

Letters to the editor

School districts fail to meet challenge

While the last several years were challenging, the Lafayette (LAFSD) and Acalanes (AUHSD) school districts have unfortunately failed to meet that challenge or even their legal obligations.

In the early days of COVID, California's Legislature passed a new law allowing remote instruction but specifically requiring school districts to "offer in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible." Cal. Education Code section 43504(b). Health officials authorized our schools to fully reopen in October 2020, but it was Spring 2021 before elementary schools reopened even part time. Stanley and AUHSD students spent 1 1/2 years on Zoom; they didn't fully reopen until Fall 2021. Even this past year, LAFSD limited extracurricular activities and restricted parental involvement at school, contrary to state law requirements in Education Code section 51101.

Unsurprisingly, our districts experienced steep enrollment declines as a result—including a stunning 11% drop in LAFSD, which is nearly three times the state average. While California schools will receive unprecedented, one-time government funding this year, our local districts predict deficits in future years, making more parcel taxes and bond

measures likely.

As a Lafayette parent heavily engaged with local school boards since 2020, I've seen the fundamental problem is an unwillingness to listen and respond to parents, or approach issues with an open mind. Parents advocated fully reopening in Fall 2020 and begged for a return to normal this past school year. School officials refused to acknowledge their concerns, ignored the learning loss and mental health impact of closures, and declined to pursue available avenues for reopening. The pattern is now being repeated as local districts are ignoring parents' pleas for greater curriculum transparency and a renewed focus on academics. As an attorney, I've repeatedly asked our boards to explain their failure to meet their legal obligations but was met with only silence.

The kids are not alright, and neither is our local schools' leadership. Concerned voters should support board candidates who will listen to parents and return schools' focus to their educational mission: Sarah Lind, Niels Larsen and Robb McSorley for LAFSD, and Renee Nowak, Mark Woolway and Gabe Ledeen for AUHSD Board.

Mark Lonergan
Lafayette

DEI is racism because it is discrimination based on race

A recent letter published Aug. 17, 2022 denied that DEI is racism. Yet DEI surely is discrimination based on race. Ask any Asian excluded from Lowell High School in SF, or from Harvard, because of their race. They are being discriminated against based on their race. Call it whatever you choose, but it is wrong. The way diversity is achieved is by favoring one race over another until the "desired" proportional representation is achieved. "Racial discrimination" is treating people differently based on race. Call DEI racial discrimination rather than racism if that makes you happy.

In fact, the definition of "racism" includes "racial discrimination." www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/racism "Discrimination" is different treatment. That is what it is, and no amount of re-definition will change that fact.

Why are progressives so afraid to acknowledge the racism in their DEI programs? Is it because admitting that DEI is racist would be admitting that they are wrong? Is it because admitting that they are promoting racial discrimination would be admitting that they are wrong? I say, "If the shoe fits, wear it." If you are afraid to acknowledge that you are promoting racism, or if you are afraid to admit you are promoting racial discrimination, maybe you should revisit your views. As Chief Justice Roberts stated, "The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race." Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., famously said, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." That day is come. It is time to stop discriminating based on race.

Robert Lavoie
Lafayette

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Kibi Café Vietnamese restaurant opens in Theatre Square



Photo Sora O'Doherty

Hoang Ho opens a branch of Kibi's Cafe, the popular Vietnamese restaurant in Walnut Creek, in Theatre Square.

By Sora O'Doherty

Hoang Ho, the owner of the successful Kibi's Café in Walnut Creek, is opening another branch in Orinda. The Vietnamese restaurant replaces Republic of Cake in Theatre Square. Republic of Cake moved to larger premises in Danville last May.

Ho is delighted with the new location, and particularly with the kitchen which enables her to create all of the from-scratch components for her food. The menu will be limited to banh mi sandwiches, summer rolls, noodle salads and drinks, including

Vietnamese coffee and Thai iced tea. But Ho hopes to add soups and other items to the menu in time.

Ho, who immigrated from Vietnam in 2015 as a single parent with two children, is passionate about baking, and will be baking her own bread for the sandwiches, as well making as homemade pate, aioli, and pickled vegetables. Both her children graduated from Campolindo High School. Her daughter is now a senior at UC Berkeley with an internship with Microsoft, and her son is a sophomore in engineering at Diablo Valley College. The name, Kibi's Café is

composed of her children's nicknames.

