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The Oak Leaf

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Alameda High School

Students get ready early for college

By Ryan Shum

As Nov. 1 rolls around, most seniors are just beginning their college applications. However, for some students eager to get a head start through early action and early decision programs, the deadline is fast approaching.

Whereas the University of California (UC) system requires students to submit their applications by Nov. 30, early action and early decision applicants must finish their applications by Nov. 1.

"I think it's kind of nice because I know that later on I won't have to stress out about it," Kristyna Smith, an early action applicant to Yale, said.

In addition, early applicants generally receive the school's admissions decisions by mid-December as opposed to March with the UC system. However, these programs aren't available at all colleges; for example, the UC system only takes regular applications. In addition, although the two programs are similar, early action and early decision differ in key aspects.

Early action applicants are allowed to decide whether they will attend upon receiving the school's decision. On the other hand, early decision applications are binding, so students who apply and get accepted must go to that particular school.

"I would recommend early action to students looking at highly competitive colleges or Ivy Leagues and if it is their number one school. Otherwise I Early Apps: see page 3



Nakamura receives his \$10,000 check.

Photo courtesy of <http://www.hornetfootball.org/>

Measure H battles ensue

By Jeremy Dong

Although the Measure H parcel tax was passed with the support of just over two-thirds vote, a legal controversy has emerged concerning its legitimacy. During the end of August, two business owners filed suits against the tax.

The Measure H parcel tax was a response to the budget cuts in California in order to attain more money for our school. During the month of June, the parcel tax came down to three recounts and ended up becoming as close as 100 votes away from not passing. It came down to individually counting the provisional ballots which are questionable votes relating to the voter's eligibility. The final vote count came down to 11,445 votes yes and 5,663 votes no, resulting in a 66.90 percent pass ratio, just over the two-thirds requirement.

At the end of August, two suits were filed. One is on the behalf of George Borikas with Pleasanton-based lawyer David Brillant. Borikas is in charge of

the Ritz Real Estate Service, and is being supported by several dozen local businesses. The other suit is on behalf of John Beery, owner and developer of Mariner's Square, with the law firm Reed Smith.

"I can understand the positions of critics of Measure H, but action needed to be quickly taken to not hinder the availability of extra-curricular school activities for students," senior Albert Chu said.

The suits were filed because they claim the tax is illegal and poorly written. There are many discrepancies in the writings of the parcel tax, which include who can be exempted from the tax, such as seniors and people with disabilities.

It is unclear at the moment whether or not the tax will still go into effect. The plaintiffs can attain a court order saying that the city cannot start taxing the people yet. If they tax the Alameda property owners, spend the money and the tax is determined to be illegal after going to court, then the city will

have to find ways to repay the citizens. Citizens hope that this will not happen and the plaintiffs and the city will be able to hold a peaceful meeting and agree on a settlement or deal. There are no set dates of conferences meetings as of now.

"I think that if the cases prevail, it will be terrible for the school because there will be huge budget cuts, although more than two-thirds of the city voted for it," government teacher Rob Siltanen said. "I am hoping there will be some compromise."

Siltanen, under the direction of Superintendent Ardella Dailey, is working on producing long-term funds for the school and other special projects. Although he has no direct role in fighting the lawsuit, he says that he is unofficially against it.

The parcel tax asks for property owners with less than 2,000 square feet pay \$120 per year for the parcel tax term of four years. Property owners with over 2,000 square feet will pay 15 cents per square feet up to \$9,500 per parcel.

Fewer dances disappoint students

By Naimah Jennings

Students this year will have fewer chances to show off their latest dance moves than in the past, due to school budget cuts. The decision came last year from school administration, who, faced with severe budget cutbacks, decided to schedule only four dances this year instead of the nine that were held in the past.

The Associated Student Body (ASB) is responsible for the organization and funding of dances; most of the funds are generated by ASB stickers and the sales of dance tickets and are used for the DJ, food and decorations. However, Homecoming will be the sole dance that ASB is responsible for this year.

The other dances are organized by the Senior, Junior and Sophomore classes. The Senior and Junior classes are responsible for their proms, while winter ball is the responsibility of the sophomores. Their funds go towards venue, DJ, decorations and food.

Those aren't the only costs for dances, as there are also the costs of janitorial services, security and the office hours spent preparing lists of students' names for dances, which are all covered by the school. This is where administration ran into trouble, for as the dances grew bigger, the cost of operations also grew along with staffing commitments.

It was especially hard for the administration, who is required

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Nakamura hits grand slam as all-star teacher

By Matthew Yuen

What would you do if you won a \$10,000 popularity contest? Our well-rounded and adept teacher, Allen Nakamura, has effortlessly-literally-won Alameda High School that amount to utilize where necessary.

