

ESTA

Panorama

December, 2006

*"It's only free
speech when
you use it."*

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The President's View *by Don McKell*

In early November, the electorate in this school district went to the polls to vote. They voted on bond issues, ballot initiatives, federal and state legislators, a governor, and a school board. When it came to the East Side there were five candidates on the ballot, each seeking to be elected to one of three at-large seats. After the voting was done, incumbents George Shirakawa and Manuel Herrera polled, in that order, in the top two spots. Evergreen resident Frank Biehl landed in third place, thus displacing 12-year veteran Patricia Martinez-Roach from the Board to become the newest member.

The Registrar of Voters officially certified the outcome of the election on Tuesday, December 5. Shirakawa, Herrera, and Biehl all took their oaths of office at a ceremony in the district office on the afternoon of Thursday, December 7. It is done.

But not quite. Eight year veteran Craig Mann has tendered his resignation from the East Side board, effective just before midnight on December 12. Mann will move on to take a seat on the Santa Clara County Board of Education, an office for which he ran unopposed. His departure from East Side will open a vacancy on our Board that will be filled by appointment – rather than election – by the remaining four-man East Side Board. Mann will not participate in the selection other than as a private citizen.

None of this is much of a surprise, and our district has been making preparations for months to identify a pool of qualified candidates from which to choose Mann's successor. Some twenty-one citizens made the effort to apply for consideration by the time the deadline for application occurred. One of those folks eventually withdrew, and another was found not to be a resident of the District. The remainder submitted themselves to a 30 minute interview with a Board-appointed panel of stakeholders; that panel was charged with winnowing the applicant pool down to as few as three finalists, which would then go to the Board for final inspection. I was one of the members of that

panel.

The panel process produced four finalists: Barbara Boone, Eddie Garcia, Darcy Green, and Sharon Godbolt. Each of those individuals has qualities that could enhance our school board, but none is perfect. On the whole, I believe them pretty much to be the best of the original group of applicants, although in truth I would still trade one of them for one of the screened-out applicants if I could.

Which will the Board choose to fill out the remaining two years of Mann's vacated term? We'll find out on Thursday, December 14, when the Board announces its decision. No doubt the week preceding that selection will be one of intense lobbying.

All of this is a lead-in to my final thoughts on the matter in the remainder of this article, which are: What exactly are the qualities and characteristics we might hope to find in the *ideal* school board member in the East Side Union High School District in the middle part of the first decade of the twenty-first century? What follows is my list, which admittedly may be very different than yours, or that of the four people who will actually be making the final selection.

1. Our school board must be composed of people who will unflinching seek to represent all of the students and residents in the District equally, no matter where they live. There is a certain tendency of late for the homes of our Trustees to be concentrated in the southeastern corner of the District. That's not necessarily a bad thing, but it would be better if there were a broader pattern in residences.

2. Our school board should have a healthy mix of diversity. This includes gender diversity. Powerful people who all share any one particular characteristic can easily develop a blind spot in their ability to see the entire landscape when it comes to establishing policy or making critical decisions. We minimize that potential through diversity in ethnicity, religion, race, and gender.

3. Our school board should be composed of generalists, as opposed to people who seek the Trustee

position to promote one critical issue. Individuals with a broad range of interests and perceived needs are much less likely to have hidden agendas. Specialization is for insects.

4. Our school board members must be beholden to no special interest, unless that special interest is the school district as a whole. Whenever a politician is not free to exercise an unfettered approach to problem-solving, possible solutions will be overlooked or ignored.

5. Our school board members must be policy-makers, not managers, and most assuredly not micro-managers. Set policy to deal with the improvement of the District as far into the future as can be done. Communicate that policy to your superintendent and other top-level managers. Help them achieve your goals, and evaluate them primarily on their ability to implement your reasonable policies.

6. Our school board members should visit schools, meeting frequently with parents, staff, and students. Listen to what you hear. Avoid using a single source for gathering the information you need in your own personal feedback loop. We all experienced the harmful results of having a too-narrow bandwidth for data gathering in the recent past.

7. Our school board members should be our greatest allies for success, and should never tire in their quest to improve our condition. Use your position to lobby city, county, and state officials at every opportunity to return California to its former pre-eminent position as an educational leader in the nation. If you haven't personally communicated with a State Assembly person, Senator, or the Governor in the last three months, think about resigning.

