



# apple PRESS

## In this issue

*Gravenstein Tops—  
Four Years in a Row!*  
*Ready for Modernization  
Management Team Returns*  
*Honoring George Koenig*  
*REACHing for success*  
*Music Program Rocks*  
*Enrollment UP!*  
*School Board Opening*

Fall 2006

Gravenstein Union School District

[www.grav.k12.ca.us](http://www.grav.k12.ca.us)

## Gravenstein Tops for Four Years in a Row!

In 2006, for the fourth year in a row, students of the Gravenstein Union School District earned the highest test scores in West Sonoma County. The Gravenstein district's Academic Performance Index (API) of 849 exceeded every other elementary district that feeds into Analy and El Molino high schools, as well as the state's goal of 800 for all districts.

Hillcrest Middle School earned additional distinction this year as the highest rated regular middle school in all of Sonoma County. Last year, Hillcrest was the only middle school in the county honored as a

California Distinguished School by the state.

Gravenstein Elementary received an Honorable Mention in this year's California Distinguished School awards.

---

**Hillcrest Middle School earned additional distinction this year as the highest rated regular middle school in all of Sonoma County.**

---

"Excellent teachers are the key to student success," reported Gravenstein superintendent Linda LaMarre, now entering her sixth year in the District. "Combine great teachers with a solid standards-based curriculum, committed and involved par-

ents, and strong community support, and you have a sure recipe for excellence in our schools."

## Ready and Waiting for Modernization

The future of much-needed modernization at Gravenstein and Hillcrest schools depends on passage of state Proposition 1D on November 7. Proposition 1D will provide roughly \$800,000 in state matching funds for our District. Our critical needs—to upgrade the main electrical and fire alarm systems, replace aging heating and plumbing systems, and renovate toilet rooms and leaky windows.

Under California's school modernization program, local districts must provide 40% of the cost, while the state contributes 60%. Unfortunately, while the Gravenstein District has saved up its share for this modernization work, the state currently has no money to match. If Proposition 1D passes, the state can meet its obligations, and critical modernization work could begin next summer.

## Gravenstein Management Team Returns for 2006-07

Beginning last year, the Gravenstein Union School District developed a unique management team approach to administer our award-winning schools. Under the direction of district superintendent Linda LaMarre, traditional principal duties are shared between the Superintendent and five teachers at our two campuses.



*Gravenstein District Management Team: L-R —Simon Lewis, Nancy Clum, Linda LaMarre, Karen Stevenson, Keri Pugno, Kate Kersulis*



The *Apple Press* is published by the  
**Gravenstein Union School District**  
[www.grav.k12.ca.us](http://www.grav.k12.ca.us)

#### **District Office**

3840 Twig Avenue  
Sebastopol, CA 95472  
823-7008  
*Linda LaMarre, Superintendent*

#### **Gravenstein Elementary School**

3840 Twig Avenue  
Sebastopol, CA 95472  
823-5361  
*Linda LaMarre, Principal*  
*Kate Kersulis, Management Team*  
*Karen Stevenson, Management Team*

#### **Hillcrest Middle School**

725 Bloomfield Road  
Sebastopol, CA 95472  
823-7653  
*Nancy Clum, Management Team*  
*Simon Lewis, Management Team*  
*Keri Pugno, Management Team*

#### **Board of Trustees**

Jim Horn *President*  
Kay Crocker *Clerk*  
Dennis Andersen *Trustee*  
Tom Harriman *Trustee*  
Marguerite Matthews *Trustee*

***Our Partners in Providing a  
Great Education for Gravenstein  
Students!***

**Gravenstein Schools Foundation**  
[www.gravenstein-schools.org](http://www.gravenstein-schools.org)

**REACH Parent Foundation**  
[www.reach-program.com](http://www.reach-program.com)

## **Gravenstein District Honors George Koenig**

George Koenig, a founding trustee of the Gravenstein Union School District, passed away on June 25 at the age of 84.

