

CARLMONT: PTA conducts survey

Continued from 1A

Fifty percent said that much of what they have learned about the school came by word of mouth, and 34 percent said they got information from other parents and students, or the media.

At press time, a margin of error for the survey was not available.

The results of the survey did not surprise Carlmont teacher Karen Reynolds, who said the school is subject to a share of unwarranted criticisms. She said that many parents make up their minds about where their children are going to go high school early on.

"It's clear to me they have certain way they want Carlmont to be," Reynolds said, adding that she thinks many parents see the culturally diverse school as a "quantum leap" from close-knit neighborhood middle and grammar schools.

"These very parents who say they might be hesitant (to send their kids to Carlmont) have never been on our campus," said Reynolds, who teaches advanced English to freshmen and sophomores and often invites parents of eighth-graders to her visit her classroom to see what the school has to offer. "There's something wrong with that."

According to a study conducted last April by Eric Von der Porten and Gordie Burton, two San Carlos parents, Sequoia Union High School District data show that each year 40 percent of students from Central Middle School in San Carlos and 30 percent of students from Ralston Middle School in Belmont attend out-of-district and private schools.

Before her daughter entered Carlmont, Muscatine said, she also had concerns.

"All I had ever heard were rumors. "I had heard how unsafe it was," she said, adding that she had received much information from the school itself but that a

campus visit changed her mind "It's a very peaceful place. It really surprised me."

Chris Taylor, a Carlmont senior, concurred.

"It's not unsafe here," Taylor said as he was leaving school on a recent afternoon. "All the schools in the Sequoia (Union High School) District are going to be the same."

Taylor added that to get the most out of academics at Carlmont, as at any school, students must apply themselves.

"Unequivocally, parents want a strong academic core," said Muscatine, citing the survey's findings that 95 percent of par-

ents said strong academics are very important to them and that 88 percent said a college preparatory program is very important. Muscatine added that the school's principal, Debra Lindo, has made efforts to visit with the PTA and was very receptive to the information gleaned from the survey.

Lindo, however, was unavailable for comment.

Muscatine added that the fact that parents hold high goals for the children and support a strong curriculum is positive.

"Parents want their children to go to college. I think this is good news for the school."

Carlmont PTA Survey
The Independent
Oct 20, 1998

PTA conducts survey on Carlmont

Attempt to quell misconceptions about the school

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff reporter

Many parents of elementary and middle school students in the Belmont-Redwood Shores School District are uncertain whether they will send their children to Carlmont High School, according to the results of recently released survey, although few have firsthand experience with the school.

Conducted and paid for by the Belmont-Redwood Shores PTA Council, the survey was mailed out to every household in the school district with kindergarten through eighth-grade public school students last spring. Of the 1,800 households queried, 549 households, or 30.5 percent, responded.

"Parents should get more information about Carlmont," said Janine Muscatine, president of the Belmont-Redwood Shores PTA Council, and a co-author of the survey.

Muscatine said her motivation for conducting the survey was that she was frustrated by the lack of firsthand information parents have, and by negative attitudes about the school that she said are fed by the media and through rumors.

According to the PTA poll, many parents with children attending school in the Belmont-Redwood Shores School District get their information about the public high

school secondhand: from word of mouth and the media.

Asked to pick from a variety of responses, 95 percent of the 549 responding households said a strong academic foundation was "very important" to them. However, 50 percent said they were "uncertain" about whether they would send their kids to Carlmont. Twelve percent said "definitely not," and 37 percent said that they would "definitely yes" or "probably" send their kids to the school.

"The perception and reality of Carlmont are not always the same thing," added Francesca Karpel, a parent and member of the Belmont-Redwood Shores School District Board, who helped tabulate answers on the survey.

Karpel said that she hopes that it opens a dialogue with the school and that the information will lead to a more accurate picture of the school's students and programs.

Of the roughly 340 parents who reported they had uncertainties or would definitely not send their kids to Carlmont, 37 percent said they had concerns about peer groups and campus safety. Twenty-eight percent said they feared a weak preparation for college.

However, the poll also asked an open-ended question about where households get their information about the school and organizers categorized the respondents answers.

According to the categorized answers, only 17 percent said they had direct experience or had other children who attended the school.

BOOK: Other parents complain

Continued from 1A

behalf of the parent, and we intend to do that."

Belmont resident Tony Festa, whose granddaughter read "Coffee Will Make You Black" last year at Carlmont, said it was just "the tip of the iceberg" and said there are other books on Carlmont's reading list that he considers offensive.

"Fortunately (the granddaughter) is so unsophisticated, even at 15, I don't worry too much about her," he said. "I helped her write some of the school work for ('Coffee Will Make You Black'), and I said to her, 'You didn't tell me about these excerpts that are in ... the paper.'"

"She said, 'Grandpa, I really didn't notice them, I didn't pay too much interest.'"

Festa also expressed dismay that the main character in "Coffee Will Make You Black" decides she is a lesbian at the end

of the novel.

On the Carlmont reading list for incoming sophomores is the book "Always Running," by Luis Rodriguez, which has raised furor in the San Jose School District and which Festa says is "pornographic."

"Always Running" is based on Rodriguez's son's violent life in a Los Angeles gang. The other choices on the sophomore list include Ayn Rand's "Anthem" and "China Boy" by Gus Lee.

Wendy Fleming, who said she has taught English and whose son attended Carlmont, said she was "disgusted" with some of the books on her son's reading list — many of which, she said, had sexual situations and language similar to "Coffee Will Make You Black."

Fleming said she had complained to Carlmont's previous principal and had gotten the runaround in talking with the

English department and instructor.

"There's an agenda, and it's to change our kids away from their heritage," Fleming said. "I wish it was altruistic and really wanted to make everyone love everyone and treat each other as equals, but that's not really the goal."

"The agenda, as far as I can tell, is to bring in a kind of sameness between the sexes — and that, of course, includes free love — and it's promoted financially by the partnerships and the corporations who stand to gain."

