges of scholastic anxiety necessary to experience it. The fact that we can order cold drinks at Starbucks, and listen to the hum

of the AC against metal grates and eat frozen yogurt in the flavors of Maine and Minnesota's berries and yet we are separated from the feeling meant to accompany such warm-weather pleasures. The fact that we are away and apart.

In the morning, the sun was harsh on the prayer flags, the kitchen, and yet as I stood there I was glad. Glad to have gained access to that warm place. Content to stand — barefooted, sleep-deprived, haggard in a black Champion sweatshirt and smudged mascara — experiencing what I had been held away from. In the morning, I stood barefooted 10 minutes, letting the pools of light and heat make wondrous mod-dress patterns the color of lemon and eggshell over the necks of my feet. Sun-devoured. Glad. Content. So, I imagine, we soon all will be.



Alexandra Reinecke is from Westchester, New York. She currently resides in Lafayette, where she is junior at Campolindo High school. She writes every morning at 5 a.m. opposite a print of “View of the World from 9th Avenue” and consumes copious amounts of coffee. Her likes include maple-flavored anything and snow. Her favorite animal is a tiger.

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