

▶ **LOCAL-9** — Editorial:
Tire fires near Westley ignite
an environmental crisis.

LOCAL NEWS

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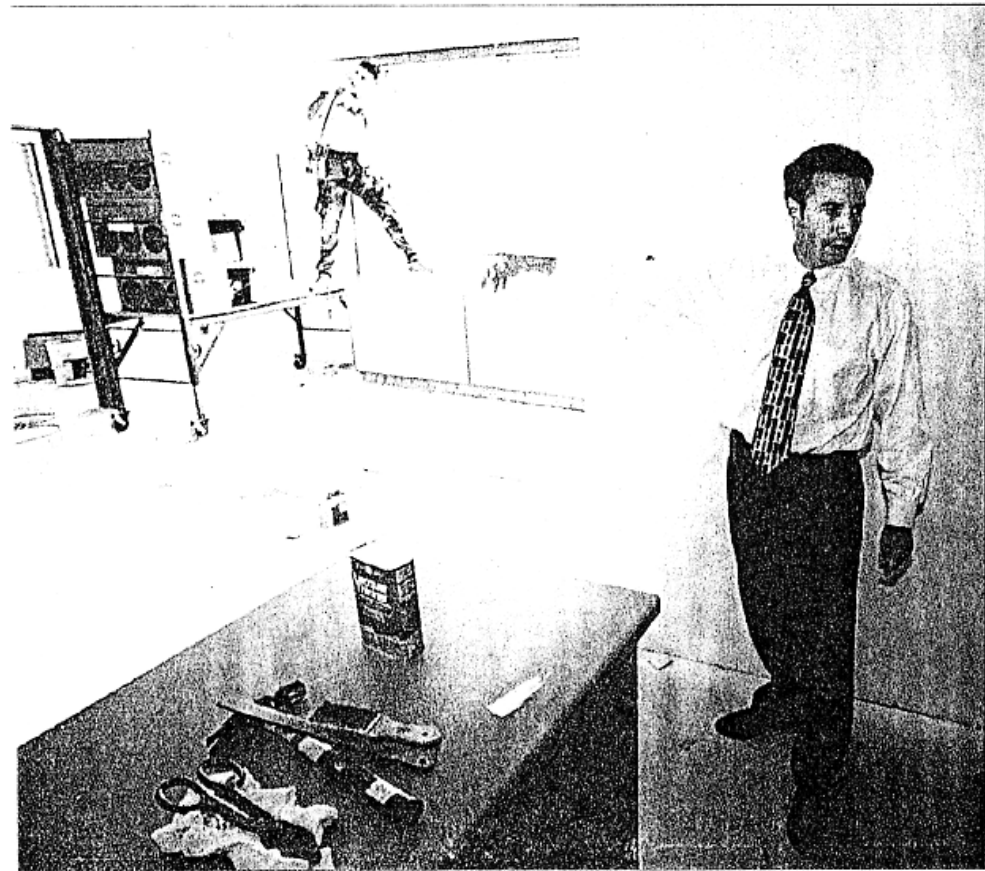
CAREER MOVE



RON LEWIS — Staff

Brittany Maunakea, 10, stands next to telecommunications consultant Frederick Gamble of Outersphere Inc. during the Microsociety Career Fair at Madison Elementary School in San Leandro Wednesday morning.

MADISON'S MAKEOVER



D. ROSS CAMERON — Staff

Rubino, James Madison Elementary School principal, points to the school's renovated front office as a man glues tiles onto the ceiling. The school is scheduled to reopen on Sept. 8 after a 15-year closure.

Renovated school will open soon

Janie R. Wakeland
WRITER

SAN LEANDRO — Standing amid freshly painted walls, piles of wiring and stacks of ceiling tiles, James Madison Elementary School Principal Rick Rubino has a vision of a school with a new staff and a new curriculum.

Part of that vision will be in place by Sept. 8, the day Madison Elementary students from throughout the county will arrive, Rubino said.

"A devil is in the details," Rubino said last week as he picked his way through a multipurpose room with cabinets awaiting installation. "We've tried to think this through."

Working it through includes reworking some classrooms for use by therapists, psychologists, bilingual education specialists, he said.

It also means details such as installing a window between the principal's office and the clerk's office so that the clerk can keep an eye on children until their parents arrive.

The school will have 19 classrooms for kindergarten through grade classes, Rubino said. It will offer a special education program for children with communication disorders.

San Leandro schoolkids will set up own 'society'

By Janie R. Wakeland
STAFF WRITER

SAN LEANDRO — If James Madison Elementary School Principal Rick Rubino has his way, his students will be running a bank, publishing a newspaper, offering goods and services for sale, making laws and arguing court cases by the end of the school year.

As part of the curriculum at the newly reopened school, Rubino will institute a program called Microsociety. Developed by

According to Deputy Superintendent Bob Nehls, the finished school will be able to hold as many as 450 students.

Adults who attended Madison when it was open between 1955 and 1983 will recognize little of the old school.

About the only original parts of the building still visible are the floors and the window frames. The

existing buildings were stripped down to the wall studs and rebuilt with new drywall and new ceilings. Among the major new items are heating systems, fire alarms, windows, wall coverings, storage cabinets, playground equipment and turf on the play fields.

Madison, and Grant Elementary School in the San Lorenzo Unified School District, are the first schools in Northern California to adopt the idea. In interviewing teachers for the school, Rubino has made sure those who are hired understand and support the concept.

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Please see **School**, LOCAL-2

Principal Has High Hopes for Madison

By Claudette Langley
San Leandro Times

The school doesn't even have any walls yet but the new principal already has some innovative ideas about the curriculum.

Rick Rubino, the principal of the soon-to-be-reopened Madison Elementary School, is steaming right ahead with his vision for campus.

"We are thinking about making this a Microsociety school," he said.

Microsociety schools are the brainchild of George Richmond, a former New York City elementary school teacher. The concept incorporates real world work experience with traditional subjects like math and English.

"The students receive Microsociety dollars for every day they go to school and pay rent for their desks," said Rubino. "The students have jobs. They are journalists, entrepreneurs, judges and lawyers."

The Microsociety movement is beginning to pick up momentum nationwide, according to Rubino. He said that not only is he interested in incorporating the program at his school, but that the San Lorenzo Unified School District is also considering it for Grant Elementary School which will open in September.

Microsociety schools give children hands-on experience with money handling, taxes, the justice system and how to run businesses.

The added doses of reality seem to help students excel in academia as well. Students from the nation's first Microsociety in Lowell, Massachusetts, tested two years above the national norm in both reading and math after the program had been in place for six years, according to an article in Time magazine.

Three years later, 13 eighth-graders from the school passed first-year college-level exams in the same subjects.

Looking into the Microsociety programs is just one of the multi-

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Madison: Will reopen in fall

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the district to put back a number of elements that were cut to save costs earlier this year. Working with the architect, Rubino shaved off \$700,000 worth of work and materials.

The school will open before construction is finished, but when the new wing is done, Madison Elementary will be able to accommodate approximately 400 students, said Rubino.

The school will have a li-

Not one to sit back and wait

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