

NEW MEMBER ELECTED TO SCHOOL BOARD

The Sweetwater Board of Trustees will swear in newly-elected member Bertha Lopez and re-elected board member Pearl Quiñones at their next meeting on Monday, Dec. 15. Ms. Lopez is the former president of the Chula Vista Elementary School Board and an employee of the National School District. She replaces Mr. Jaime Mercado as the Seat 4 member. The board will also select new officers at the December organizational board meeting.

DISCOUNT THEATRE TICKETS BENEFIT AVID

Enjoy a night at the theatre and support AVID too. Discount tickets are on sale for performances of *The Color Purple*. The musical with the GRAMMY®-nominated score features jazz, gospel and blues and is being staged at the San Diego Civic Theatre on Wednesday, Dec. 3 at 7 pm and Thursday, Dec. 4 at 7:30 pm. Book tickets online and save at least \$10 per ticket. Log on to www.broadwaysd.com and select "Groups." Click on "Book a Group." Click on "Corporate & Specialty Groups." Click on the AVID logo. Enter the password: "college." Select your tickets. For questions, contact metorres@sdcoe.net or call Melanie Torres at (858) 292-3831.

ACSA NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN

Attention all management. It's nomination time for the Association of California School Administrators Awards. The deadline to submit nominations to the Region 18 Office is Friday, Dec. 5. A committee composed of past Region 18 presidents will select winners to send on to the state ACSA for consideration. Winners will be recognized at the Honoring Our Own Extravaganza to be held April 29 at the Sheraton Harbor Island Hotel. Download forms at www.acsa.org. Send nominations via e-mail to acsaregion18@sbcglobal.net or call Cindy Allen for more information at (619) 498-0453.

YOU'RE INVITED TO THE CABE POSADA

Enjoy some holiday cheer and help raise funds for students in bilingual education. The South County chapter of the California Association for Bilingual Education invites you to La Posada, an evening of holiday fun, food and refreshments on Friday, Dec. 5 starting at 4 pm. Donations of \$10 per person or \$15 per couple will go towards scholarships to be awarded to students attending South County public schools. For location and details, contact Ruth Diaz de Leon at ruth.diazdeleon@cvesd.org or Kim Callado at kim.callado@cvesd.org

GET YOUR SCPA BOOSTER BRICK NOW

Friends of the arts, you can help build a lasting legacy at Chula Vista High, one brick at a time. Buy a Booster Brick to support the CVH School for the Creative and Performing Arts. For a \$50 contribution, your message and name, or that of your loved one, team or group will be engraved on a 4" x 8" brick. The bricks will be placed in the plaza in front of the newly remodeled SCPA Theatre. Pick up an order form at the SCPA office on K Street near Fourth Ave.

FLEX PLAN APPOINTMENTS

Did you know you can stretch your paycheck by joining the Section 125 Plan. A 125 account allows you to set aside money for unreimbursed medical expenses and dependent day care. Participating in the plan also allows you to deduct a set amount of money from your paycheck as pre-tax dollars. That means you'll reduce your taxes and increase your spendable income. If you plan to participate, be sure to set up an appointment with the American Fidelity Representative who will be at the District Office Dec. 1-6. Call (866) 523-1857 ext. 0 to check on available appointments.

COMMON CALENDAR GOES TO THE BOARD

The Board of Trustees will consider the proposal to adopt a common calendar at their regular board meeting on Monday, Dec. 15. The meeting will begin at 6:30 pm. Details of the process to determine the criteria for the proposed calendar and minutes of the Common Calendar Task Force meetings can be viewed online at www.sweetwaterschools.org

DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY FOR ADULT EDUCATION

Sweetwater's Adult Education division is celebrating its 75th year of service. Sweetwater Evening High School, as it was originally known, opened in 1933 under the leadership of Principal P.E. Killion. The school had modest beginnings. Located on the northeast corner of the Sweetwater High School campus, the Evening School opened with just seven teachers and 73 students. Class offerings included dramatics, business education, public speaking, arts and crafts and English for foreign-born individuals.

We'll share more highlights of the 75-year history of the Sweetwater Division of Adult Education in "Currents" as the celebration continues this school year.

HELP ADOPT-A-FAMILY HOLIDAY DRIVE

You can make the difference for a Sweetwater family in need this holiday season by donating to the Adopt-A-Family drive. Dr. Julia Smith and her staff at Student Health Services are seeking donations of non-perishable foods; new unwrapped gifts for middle/high school students; holiday ornaments; stocking stuffers and gift cards for groceries, Walmart or Target. Of course, gifts of cash or checks will also be gladly accepted. Families will be referred by school sites and will be selected based on severity of need. Call (619) 585-6020 with questions regarding the holiday drive.