8. Our school board members should ask the tough questions, and learn to recognize uninformed, diversionary, or fluffy answers. Be willing to periodically question every dime the District spends, every institutionalized practice, and every cabinet-level manager. Be willing to let people fail when they try to improve student success, but not too often.

Shady Dealin's

Mt. Pleasant

Thank you to Wendy Stegeman for finally exposing one of the shadiest areas of ESUHSD spending – Construction. The district assures everyone constantly that they know what they are doing and nothing will be paid out until inspections are made. This is not true (just look at the poor preparation and peeled paint on some of our newly painted schools).

The ESUHSD seems to have no one who can properly write specs (which would avoid underbidding and poor materials. This area needs to be more carefully monitored by ESTA. We have some very well informed members with years of experience. Let's utilize them.

*--Thank You,
Maureen Burt*

**NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND:
THE FOOTBALL VERSION**

Independence High School

1. All teams must make the state playoffs, and win the championship. If a team does not win the championship will be put on probation until they are the champions. and coaches will be held accountable.

2. All kids will be expected to have the same football skills at the same time under the same conditions. No exceptions will be made for interest in football, a desire to perform, athletically, or genetic abilities or disabilities. ALL KIDS WILL PLAY FOOTBALL AT A PROFICIENT LEVEL.

3. Talented players will be asked to work out on their own without instruction. This is because the coaches will be using all their time with the athletes who aren't interested in football or have limited athletic ability, or whose parents don't like football.

4. Games will be played year round, but statistics will only be kept in the 4th, 8th, and 11th games.

5. This will create a New Age of sports where every school is expected to have the same level of talent and all teams will reach the same minimal goals.

*--Author unknown,
Submitted by Gail Chaid*

P A N O R A M A
MARTIN BRANDT, IHS
EDITOR

Panorama is a monthly publication of the East Side Teachers' Association, 888 S. Capitol Ave. San Jose, CA.

Panorama is a forum for ESTA members, and welcomes all member contributions. Submissions must include author's name, position, and school site. Those with fewer than 250 words will be printed in the "Letters" section. All submissions may be edited for length or clarity.

Letters, articles, columns, queries, or classified ads (for ESTA members only) should be emailed as **Microsoft Word Attachments** to **brandtm@esuhsd.org**. Deadline for January submissions is Friday, January 5, 2007.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in *Panorama* are those of individual members and may not represent the official views of the East Side Teachers Association. *Panorama* will not print ad hominem attacks, personal insults, or racially provocative imagery.

HHH 1910-1993

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE REPORT

ESTA leaders had such a great time meeting the newly-tenured teachers at the party we held at Mt. Hamilton on Dec 6th. Over 60 teachers became tenured at the October school board meeting and many attended our party. It gave them a chance to ask questions about their new status, enjoy some great food and met some new people.

I have just finished the second visits to all the sites as the Organizing Committee Chair. Big thank you to Alecia Myers and Julie Kasberger, the leaders of the Wellness Policy, who provided a great selection of healthy snacks and drinks during the visits.

I learned this visit that many ESTA members are not using our eye glasses vision program, VSP. At each site I found several teachers who have not used the VSP, some who were not aware we have it, and many who have paid out of pocket for glasses! For those who could not attend, here is the VSP lesson:

OPTION 1

- 1) Go to www.vsp.com and find a doctor near you; you only need your social security number to log in.
- 2) Call the office of your choice from the list, and they will look up our plan. Within minutes they can give you an appointment for an exam.
- 3) Once you have your new prescription, you can order glasses.

We have a \$20 yearly deductible and we do have a family plan. You and your family can get lenses each year, frames or contacts every other year. We have many great options for lenses like scratch resistant, polished lenses on the sides, transitional—to name a few things. For more options go to www.vsp.com and see for yourself!

OPTION 2

- 1) Visit your regular eye doctor through your medical plan.
- 2) Go to vsp.com and find an office.
- 3) Print up reimbursement form for doctor visit out of network, and get your co-pay back from vsp.com.

- 4) Take your eye prescription to any vsp doctor and order glasses that same day.

You will have the \$20 deductible and all the same options even if you don't use a network doctor.

After each visit I have been sent the Building Presidents my agenda so that you can see what you missed. Let me know if any of the CTA benefits I mentioned interested you and I can send you more information.

