

Acalanes High School • Bentley School • Burton Valley • Camino Pablo • Campolindo • Contra Costa Jewish Day School • Del Rey • Donald L. Rheem • Glorietta • Happy Valley • Joaquin Moraga

Lamorinda Schools

Lafayette Elementary • Los Perales • Miramonte • Orinda Academy • Orinda Intermediate • Saklan Valley School • Sleepy Hollow • Springhill • Stanley Middle • St. Perpetua School • Wagner Ranch

It's Bee Season!

By Andrea A. Firth

It has been the subject of a best-selling novel (Bee Season by Myla Goldberg), a long-running Broadway musical (The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee), an academy award nominated documentary (Spellbound), and a film and Starbucks favorite (Akeelah and the Bee)—the Spelling Bee persists as a fascination and a tradition across America and here in Lamorinda. In this age of computer spell check where words are rewritten with correct spelling before the typist has lifted her fingers from the keys, what's the attraction to the old-time Spelling Bee? "It's fun to watch," explains Elaine Frank, principal of Rheem School in Moraga, "It's really exciting." And for the kids who compete, she notes, "It's a real challenge."

Over the past two weeks, area schools have hosted competitions to identify their best spellers. With words such as mononucleosis, penitentiary, epiglottis, deterge, and cauliflower, Lamorinda students in 3rd through 8th grades have demonstrated their mastery of the English language or at least the sequence of its letters. The winners of the local Spelling Bees will head next to a county-wide contest held in March. The county winner



OIS Spelling Bee Finalists, Orinda Photo Ron Langer



Rheem School Spelling Bee, Moraga Photo Ann Ralph

then has the opportunity to participate in the Scripps National Spelling Bee that is held in Washington, D.C. in May.

What makes a super speller? Is it extensive reading, acute visual memory skills, the

ability to breakdown words phonetically, a superior knowledge of the origin of words? It's hard to say and even harder to spell. Whatever it is—it's a mystery and a gift.

Lamorinda Spelling Bee Winners		
Elementary Schools	Student	Grade
Camino Pablo	Callan Beaver	4th
Los Perales	Uma Gaffney	4th
Rheem	Quinn Cuddiny	3rd
Sleepy Hollow	Brooke Presten	5th
Intermediate Schools	Student	Grade
Joaquin Moraga	Caroline Bell	7th
Orinda	Molly Fiero	6th
Stanley	Ryan Smolkin	8th

Acalanes & Stanley Jazz Bands are Winners!

By Jean Follmer



Rick Meyer and the Acalanes Jazz Band at the Folsom Jazz Festival Photo submitted Stan Stinnett

For the second year in a row, the Acalanes High School Jazz Band won 1st place in the AAA division at the Folsom Jazz Festival. Acalanes' Jazz Quintet also won 1st place in their Combo (small groups) Division. The Quintet members are Ellie Athayde, Gurbir Dhillon, Ben Ebert, Parker Grant and Maxime Stinnett.

Acalanes Band Director, Rick Meyer, said the band has gone to the Folsom Jazz Festival for the past five years. He says, "For what it is, it's the best I know of in California. It's an educational program" so it includes workshops the musicians can attend in addition to the competitions. He particularly likes Folsom because his musicians get to listen to the other jazz bands perform. Meyer says "They hear bands that they're not going to hear all year."

Meyer has been the Band Director at Acalanes High School for 24 years and oversees three concert bands and the orchestra in addition to the jazz band. Students must audition to

become a member of the Acalanes Jazz Band and practice is every morning at 7:00. Meyer said his "objective is to keep them (the students) involved in music because they're going to be the next proponents of what we do." They are going to be the symphony patrons and the parents that keep music going in the schools. When asked if he likes his job, Rick said "I love my job. You can't do this job and not love it."

Stanley Middle School had a very successful debut at the Folsom Jazz Festival. Led by Director Bob Athayde, the Stanley Jazz Messengers (after Art Blakey & the Jazz Messengers) won 3rd place. This was the first competition this band has been in, so the results are even more impressive. In past years, Stanley has participated in numerous other jazz festivals including the Monterey Jazz Festival, Los Medanos Jazz Festival and the local Generations in Jazz Festival. Athayde says he likes the festivals because "they get people excited."

Kids remember playing on the Wharf" in Monterey.

The Stanley Jazz Messengers are the top of the three jazz bands led by Athayde. Jazz is not part of the Stanley curriculum, so students participate on their own time at 7:25 am four days a week. Next year, that commitment will increase to five days a week. Athayde encourages his students to be creative. He says "We stress improvisation with written chord changes and they like doing it. The older we get, the harder it is to do improvised jazz solos." In addition to the jazz bands, Athayde also oversees six concert bands and two after-school combos in conjunction with LASF Assistant Director Tommy Davidson and his Executive Assistant, Ginni Reynolds (who does everything from keeping Athayde on schedule to fixing saxophones).

Both Acalanes and Stanley will perform at the Lafayette Jazz Festival to be held March 6-9, 2008 at the Bentley School Theater in Lafayette. Don't miss it!