Mack encouraged parents to be vigilant in reviewing their children's school reading.

"Parents, be aware of what your children are reading, not just at public schools, but private schools as well — it's not just Carlmont," she said. "If parents got involved, maybe they could nip it in the bud before it actually gets to be (a problem)."

Carlmont teacher arrested

By Amy Wallace
Staff Editor

A Carlmont High School teacher has been arrested for having a loaded gun on school grounds.

Belmont Police arrested David Merta, 54, on Sept. 9 for possession of a loaded firearm while on school property.

He was booked into the San Mateo County Jail and released on bail.

Merta, a teacher at Carlmont for more than 25 years, told police that he had brought the revolver to school with him during the summer to get it out of his house, and had forgotten about it until asked.

School officials learned of the weapon while conducting a personnel investigation into another matter, according to police.

When officials confronted Merta

about the weapon, he retrieved it from a locked storage cabinet.

According to police, there were no bullets in the pistol itself, but there were bullets stored in the same box with the gun — making it a loaded weapon, by legal definition.

Police stated that it did not appear that students were in any danger, nor were there any other motives for the weapon being on campus, according to police.

*Carlmont High School
The Independent
Sept 19, 1998*

Carlmont responds to book issue

Other parents express similar concerns over reading material

By John Baker
Staff Reporter

A Belmont parent said she is now satisfied that Carlmont High School is responding to her concerns about what she says is a sexually vulgar book, but other parents have since come forward with similar complaints.

"They've been really great and have been really helpful," Michelle Mack said, adding that media attention to the matter may have helped get the school's attention. "I'm not sure they wouldn't have got a hold of me, but they sure got a hold of me a lot quicker."

Mack had complained that "Coffee Will Make You Black," a 1994 novel by April Sinclair, is full of what she said are intense sexual situations and what she calls vulgar terms for genitalia and sexual intercourse. The award-winning book is set against the civil rights and black power movements in 1960s Chicago.

"It was quite a page-turner," Mack, 33, said wryly.

Mack said other parents have called her to express similar concerns and she has since filed a formal, written complaint with the district, with the assistance of Carlmont Principal Deborah Lindo.

Neither Lindo, Carlmont Instructional Vice Principal Sue Scott nor an English department representative responded to multiple telephone messages requesting comment.

Deborah Moore-Washington, curriculum director for the Sequoia Union High School District, said that in cases in which a parent has a problem with an assigned book, the first step would be to speak with Lindo or Scott. After that, a formal written complaint would be filed.

"If it can't be resolved at that level, then there may be a meeting called that includes ... the parent, principal, vice principal and department chair," Moore-Washington said.

"(They) would sit down and talk about the concerns, and make sure they understood some basic things from the teacher, like 'What are the merits of this book? Why is this particular book chosen? And how this book is being used, and what options does the student have in looking at that book.'"

Moore-Washington said she was not aware of any other complaints about "Coffee Will Make You Black" and pointed out that incoming freshmen could also choose to read another book on the list, "Farewell to Manzanar," by James and Jean Houston-Wakatsuki.

"We certainly do appreciate it and we're sensitive to the fact that there's even one parent who's concerned about something their student is reading," she said. "We do need to look into this seriously on

BOOK: page 4A

Carlmont High School
The Independent
Sept 16, 1998

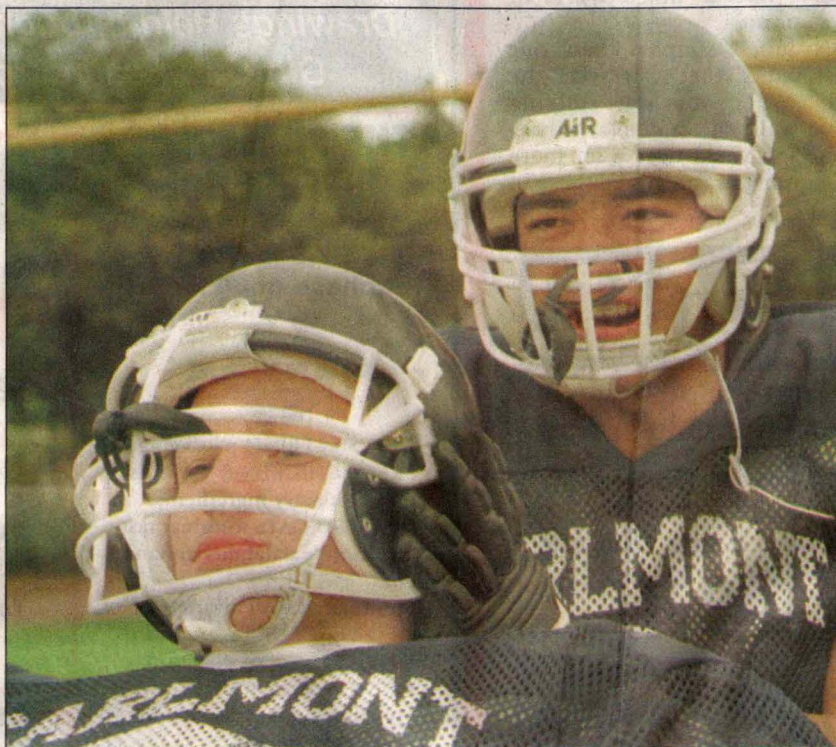


TOM HARPER

Back to class at Carlmont

Carlmont High School in Belmont officially started classes on Sept. 8. With the start of the new school year, the school also showed off its new sign for the California Distinguished School.

Above, Annelisa Rhuben and Amanda George, both seniors, discuss their first day of class at Carlmont. At right, football players Todd Fraser and Brendon Carver, both seniors, stretch out before practice on the field at Carlmont.



READING: Explicit book at issue

Continued from 1A

assigned book, I am beside myself."

But Sequoia district officials said this is the first complaint they've had about the book.

"We've had no other complaints about this book that I am aware of," said Deborah Moore-Washington, curriculum director for the district. "I am not aware of any complaints the district has had about any other book historically either."