Life and disability insurance was also discussed because this month through Jan 29, 2007 we are having open enrollment. Don McKell spoke about this at length in the ESTA update, but in case you missed it, let me remind you. As teachers we do not have disability insurance, so when we have a need to be out for several weeks and are out of sub days, we lose pay. With disability insurance and an absence of over two weeks, you get a percentage of your salary when you are out of sub days and if you have sub days, you get a little extra money each day you are out.

Also, we are having Life Insurance open enrollment which means even if you have an existing condition, you can not be denied enrollment from either of these programs. An existing condition could even be pregnancy; during open enrollment you will not be turned away! You need to have worked 10 days once enrolled to apply for the insurance. This is a great opportunity, especially if you know of an upcoming surgery you need and have been putting it off due to concerns about pay. Please email me veram@esuhsd.org or estavp@aol.com if you have questions.

I hope to see more of you at my third visit which will begin in February. Also in February there will be a new teacher check in, so I will give you that date in my next months report and I will send it out on email.

If you have some suggestions for the Organizing Committee, let me know. I hope to have a meeting after first semester is over. Email me if you are ready to join my team, veram@esuhsd.org or call me at 347-7198 (77198 from any district phone.)

Have a great two weeks off; you have earned it!

Marisa Vera
Vice President ESTA
Evergreen Valley

YOUR CONTRACT

ARTICLE 11

Can a principal criticize my choice of clothing in my evaluation? How often are we observed? What do they look at?

These were the first of a series of questions that lead me to believe that many of us are unaware of the process delineated by the contract, so I thought, given how many of you are recently tenured (congrats, by the way), I'd spend my time on the evaluation process this month. The teacher who brought this to my attention is newly tenured and apparently, her principal was unaware of that fact, and it is an important issue. As tenured teachers, we have a choice as to the type of evaluation to which we wish to be subjected and if your principal does not ask, you have the right to request. Personally, I prefer the portfolio or project evaluations -- I've been in the classroom longer than most of the people evaluating me at this point and have never gotten anything really worthwhile out of the "drop in for a day while the kids are on their best behavior" sort of observation.

My first question to the teacher mentioned above was whether or not the issue of clothing and personal presentation had been broached in the pre-conference and had been agreed upon. According to the contract the elements of the evaluation shall be mutually agreed upon, and concern classroom management, lesson planning strategies, objectives, and assessment. I could not find anything in there about clothing. I looked. However, I suppose if it were discussed in the pre-conference and had an impact on the classroom environment in some way, it could be part of the plan. I've never seen this happen. I've seen PE teachers in skimpy silk shorts in the late '80's that could be deemed distracting to students. I know of a teacher with a tattoo of a nude woman that my mother would question and I know a teacher who still thinks the '60's is the premier fashion event of the current and previous eras. But I'm stretching on this one, I admit. Most of us are clothed, and some of us are remarkably professional in our attire (including the teacher who originated

this one, ironically—she could teach me a few things about dressing well). Our contract cannot violate the Constitution and neither can an administrator. Still, I suppose someone somewhere will create an exception on this one for me.

In a nutshell, If an issue is introduced in the pre-conference that is not agreed upon, the administrator can still use it as part of the evaluation, as long as it is reasonable and legal (article 5—conformity to law). BUT if it isn't in the pre-conference, it should not be in the post-conference.

Another question I asked was whether or not this teacher had been informed of her status next year. Since she was confused by the question, the answer was probably "no". Our contract states explicitly that we be told whether we are on or off track for the following year. Mind you, a "highly qualified" (and I hate that term -- it's soooooo arrogant!) ESTA veteran of 10 or more years, may be given the option to be off track for up to five years if both the veteran and the administrator agree to this. On the other hand, we can continue to be evaluated yearly if the administrator deems it necessary. The point is that he/she/it must tell us our status in the meeting.

Final thoughts: can administrators evaluate you for not attending after-school-hours meetings? No. (they can simply not pay you the overtime). Can they evaluate you on your political affiliations? No. Can they comment on your lack of involvement in clubs? Definitely not. Does your evaluator have to be an administrator? Definitely YES! The person evaluating you must not only have an administrative credential, they must also *be* in an administrative position. (Your department head is not in an evaluative position.) Administrators can evaluate you on your performance in the classroom and *only* your performance in the classroom. The purpose of an evaluation is to make us better teachers, not make us into carbon copy dolls of each other.

*Love and kisses,
Janet*

Janet Goldhamer
Griveance Co-Chair
Oak Grove

You get a two-fer-the-price-of-one on this Board report! Our board members have been busy bees! November summary:

The **Victor** and **Luz Estrella** family was honored for previously winning the The Hispanic Foundation *La Familia* Award. A role model family, with two teachers!

