

# Countywide Youth Commission

Newsletter of the  
Contra Costa  
Countywide  
Youth Commission

The Bridge

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Representing the youth of Contra Costa County since 1995

## Generation Y: The coffee drinkers?

Commissioner Eunice Lee

When Starbucks was putting up their green awnings in the late 1980s, we, the present teenage generation was born. We are now a great percentage that contributes to the coffee industry. According to one national survey, nearly a quarter of ninth-grade girls drink caffeinated coffee and the NPD Group has market research that shows the number of teens drinking coffee in cafes or restaurants has increased 12 percent since 2002, on top of a 15 percent rise from 2001.

But are we really drinking coffee? To the majority of teenagers, the idea of drinking straight coffee is unappealing, but the sound of “a caramel macchiato” or “a caramel frappuccino” is another story. We have found our affinity to the crafted, flavored, sugar saturated coffee drinks.

When do these we find our “coffee” craving? High schoolers drink coffee anytime in the day. We meet at coffee shops before school, during lunch, after school, and at night.

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## ‘Waiting for Van Gogh’ in Walnut Creek

Commissioner Brenda Barnhart

People may not know this, but hidden inside the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek is the little gallery that could, the Bedford. I have been to a show there where Linda McCartney’s photographs were displayed, and it was the only gallery where her work was shown in all of Northern California. So when a new show came in I knew that I wanted to go see it.

From November 17 to January 30, the art of my favorite European country was on display. “Waiting for Van Gogh: Dutch Paintings from the 19th century” features seventy paintings from 1830 to the early 1900’s on loan from the collection of Contra Costa residents and Dutch art collectors Jan and Mary Ann Beekhuis. None of the paintings are by Van Gogh but many of the artists were friends, teachers, and colleagues of the famous artist.

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Is the law that gives equal treatment to women in school sports helping gender equality or limiting opportunities for men? Tania Chen and Andrew Chan debate in the Chan- Chen Challenge.

### Title IX ends gender gap, by Tania Chen:

Many of us women take our lives for granted because we were all born into a society that allowed equal opportunities for women. Just imagine if tomorrow, you are kicked out of the Varsity Soccer team even though you were team captain. Or, you can't get a degree in nuclear engineering because apparently, that was a man's job. What would women aspire to? Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ensures that the federal government delivers on the Constitution's promise of equal opportunity so that every individual has the right to develop his or her talents. Although Title IX was initially established to help increase women's participation in sports, this idea has been expanded into several aspects of academic life.

Title IX, as a landmark civil rights law, profoundly affects all aspects of schooling by requiring equal opportunity for females and males. It has played a part in lowering the dropout rate among high school females who become pregnant or have a child. The law prohibits schools from suspending, expelling, or discriminating against them in educational programs and activities due to their status as mothers. In addition, because becoming pregnant and having a child while in high school correlate strongly with dropping out of school, many school districts have opened alternative schools for this population to help them persist in school and graduate. As a result, the dropout rates declined 30 percent.

The many gains that have been made in giving women new opportunities to advance their education have had and continue to have a direct impact in opening up the professions and giving women the opportunity to seek employment in nontraditional fields. Women have also made significant inroads in specialty fields. For example, the proportion of women gynecologists/ obstetricians rose from 8 percent in 1970 to 39 percent in 1995, an increase similar to increases in their numbers in the field of medicine overall.

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### Title IX must go, by Andrew Chan:

In 2002, Title IX celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in banning discrimination in education based on gender, and for most people, they would consider the 1972 amendment a success. Since the 1970's, the United States has seen an incredible increase in women's participation of sports. In 1996, 39% of women participated in high school varsity sports, compared to but 7.9% in 1971, and in the past 33 years, women's participation in high school sports has increased 10 fold, from 294,000 to 2.8 million.