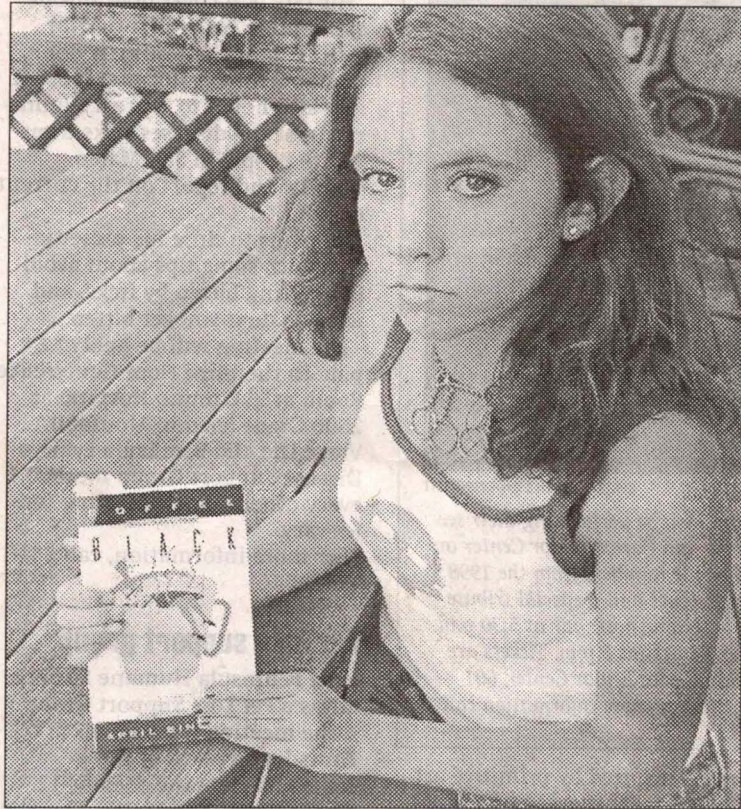
District spokeswoman Susan Berghouse said the summer reading program is districtwide and each school can select different books. Berghouse added that she did not have details about the Carlmont situation.

There is also an established policy for curriculum and book complaints, Berghouse said.

"They have a procedure at the high school to follow, which includes putting in writing the nature of their complaint, and the follow-up steps that will occur," she said. "There's a policy in force the parents can use."

The other book students could choose to read is "Farewell to Manzanar," by James and Jean Houston-Wakatsuki.

Mack said she has no problem with the second book, but said she has formally complained to the school board, written a letter to Congress and notified numerous media outlets about "Coffee Will Make You Black."



SUSAN GARRISON

Carlmont High School freshman, Krystal Mack, 14, holds a copy of the book, 'Coffee Will Make You Black,' which is required reading for incoming freshmen.

"No matter what they do at this point, the damage has been done to my daughter," Mack said. "She's already read it, I can't erase it from her mind."

Mack said she was curious as to what the class assignment

would be.

"It's not about the black power movement, it's (really) about kids having sex," she said. "I have a hard time believing these teachers have any respect for our children."

Carlmont High School
The Independent
Sept. 9, 1998

'Suggestive' book upsets Belmont mom

Required reading for Carlmont freshmen has explicit language

Editor's note: The following article contains language that some people may find offensive or unsuitable for children.

By John Baker
Staff Reporter

A Belmont parent is outraged that her daughter, an incoming Carlmont High School freshman, has been asked to read what she says is a sexually explicit book.

Michelle Mack, 33, says "Coffee Will Make You Black," a 1994 novel by April Sinclair, is full of what she said are intense sexual situations and what she calls vulgar terms for genitalia and sexual intercourse.

"If my daughter was to repeat those words, she'd lose some teeth," Mack said, "and we have five grand invested in her nice, straight teeth."

"Coffee Will Make You Black" is set against the civil rights and black power movements in 1960s Chicago, and is told in the first person by a teenage female narrator. The book won the American Library Association's "Book of the Year (Young Adult)" award in 1994.

Sinclair was born in Chicago and now lives in the Bay Area. She did not return messages left through her publisher, Hyperion Publishing, a division of Walt Disney Publishing. Officials at Hyperion would not comment on the book.

Carlmont students were to

choose between "Coffee Will Make You Black" and another book to read over the summer. They will have an assignment based on their reading the first week of school.

Mack said she had called the office of Carlmont Instructional Vice Principal Sue Scott three times to complain, but Scott had not called her back. Mack said she will be at Scott's office door Sept. 8, the first day of school.

"People in the school seem to not care (they) have parents angry because they make (students) read such garbage," Mack said. "It's not even Playboy trash — it's something you'd read in Hustler."

Mack, who said she has indeed read the book, said her problem is not necessarily with the subject matter, but the way it is portrayed.

She said passages such as the following were among the ones that upset her:

- "My body felt like I was splitting in two — Sean had forgotten I was a virgin. Now I knew I was making a mistake."

- "Oh baby baby, are you going to come yet?"

I felt embarrassed by the comment, but I couldn't deny the juicy noises my p***y was making as Sean's d**k rubbed against it."