Latino Student Coalition ESUHSD did a slide show of their conference. Impressive young people!



The **Evergreen** parents were here in force to lobby for a new school. They deserve it because they expect it. The realtors promised...**Jim Zito** of the planning commission came to ask the board to set aside land by one of the big developments going in to the south or east. Counsel and **Garofalo** came up with different numbers on how much a Memo of Understanding with developers to pay a higher rate per unit/footage might yield. This was put forward to the next meeting after the City Council meeting where the city will vote on projects.

1. **Thumbsup** for extending \$200 reimbursement to non-classroom certificated personnel.

2. A transfer of territory between ESUHSD and SJUSD to make school lines make better sense.

3. Lots of salary schedules and positions approved.

4. Sale of bonds and program to pay for retiree benefits into the future approved.

5. Lots of kids were expelled.

6. Board candidate interviews were slated for 11/27, 28, 29, 30, from 6pm–10pm in the board room. No extension of deadlines would happen regardless of the short open window. The interviews of 18 candidates indeed took place on the above dates. Not all committee members showed up to serve. Some folks split assignments. DVDs are available of all interviews. (Two of the 21 candidates withdrew, and one was paper-screened out due to address.)

December 7th board meeting: A very nice swearing ceremony with lots of food at 4pm. **Joe Coto** swore in **Manuel** and **George**. **Dan McCorquodale** swore in **Frank Biehl**—who was very excited and earnest about representing all members of the district. (He plans to visit all schools so he can make information-based decisions! What a novel concept!) **Pat** did not attend. **Craig** did, and received a big glass appreciation-thing that might have purchased a DVD player for a classroom. He didn't mention whether he would be returning any of the things purchased with

the district credit cards. Many politically expeditious congratulations were passed around.

And then there was a little board work.

The **City Council** delayed its decision on projects until April. So ours is delayed.

The **Evergreen** parents showed up to lobby again for why they deserve a new school because they have enough money to buy nice, new houses and they want one.

A lady from the **planning commission**(?) suggested that the district was being naïve and moving too fast to accept what the developers are telling admin. She believes we could do much better and encouraged several actions before signing the MOU that is on the fast track. **Lou Veteck**(sp) gave a presentation of some of the numbers—his premise is based on the notions that 1.) the state will provide money (which it won't), 2) the projects will be built as the current plans stand (but the **City lady** indicated that plans are being scaled back), and 3) the declining enrollment of feeder districts predicted by the demographer (now starting to be experienced) is wrong. But it looked good if you have no other knowledge. More people encouraged setting land aside.

A \$2,000 retirement incentive is being offered for people who notify the district by 01/05/07. **Don McKell**, understanding the need for early notification, suggested a second tier bonus at a slightly later date and for a lesser amount. The point is to avoid June-July-August surprises that leave classrooms with long term subs or less than first choice hires.

George Shirakawa will be the board president, **Lan Nguyen** veep, and **Manuel Herrera** clerk. **Frank** will be in learning mode for a while. The boys passed all other items of business very expeditiously without much question—or thought. This was the time to have your item on the agenda! And everyone was out about 8pm! Amazing.

Interviews of the four finalists will occur on December 14th. No public comment. Announcement that night. Public is welcome in the Peanut Gallery. **Mr. Mann** has encouraged a large turnout of the African-American community. Although one of the African-American women may, after interviews, be the best choice, no race or ethnicity is guaranteed a particular seat. Otherwise, **Frank Biehl** will have to become a Hispanic woman. His wife might object... Come join me!!! It could be Verrrrry Interessssssting...

A Christmas Story

I sat silently mortified. What had I done, I

I was in my second year of teaching and Christmas Break was approaching. I wanted to have the students do something on the last two days before the break that would be fun and still instructional, so I decided to offer grade points to anyone who would present something that was in the holiday spirit. Recite a poem, read a passage, perform a skit – anything that marked the occasion.

Sharon Morales
Evergreen Valley

thought. I was sure I had inflicted irreparable damage on this poor lad. I could envision sometime in the future when, now grown, he would be lying on a psychiatrist’s couch telling how his life was ruined because his English teacher had forced him to recite a poem in front of the class. My heart ached for him.