However, despite the progress that the US has made over the past three decades under Title IX, the amendment has come at a tremendous price. Men's sports have been hit hard, and hundreds of boys in high schools and colleges across the nation have been denied to participate in traditional sports. Furthermore, schools have lost millions in revenue as they are forced to sponsor unpopular women's sports. It is time for balance to be restored to sports in America; it is time for Title IX to go.

Title IX was established in 1972 to help to increase women's participation in sports, and the Department of Education used a three fold test of enforcement. First was one of history: Did the school have a history of compliance or working to compliance? Second was a test of interest: Was the school meeting the interests of the student body? Finally, and most importantly, was the test of proportionality: Was the participation and funding of sports for females proportional to its population in the student population? It is this third test that has brought headaches to men's sports programs across the country.

Because of the sudden need to have 50/50 participation of men and women in sports, schools were immediately forced to open up programs for women to participate. However, to get that proportionality, schools were also forced to cut men's participation at

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## Experiments with totalitarianism

Commissioner Deirdre Ruscitti

We often make the mistake of assuming that all of the freedoms we enjoy are permanent and we will never have to cope with a loss of such civil rights. We assume that we can take our lives for granted. I myself used to hold such feelings, but after a fateful English class, all of my assumptions have been wiped away. Although this may sound melodramatic, perhaps it will not sound so farfetched after you hear the story.

We were about to begin reading *Animal Farm*, which was written by George Orwell as an anti-totalitarianism perspective. That day, my Freshman English teacher, Sarah Lovick, came in late and quite distressed. When we asked what had happened, all she would say was that the Administration had made some drastic school policy changes and that Vice Principal Jim Long would be coming in to explain what would happen. Tense minutes passed, and then the door opened, and Jim Long walked in.

He strode in, casting disapproving glances at us as he strode to the front of the classroom. Desperate for any clue of what was happening, we all tried to read what was on the paper he was holding in his hand. All we could determine was it looked official. He began to read.

The paper he was holding was an “official” decree from the Mt. Diablo Unified School District. It said that because the freshman at Clayton Valley High School had behaved badly, and we were to be punished. He cleared his throat, and then continued.

He told us that since freshman had been acting immaturity at sporting events, we would not be able to play any sports until senior year, assuming we had matured by then. We would not be able to chew gum or go to the bathroom during class either. We would have a separate lunch period, and would be required to eat in the lunchroom, not

See Totalitarianism, pg. 5

## Coffee, from pg. 1

Reasons vary, but with the stress of academics and the busy schedules of sports and other extracurricular activities, coffee is used mostly as a stimulant to keep our going through the day.

However, as we are now perceived to be coffee drinkers, we must know coffee’s detrimental effects. Though it doesn’t stunt growth, caffeine hampers bone-building and so those that are addicted may consider taking calcium supplements. According to The Seattle Times, a recent survey found that teen girls who drank coffee at younger ages were four times more likely to smoke cigarettes and more than twice as likely to drink alcohol.

With the coffee industry skyrocketing, time will only tell if teenage coffee drinkers will be a fad or a trend.

## Youth Hall of Fame

Commissioner Deirdre Ruscitti

The Countywide Youth Commission’s annual Youth Hall of Fame was complete on March 5 when commissioners from each of Contra Costa County’s districts gathered to decide who would be the best candidate for each of the categories.

The winners are listed below:

Good Samaritan: Cassidy Perry has spend countless hours helping those who can’t speak for themselves. She has donated her time to help homeless cats.

Valiant Volunteer: Alex Moussavi is a member of San Ramon’s Teen Council, Tri-Valley Animal Rescue, the Senior Center, the Community Center and numerous other volunteer groups while maintaining a good academic record at his school.

School Leadership: Elizabeth Cruz has helped numerous English-learners pass the Calif. Exit Exam and other important tests. She has also been involved with Liberty High’s Leadership program.

## Coffee Facts:

### A Q&A about the effects of coffee

What does the caffeine in coffee do to the body?