"I am so angry I can't see straight, that they would make my daughter read stuff like that," Mack said. "I would wring her neck if I found it in her room, but for a school to have that as an

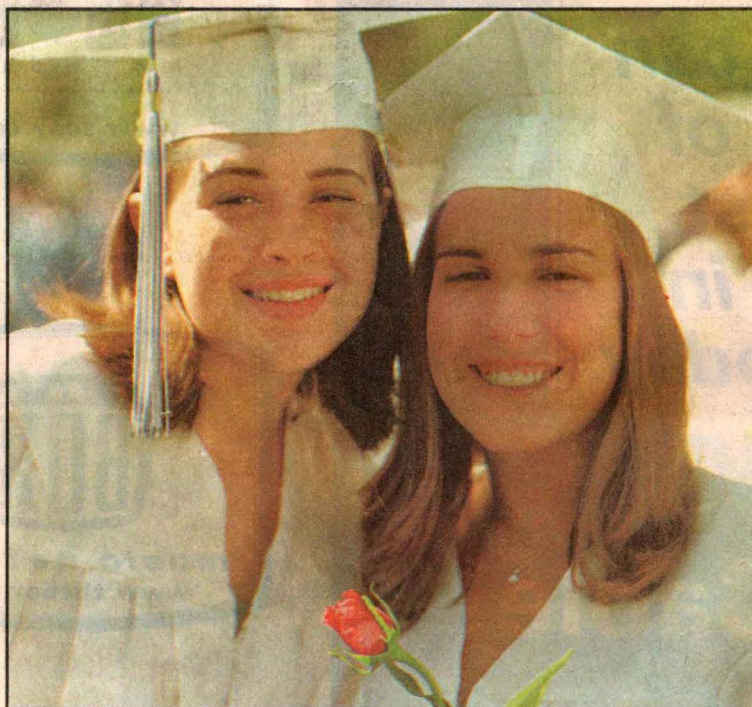
READING: page 4A



TOM HARPER/EB

Carlmont's Class of 1998

Pomp and Circumstance: The Class of 1998 at Carlmont High School in Belmont celebrated its commencement exercises on Friday, June 12 at the school. Teachers, staff, family and friends all participated in the graduation where seniors were honored for the academic excellence and accomplishments. This year was the 44th commencement for the California Distinguished School. This year's co-valedictorians were Melissa Lee and Michael Perez-Lizano. The salutatorian was Erica Kishi.





CHANGING COURSE: Jose Morales (above) laughs with classmate Sarah Brown in biology class at Carlmont High School in Belmont, which he preferred to school in Guatemala. He's able to go to the school through the help of people like the Benners, who have hosted him while his mother remains in Southern California. Before the prom, Carlmont senior Kathy Benner (top photo) gives him a lesson in corsages, as her mother, Donna, watches. Next month, he'll rejoin his family.

► **PROM**

From Page 1

on his own — at least until his teachers intervened. They took him in for a week or two until they found a family that could host him through the end of the school year.

Robert and Donna Benner, whose children Eric and Kathy are seniors at Carlmont, found room for Jose in their house. They helped him prepare for the prom — “my first prom,” he says proudly — and made him feel at home at a time when he had almost forgotten the meaning of the word.

“They’re just the best people I have ever met,” Jose says. “I feel so comfortable in their house. I can’t say enough about them.”

He also can’t stay here. His mother is raising two daughters, 8 and 3, and needs Jose with her.

The principal at Carlmont is helping Jose find a high school in Southern California that will challenge him as much as Carlmont has. “I have to find out what the best investment is for my education,” he says.

“I really thank everyone who helped me and put themselves in my situation,” Jose says. “If they hadn’t, I would have just given up. But I did the right thing.”

— *Jeanne Cooper*

Carlmont High School
San Francisco Chronicle
May 22, 1988

Guatemalan teen
depends on kindness
of strangers to finish
what he started
at Carlmont High



PROM AND CIRCUMSTANCES

Photos by
CARLOS AVILA GONZALEZ / *The Chronicle*

Two months before the Carlmont High School prom, sophomore Jose Morales wasn't worried about who his date would be or what he would wear. He was worried where he would sleep the next night.

His mother was living in Southern California, and his father is in Guatemala, where Jose was born. He had stayed for a few nights with an uncle in a rented room and then slept on friends' couches. He wanted to stay at Carlmont — but began to wonder if

the struggle was worth it.

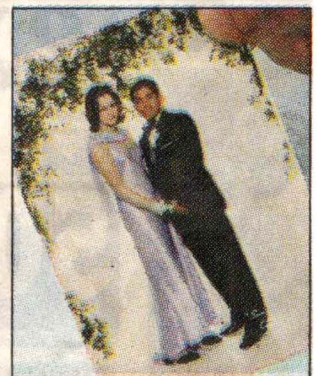
At Carlmont, Jose was involved with the school's Zimbabwe Educational Exchange Program. The kids sold See's chocolates, wrapped books at Borders and worked hard at odd jobs to pay for their trip last summer to Zimbabwe, which was "really cool," Jose says. Like the others, he then looked forward to the reciprocal visit of Zimbabwean students in April this year.

"I really wanted to be there," Jose recalls wistfully. But it wasn't going to be easy.

Jose had moved to the Peninsula with his mother and stepfather four years ago. But last October, Jose's stepfather moved the family back to Guatemala, and Jose went to live with his grandparents in the small town of Jutiapa. When he started school there in January, "it was different, it was strange," he says. He was prepared to adapt, but then his mother left his stepfather and asked Jose what he wanted to do.

"Being the oldest, she looked to me," he says. "I let her know she could do what she wanted, but personally I thought the best thing to do was to come back here."

They returned to California in February, but his mother couldn't find work in the area, so Jose was



KEEPSAKE: Jose's photo with prom date Selma Costa will be a treasured souvenir.

Students defend Carlmont

BY VIVA CHAN
Staff Reporter

A deluge of letters to the editor from Carlmont High School students flooded the Enquirer-Bulletin office last week in response to an April 20 article headlined "More students choosing private school option," which touched upon the issue of public perception of the Belmont high school.

Carlmont teacher Karen Reynolds assigned her ninth and 10th grade English classes to write to the newspaper after students shared their frustration about how the article handled the school's reputation.

Sophomore Robert Maitia said he's fed up with a barrage of negative media depictions that play up the underlying tensions on campus during a period when the district began busing students to the Belmont public school from East Palo Alto.

"The students from East Palo Alto present to Carlmont's population a great flavor of cultural diversity," Maitia said.

"By no means we're a utopia of racial harmony. We have had our culture clashes, but we have rebounded from these skirmishes and have learned and evolved a lot for having experienced them."

Sophomore David Nash also said he felt the piece was a slam against his school, which doesn't "deserve the reputation that everyone is giving it."