Comcast Sportsnet held a contest in which voters in the Bay Area would choose the 'All-Star Teacher' from the community.

Teachers were nominated for their merits in leadership and their impact on the school they represented.

Voters submitted their choice online for their favorite pick, who they believed was the true All-Star teacher.

Nakamura was nominated by a colleague for his leadership and efforts to always improve the school. Students call him 'Nak'

an affectionate nickname for his name Mr. Nakamura, representing the bond he shares with students. Those who have had Nak as a teacher recognize the effort Nakamura puts into his job, for he teaches classes of United States history, Ethnic Studies and leadership.

"He puts an incredible number of hours into his work," says

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Improved ASB sticker offers many new discount options

By Jeremy Dong

For only \$30, the ever more popular ASB sticker helps students save money at school activities and nearby businesses.

Many students who frequently attend school activities often buy ASB stickers. As of now, Leadership has sold more

than 500 ASB stickers, more than previous years. The sticker has been more publicized this year and was sold at orientation for only \$25.

"It's worth it because people who participate in school activities and eat off-campus can often get reasonable discounts."

Jessica Adkins

from local businesses as well as all the school functions. Continued on from last year, this year's list of discounts includes even more businesses.

With the ASB sticker, students can get free entrance to home football and basketball games, \$3 off drama plays, \$2 off music

concerts, \$2 off school dances, free Senior Picnic, discount off Senior Ball and Junior Prom and discount off at The Hive. Businesses that have contributed to the list of store discounts include District, Sun-tans To Go, Robeks, Kobe Ya, Loard's Ice Cream, Party

Warehouse, Bowzers Pizza, Lee's Nails, Shear Delight & More, 3 Wishes, Fudgelato, Doummitt Shoes, Café Central and Hawaiian Drive Inn. Throughout the year, there may also be additional discounts added to the list.



New teacher Fayliza Horton breaks into a smile

Photo courtesy of Samantha Vaughan

New school year means fresh faculty faces

By Li Feng Feng

Along with the fresh faces of hundreds of ninth graders this year, there are also 12 new staff members at the school.

School Resource Officer Josh Crossley was previously out on patrol with the Alameda Police Department before coming to this school. He has taken over for Officer Tom Cobb who left because the school gets a new resource officer every four years.

"I enjoy dealing with kids. It's fun," Crossley said about why he took this assignment. During his spare time, Crossley enjoys hunting, fishing and watching baseball.

Students that play musical instruments or enjoy music will be happy to know music teacher

Jesse Randell who previously taught at Island High, is now teaching at Alameda. So far, he likes what he sees.

"It's great. I love working here," Randell said. When Randell has the day off, he practices the martial art aikido, plays the drums in his band and climbs mountains.

English teacher Fayliza Horton was looking for a change of pace when she decided to make the transition to high school. She worked at Bay Farm Elementary School and Wood Middle School for a total of eight years before joining this school.

"I wanted to work with older students who can produce a higher level of work," Horton said about her decision to move

to a high school.

Another teacher is a familiar face to her former students. English teacher Nelly Baranyi had taught at Lincoln Middle School for five years and knew many of the students roaming the halls this year.

"It's comforting. It's nice for me to see so many familiar faces. I miss them when they leave Lincoln but this time I didn't have to," Baranyi said.

Principal Mike Janvier praised the new additions to the staff by saying how experienced they are and that he has heard nothing but good news from students.

"They are going to be a great addition to our school. I look forward to working with them," Janvier said.

2008-2009 Test Dates	Test	Registration Deadlines	
		Regular	Late (a fee applies)
October 4, 2008	SAT & Subject Tests	September 9, 2008	September 16, 2008 (by mail) September 19, 2008 (online or by phone)
November 1, 2008	SAT & Subject Tests	September 26, 2008	October 10, 2008
December 6, 2008	SAT & Subject Tests	November 5, 2008	November 18, 2008
January 24, 2009	SAT & Subject Tests	December 26, 2008	January 6, 2009
March 14, 2009	SAT only	February 10, 2009	February 24, 2009

* PSAT: Saturday, October 18, 2008

Students object as administration cuts number of dances to four

Dances: from page 1

to attend all school functions. "If there is a football game on Friday and a dance on Saturday, administration has to attend both of them," principal Mike Janvier said. "It was taxing."

While the decision may come as shocking to some students here, it is the norm in many other schools in the area.

Janvier looked around at other schools and he compared the dances to the ones at Alameda. "Other schools have far less dances. Most schools have around four dances including Junior and Senior Prom," Janvier stated. "Encinal even combines their Junior and Senior Prom."