-The central nervous system gets a mild jolt and ‘wakes up’ the brain, gets the digestive tract going, speeds up metabolism and raises the levels of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that affects mood.

Source: thetimesonline.com

What are some of the ‘side effects’ of drinking too much coffee?

-Rapid heartbeat, irritability, insomnia, indigestion, nervousness, dizziness and dehydration are common.

How much caffeine is too much?

-Experts agree that 400 to 450 mg of total caffeine intake per day is safe for adults and children over 12 years of age. This takes into account caffeine from all sources: coffee, soda, tea, chocolate, and others. However, a grande Coffee of the Day from Starbucks averages 500 mg of caffeine.

Source: International Food Information Council Foundation

What are low or no caffeine drink options?

-Chai tea, bubble tea and smoothies are all good choices!

Artiste: Kaylee Johnson, who is dedicated to dance so much that she has started a program called “Re-Use a Dance Shoe” to help underprivileged children get the shoes and costumes that they need to dance.

Adult Advocate: Janis Dewar is coaching an Odyssey of the Mind team and managing the field trips of an eighth grade class at Stone Valley Middle and the promotion ceremony at Monte Vista High, among other activities that help youth.

Congratulations to all nominees. The winners will be honored in a ceremony at the Board of Supervisors chambers in Martinez on April 5.

# Countywide Youth Commission

## Food for thought, breakups, hangnails

Commissioner Daniella Pineda

I was having a retched day: My boyfriend broke up with me, the college of my dreams rejected me, and I had a hangnail. Most girls my age- 17- if in this sort of predicament, will usually resort to two acts: Bellow hysterically while the tears and mascara ooze down their face onto the telephone of which their friend listens calmly at the other end, or consume a meal with the appetite of a 300 pound man. So I chose the second scenario. While walking in downtown Lafayette, in an attempt to seek clarity or enlightenment or something, I found a sanctuary. A place that had everything I needed to indulge, that place was a Chinese restaurant called Uncle Yu's.

With high white ceilings and extravagant prints of glamorous Chinese woman, the place had a very crème de la crème atmosphere to it. Lucky for me, Christmas had just passed, so I had a little dough to spare. A minute after being seated, service was crisp, the waiter knew what he was doing and made eye contact with me

## NorCal vs. SoCal

Commissioner Andrew Lai

I recently read an obviously biased article by a USC student, detailing why the southern part of our great state is better than the northern portion, in which we inhabit. In the article, he describes Northern California as barren and humid, while ranting about how lame Stanford University's mascot is. Finally, he finishes up by stating all the great "attractions" in Southern California. Besides a couple of theme parks, the majority of the list is made up of sports arenas or stadiums. Personally, I have never thought of the Network Associates Coliseum as a landmark, but obviously I'm not looking hard enough.

I don't, by any means, "hate" Southern California- I'm far from it.

the whole way through.

The menu had various choices of all kinds, from duck to scallop with sweet walnuts to eggplant. I knew I was in the right place, and was feeling real spiffy. A group of business men next to me were holding their brandy and scotch about to toast, so I held my wine glass with ice water and gave the old chaps nod, only for them to look at me as if I'd just drank a gallon of Windex. Realizing that I was by myself with a wrinkled napkin tucked in to my "Get crazy with the Cheese Wiz" shirt, I quickly regressed. I'm so awkward.

The appetizers then came, a crunchy and succulent spring roll served with a side of sweet sauce and something that looked like mustard, or cornstarch and yellow dye. I'd advise to open up a spring roll with caution, and give it time to cool. The second I bit into mine, I spit it out and perhaps permanently burned four taste buds closed.

A nice convenience was that there were two bathrooms located on each side of the restaurant, like emergency exits in a plane, and I've had those kinds of meltdowns in a restaurant. Especially after nachos or some kin of espresso, pshaw!

