

## Demystifying Science Packets

Science packets. You've probably heard about them. They are the subject of spirited discussion in the classroom, at CPA Parent Council Meetings and around many kitchen-tables. What are they and why are they creating such a stir? Every family needs to understand why science packets are so important and how they impact the way students learn.

According to CP Academy Advanced Biology teacher Hesham Diab, science packets are a compilation of student assignments pertaining to a particular unit. Science packets encourage students to keep their assignments and notes organized which makes them better prepared when it is time to study for exams and finals.

Science Packets are submitted for a grade every two weeks and it's here that problems can develop. Many students simply do not submit their science packets for a grade. Why and how does that happen?

Students are required to maintain their work in a 3-ring science binder divided into 5 sections: Class Business, Current, Completed Work, Tests/Quizzes and Labs. When packets are due, students gather together the required assignments for a particular unit, staple them together and submit them for a grade. Unfortunately, some students lose assignments or fail to complete them in time. This may be where families can help. Mr. Diab claims the number one factor preventing student success is many students lose or never obtain a binder. He suggests that families ensure their child has a binder and also ask to see it regularly. He also directs families to another valuable resource, the CPA web-site. Here homework assignments, packet due dates and exam schedules are listed along with other important communications. Lastly, Mr Diab allows students to leave their binders in class so they are prepared every day.

### Important Calendar Dates

March 31 <sup>st</sup>	End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grading Period
April 10-14th	Spring Recess, no school
April 20 <sup>th</sup>	CPA Parent meeting, 7 PM

## CPA Science Teacher Hesham D. Diab

Mr. Diab was born in one of the world's greatest intellectual capitals, Alexandria, Egypt. Soon after, his family left for California, moving all around the Los Angeles area until they settled in Orange County where Mr. Diab was raised. He attended Midland High School and then UC Irvine where he studied for a degree in Biological Sciences. Gaining educational momentum, he later earned a teaching credential from Cal State Fullerton. Mr. Diab began his teaching career locally in Aliso Niguel High School and Mission Viejo High School, both award



winning campuses known for rigorous academic programs. But, when his sister was accepted to U.C. Berkeley, Mr. Diab decided to join her, moving to the Bay Area after he was offered a teaching position at Berkeley High School. Mr. Diab claims his

number one passion is SPORTS, SPORTS & SPORTS! He is an enthusiastic fan of American football followed by soccer & basketball. In general, he is intrigued by all sports because of their competitive nature.

*What is Mr. Diab's Teaching Philosophy?*

Mr. Diab teaches because he believes he can make a positive difference in his students' lives by encouraging productive lifestyles which will eventually lead them to become more successful people in our society.

→ On March 14<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Diab was a guest speaker at the CPA Parent Meeting where he discussed his Advanced Biology class. He reported that nearly 50% of students do not have a science binder and in response, families of those students will receive a call from Advanced Bio. tutor Eric Chen beginning this wknd. Also, students do not return to class on time after lunch. Over the past 4 ½ wks, he noted 123 tardy marks during 4<sup>th</sup> period.  
*Wish list:* Families, check-in with your students and Mr. Diab!

## What's Happening Around CPA

### College Information Seminar

Over 50 people attended the CPA College Information Seminar on February 18<sup>th</sup>. BHS College Career Advisor Ilene Abrams helped to unscramble the college application process by discussing the many resources available to anyone seeking higher education. Guest speaker Dr. Mario Rivas of Vista College explained the benefits of enrolling in a community college while still in high school and Flora Russ had student transcripts available. A special thanks to Irma Parker, Parent Resource Center, and her group for orchestrating this event. Couldn't attend? Check the CPA website for college counseling information.

### Updates Submitted by Ms. Bell

Approximately seven of our freshmen entered a National High School Essay Contest sponsored by the Oprah Winfrey program for her book club. Her monthly book selection is *Night*, by Elie Wiesel, a memoir about the life of a teenaged boy who experienced the Holocaust of WWII. The contest will select the essays of 50 winners nationwide, who will be given a trip to Chicago to meet Elie Wiesel and Oprah Winfrey, and be featured on her show. Students were motivated to meet the author especially after meeting another Holocaust survivor, Lucille Eichengreen, who spoke to the freshman classes and told them her story. Good luck to the contest entrants!

Recently, several CPA graduates from the class of 2005 came to speak to our juniors about their freshman college experience. They represented Morehouse, Clark Atlanta, UC Santa Cruz, Cal Poly Pomona, SF State, SF City College & Yale! Among them was Lily Dorman-Colby, a freshman at Yale. Lily talked in particular about her efforts to obtain financial aid and scholarships, and related experiences of having one of her '05 classmates, Tatiana Horne, recommend certain scholarships. Lily explained, had it not been for Tatiana, with her overflowing file folder of scholarship applications, she may not have been able to attend the college of her choice. Lily also advised juniors to investigate SAT preparation courses like those given by the Princeton Review because it raised

her SAT score by 400 points. She also explained how students may obtain a scholarship for the course. After her talk, History teacher Ms. Freidus was so inspired, she visited the Princeton Review offices and asked them to offer their services to our juniors. The next week, they gave a diagnostic SAT practice test to each of our 70 juniors, provided a score analysis for each student and came back the following week to give a sample review course. This is why we are called Community Partnerships!

On February 14, ninth graders (and several of their parents) participated in the Addison Street poetry walk. Each student did a brass rubbing of a poem they selected from among the 126 plates installed in the sidewalks along both sides of Addison Street. They followed up with a research project on the poet and the poem's subject gaining a better understanding of Berkeley's rich literary history. Former U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Hass, a participating poet and co-editor of the Addison St. Anthology (guide to the poetry walk) has planned a visit to the CPA freshman classes.

While reading *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, juniors in the American Lit. class worked on a project that we integrated with English, Math and Art. Using concepts from IMP and dimensions given in the narrative, students constructed an actual-sized replica of the "garret," the attic space in which Harriet Jacobs hid for 7 years to escape slavery. Nine feet long, seven feet wide and three feet high at its highest point, the garret is now on display near the G/H building breezeway on the 2nd floor. Students stayed after class for several days to construct the garret with the help of Mr. Lewis, and then began priming it with the help of Mr. Knight to prepare it for painting. All of Ms. Bell's students took turns sitting inside of the garret to experience what it might have felt like in such a space, if only for a few minutes. They were able to use their experience to help write their essays on the images of confinement.

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Newsletter Inquiries: Questions, ideas or stories for the CPA Newsletter may be submitted to Janet Voorhees at [voorheel@pacbell.net](mailto:voorheel@pacbell.net) or call 510-524-4748.