

Vandals Hit Moraga Elementary Schools

By Lee Borrowman

A broken skylight at Rheem; a field at Camino Pablo with extensive damage caused by someone(s) driving onto the field and spinning “doughnuts;” the Los Perales Auction Committee’s ten foot tall replica of the Empire State Building, destroyed not by the plush King Kong who was seen climbing the “building” before winter break to the delight of all, but by vandals who struck over the holidays.

All three of Moraga’s elementary schools suffered property damage that was discovered on January 2 by Superintendent Richard Schafer as he drove from school to school to make sure all was well while students and staff were away. “My first reaction (upon arriving at LP) was disappointment,” said Schafer. “I have tremendous trouble understanding the pleasure people get from destroying things.”

As district employees busied themselves repairing the skylight and nursing the scarred field, Schafer noted, “Vandalism takes resources away from instruction and hurts students and the community.”

As of this writing no arrests have been made, but some parents and staff believe the recent vandalism was probably the

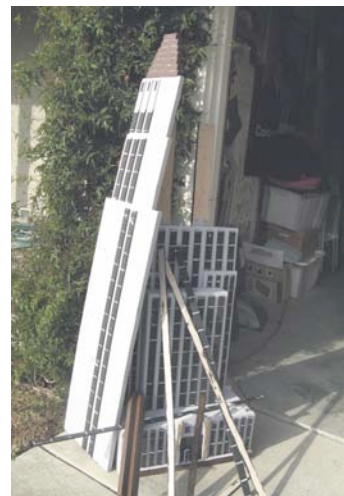


Work on the State Building, Los Perales. Empire State Building for the

parent Sandy Preto Flett said she hopes parents will “please consider talking, again, with their children about using common sense and being a respectful member of our community.”

Schafer is supportive of juvenile diversion programs for teenage vandals. “I have had experience with juvenile diversion programs in my former district. When young people committed a first offense, they had to meet with the owner who then explained the costs and problems associated with the repair. The goal was to make impersonal crimes personal,” Schafer explained. “(Moraga Police Chief Mark Ruppenthal) has an officer working in this area when the opportunity/availability occurs,” he continued.

Flett’s 77-year-old father constructed the somewhat smaller-than-life replica of the



...and after

Los Perales Auction Committee, whose theme this year is “A Night in the Big Apple.” She is saddened by the loss, adding, “It took him three full days to build it; it was for the kids...it was a labor of love.”