In fact, I love it. It does seem strange for a Nor-Cal guy to have such great affection for So-Cal, but there is no denying the great weather, the beautiful locales and the "hip-factor." Bigger is better seems to be the motto of the city. Everything is larger, from the cities, to the buildings, to the payroll of the baseball teams, to the...we won't go there. Regardless, the article I read took it just a step too far for me. It is time once and for all to prove that Nor-Cal is superior to So-Cal.

Firstly, I would like to start by addressing the issue of Stanford's mascot, which was brought up in the article. The author drudged on about the stupidity of "the tree." Being a lifelong Cal fan, I agree that the tree is pretty lame. However, I would like to pose a similar question to the USC faithful. Why is your mascot a Tro-

After about twenty minutes or so of funny looks from a six year old kid with food on his face, my food came: salt and pepper calamari, chow mein, shrimp fried rice, sautéed string beans, and eggplant. Each dish was excellent. The portions were decent and seasoned just right. For some, the salt and pepper calamari may prove too salty, but if you're like me and accept your fate of high blood pressure and cholesterol, then bon appetite!

Ok, the food at this restaurant was so good that it actually took my mind off the head throbbing teenage issues of my so-called life. I was so full, and had plenty to bring home. After I got my check, I had cleaned my teeth of the finishing chocolate mints served along with fortune cookies. My fortune was blank, literally, just a sheet of paper, I don't know what that means, but I will take it as a message that I must come back, come back to the hot fierce spring roll that is Uncle Yu's. I'm Daniella Pineda, and that's how the crust crumbles, baby.

*Daniella is a student at Acalanes High School who loves to dine and discuss poetry in depth. She is a Chair of the CYC's Policy Committee and resides in Lafayette.*

jan? The Trojans were defeated in the Trojan War by how do we say... getting Punk'd...in the infamous Trojan Horse incident.

Now that I have that off my back, let's get to the intellectual argument. I have devised a four-category comparison that will determine the winner of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Civil War. They include industrial/economic value, people, sports and the "hip/cool factor."

The United States is the largest economy in the world by far. In fact, the output of this country is greater than that of the second and third largest economies put together. However, if California were to be considered its own country, it would be the fourth largest economy in the world. So can this success be attributed more to Northern or Southern California?

See NorCal, pg. 6

## Pro, from pg. 2

Before the passage of Title IX, athletic scholarships for college women were rare, no matter how great their talent. After winning two gold medals in the 1964 Olympics, swimmer Donna de Varona could not obtain a college swimming scholarship, because, for women, they did not exist. It took time and effort to improve the opportunities for young women: two years after Title IX was voted into law, an estimated 50,000 men were attending U.S. colleges and universities on athletic scholarships--and fewer than 50 women. Today, college women receive about one-third of all athletic scholarship dollars.

Here it is important to recognize that there is no mandate under Title IX that requires a college to eliminate men's teams to achieve compliance. The thought that "if women are to gain opportunities, then men must lose opportunities," presents a false image. As with other educational aspects of Title IX, and according to the expressed will of Congress, the regulation is intended to expand opportunities for both men and women.

Accompanying this untold story of success is the too frequently told story of the barriers that women continue to encounter--despite their history of accomplishments and despite the history of the legislation that protects them from such barriers. Too many women still confront the problem of sexual harassment, women still lag behind men in gaining a decent wage, and only one-third of all intercollegiate athletic scholarships are granted to women. Clearly, much more remains to be done to ensure that every American is given an equal opportunity to achieve success without encountering the obstacle of gender bias.

## Con, from pg. 2

at the same time by cutting programs. As a result of Title IX, more than 400 men's athletic teams have been dismantled all across the nation. In Colorado, some of the sports, among others, that were cut were wrestling, tennis, baseball, basketball, swimming, and diving. In other high schools, cross country teams have had to cap their men's teams while searching for women's runners to participate. Even when women have no interest to participate in sports, they are often targeted just to get proportionality. The fact is that

men who wish to play team sports have been simply denied as a result of Title IX.