It was in the days when we had a sizeable influx of Vietnamese students and a number of them were enamored with the *Visit from Saint Nicholas* or “Twas the Night Before Christmas.” We heard that over and over again. One group put on a short play they had found in a book—this was in the days when students went to the library for information. It was so terribly bad, but they were so earnest and tried so hard, I had to stifle my laughter. Some offerings reflected the customs of the diverse cultures represented in the class. All in all it seemed to be working well.

He finished the poem and his classmates applauded politely. The other students completed their assignments and earned their coveted points. The bell rang and as students departed saying “Merry Christmas” and “See you next year,” the young man came to my desk, a broad smile on his face.

“I did it,” he said in his broken English. “I did it. I didn’t think I could do it but I did it.”

I breathed a sigh of relief. I hadn’t ruined his life after all. I congratulated him and wished him happy holidays and he left for vacation still wearing his broad smile.

Then on the second day, a Vietnamese boy got up to recite a poem. As he began to recite, it became apparent that he not only had a strong accent but he had a speech impediment. No one could understand a word he was saying. I glared at the other students, fearing that someone would laugh or make a comment. But I had to give them credit. They were all attentive and kind. As the young man recited his poem, his hands trembled and the paper he held shook so hard that I couldn’t see how he could read it.

I think of that young man every year when I search for something fun but instructional for my students to do just before the holiday break. I wonder if he overcame his accent and speech impediment and hope that reciting that Christmas poem gave him just a bit of confidence to help him on his way. And I secretly thank him for the marvelous lesson he taught me, that we can’t always protect our students from taking risks and often those risks turn out just fine.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

I must have been a difficult child to like. I was vain, boastful, harsh in my judgments of others, and easily given to tears when such judgments were applied to me. At an early age I could expound on Lincoln and his generals—Grant was my favorite—but I was hopeless in understanding the social rules which governed behavior among my peers. When someone teased me, I took offense and replied with as malicious an insult as I could muster. But my most vicious retorts just bounced off my adversaries, while even their benign jests (I could not tell the difference) stuck deep in me.

My elementary school classmates? Vicious brutes. My teachers? Bigots and Dickensian childhaters. I think it's reasonable to say that from a psychological standpoint, much of my behavior for the next two decades would in some way be connected with an urge to resurrect my suffocated sense of self-worth.

The process didn't start well. By the time I arrived at Silver Creek High School in the fall of 1978, I was a wreck. I had brought with me a fierce desire to be a tough guy stoner dude—the kind of person who no one would dare make fun of. Led Zeppelin t-shirt, long hair, bell-bottoms and hiking boots. I would be the Atomic Punk. Teachers would fear me, other guys would respect me, and girls would want to save me, but I would remain unreachable—a model of distant, stoic endurance.

It didn't work. My hair grew wide, not long; I wasn't nearly as good at throwing punches as I was at cowering helplessly when punches rained down on me; and to tell you the truth, Led Zeppelin always left me a little cold. (I much preferred the thinly disguised self-pity of The Who's "Behind Blue Eyes.") And of course, no human female on campus even knew I was alive, except for that one girl in my science class, Minnie Diaz, who greeted my every utterance with, "Shut up, stupid!"

What a disaster.

When I look back on it all, I am amazed and thankful that I've made it this far in life without yet making a cameo appearance on *Cops* or *The Jerry Springer Show*.

Who saved me? Well of course, my teachers did, but not in any grand moment of revelation. The writer in me wants to invent a scene, something dramatic, some kind of tear-streaked moment of epiphany in which a teacher offered me Truth, Beauty, and Goodness and I took them, fashioned them for myself, and was healed for good.

But it didn't happen that way. It was more boring than that. There were indeed moments of revelation when—reading *Crime and Punishment* or *The Grapes of Wrath*, for example—I got a glimpse of the delights of what I now call "Nerd Life." But when Bruce Springsteen sang in "Badlands" that "It ain't no sin to be glad yer alive," I was still terrified by the invitation to happiness.

So what did my teachers do? Mostly, they were fair when it seemed as if the world was against me; they were generally kind and patient when the vocabulary of my peers consisted mostly of phrases like "Dumb-shit," "ass-wipe," and "moron"; and they were hopeful, even in the face of my persistent, bleak self-hatred.

It's impossible to quantify this aspect of our work. It lives and breathes in our classrooms, but defies definition and description, so it can't be printed in a list of state standard to be foisted onto our classroom walls.

