

Acts of Kindness at NorCal Kids Triathlon

By Jennifer Wake



From left: Colton Gibson, Grey Bennett, Dresden Gerber, William Andrews, Jane Andrews, Crew Bingham and Olivia Bates. Photo Lauren Bennett

The NorCal Kids Triathlon, sponsored by the Orinda Community Foundation, notched another successful year of swimming, cycling, and running Aug. 27, with more than 320 kids ranging in age from 4 to 14 participating in the eighth annual event, which starts and ends at Miramonte High School.

"This event really strengthens community spirit and helps the young athletes burst with pride as they cross the finish line," said event co-chair and OCF president Sue Severson. "Over half the athletes every year are first-time participants in a triathlon."

There were a few tiny hiccups for a couple of the young triathletes, but fortunately, thanks to quick thinking and the kindness and support of others, the event ended positively for everyone.

Debbie Westover's 14-year-old daughter Maddy and three of her friends, Natalie Swanson, Ella Lewerenz and Keily Sarica, were at Water Station No.1 when one of the little 4-year-old athletes came up to the station, crying, confused and wanting his mother.

According to Westover, Keily stayed back at the water table in case other kids came while Maddy, Natalie and Ella took the little boy by the hands and ran the rest of the way with him to the track and over

the finish line.

"I thought that was the cutest thing I had ever heard," said Victoria Carter, who later relayed the story to Severson.

Event co-chair Richard Stanaro described a different instance involving another triathlete in the 5-6 year range.

"We had a little chap that fell off his bike. His mother told one of our committee team members about it, and told [her son] that to get the medal, he must finish, encouraging him and teaching him the virtue of fortitude. His dad followed with him, but he came through in the end after the awards had started."

Stanaro told the event announcer, Scott Butler, about the young athlete and volunteers kept an eye out for him. "We saw him coming into the stadium area with his dad in the background, and we told Scott," Stanaro said.

The announcer told Steve Harwood, his "partner in crime," to key the theme music to "Rocky" while Butler made a special announcement, encouraging the crowd to cheer the boy on. "He really turned on the juice for this little boy," Stanaro said.

"The whole crowd cheered him on by name. He was wiping away tears as he entered the track and ended with a huge smile," Stanaro said. "That made my day."

Scout revitalizes map of America on Los Perales playground

By Cecilia Murtagh



Christophe Marinier with his map.

Photo provided

The cry went out, "Where is Rhode Island? Someone painted over Rhode Island!" The project director, Christophe Marinier, walked over with the green paint and replaced the missing state. National disaster averted! This happened as Marinier, an Eagle Scout candidate from troop 234, recently worked on his project to repair and repaint the large playground map of the United States at Los Perales Elementary School.

When asked why he chose to spruce up the map he said that he had enjoyed playing around it when he was a student at LP and it had inspired his love of maps. He noticed that the map, which was originally done by the Moraga Rotary Club, had faded over the years and was in disrepair. He sought permission from the school principal, who suggested that the Scout include the basketball and four square courts.

Marinier sought help at Home Depot where he talked to the experts to find out exactly what this job would entail. He found out it would take more than just paint. It would take money and many hours by many volunteers to complete. He estimated costs, and solicited funds from people who also wanted to preserve the map.

Then he reached out for help. He orga-

nized a core group of Scouts: Haden, Christian and Tristan Prizeman, Siegfried Needham, Mason Gruebelle, Andy Babson and Sam Lee, who brought along his brother and grandfather. These stalwart Scouts were joined by Marinier's parents Philippe and Celia, his sisters Camille and Brigitte, and his grandfather Bob Murtagh. They in turn drafted Noel Wolfe and his family, Maura, Ellie and Will.

As the big day approached Marinier gathered his supplies. He needed to procure paint, a gas blower, a power washer, sand, and asphalt. After the blower and broom crew finished, the entire surface needed to be power washed. Next the sand crew, followed by the asphalt crew, filled in the many large cracks that had appeared in the playground surface over the years. Then, the whole thing had to be primed. Finally, the cartographers, with their paints, could get to work on the map while another group worked on the four square courts, and still others painted the basketball courts. As it took shape Marinier knew that he had chosen his project well. It turned out better than he imagined.