The news of fewer dances brought a wave of discontent to the student body.

Many students who looked over their school agendas were excited to start the school year off with the Welcome Back dance, scheduled for the first Friday of school. The bad news came in the announcements on the first day, saying the dance had been cancelled.

"I didn't like it. The dance would have been a good way to end the first week of school. The students could have gotten to know each other better," junior Leif Reynolds said.

While the upperclassmen have three different dances that they can attend, freshmen and sophomores are left with just two options. "I think it's unfair to the sophomores. I want to get my freak on just like the juniors and seniors. It's unfair to freshman [who] won't even be able to really enjoy the dances," said sophomore Tiara Christopher.

The cutbacks also sparked questions about how ASB would be able to generate funds, especially since fundraising options are so limited with regulations on food sales. However Allen Nakamura, the ASB facilitator, has no worries. "It will make an impact, but we have the sales of ASB stickers. It shouldn't affect us too much," Nakamura said.

There also comes the worry from the student body about further cutbacks on students' activities.

"School dances are a tradition, so if you cut these traditions, what would stop them from cutting more?" asked junior Ross Koppel.

However, there may still be hope on the horizon for students. "Alameda High's academic life will always have an equal balance with social activity," Janvier said.



Nakamura helps a student.

Photo courtesy of Samantha Vaughan

Nakamura: from page 1

ber of hours and these hours are related to directly supporting students through clubs, leadership and sports," Principal Mike Janvier said.

He made it to the finalist round and was interviewed by Comcast. They ran a small profile on him on their website and interviewed other students for a few pupil opinions.

Pieces of this interview was aired on public television, during commercial breaks of Oakland Athletics and San Francisco Giants games as well as on the Diamond Vision (Jumbo screen). This allowed the fans to get involved and learn more about the candidates.

Other teachers from schools across the bay area also went through this process.

In a sense, winning wasn't easy for Nak. He was pitted against teachers from schools with much larger student bodies such as James Logan High (in Union City) among others.

Despite our population difference, Alameda has proved that

the school can unite for a good cause. But the votes did not come entirely from the school. The school alone could not have pieced together a victory solely with the student body. Outside help was required.

"It makes me feel good that the community came together not only to vote for me, but for the school. It was amazing that they voted as 1 unit. It's really something, thinking of the pride Alameda people have," Nakamura said.

"This shows the admiration of students, teachers and staff alike who are impressed by Mr. Nakamura and support his work," Janvier said, of Nakamura's victory.

Nakamura and Principal Janvier will decide where to direct the funds, but are currently unsure of how they will utilize them. "I'll have a lot of say in [choosing where the funds go] but we are still deciding at the moment," he said.

Principal Janvier said that in general, teachers who receive the awards get to choose where they

direct the funds. "The winnings will be spent to support the students in general but also benefit from the programs that Nakamura works on. He obviously gets to choose how to spend the money," Janvier said.

They had decided, though, that a part of the winnings would go towards improving the computer labs and technology on campus..

"Well it will help a little, but this amount isn't revolutionary, in terms of the funds that Alameda needs," Nakamura said.

If anything, this victory for Nakamura is a victory for Alameda. "It really puts us on the map, gives us a reputation," he said.

Principal Janvier agreed and is very optimistic of the future. "This is a reflection of the good things going on at Alameda High School, because it engenders pride. Our School deserves to be recognized for our hardwork," he said.

Congratulations to Nakamura, our true All-Star teacher.

Motivated students apply early to competitive colleges

Early Apps: from page 1

wouldn't recommend it and just go for regular applications," college and career counselor Sandra Pula commented.

Even within the early action category, there are discrepancies between the various options. While students can normally apply to any number of early action schools, some schools only accept restrictive early action, which limits the student to applying to only one school early.

"I wish they weren't restrictive and more schools offered it," Smith said.

However, the early application system – particularly the early decision program – faces some controversy by critics. Some feel that it is unnecessary to bind students to a single institution at such a young age when they may still be unsure of themselves. In response to such criticisms, some prominent colleges like

2008/2009 Act Test Dates and Deadlines

Test Date	Registration Deadline	(Late Fee Required)
Sept. 13, 2008	August 12, 2008	August 13–22, 2008
Oct. 25, 2008	Sept. 22, 2008	Sept. 23–Oct. 3, 2008
Dec. 13, 2008	Nov. 7, 2008	Nov. 8–20, 2008
Feb. 7, 2009	Jan. 6, 2009	Jan. 7–16, 2009

* All UC and CSU applications are due November 30, 2008.

* Most Early Action schools' applications are due November 1, 2008

* Different colleges have different scholarship deadlines- see the colleges' websites for details.