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Megan's Law Database omits many offenders

ANDRÉ GENSBURGER
Clayton Pioneer

There are three listed, registered sex offenders in Clayton, according to the Megan's Law Web site database. Compared to the 63,000 registered sex offenders in the entire state, this number is small. However, it is important to note that the database, often assumed to be complete, omits many sex offenders. At this time, approximately 22,000 offenders statewide are not listed, although the site claims that their whereabouts are known to local law enforcement. There are also exceptions that can have sex offenders given an exemption from being listed. In fact, according to the site, approximately 25 percent of the

offenders are exempt from the list for a variety of reasons, including if the offender is a grandparent or a step-parent, if probation was ordered, or if acts are classified as "misdemeanor child molestation" or "sexual battery by restraint." Arguments persist from state to state defining who should be listed. Registered sex offenders are required to update their addresses annually, within five days of their birthday. Transients must update their location every 30 days. Statistics gathered from the site show that 90 percent of child victims know their offender. Over half the offenders are family members. Most offenders do not use force; they use deception or enticement, and the abuse is typically over a long

period of time. Megan's Law was named after 7-year-old Megan Kanka of New Jersey, who was raped and killed by a convicted sex offender who lived across the street. "We knew nothing about him," says M a u r e e n Kanka, Megan's mother, on the family's foundation Web site. "If we had been aware of his record, my daughter would be alive today." Passed hand-to-hand, more than 400,000 citizens signed a petition demanding immediate legislative action. The law was passed in 89 days, and from there the United States Supreme

Court agreed that the database could be placed on the Internet. The database was made public in 1996, and most states have some form of similar database. In an anonymous survey of 10 Clayton residents conducted outside the Clayton Post Office, eight believed that the information was necessary for the protection of the public. "That kind of thing just makes people go after the person for retribution," one respondent said. Anyone who uses the information from the Megan's Law database to harass an offender or his or her family is subject to criminal prosecution and civil liability. For additional information, visit www.megan-nicolekankafoundation.org.



photo source: (AP)
Megan Kanka at age 7.

School News


DIABLO VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL
DVMS will host a workshop on Raising Children in a Techno-savvy Home. A study by the Children's Digital Media Center at Georgetown University revealed that kids volunteer far too much information to strangers. When asked, two-thirds provide their age and at least their first name; 60 percent offer their location and contact information; one in five offer up their full name. Parents and teachers wonder if students and the children who are creating these blogs understand that ANYONE in

the world can read them. The World Wide Web is exactly that: World Wide. It is the responsibility of teachers and parents to help students understand the basics of Internet safety. And if parents and teachers don't understand these dangers, how can they help students learn? Bradley Snider, a teacher of technology at Pleasant Hill Middle School, is currently studying for his Masters Degree in Educational Technology. He offers workshops to teachers and parents to get the answers to these serious questions: How much danger is my teen capable of getting in? How can I pro-

tect my teenager from accessing adult sites? How can I stop predators from accessing my teen's MySpace? How can I monitor what Websites they visit? How can I monitor and save what is emailed from my teen? How can I monitor and save what is typed in chat rooms? These questions will be answered and reviewed extensively in Bradley Snider's workshop Tuesday, Jan. 15 at 7 p.m. at Diablo View Middle School. Please feel free to bring laptop computers if available. Email dvmospfc@yahoo.com for more information or to let us know if you plan to attend. Refreshments will be served.

by statewide audition, to perform with the California Honor String Orchestra. Tiffany is a member of the Clayton Valley Orchestra, under the direction of Mr. Mundy Viar, and she studies violin privately with Lawrence Huang. The Honor Orchestra rehearsed and performed at the University of Redlands in Southern California December 7-8. *** The Mt. Diablo Unified School District Middle and High School Honor Bands perform Saturday, January 12, at Northgate High School. The annual music honor event is conducted in two parts this year to accommodate the large audiences expected for each band. Middle School Honor Band is led by guest conductor, Rick Meyer, of the Acalanes High School District, and the High School Honor Band is led by Monte Bairos, director of bands at Diablo Valley College. For more information on the music programs at CVHS, contact Mr. Mundy Viar, 682-7474 x 3125 mundyviar@aol.com. *** The Feb. PFC Meeting is scheduled for Feb. 7, 7 p.m. in the school library. *** For the CVHS students that attended the PFC Sponsored Ames Seminar PSAT preparation classes, a Parent-Student Review Night with Bill Ames will be held on Jan. 15, at 7 p.m. in the school library. Parents can also sign their students up for the Ames Seminar College SAT Prep Seminars Section 33, classes will be held at Clayton Valley High School, 12 Wednesdays, Feb. 6 through Apr. 30, 7 - 9:15

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CLAYTON VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL
Clayton Valley High School students, **Aaron Hill and Justin Page**, have been selected by audition to perform with the All Northern California Honor Band. High School students from all California counties north of the Tehachapi Mountains may audition for the elite music ensemble. This is the third consecutive year that Clayton Valley students have auditioned for, and been accepted into, the honor band. Each year, a guest musician is hired to conduct the weekend of activities. This year, local band leader John Maltester is the conductor. Maltester is the director of bands at Los Medanos College in Pittsburg. The All Northern California Honor Band rehearses January 18-19, and performs on January 20, at the San Joaquin Delta College in Stockton. *** Clayton Valley High School sophomore, **Tiffany Ng**, was the first-ever student from Clayton Valley to be accepted,

See School, page A10

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