In a word though, it is nothing less than "salvation." I would reclaim my dignity. I would eventually attend the university and rediscover my self-worth. (I was not so much educated at San Jose State as I was liberated there.) Against all odds, considering my impulse toward self-important pomposity, I would even discover a sense of humor about it all.

The closest I can come to an epiphany moment is this: one afternoon when I was a junior, I was walking through the Silver Creek Quad, and I came across the dreadful Minnie Diaz—whom I'd done my best to avoid since Freshman year. But this time we were each walking alone, and there was no one else in the vicinity to defuse the tension I felt. We could not avoid looking at one another.

In a moment of inspiration, I realized that some form of communication was inevitable, perhaps even necessary. So I dropped to one knee and proposed to her.

We've been friends ever since.

Somehow, I had been saved. There were no shafts of celestial light piercing through cumulus clouds. No choirs of heavenly angels. But thanks in large part to the patience, fairness, good humor and kindness of my teachers, I would learn to apply a little bit of these myself. Salvation had come to the Atomic Punk.

There is light in the darkness, and it is you.

Happy Holidays.

Martin Brandt
IHS

ESTA Classifieds

MindsInSight Online Classroom Tools - MindsInSite is a hosted Moodle solution for teachers and trainers of any kind. Allowing us to host your remote learning solution allows you to spend your time developing content rather than managing software and hardware. Cut your time spent on paperwork in half. 10% discount for all ESUHSD teachers. Take a look at our services at: <http://www.mindsinsight.com> and/or contact Bruce Selzler @ 347-4936

VACATION RENTAL: Cozumel houses available by the week. One and a half blocks from ocean. Easy walking distance to shopping & ferry to mainland. Three rental units: 3 bedroom, 2 bath \$950; 2 bedroom, 1 bath \$650; & 2 bedroom, 2 bath \$680. All 3 units combined for \$2,052. Ten percent discount for teachers. Summer rates are lower. All have kitchen, A/C, DSL internet, cable, safes, and phone and access to pool, rinse tank for scuba, courtyard, and sundeck on roof. Contact Mike at 251-1584 or cloughmf@msn.com.

Wedding/Event DJ. \$120.00 per hour. We are a husband/wife team that will work very hard to make your special day perfect. Contact Anthony Kudsi (IHS) at (408) 858-4555 for more info or to make an appointment.

Materials for Spanish For Spanish Speakers classes : Books, posters, etc. Sistilio Testa (WCO, OG, ret.) 295-6327.

Joe Sousa, handy service: Remodeling, repair, plumbing, electrical, flooring and tile, drywall. Free estimates. Excellent references. License number 316835. Tel. (408) 234-7428. (Marie Anderson, AH).

LOS GATOS LATTICE: fences, decks, gates, pergolas, arbors, patio covers, retaining walls, automated gates, outdoor projects. Also, general construction/remodelling as well: crown molding, baseboards, doors, windows, drywall, finish work, etc. Call DAVE FREDERICKS @ 347-3966 or contact at big57wave@yahoo.com. References from colleagues at all ESUHSD schools.

CGT Travel, Contact Marian Dotson, at 831-338-1959 cgtravelpals@yahoo.com CGC Travel cst 2027232-40

Mission Style. CUSTOM MADE CHERRY Entertainment center/cabinet & chest of drawers/cabinet.

ENTERTAINMENT CENTER is 7 ft. tall, 64 inches long, 22 inches deep. It has 5 doors, 2 drawers, & opening with shelves 28 inches wide by 43 inches tall. CHEST OF DRAWERS is 9 ft. long, 67 inches tall, 24 inches deep, has 16 drawers and 2 doors. They are a matching set and were made for a large bedroom. Contact Dave Fredericks: email big57wave@yahoo.com or PHHS woodshop#73966.

Wedding Officiant: Special offer for ESTA members. Local weddings performed for \$200. Contact griffinje@esuhsd.org for info and details.

Intero Real Estate Services Selling or buying a house is very personal....but you can get three great realtors by calling Sam Alvarado (772-7661), Sheryl Ruth (348-5449) or Ron Smith. They are Interio people (a great firm) and through their WREATHS Program are donating \$1000 to your school program, department or team for ANY name that results in a sale. It is a no-brainer and seamless!

For Sale: Wurlitzer Organ. Full pedals, 2 keyboards, beautiful walnut finish. Sounds great. \$250.00 or best offer. Contact Nick Shehadi (408) 265-0351.

