

# NEWSLETTER


Community Partnerships Academy  
Berkeley High School





web site: <http://www.bhscpa.org>


## Welcome Back!


We hope your year has gotten off to a good start and you've settled in to Berkeley High. Here are a few suggestions for ensuring your student's success:


 Your child has homework every day. To find out what it is, go to the CPA website, <http://www.bhscpa.org>, and click the Homework button. Then click the teacher's name. On the page that appears, click the class name to see the homework. Eventually, we will transition to the new BHS homework site, but for now, use the CP Academy website.


 Right now is a good time to check with each teacher to make sure everything is OK while there is still time to correct problems. In particular, ask about getting to class on time, behavior, materials needed, and any missing work.

 Stay connected with teachers through emails, letters, or phone. Use the CPA Website to monitor class assignments. Attend parent meetings. Meetings are held the third Thursday of each month at 7pm.

 Set a regular time for homework and arrange a quiet, well-lit place. Make sure your student turns in the work on time.

 Limit TV, video, and recreational computer time, especially on AIM and MySpace.

 Take a look at the BHS Organizer and encourage your student to use it. It is a fantastic way for students to prioritize their busy lives.

 Make sure your student knows about the Homework Center. It's in H202, Tuesday through Thursday beginning at 3:20 pm. If those times aren't

convenient, there are many other homework help centers at BHS. Check the CPA or PTSA website to find out about them.

## Parent Meeting, Thursday, 9/21

The first Parent Council Meeting of the year will be on Thursday, September 21<sup>st</sup> from 7 pm to 9 pm in the College and Career Center on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the D building. We will discuss how parents can plug into CP Academy through communications, community building, internships, and fund raising, as well as by supplying four members to the Leadership Council. We will also talk about what we want to accomplish this year.

## Meet Nat Lewis

If you have a student in IMP2 or IMP3, chances are you've already heard about Nat Lewis. You've probably heard that he's a cool guy or that math class is fun and interesting, positive impressions that arise directly from his approach to teaching and learning.



Here is what Nat said about his teaching philosophy: "Everyone wants to learn. Teaching is just a matter of making the situation right for each person. The traditional math classroom is like a torture chamber, where only the strongest make it through. My goal is to make the environment and the approach

comfortable and JUST CHALLENGING ENOUGH so that everyone is being pushed with enough force to move them forward without knocking them down. I believe in strength through inclusion, diversity, and a variety of approaches. I believe that being able to work with, understand, and learn from one another should be a primary societal goal, and would solve a lot of problems in the world.”

Nat has been teaching at BHS for six years, four years in the Big School and two years in the CP Academy. In 1992, he graduated from UC Santa Cruz with a BA in Environmental Studies with a focus on city planning and later received his teaching credential from St. Mary's College of Moraga. He has just finished work for the prestigious National Board Certification, a distinction that only 1% of California Teachers have achieved.

Nat lives in Berkeley near BHS and is married with two daughters, ages six and nine. He is active in his church and is considering becoming a priest or deacon. Right now, he runs a bluegrass band at his church in which he sings and plays the guitar and tenor banjo. If you stop by his classroom during lunch, you might find him practicing the mandolin. In his remaining time, Nat practices Karate with Annie



Johnston (also of the CP Academy), takes long bicycle rides, and last, but not least, does sculpture in found objects like the one shown here.

## SAT Help Needed

A successful college application is a weighted sum of good grades, good standardized test scores, great recommendations and some extra-curricular activity that shows the insight and dedication to something that the student is passionate about. The CP Academy is doing a great job helping students prepare in almost all of these areas. Where we could use help is on the standardized tests (SAT and ACT).

Although college admission professionals agree that SAT and ACT scores are definitely not a measure of intelligence, nearly every competitive college requires standardized tests for college admission. For example, in 2005, students needed an average SAT1 combined verbal and math score of 1351 for acceptance into UC Berkeley and an average SAT1

combined verbal and math score of 1139 for UC Merced.

The problem is that an informal survey of about 20 sophomores and juniors in CPA who had already taken the SAT1 test showed that test scores averaged 441 for verbal and 460 for math. A significant number of these students had GPA's of 3.0 and above and were not planning to take a SAT review course, usually because it was too expensive.

Here's a possible solution. An alumna from last year was able to raise her SAT scores by taking about 10 SAT1 practice tests, doing something about the parts she got wrong, for about a year before she actually took the real test. She increased her scores by about 400 points overall, which put them in the high 600 range for verbal and math respectively.

Let's do the same. On the College Counseling page of our website, we could add a link for a SAT1 practice test. To do this, we would need volunteers to write solutions for the mathematical and verbal sections. We would also need donations to buy materials. (If everyone donated \$10, we would have \$2500, more than enough.) To go forward with this plan, we need the following:

- A decision about whether we want to have practice SAT1 sections on our website with answers and solutions. (Please email [admin@bhscpa.org](mailto:admin@bhscpa.org) with a yes or no answer. We can also have further discussion at the parent meeting.)
- People to volunteer to write solutions to the Math part and the English part.
- A donation of \$10 per family to pay for the SAT1 materials. (You can donate directly through the website, [www.bhscpa.org](http://www.bhscpa.org). Click Give to CPA and follow the instructions.)

## Vote on November 7<sup>th</sup>!

Three School Board seats are up for election. Two incumbents, Shirley Issel and Nancy Riddle, are running again and there is a third open seat as incumbent Terry Doran is not running for reelection. The three challengers are Karen Hemphill (a CP Academy parent!), David Baggins, and Norma Harrison. Make sure you vote!

Newsletter Inquiries:

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