The LP students get to enjoy the map this year and Lamorinda Weekly readers can see the finished product on Google Earth.

2017 Lamorinda Idol winners take a bow

Submitted by Steve Harwood



ABC (Lleyton Allen, Elizabeth Becker and Jenni Coletta)

Photos provided

The 12th annual Lamorinda Idol singing competition, produced by the Lamorinda Arts Council Aug. 27 at the Orinda Theatre, featured talented soloists and singing groups from kindergarten to 12th grade from throughout Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, with winners in the elementary, middle and high school categories crowned 2017 Lamorinda Idols at this fun-filled, raucous event.

And the winners are:

K-2 Solo: Riyana Habarakada and Sanya Rawat

3-5 Solo: Mina Lim

Middle school Solo: Nejla Ackdoe-Pagey

High school Solo: Elizabeth Becker

Groups K-5: Fourte (Claire O'Connor, Sadie Poole, Natalie Schroeder and Katie Welch)

Groups 6-8: Deuce (Nejla Ackdoe-Pagey and Grace Barmmer)

Groups 9-12: ABC (Lleyton Allen, Elizabeth Becker and Jenni Coletta)

Audience Award: Michaela Sasner



Fourte (Claire O'Connor, Sadie Poole, Natalie Schroeder and Katie Welch)

Fractured peace

By Alexandra Reinecke

F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote that life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall. While the season is fast approaching, however, it is neither crisp nor personally incarnating. It is warm and groggy. Suede moccasins sit like impatient Labradors in the back of my closet. A new, sleek down Patagonia puffer is mashed in my backpack, resentful of the hope I, by wearing it in whatever short, early chill the morning provides, momentarily gift it. I haven't enjoyed the cedar smell of new pencils. Target does not yet allot shelf space to Washington apple candles. Beside the pack of gum signifying my recent plane ride home, the honey color of new, school year Chapstick threatens to melt in its stick.

With school starting, it is effectively fall, but not fall. I, being a senior, am effectively finished with the college admission mania, and yet I am not. I spent my summer completing Hinduism research at Columbia. I also spent it writing supplements for the 16+ colleges to which I plan to apply. Now, back at school in this sweltering California heat, I am as in limbo as is the surrounding weather.

I spent three years of high school working toward admission to my first choice college. From the vantage of my freshman, sophomore, and junior years, senior year appeared to be the breathing time after a long distance track of hurdles. As a senior, I have, unfortunately, found this school year is not composed of exhaling, or of the post-competition stroll to the water fountain I always expecting.

As a senior, I find myself sprinting, considerably less enthusiastically, at a group of phantom hurdles that were hitherto concealed to me. Maintaining the academic track record I have sustained through high school. Continuing to produce fiction and nonfiction, to lead publications and clubs. Studying for Calculus tests which seem no less real to me than did their mathematical predecessors, which struck fear like nothing else in me for three years' duration.

I do not take car trips to Muir Woods, as I once expected I would. I do not eat takeout Chinese food over Scrabble games with leisure time I can now afford. I make Quizlets for AP Comp Gov. I bite the inside of my mouth over Calculus. Rather than begin the caffeine cleanse I, last year, promised myself

I'd start in the fractured peace of this year, I stockpile the pantry with chai latte mix and cases of Diet Coke.

This is not a fractured peace. This is not the tranquility following the run. I am the same person I was as a junior, and as a sophomore, and as a freshman. I escape none of the old responsibilities. I skirt none of the old expectations. I am in limbo. I am working to a standard of excellence by which I am not only merely tired, but routinely exhausted.

So, it is not getting crisp. So, my life is not starting over again with the looming change of season. And Fitzgerald also wrote something different about starting over. "It's never too late . . . to be whoever you want to be. . . I hope you live a life you're proud of. If you find that you're not, I hope you have the strength to start all over again."

So, maybe fall isn't about becoming born again with the leaves. So, maybe autumn isn't, as I expected of the time between junior year and college decisions, a time which smells of cider and cedar. A time of fractured peace.

So, courage isn't sitting out from the end of a hard race, but seeing it through. Courage is having the capacity, however difficult, to be the person, in those three years, you so often were. Courage is having not the capacity to start all over again, but that to start from where you stand. To begin to continue.



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 o'clock 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.