"I am not from East Palo Alto, but I respect all of the students we have from there. It gives us something unique, diversity, a chance to learn about other cultures in the world," the San Carlos resident said.

Freshman Juakila McConnell, an East Palo Alto resident, said she felt slighted by the article.

"I'm proud to be a student at Carlmont. I felt so bad when you made those comments," McConnell said.

Sophomore Erik Hayes mentioned both public or private schools encounter the same problems.

"The fact is, no matter what school you go to, public or private, there will be crowds involved in drugs and drinking and there will be crowds that have never touched an illegal substance in their life," he said.

"It's entirely up to your kid on which direction he or she chooses to go. I have many friends at private schools and know for a fact there is equal peer pressure at all schools."

Sophomores Lydia Cruze and

See **CARLMONT**, page 8A

Carlmont High School
Enquirer Bulletin
May 12, 1998

CARLMONT: Students respond to story

Continued from 1A

Francis Chang took issue with the suggestion that fights were commonplace on campus.

"I would just like to say that there are problems no matter where you go," Cruze said. "You'll find drugs, fighting and tensions at any school you choose, but because of our bad reputation, which the movie "Dangerous Minds" made worse, I'm sure, issues like these are always blown out of proportion at Carlmont."

Said Chang, "There have hardly been any fights in the two years that I have been at Carlmont."

The article reported that Carlmont is one of the schools in the Sequoia High School District that a group of Belmont parents want to help bolster by releasing a survey to gather public percep-

tions of the school.

Organizers of the Carlmont survey provided 1,800 parents with a list of developments surrounding the public high school.

Following the entrance of the new principal, Debra Lindo, last fall, a new, stricter attendance policy has gone into effect.

Adding some positive media coverage to the campus was the recent appearance by state Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin, a Carlmont alumna, who spoke during the recent groundbreaking ceremony for the new science wing of the campus, part of a three-year, campus-wide renovation.

This fall, both Carlmont and Sequoia High School in Redwood City plan to close their campuses during school hours.

A number of parents who contacted the newspaper said they had a different read on the issue and weren't swayed by whatever reputation the public school system may bear.

San Carlos resident Sandra Nelson said both her daughters attended Sequoia and they never regretted their choice.

"My 14-year-old daughter was accepted at Mercy High School but she opted for Sequoia," Nelson said. "She knows the ins and outs and she's doing fine."

Nelson said the public school system has served her daughters well. Both of them have been recognized for receiving state algebra awards and for passing a new statewide integrated math and science exams in the top tier.

"My daughters and their peer who went to private schools are amazingly capable," she said. "It's sad that they did away with the San Carlos high school and now kids have to be split up."

San Carlos resident Fred Shehab said he's already interested in examining both public and private school options for his grade school-age children.

"This is constructive information," Shehabi said. "Otherwise we won't know what's going on with the schools."

Davis visualizing a state crown

TRACK & FIELD

Long jumper setting her sights on an 18-foot effort

BY ADAM WEILER
Correspondent

As she stands at the beginning of the runway, Carlmont junior Tamika Davis is visualizing the jump she is about to take in her head.

She rocks back and forth before exploding down the strip of track toward the giant sandbox. Before you know it, she has hit the mark perfectly and vaulted herself high into the air.

Seconds after she exits the pit, Scots assistant coach Bob Hammer is there to go walk her back up the track while going over techniques with her. Hammer, who is a former Carlmont athlete, has volunteered his time to help various long jumpers who have come through the Scots program.

"I feel like Tamika will have great success because of Bob," said Scots head coach James Jewett. "He teaches her all the technical stuff, where I just want her to visualize the jump before she jumps."

This week, Davis, who had no competition, jumped 16 feet, five and a half inches in a dual meet

against Sequoia High at Carlmont.

Davis' jump and the Scots' solid across-the-board performances helped the Carlmont girls to an easy PAL victory over Sequoia 67-37, but the Carlmont boys team, missing its top miler to an injury, was out-dueled by Sequoia, 87-30.

Sixteen-five isn't such a bad effort, according to Jewett. "Considering the weather and the fact that she wasn't competing against anyone, I feel it was quite a good jump," he said.

"I was having a hard time getting my muscles loose," said Davis. The conditions Thursday weren't prime for jumping: frigid temperatures with light drizzle falling. "But it is good to get out of the hallway and onto the track."

For Davis, she will not be satisfied until she jumps 18 feet. "Last year I made it to the Central Coast Section finals, so the next step is to go to the state finals," said Davis.

Davis, who played under Jewett's guidance on the girls basketball team, feels she got a good head start on the track season because of her basketball experience.

"The workouts we received in basketball helped me a lot, but the height I got on rebounds helped to improve the height I would get in the long jump," said Davis, whose career best jump was 17-feet, four-inches, which she nailed last year.

Although her basketball experience was positive, track is Davis' first priority.

"Track is my true passion," said Davis, who wants to emulate the great heptathlete Jackie Joyner-Kersey. Not only does Davis compete in the long jump and triple jump, she runs the anchor leg on the Scots' 4x100-meter relay team and the open 100 meters.

"Tamika is one of the smoothest runners in the program," said Jewett. "It doesn't look like she's running fast, but she just eats up yardage."

Besides a small case of shin splints, brought on by running in the hallway and stairs during the peak of the El Niño storms, Davis has managed to stay healthy this season.

But Tamika Davis is not the only athlete in the family. Her sister Shamika, who runs the third leg of the 4x100 relay and the 200 meters, also took home the top mark in the shot put against Sequoia.

The senior tandem of Cathy Benner and Nina Mendez teamed with the juniors Shamika and Tamika Davis to dust Sequoia in the 4x100-meter relay.

"I was pleased with their performance, but they still need to work on the technical aspects, like baton exchanges and cutting the steps down between those exchanges," said Jewett, who has been coaching the track team for six years.