We're online too: www.lamorindaweekly.com (it's free)

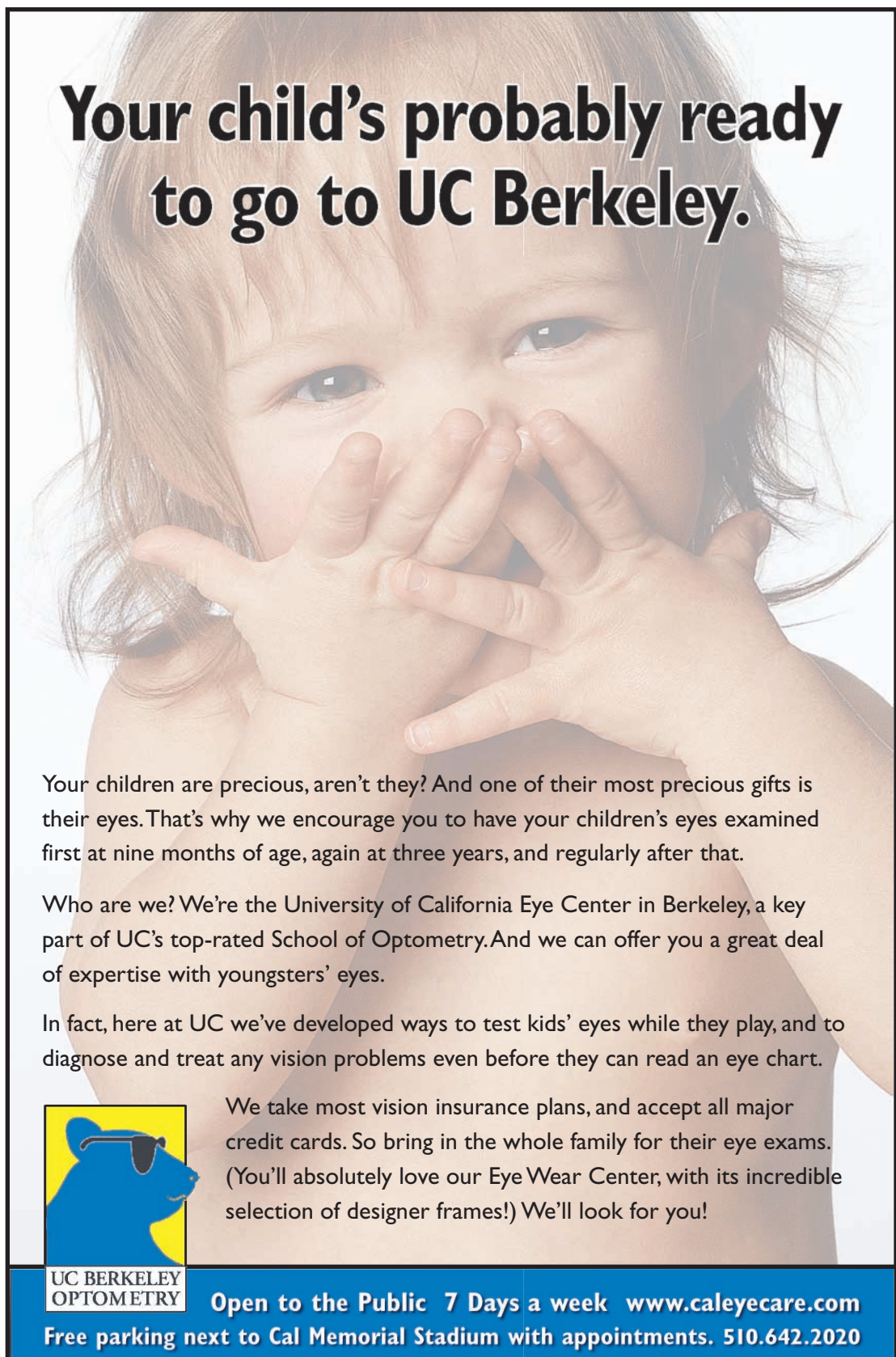
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Lamorinda 4-H Corner

By Tara Anderson, 6th grade, Stanley Middle School



Members of the Lamorinda Poultry 4-H Group after a trip to the Stockton poultry show Photo submitted

My name is Tara and it's my first year in 4-H. 4-H is a local non-profit organization. 4-H stands for Head, Hands, Heart, and Health. 4-H is a good way to make some friends and to feel included. 4-H isn't just about the animals, for example, I am in Photography and there are other groups too like Foods, Sewing, Music, and much, much more.

Another great thing about 4-H is YOU DON'T NEED AN ANIMAL TO DO IT! The only pets that I have are our two cats and I am still in Poultry and Horse. My brother is in beekeeping; bees are great pets for any area. 4-H is just plain fun. 4-H is learning. In 4-H there is no limit to how many projects you do so long as you have the time. It's a great thing to do for

children grades K through Senior. Some of the fun things about 4-H are going to camp and fair. I am looking forward to these activities. I think 4-H is just a plain, all around great thing to do.

Area 4-H Web site: cecon-tracosta.ucdavis.edu

For more information about Lamorinda 4-H contact Michelle Chan at mmchan6@yahoo.com.

Teens Talk Cars at Orinda Motors

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"We were told to always have an emergency kit in the back of our car," remembers Jorgens. "It is important for these young people to have a plan if their car breaks down and what to expect if they drive in harsher conditions," says Vanek. He explained to them the importance of preparing a car when they'll start to embark in longer trip, "A battery

in moderate condition can become a problem in cold weather, and if you're stuck in the snow, you better have food for a few days and extra gear available in the car."

Most of the questions of the boys and girls attending the class revolved around the price of buying and maintaining a car. Vanek recommended a Japanese import as a first car

and stressed the importance of having used cars inspected, even if they are hand-me-downs.

The next class for the Miramonte sophomores will be on April 13th. Vanek is willing to give some of his time to other groups in the community if they would like to train other young drivers.