10'x15' Tent. Excellent condition; \$40 or best offer Rachel Stanek (Pegasus/IHS) 928-9946.

Clean comfortable quiet home for rent in Blossom Valley: 3 Bedrooms & 2 Baths \$2100.00. New carpet, Jacuzzi tub in newly remodeled master bath, large master suite, wood burning fire place, updated appliances, central heat and air, new windows, newly insulated attic, two car garage with storage, washer/drier hook up (gas or electric), 1450 square feet of living space, 2000 square feet of yard newly seeded, lawn mower & trimmer provided, covered patio, privacy fence in back, security system (though not needed), community pool, great open floor plan easy access to Hwys 85, 87 and 101. Available immediately. Sorry no section 8 please. \$2100.00 deposit required, cats are welcome. Call Caryl Selk at 408-973-9325 for more information. Virginia Yenter Yanowsky, (EVHS).

1 bedroom granny unit. \$800.00 a month includes all utilities except propane and phone. It is located in the East Foothills—no dogs please! If interested call Kathy and Rich Harris 408-274-8271.

The Backside

Not to be mistaken for Truth

Alabama family sues special ed teacher

Special Ed teacher Annie Sullivan thought that the invitation to teach one-on-one with a blind, deaf, and mute Alabama girl would be her big career break.

But Sullivan has instead found herself under investigation by Child Protective Services and the defendant in a hotly contested lawsuit, accused by the girls' parents of "Gross cruelty, mental, and physical abuse" for an episode apparently involving scrambled eggs and a spoon.

"Tis madness, most sure," said Sullivan in her soft Irish lilt. "I've been advised by my attorneys not to comment beyond that."

But sources within the girl's

Say hello to 'Hella Kitty'

There's something different about Hello Kitty this year. Something vaguely sinister and threatening. There are the button eyes and nose, the cute red ribbon, the whiskers—and then, a pair of downward turning eyebrows, turning the innocent feline into a scowling, menacing creature of the streets.

Say "Hello" to the hottest item this Holiday Season: "Hella Kitty," the first attempt by the giant Japanese toy and clothing "Hello Kitty" concern to market directly to adolescent

Company executives are optimistic that their

scowling version of the lovable cat will into a market they've neglected till "Really, it's the same kitty," said executive. "But this year we've added permanent scowl. If it sells well, who we can go with this? We could make a Gangsta version, a Biker version, a Raider version. Anything to appeal to that bad-ass lurking in everybody's wallet."

Over at San Jose Blue Jeans on Story Road, sales are confirming the company's optimism. "Hella Kitty is by far our most popular item of clothing this Holiday Season," said one sales clerk. "They're even outselling *Scarface* t-shirts!"

"Hella Kitty is hella hardcore, dude," said one proud owner. "Soon as I get home, I'm gonna throw this shirt on and go walk my doberman!"

family, the Kellers, have confirmed that a physical confrontation between the teacher and student did indeed take place, apparently when the child tried to commandeer Sullivan's plate of scrambled eggs.

The source added that a pitched battle then followed in which Sullivan succeeded in teaching the child to use a spoon and eat from her own plate.

Representatives for the plaintiffs argue that the successful results of the battle are irrelevant. "Let's make this perfectly clear," said attorney Heywood Jabuzov. "The family doesn't care whether Miss Sullivan succeeded in teaching the child to read Shakespeare. It



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is simply barbaric for a teacher to defend her scrambled eggs by turning her student over-easy."

Sullivan remains uncertain about her future as a teacher. "What kind of country is this, where you stand accused simply for succeeding at your job?"

She added that she's considering employment now at a camp in England run by the family of a "deaf, dumb and blind" pinball champion. "Maybe they'll accept me over there. As for this lawsuit, I'm not gonna take it!"

AP student kisses up

Local high school Junior Will Layawetwan admitted in a news conference yesterday that while he does work hard to succeed in school, he never misses a chance to kiss up to the teacher.

"During my years as an Honors and AP student, I have made sure to supplement my scholastic efforts with a steady regimen of toadying, sycophancy, and servile uncton."

Layawetwan's kissing up takes many forms. "Sometimes all you gotta do is ask a question about the classwork right before the bell rings. Your classmates hate it, but believe me, little things like that make a difference on report cards."

The ambitious youngster plans on a career in politics. "Condoleeza Rice and Donald Rumsfeld are my heroes," he said. "They've shown how far quality toadying can take you!"