The new location is ideal for recreating her family recipes, Ho says. She bases her food on her family experience coupled with available ingredients and the local environment. When she first arrived, she would drive to Oakland for banh mi, but, she says, she was disappointed in the quality available, which led her to open her first restaurant in Walnut Creek just over three years ago. Ho strives to use the highest quality ingredients available in her recipes.

After undefeated openers, hope springs eternal for Lamorinda football

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"Luke did a lot of preparation in the off season, in the weight room, going to seven-on-seven tournaments and camps and visiting a number of colleges as well," Scharf said. "We also hired Ross Bowers, a former Cal Bear as our quarterback coach and he's been doing a fantastic job."

Bowers has a high regard for Duncan's athletic ability and the intangibles he brings to the game. "Luke has a special arm and with his size reminds me of Jared Goff," Bowers said. "He can make any throw and I've watched his growth and maturation in becoming the team leader."

Backing up Duncan is John Williams who can also play safety and Myles Bastani who came up from the JV team and has shown the ability to step in if called upon.

The backfield is led by Thomas Wilson (68/429/6.3), Gabe Roman (19/66/3.5) and Bennett Destino (7/72/10.3). "Wilson led the team in running and Roman came up from the JV last year and Destino is coming back off an injury," Schram said. "We are very confident in running the ball and they give us great flexibility."

Schram calls his receiving corps "awesome." Jimmy Foster (30/387) was second on the team in receptions and Cooper Bohlig (28/421) was third. Ethan Conley and J.D. Pearce are both coming back off injuries and have been showing well.

There is a lot of size and experience on the offensive line. Jackson Davenport and John Kelly are returning two-way starters and 6'8" Luke Davis (6'8" 350) has been alternating at guard and center with Nick Blair. Nick Bonar should be the starter at right tackle and Thomas Zwalen, and Andrew Davenport should all see time on the line as well.

With so much depth on the offensive line, Schram feels he has the ability to use some of that size on the defensive line as well. He is particularly excited at the rush skills of wide receiver Nic Webber and Will Scott. "Nic and Will have proven

to be very difficult to block and have the potential to destroy teams, Schram said. "They've both given great looks to our tackles in practice."

With the graduation of Sam Ross who is now playing at the University of California, the defense is led by middle linebacker Grant Scanlan who will also be used at tight end when needed. Schram is counting on an upcoming junior from the JV team to supplement Scanlan. "We have a solid group of players in Finn McManus, Nate Howe and Gabe Roman," Schram said. "Our JV staff did a fantastic job the last couple of years in building up a continuity and teaching fundamentals, so we have a really solid nucleus on defense."

Chase Bliss and Ethan Conley will be starting at the corners and there is great depth at safety with Matthew Hawkins, J.D. Pearce, Foster and Bohlig.

Even with the larger roster, Schram shares a concern that all coaches have. "We've got to stay healthy," Schram said. "We have to take care of business in our non-league because our league is so tough. We understand that going in and we're just going to have to deal with it."

The Matadors defeated Berkeley 48-20 in their opening game.

Acalanes

Unlike Miramonte and Campolindo, Acalanes is going into the season with a pair of quarterbacks that have no varsity experience, Jake Boselli, and Sully Bailey. "These two kids are very talented," head coach Floyd Burnsed said. "They're quick learners and they're going to play at a high level."

Ellis Burger averaged 12.6 yards/carry and scored five touchdowns and is now expected to carry the load this year. "That's what seniors are supposed to do -- step it up and be the man," Burnsed said. "Ellis is bigger at 190 and he's got great speed. Jack Miller is new to the varsity and has shown he knows how to read blocks and is able to make really good cuts."

There is speed to burn at the wide receiver position. Trevor Rogers averaged 19.7

yards/reception with five TD's and Ethan Torres scored four touchdowns while averaging 13.1 yards/reception. Burnsed is expecting a lot out of Paul Kuhner a 10.5/100-meter sprinter. "Paul only played four games on the varsity and is a real threat on kickoff returns scoring two touchdowns."

Tyler Murphy is starting at left guard. "He's up to 275 pounds now," Burnsed said. "He a very good athlete that can pull and trip."

After that, the line is still a work in progress. "Victor Nicolacakis can play center and guard and we're still evaluating Marcus Julian who was our right guard last season," Burnsed said. "We have good players and it's just finding the best combination."