Furthermore, schools have also lost their ability to invest in sports that make money. Because football teams often need 40 or more players, all male, many schools have been forced to go without the most profitable of all high school sports in America. Whereas female sports usually lose 10-20% of their costs, male sports gain up to 50% profits due to their popularity. As a result, both men's and women's teams are hurt. If schools simply invested more in male's sports, this would create funds to create more women's opportunities as well. Unfortunately, schools cannot because of the restrictions under Title IX.

Title IX was made with great intentions in mind, and to a certain degree, it has made the dreams for women's athletes; however, it has only created nightmares for men; it is time to hand back control of sports to the school themselves and let them decide the best for their students. It is time for Title IX to go.

## Art, from pg. 1

Popular subjects in Dutch paintings were: town views, country landscapes, nature, human activity, winter scenes, seascapes; and in this exhibit three paintings featuring cows. Since Holland is low-lying and needs dams to keep the North Sea from flooding the country, many of the paintings included scenes of water: of canals, rivers, and oceans. The Hague School produced most of the exhibits and featured many artists.

There were only three female artists in the display, and two of the three only painted still-life's because women in Europe at that time stayed inside at home, and were not encouraged to paint, and rarely were trained.

Exhibits at the Bedford Gallery are sure to be myriad in their subjects and mediums. A recent exhibit was of Indian baskets, and another featured Modern Art. If you want to see good art in Contra Costa County, try the Bedford Gallery in Walnut Creek, where an inexpensive ticket will take you into a world you previously thought you could only dream of in Northern California.

## Totalitarianism, from pg. 3

around campus. The dress code would be changed, and the only colors we could wear would be white, khaki, and green (these were the only "non gang" colors). Finally, he told us that since these rules applied only to current freshman, we would have to wear armbands with 2007 written on them, to separate us out. To add insult to injury, all of these rules would go into effect on the following Monday, and any student who disobeyed would be suspended without exception.

The room was silent. A few people began to cry. After a minutes pause, a few students raised their hands, and asked questions varying from "How are we supposed to buy enough clothes in time?" to "Why are you getting rid of sports?" Each question was shot down, and the student who had asked it sunk down further in their chair. After no one dared to say anything else, Jim Long walked quietly out of the room.

As soon as he left, some students burst out into 'This isn't fair' comments, or quiet sobs. We began to brainstorm what we could do as a group, but none of the options seemed viable. It seemed like all hope had been forsaken. By now a majority of the class was in tears.

After about 45 minutes of this façade had gone by, Sarah Lovick suddenly announced that we had all been tricked, and that none of these rules had been passed. She then told us that we had not supposed to cry instead we were supposed to get mad and launch a revolt, just like if there had really been a dictator.

Now that I have some time to think about what happened, there are so many things I wish I had said and done. I should have been able to realize that something was wrong, and reacted appropriately. Instead, I just sat there, static.

So now, I beg to ask the question how would we- by we, I mean society as a collective whole- react if a more serious situation like this occurred? It is not a question that we often think of, but it is one we need to ask ourselves nonetheless. Otherwise, we will be lost if the need ever should come to pass.

# Countywide Youth Commission

Would you like to have your opinion in print? Email a letter to [cycbridge@gmail.com](mailto:cycbridge@gmail.com), and we'll put it in The Bridge!

## NorCal, from pg. 4

Obviously, Northern California has Silicon Valley, one of the technological centers of the world. Furthermore, the Bay Area is the home of the budding biotechnology industry, not to mention one of the largest seaports in the world. While Northern California is home to the Silicon Valley, Southern California houses the "silicone valley." The largest industry in Southern California is Hollywood. Though Hollywood is large, it profits on making classics such as Gigli, Torque and Glitter, while Northern California manufactures microprocessors, prosthetic hearts and Ghirardelli chocolate. Enough said.