Benner, who beat out Tamika Davis in the 100-meter sprint with a time of 11.7 seconds, also crossed the line first in the 200 meters in 28.29. Davis finished a tenth of a second behind in the 100 meters at 11.8 seconds, while Mendez finished third at 11.9.

Senior Katie Barkett lost a close race in the 400 meters, but came back to win in the 800 meters.

The boys team was without its top miler, Ian Mileo, who is expected to miss a lot of time because of a stress fracture in his foot. Senior Alfonso Chavez stepped into his spot in the 800 meters and finished third.

"He stepped in and ran the 800 for the first time. I think he did an excellent job," said Jewett. Chavez also finished second in the mile with a time of 5:04.7.

Junior Brandon Carver, who crushed the competition on Thursday with a 39-foot throw, led the shot-putters. And once again, Isaac Stahlhut notched a victory in the 300-meter hurdles.

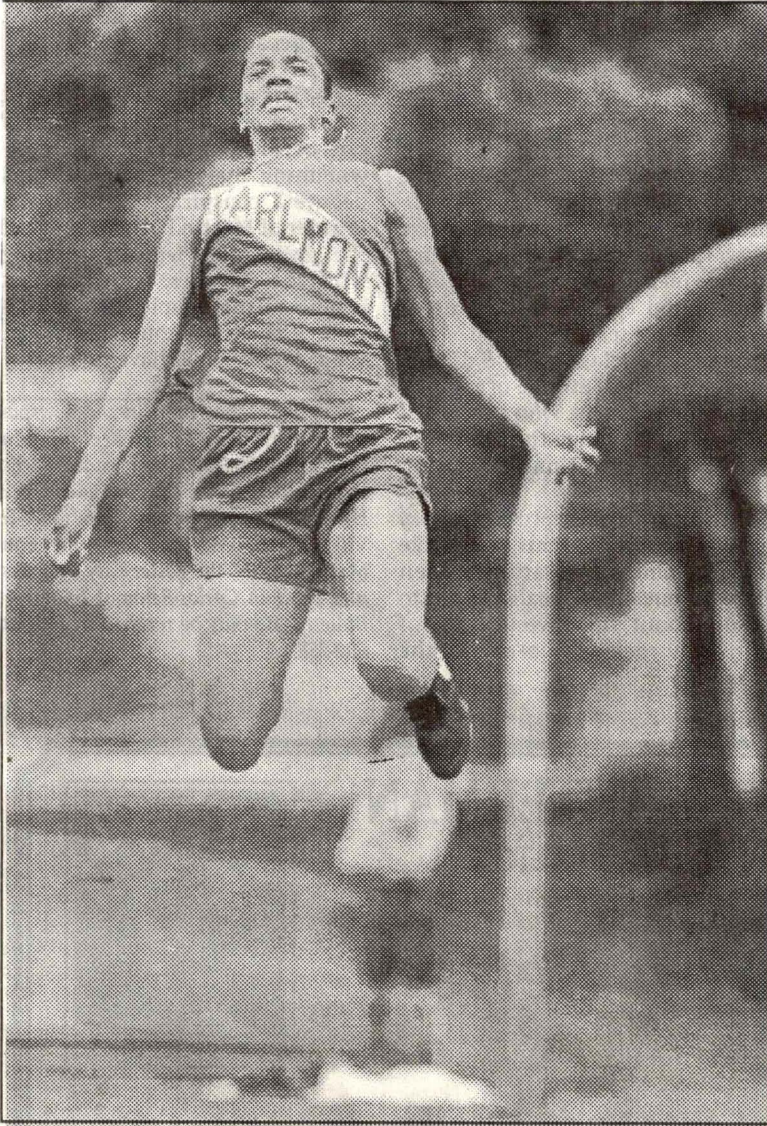
"I'm happy with our performance today. We have about three or four more weeks to go and hopefully we will peak at the right time," said Jewett. "So far the team is in good shape and we're right on track with our goal to win the Peninsula Athletic League title."

The team will enjoy a week off because of its spring break before returning to action against South San Francisco on Wednesday, April 15, at Carlmont.

Carlmont Sports
Engineer Bulletin
April 8, 1998

Carlmont's

SPORTS



RANDI LYNN BEACH/EB

We have liftoff: Carlmont long jumper Tamika Davis is shooting for a medal at this year's state track & field championships.

TIME: History tour at Carlmont

Continued from 1A

western civilization.

Braunstein, who called the opportunity "a way to make history come alive for parents and guests," said the idea was sparked by the interactive exhibits the school's science department has developed in the past. Traditionally, the social studies classes have prepared their own individual projects for the event.

"We're physically separated. This gives us the chance to come together," added Al Swann, chairman of the social studies department, as students from other classes bustled in the hallways, setting up exhibits and activities that touched on the distant past as well as modern culture, economics and government.

One of Braunstein's students, Lazlo Barkoczy, saw the event as a

chance to work solo and use a little creativity.

"What could you do if you want to do something strange and walk around," he said he asked himself, adding that he had done preliminary research to decide what part he would play that evening. The afternoon before the open house, he said he was hoping to don a graduation gown, acquire a whip and possibly create some sort of pointed face mask for his role as a roving plague doctor.

It brought out the artist in classmate Seby Caceres.

"I offer to paint your portrait," explained Caceres who, posed as Pablo Picasso, was joined by a would-be Vincent Van Gogh that evening. Classmates Cara Cutter and Laura Kvistad said one of the group's goals in creating their

"interpretive art studio" was teaching visitors about different styles of painting.

Another group put participants through a trial, deciding whether they would lose their heads at the guillotine based on their responses to a series of questions. And creating a modern day interpretation of the Greek Olympics, other students challenged parents to win olive wreaths hurling the discus — in this case, a modern-day Frisbee — or prevailing in a staring contest.

"It's chaotic but it's a wonderful energy," said Braunstein, whose students came up with the exhibit ideas. In another class, she added, some students even attended a yoga session one weekend to help prepare an authentic contribution.

"They are actually excited about what they learned," she said.