Juniors Brady Morrow and Lucas Rocha are the starting defensive tackles and Nathan Bennett, and Justin Zegarowski are the outside rushers. "Justin only weighs about 190 but he is really quick and will be handful for tackles," Burnsed said.

At linebacker, Jack Giorgianni is a returning starter at inside linebacker alongside Tyler Worthington who had eight tackles for loss last season. Nathan Bennett, George Churchill, Miller Smith, and Nathan Kim all saw some playing time last season and are looking to fill the other starting position.

The strength of the defensive backfield looks to be inside with their safeties. "We moved Kyle Bielawski (6'3" 195) from linebacker to safety and he has track speed alongside Coco Gannon who will play the other safety so we're really good inside," Burnsed said. "Torres and Rogers may also play some corner as well because they're such good athletes." Juniors Gavin Bender and Marshall Anderson should also see some playing time on the outside.

With all of the time and effort that has been invested, Burnsed is approaching the season with great confidence: "I'm very optimistic about our football team this year. I think we're good in every area."

The Dons defeated San Marin 21-14 in their opener.

Campolindo

Last season after graduating 29 seniors and having only two returning starters, Campolindo head coach Kevin Macy spoke of it being a rebuilding season that ended up with an NCS championship and making it to the state semifinals. This year, the team has only lost 20 seniors and is returning four starters, so Macy has not really changed his tone. "Last year was supposed to be a rebuild year and the funny thing is that we still don't know how we had the success we had so that's put a target on us even though we still have some rebuilding to do."

Dashiell Weaver stepped in as the starting quarterback having had no varsity experience and led the team to a 10-4 record and is looking to build on that team's success. "I believe that there has been a carryover of energy and motivation from last year, seeing what we could do after such a terrible start to the season and ending so well and we've taken that to heart," Weaver said. "We do have a lot of young players and we have a lot of things to smooth out but I'm super excited for what we have this season."

Weaver hasn't rested on his laurels. "I've gotten stronger and a little taller," Weaver said. "The number one thing is trust. The coaching staff trusts me more and I trust them and my teammates."

If there is one thing that Weaver can really count on, it's that wide receiver Robbie Mascheroni is going to be his prime target as he was last season when he caught 70 passes and 14 TDs. 36 more than the second leading receiver for Campolindo.

A number of colleges have been in contact with the 6'4" Mascheroni and this will continue until he makes his ultimate decision. He can also count on being double teamed a lot. "Some of our other receivers will have to surface," said Macy. "It may be Brendan Comerford (31/162/1 TD), Sean Spillane (3/83, 1 TD) and juniors Scott Lyon and Timmy Daugherty who have good speed, but the bottom line is we're going to need to have other receivers to

count on."

The offensive line is going to have five new starters, all juniors and will be key in their ability to protect Weaver in the pocket. As they are lining up right now, it's RT Shane Harris, RG Bryce McLaverty, C Nick Walker, LG Max O'Balle and LT Frank Anderson.

O'Balle will also be seeing a lot of time on the defensive line but the rest of the line is still in flux with Hudson Orman, Shane Harris, Nicholas Lopez, and Anderson all competing for starting positions.

Robby Horst, returning as the starting middle linebacker and will also be called on at times to play fullback, is taking on the role of leader on defense. "It's a big responsibility trying to keep everyone in check," Horst said. "We're a tight team and we act like brothers so I'm able to keep everyone focused and practicing well. I'm very confident going into the season even with a whole new defensive line."

One reason it's a whole new defensive line is because Charlie Murrin is moving over from defensive end to outside linebacker. Murrin is not overlooking that this is for the most part a new team from last year. "Last year was magical but we can't take too much from that in that we only have four returning starters," Murrin said.

Moving to linebacker is a challenge that Murrin welcomes. "It's a lot different from defensive end but I like it more because I have a lot more freedom now that I'm involved in the run and pass. It was a bit of a struggle at times, but I've gotten a lot of help from Robby Horst, and I've learned how to handle it."

The defensive backfield will be starting Timmy Daugherty and Lucas Concepcion at the corners with Jake Spencer at free safety and James Giordani at strong safety. Mascheroni may also be used at the safety position if the need arises.

The Cougars defeated Moreau Catholic in their opener 28-17.