George helped create the Gravenstein Union School District in 1955 by merging three smaller school districts into one. For the next half-century, until his retirement in 2004, he provided strong and steady leadership on the school board, presiding over the construction of both Gravenstein and Hillcrest schools and the tenure of four district superintendents, hundreds of teachers and staff, and thousands of successful students. Over the years, he inspired other trustees with

his quiet integrity and strong sense of decency and fairness. Despite the demands of his work, his school board service and his decades-long leadership of the Hessel Fire District, George still found time to volunteer in Gravenstein classrooms helping our children learn to read.

To honor George Koenig's enormous contribution to our community, the Gravenstein District school board recently named the Hillcrest soccer field as the "George Koenig Memorial Field." Recognized as one of the best soccer fields in the West County, Koenig Field will be dedicated in a ceremony this fall.

---

## **REACH Creative Arts Program Enters Fourth Successful Year!**

In addition to a well-deserved reputation for academic excellence, the Gravenstein School District has long reflected our community's strong support for the creative arts. For many years, Gravenstein students have enjoyed one of the county's best music programs among smaller school districts. In 2001, our voters reaffirmed this commitment by passing a parcel tax that primarily benefits our music program. Generous donations have also supported art and poetry enrichment in our classrooms.

But Gravenstein's commitment to the arts took a leap forward in 2003 when the District adopted the REACH Creative Arts magnet program. REACH was envisioned by a small group of dedicated parents who approached our District after losing their facility at a neighboring school. Beginning with two classrooms at Hillcrest Middle School, the REACH program emphasized enhanced creative arts learning, a caring and involved parent

community, and committed financial support through donations to the REACH Parent Foundation (RPF).

With the help of RPF's strong leadership, volunteerism and financial support, REACH has grown to four classrooms covering grades 4 through 8. With 90-some students, REACH program families retain a sense of community and involvement that benefits their students and the Gravenstein school district as a whole.

As students of Hillcrest Middle School, every REACH student receives a rigorous, standards-based education. To accommodate their additional enrichment activities, REACH students attend a longer school day than regular program students.

Outside the classroom, REACH students traveled to Westminster Woods for nature field classes, dug the Bard at the Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Oregon, and conducted watershed studies in Olympia National Park in Washington.

# Music Program Rocks at Gravenstein Schools

For many years, Gravenstein District schools have received unwavering support from our local community. In 2001, when Californians faced skyrocketing electricity rates and a national recession, Gravenstein voters adopted a \$36 parcel tax to support music programs in our local schools.

With this generous community support, Gravenstein has continued to provide one of the strongest music programs among Sonoma County's smaller school districts. Today our district offers regular music instruction for all of our K-5 students, a 4/5 grade band, 6th grade and 7/8 grade bands at Hillcrest, a jazz band, and a special strings class!

This year we welcome **David Fichera** as our new music teacher and Drama Director. Mr. Fichera brings to Gravenstein schools a strong background of teaching at Sonoma State University, direction of theater productions at Montgomery High School, and extensive experience in performance, theater arts, and dance.

With Mr. Fichera, music truly is a family affair. His father, retired after a teaching career in Petaluma, helps teach our 4/5 grade band classes. His mother, a violinist with the Santa Rosa Symphony, will assist with strings instruction as well.

Coming in March 2007—our exciting production of *Guys and Dolls!*

---

## Gravenstein Schools Foundation – A Crucial Partner in Our Schools

Since 2000, the Gravenstein Schools Foundation (GSF) has supported both Gravenstein Elementary School and Hillcrest Middle School. Through generous donations from parents and community members, GSF raises and spends roughly \$60,000 each year to benefit Gravenstein District students.

This month GSF kicks off its GO 2006 campaign. GO is the annual GSF

fundraiser that has helped provide programs and activities like the Spanish instruction program at Hillcrest, a variety of educational and fun field trips for all grade levels, new and safer playground equipment, the Artist in the Classroom program at Gravenstein school, the Poetry program at Hillcrest, and the annual Halloween Carnival, to name just a few.