Now, on to sports. I will be honest and cede that prep sports in Southern California would probably beat those in Northern California. Most high school sports such as basketball, football and tennis tend to be stronger in Southern California, with the exception of some spectacular teams, such as De La Salle football. However, that is about where the "Southern superiority" ends. In college sports, the contest is pretty much a wash. UCLA has the most NCAA championships of any school, with Stanford a close second. USC follows in third. Cal doesn't rank high, but isn't far behind if you add in their rugby championships. However, the United States Sports Academy Directors named Stanford and Cal number one and nine respectively for top athletic programs in the nation in 2003-4. Meanwhile, UCLA and USC were third and twentieth respectively. As for professional sports, there is no doubt that Northern California takes the prize. Though Southern California has the Lakers, they also have the Clippers. That about evens out to our Warriors. Now if you take the Super Bowls of the 49ers and Raiders and compare that to the...wait...that's right, there are no professional football teams in Southern California. The two that were there, the Raiders and Rams were horrendous in Los Angeles and didn't experience success until they were well out of town. As for hockey...well, who cares for hockey anyway? If we did, there would be a season.

Anyways, sports is a close call. It is either a wash or slight advantage to Southern California.

Finally, on to the finale, the "hip/cool factor." At first glance, this seems to be an easy decision; of course it is Southern California. With the undeniable presence of Hollywood, the success of The OC, while Southern California is modern hip, Northern California is vintage hip. SoCal is like the UGGs and the SUV, while NorCal is like Louis Vuitton or a '67 Mustang; it will last for "hella days." The lifestyle and activity of Southern California might be "in" now, but it will become tired quickly. Eventually, people will start to long for the laid back attitude of NorCal, which SoCal has attempted to duplicate in the veneer of the stereotypical "surfer dude." By the time the tanning teenagers of Southern California turn thirty and realize that they can't all be actors or actresses, they will start to long for the security and opportunity only found in Northern California.

While the glory of Northern California continues get better with age like a fine wine, sooner or later, inhabitants of Southern California will see its star start to fade and realize it is just one big bust. Long live NorCal, the true home of Tupac Shakur, Tony Bennett, eBay, Pixar and the real Silicon Valley.

## Help Corner

Dealing with a problem? Wondering what to do now? These are numbers you can contact and get help. They are all anonymous.

CA Youth Crisis Hotline- 1 800 843-5200

School Violence Tipline- 1 800 863-7600

### Crisis Hotlines-

-Crisis and Suicide Intervention- (925) 833-2900

-STAND! Against Violence- (888) 215-5555

-Contra Costa Crisis Center- 1 800 833-2900

-National Runaway Switchboard- 1 800 621-4000

### Counseling-

-Teen-to-Teen Hotline (4-9 P.M.)- (877) 945-8336

-Youth Talk Line (12 P.M.-12 A.M.)- (888) 977-3399

-Child Protective Services (child abuse)- (925) 427-8811

### Alcohol and Drug Abuse-

-New Connections- (925) 439-7111

-Alanon/Alateen- (925) 932-6770

-Alcoholics Anonymous- (925) 939-5371

-Narcotics Anonymous- (925) 685-4357

### Health Clinics-

-Bay Point Family Health Center- (925) 427-8300

-Planned Parenthood Clinics-

-Antioch- (925) 754-4550

-Concord- (925) 676-0300

-Concord Health Clinic- (925) 646-5275

-Pittsburg Health Clinic- (925) 427- 8035

-Sex and AIDS Hotline- 1 800 227-8922

-Mental Health Clinic- (925) 427-8664

### Child Abuse

-Child Abuse Hotline- 1 800 422-4453

### Gang Intervention

-One Day at a Time- (925) 777-6992

### Job Hunting/ Career Skills

-Youth Development Services- (925) 942-3313

-Antioch Office- (925) 777-2109

-East Bay Works- (925) 646-5555