RECOGNITION OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE MONTH

December 7 = Pearl Harbor Day
 December 21 = Hanukkah begins (through Dec. 29)
 December 25 = Christmas Day
 December 26 = Kwanzaa Begins (through Jan. 1)

DECEMBER

Board Meeting.....	15
Winter Holiday.....	24 & 25
New Year's Holiday.....	31 & 1



Sweetwater Schools are Golden

Fall is here and, in keeping with a proud tradition, two more Sweetwater schools are turning golden.

Outstanding programs at Hilltop High and Olympian High have been selected to receive prestigious Golden Bell awards from the California School Board's Association at a ceremony on Dec. 6.

School districts throughout California compete for this high honor. The addition of two awards this year brings the total of Golden Bells earned by Sweetwater schools to 25.

The Hilltop High Connect Crew, led by advisor Louise Fericelli, was recognized as an exemplary student services program. Each school year, Connect Crew classes train 60 juniors and seniors as student leaders to mentor incoming freshmen.

Each entering 9th grader is paired with a Connect Crew leader who becomes their own personal campus guide. As trust and friendship grow, Connect Crew leaders serve as role models and motivators, coaching newcomers through the high school experience.

Even though they have a special mission to help freshmen, Connect Crew leaders are also effective conflict mediators for problems schoolwide. Often students will more readily discuss their problems with another student, so Connect Crew members help identify trouble and diffuse problems before they flare-up.

Connect Crew is a wonderful example of how student support services have been broken down to the basic one-on-one level to create a school culture of caring at Hilltop High.

Across town, Olympian High, the newest Sweetwater high school, also garnered a 2008 Golden Bell award. The Schoolwide Academic Literacy Plan was honored as an exemplary instructional program.

The research is clear, there is a disconnect between what many high schools teach and what colleges and employers expect from high school graduates. Principal John Devore launched the Academic Literacy Plan at Olympian to bridge that gap.

The Olympian Academic Literacy Plan represents a shift in the high school instructional approach from content-driven to a skills-driven focus. It is based on a systematic teaching of a set of three habits of mind: intellectual perseverance, metacognition and intellectual curiosity.

To build intellectual perseverance, students are taught to understand that if they receive a D, F or even a C grade, they may need to relearn the material. Tests are given multiple times to ensure mastery. At Olympian High, teachers and staff encourage students to stick with it.

In developing metacognition, students learn to examine their own and others' thought processes; to practice intellectual humility and become comfortable with ambiguity.

Teachers also nurture their students' intellectual curiosity by instilling an interest in exploring other cultures, issues and questions beyond their own experience. This year's senior class is reading "Three Cups of Tea" by Greg Mortenson. It is the story of one man's effort to promote peace in the Middle East by building schools for girls. Inspired by the book, Olympian seniors are involved in an effort to raise \$12,000 to build a new girls' school in Pakistan.

These are two outstanding programs making a real difference in students' lives. Both the Olympian Academic Literacy program and Hilltop High's Connect Crew have transcended the classroom to help their students become engaged in their education in a meaningful way.

These first-rate programs stood out under judge's scrutiny from among hundreds of excellent school programs considered across California.

Congratulations to the staff and students of Hilltop High and Olympian High schools for carrying on a proud tradition of excellence. Sweetwater's Golden Bell track record is a testament to the passion and dedication of our educators and evidence of the hard work and potential of our students.

Board of Trustees

Greg R. Sandoval • Arlie N. Ricasa • Jim Cartmill • Pearl Quiñones • Jaime Mercado
Dr. Jesus M. Gandara, Superintendent

KUDOS

Alicia Hernandez, Grants and Communications, has earned a Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Phoenix.

Charlene Lemons, Alternative Education, will be among a selected group of individuals who will be in attendance at the Washington, D.C. Inaugural Ball on January 20, 2009 where President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama will be present.



Robert Manroe, CPH Biology Teacher, for working with the Chula Vista Police Department in teaching 60 of his students to calculate clues on a field trip to the police crime lab.

Gailzie Mitchell, SUH Dance Teacher, and her Sweetwater High dance students have been accepted for the 19th time to perform on the "Carnation Plaza Gardens Stage" at Southern California Disneyland.

Jason Mangan, BVH Band Director, received a \$5,000 grant from HSBC. His Club Blue band and color guard will be leading the Hollywood Christmas Parade on Nov. 30.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

Dr. Thomas Glover, Director of Classified Personnel, **A/C - Human Resources**