Carlmont High School
The Independent
May 4, 1999



DAYNA ALPINE

(Above) Evan Wagschul (far right) and Tony Barulich engage in a thumb wrestling match. (Below) Spencer Ryan wins a staring contest.

A journey through time



Carlmont students give brief history lesson

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Offering parents and other guests a chance to peer into the past, Carlmont High school students banded together recently to summon Ramses and Ghandi and unleash an interactive reign of terror on a classroom at the Belmont school.

Part of a school open house April 20, "A Journey Through Time" was the culmination of the work and imagination of Carlmont's social studies classes. The evening event saw student hosts and hostess — dressed as everything from Greek goddesses to early Egyptians — escorting visitors to Japanese art displays, into historical scenes from medieval times, test their hand at cultural trivia, and view a skits on presidential scandals.

"This is the first time we've done this," said a busy social studies instructor, Patricia Braunstein, as her students made final preparations on the exhibits that were based on the development of

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Carlmont High School
The Independent
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NEWSMAKER

Americans in Paris

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

In her second year as Carlmont High School's full-time French teacher, Kathy Burton is doing much to ensure her students' foreign language experience stretches beyond simply memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules.

In coming weeks, Burton and her husband will escort a group of students on a two week homestay exchange



Kathy Burton

program in Fountainebleau, France — one of several ways she is working to enrich the French program at the Belmont high school.

The students will stay in Fountainebleau — 30 minutes south of Paris — with host families who they will visit with in the evenings and on weekends. During the daytime, the 11 teenagers will meet up their teacher to explore the historical and cultural sites of Paris, and will even attend several days of school with students in their host families. Next year, the students from France will then come to stay with their American counterparts.

"It going to be a smashing success," said 37-year-old Burton, a San Francisco resident who has taught at Carlmont for six years. "The excitement is really high."

Students participating in the exchange program are Sarah Brown, Emily Jones, Jessica Lambert, Erika Leydig, Lauren Low, Elizabeth May, Alicia Murphy, Cassey O'Connor, Jenny Pardini, Kelly Takao and Alondra Trevino. Part of the trip will coincide with the Carlmont students' spring

break.

The exchange was arranged through a small non-profit group started by a teacher in San Mateo and a partner in France. It is not, however, Carlmont's first student exchange. Two years ago, Burton said, the school took part in an exchange program between students from East Palo Alto and students in Zimbabwe.

Burton said that the trip to France will prove a huge benefit to the Carlmont teens — who are mostly students at the advanced level in French — because not only will they have opportunities to use the language they have been studying, the teens will get a first hand look at the area's culture and lifestyle through their stay with the host families.

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NEWSMAKER: Parisian trip

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For her students not participating in the exchange, Burton offers an opportunity to attend French camp in the Bay Area — a program designed to immerse students in the language over a period of a weekend.

"They speak nothing but French for 48 hours," she explained.

In addition, Burton has helped to establish an advanced placement program in the language for fourth- and fifth-year French students at the school. Advanced placement students can study a

subject at the college level and then take a test to gain college credit. Burton also provides a small computer lab in her classroom that allows student to do research on France on the Internet.

"All of my students are corresponding with a student from a high school in another town (in France)," Burton said, added that in addition to meeting teens in the host family, the students who are going on the France trip will get an opportunity to meet their European pen pals.

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carried away the trash.

A group of girls — **Caitlin Eanes, Alexis Heatley, Melanie Newman, Brandy Bennett and Kim Edwards** — were put to work

“They’ve done in an hour-and-a-half what it would have taken us a month to do.”

— **Bob Hoover**
Community Leader

at Free At Last, a community organization, washing windows, cleaning the bathroom and sweeping.

“If it was my house,” said Eanes, “I’d want somebody to help me do this.”

Up University, at the Ecumenical Hunger Program, director **Nevada Butler** had more than a dozen Carlmont students all over her offices, sorting food, carrying boxes, even dusting.

A group of boys — **Danny Paravati, Brent Schimeck, Donny Ko and Anthony Atkins** — was washing down the sidewalk in front of EHP, using a cleanser Butler had given them.

“I was really afraid they were



PHOTOS BY CARLOS AVILA GONZALEZ /THE CHRONICLE

Allison Beck, 15 (left), held a bag for Allison Gray, 14, who dumped debris found during the cleanup

going to horse around and stuff,” said Butler. “This has been a group of people who were ready to work.”

By noon, the kids were starting to congregate in bunches along the street — they were running out of things to do.

“They’ve done in an hour-and-

a-half what it would have taken us a month to do,” said **Bob Hoover**, a veteran community leader at the Community Resources Building on University.

The once-cluttered University Avenue now was trash-free.

The sidewalks were scrubbed and clean.

You could see that Carlmont had been there.

Mark Simon writes Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from The Chronicle’s Peninsula Bureau; he can be reached at (650) 961-2499, by fax machine at (650) 961-5023, or by e-mail at msimon@sfgate.com.

Carlmont High School
San Francisco Chronicle
Feb 10, 1998

Carlmont Kids Sweep Image Clean

Students at tough school mop up East Palo Alto

The buses came back to East Palo Alto yesterday morning.

The buses usually head the other way, out of town to Belmont, where about 350 kids from East Palo Alto go to Carlmont High School.

This time, the buses were coming from Carlmont, carrying about 500 students.

They were coming to clean up — at Whiskey Gulch, the commercial neighborhood on University Avenue just west of Bayshore, and house-to-house along San Francisco Creek, whose muddy waters had spilled over.

When they were done, they not only had scrubbed up a section of East Palo Alto, they had scrubbed up the image of Carlmont.

It has been a rough few years for the school's reputation.

In 1994, President Clinton went to Carlmont to sign an executive order allowing schools to expel students who bring guns to campus.

The 1995 movie "Dangerous Minds," based on a book written by a teacher who was at Carlmont for five years, depicted the school as a tough, violence-prone inner-city campus, instead of the multiracial, suburban-based campus that it is.