Thank you, GSF!

---

### Visit our Website for the latest news on your local schools!

The Gravenstein District website is a great source for District news, information and links to community and education-related sites. Learn about school and community events, enrollment procedures, school board agendas and policies, and view the latest school calendars.

[www.grav.k12.ca.us](http://www.grav.k12.ca.us)

## Gravenstein Enrollment UP!

After declining for more than a decade, enrollment in Gravenstein's schools is up roughly 15% since 2002. Bucking a general trend in Sonoma County, our enrollment increased by 40 students this fall to a total of 565.

Leading this upswing is a net influx of students from neighboring school districts. These families are learning what local residents have known for years – Gravenstein's excellent teachers, rigorous standards and small, safe schools provide a great education for kids! We welcome eligible transfer students where space is available. Interdistrict transfer forms are available at the Gravenstein district office or on our website – [www.grav.k12.ca.us](http://www.grav.k12.ca.us).

---

## Gravenstein School Board Seeks Another Member

There will be no school board election this November for the Gravenstein district because only two people filed for three open seats. As a result, incumbents Tom Harriman and Jim Horn will automatically be reelected to four year terms beginning December 1, 2006.

The board will fill the remaining opening at a special meeting on October 25. The board will accept applications to fill the vacancy at the district office until October 10. Candidates for the Board of Trustees must be registered voters and residents of the Gravenstein school district.

If you're interested in serving on the Gravenstein District school board, please contact the district office (823.7008) for details and an application form.



NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
SEBASTOPOL, CA  
95472  
PERMIT NO. 59

## Gravenstein Union School District

3840 Twig Avenue Sebastopol, CA 95472

[www.grav.k12.ca.us](http://www.grav.k12.ca.us)

### News Flash!

Proposition 1D will provide \$800,000 to help modernize heating, plumbing and electrical systems at our schools.

**Remember to VOTE**  
on November 7

## Proposition 1D Set for November 7

In the upcoming election on November 7 you will be voting on one measure of crucial importance to the Gravenstein Union School District.

**Proposition 1D** is a statewide school construction bond that would provide roughly \$800,000 for our Gravenstein schools.

Our critical needs – to upgrade the main electrical and fire alarm systems, replace aging heating and plumbing systems, and renovate toilet rooms and leaky windows.

Under California's school modernization program, local districts must provide 40% of the cost, while the state contributes 60%. Unfortunately, while the Gravenstein District has saved up its share for this modernization work, the state currently has no money to match. If **Proposition 1D** passes, the state can meet its obligations, and critical modernization work could begin next summer.

We hope you will study your Voter Guide carefully and cast your ballot wisely. Please contact the District Office at 823-7008 for more information on the financial impact of Proposition 1D on Gravenstein's schools.

visit our website at [www.grav.k12.ca.us](http://www.grav.k12.ca.us)

### Gravenstein Elementary Highlights

- Reduced Class Size in grades K-3
- **Highest District API score in the West County**
- Art and Music Programs, including a 4/5 band
- **On-site Academic Preschool**
- Extended Day Kindergarten and On-site Daycare
- **California Distinguished School**
- Before school Spanish instruction
- **Strong Academics and Creative Arts**
- Technology and Learning Labs
- **REACH creative arts magnet program for Grades 4-5 (at Hillcrest School)**

### Hillcrest Middle School Highlights

- Positive academic emphasis including advanced Mathematics and Lab Science
- **Highest API middle school ranking in Sonoma County**
- California Distinguished School
- **Full music program—4/5 grade, 6th grade, 7/8 grade and jazz bands—and a strings class!**
- Active intramural and countywide sports and activities programs
- **REACH creative arts magnet program**
- Before and After School Programs including Sports, Art, Drama, Tutoring and Jazz Band
- **Spanish language instruction for all students**