In October, there was a flare-up of racial tensions — none of which led to violence.

All of these episodes portrayed Carlmont about as accurately as Michelle Pfeiffer resembles your English teacher.

It has left Carlmont Principal Debra Lindo understandably eager to find projects that might be positive, unifying, and instructive.

Helping out East Palo Alto — some to a third of Carlmont's 1,400 students — fit all the criteria.

Lindo arranged a series of on-campus community service projects for the 900 Carlmont students who didn't volunteer to go to East Palo Alto.

Then, yesterday morning — dressed in jeans, a yellow rain coat and a blue Carlmont baseball cap — Lindo led a parade of 10 buses to East Palo Alto, where the students were rapidly herded into action by Patrick Brock, a community organizer supervising local cleanup.

When the students arrived, University Avenue — a long block of small businesses, community service organizations, shops and restaurants — was a mire of debris and mud.

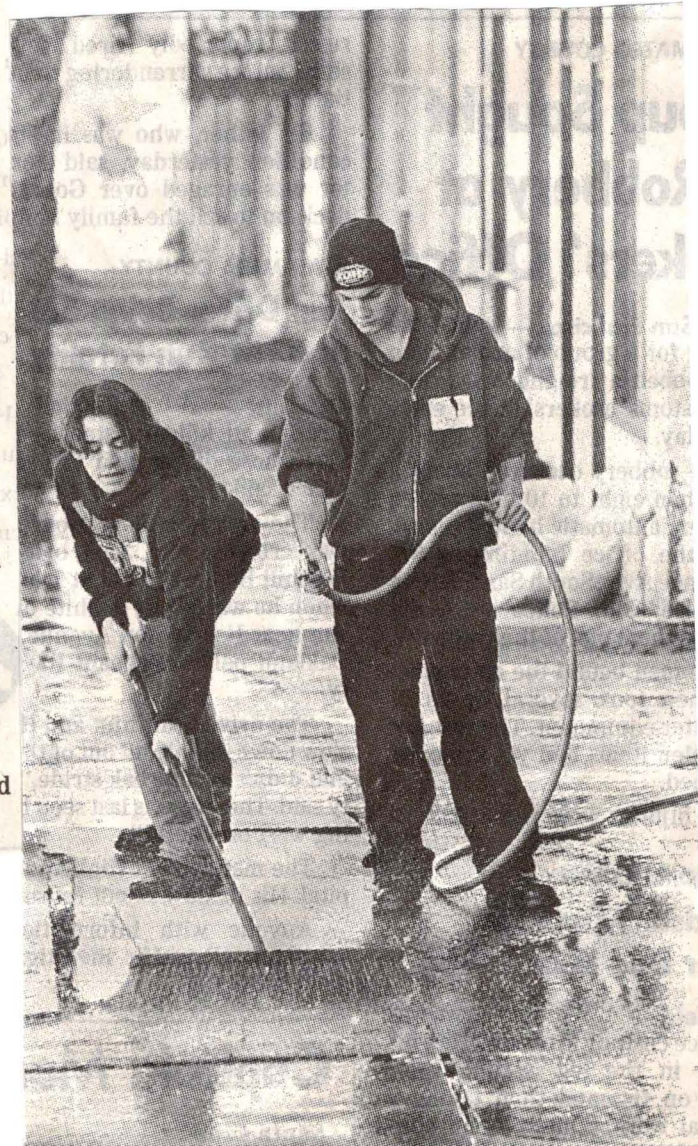
Brock quickly deployed the kids on either side of the street with instructions to go door-to-door, asking what they could do.

Some of the kids appeared bewildered.

"You didn't have to come," Brock announced. "If you don't want to be here, at least act like you do."

The kids spread out and within 30 minutes they were lugging sandbags to storefronts, sweeping mud from inside the stores and hauling trash and ruined carpeting to the sidewalks, where more students put the stuff in plastic bags.

A front-end loader came by and
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Carlmont High students Brent Schimeck (left) and Anthony Atkins, both 15, hosed down East Palo Alto's University Avenue

*Belmont High School
San Mateo Co. Times
Jan. 14, 1998*

SAN MATEO COUNTY TIMES WEDNESDAY, January 14, 1998

Tougher curfew policy working in Belmont

By Karen Heywood
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — One year after launching a plan to crack down on youth truancy, officials say the tighter restrictions seem to be keeping more Belmont kids in school and off the streets.

Belmont Police Chief Jim Goulart said "students have been pretty responsive" to the ordinance, which forbids people under age 18 from wandering around the city during school hours and imposes harsher penalties for violators than do most cities' curfews.

In the entire year the heightened curfew has been in place, Goulart said Belmont police have issued just 14 warnings and one actual citation — a statistic he considers a success.

But while the numbers indicate that fewer kids are on the streets and playing hooky, some youth said they weren't even aware of the new policy.

In the words of one Carlmont High School student named Carrie, "What curfew?"

And Carlmont senior Lauren Cirlin said that Belmont police do not seem to be cracking the whip.

"It depends on the cop," Cirlin said. "But usually if you start a conversation with them, it's fine."

Under the program, which also prohibits minors from

being on the streets from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m., first-time youth offenders are supposed to receive a written warning or a letter to their parents, said Chief Goulart, who was a strong force behind implementing the curfew.

In more extreme cases, he said, noncompliant teens can be subject to fines between \$35 and \$150, be required to take an 8-hour class, or have their drivers licenses revoked for up to six months.

Besides heightened police involvement, Goulart also credited the Sequoia Union High School District's implementation of a new attendance policy in September — the first to be enforced in the district in a decade — with helping to keep young people off the street.

Sequoia students who fail to attend a certain number of class sessions are transferred into alternative programs.

"The combination of the attendance policy and the daytime curfew is making students' decision to stay in school easier," he said.

Deputy Chief Probation Officer Janice MacLaren, who oversees The County's juvenile division, said she applauds curfew Belmont's program, adding that violation cases referred to The County level from Belmont are at a minimum.