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AUHSD Teachers Seek to be Part of the Solution

By Jean Follmer

Starting down a \$4.8 million deficit for the 2010/11 school year has been no easy task for the top-rated high school district in California. AUHSD Superintendent John Stockton recently applauded the Acalanes district teachers for being part of the solution. "The exemplary quality of the Acalanes Union High School District has recently been demonstrated by its teachers.

These professionals joined together last week to show a strong commitment to their students, community, and peers," Stockton said in a May 5 memorandum.

The district recently reached a 3-year contractual agreement with the Acalanes Education Association

teachers. "This agreement exemplifies a sincere desire by our teachers to do their part, and much more, to buffer our students from the full brunt of state funding cutbacks," continued Stockton.

Acalanes Education Association President and Las Lomas teacher, Jennifer Nickl, said the teachers are dedicated to their students. "Eighty-five percent of our members have chosen to sacrifice for our students - we've 'come to the party', as it is," said Nickl. In addition to the devastating, pending teacher lay-offs, compensation concessions on the part of teachers will include:

- 5 unpaid furlough days for the next 2 school years
- Increased class sizes

- Reduction in health benefits
- Cost containment measures on retiree benefits

Non-credentialed and administrative employees will make similar compensation sacrifices.

Nickl said the AEA has stressed to teachers that, although there will be pink slips issued, "don't bring that message back to the classroom." Contract negotiations were very difficult, according to Nickl, because the furlough days will result in \$2.7 million in salary cuts and the health benefits reductions were hard to digest. "People who had a particular doctor for many years or had gotten particular services have to make changes. As education professionals, we always

knew we were paid less than other professionals but we felt somehow compensated because of the benefits," said Nickl.

Although she holds hope regarding the State projections that the school budget dilemma will start turning around by 2014, Nickl said parents, teachers and communities have to operate as though it won't. "I'm beginning to lose faith in any data analysis or collection of any kind. I'm glad we've settled our contracts so we can focus on passing Measure A," said Nickl, adding that the AEA will be visibly supporting the passage of Measure A and are giving out car signs that say "Another AEA member for Measure A."

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MAGIC JUGGLING PUPPETS

Celebrating Lamorinda's High School Artists

By Cristina Kim

"What art offers is space - a certain breathing room for the spirit." ~John Updike



Best in Show and 2D third place winner, Tina Curriel, smiles in front of her winning piece Photo Ohlen Alexander

The Orinda Arts Council's 7th Annual Student Visual Arts Competition announced its winners on March 10th at the Orinda Library Gallery. Packed with stu-

dent artists, friends, family, and community members the gallery, which exhibited over 200 works of student art, was alive with positive energy and loud cheers for the win-

ners. Miramonte, Campolindo, Bentley, College Prep, Head Royce, Holden High, and the Orinda Academy all had student representatives who competed in the three major categories; 2D, 3D, and Photography. The competition was funded and supported by the Orinda Arts Council; in each category there were first, second and third prizes as well as a number of honorable mentions, all of which garnered monetary rewards. Local artists with expertise in these categories acted as bipartisan judges who ranked and critiqued the students' works.

In addition to the traditional categories, this year marked the first ever "Best in Show" award which, unlike the other categories, was voted on by the public. Using their cell phones, people who entered the gallery were encouraged to text in a vote for their favorite piece of artwork. The voting period opened on March 5, 2010, and closed at 5:00 p.m. on March 10th. Tina Curriel, a

Campolindo senior, won the Best in Show Award as well as a shared third place in the 2D category. An avid fan and protector of wildlife, her winning piece, titled "Vulnerable," depicts a rhinoceros painted over collaged dictionary pages.

Curriel explains, "'Vulnerable' was inspired by a trip to the San Francisco Zoo, like most of my oil paintings. It was inspired by the fact that the rhinoceros is a powerful and ancient creature, which has no real predators in the wild yet is nearly extinct." She attributes her love of animals and art to her grandmother and puts a great deal of thought into her artwork. She was very happy with both her third place and "Best in Show" awards. Curriel elaborates, "I am delighted and honored to be the viewer's choice winner. After pouring hours into my art, it is gratifying to see other people enjoying my work." She will continue pursuing her love of art this coming fall at Oakland's California College of the Arts.

The 7th Annual Student Visual Arts Competition Winners

- 2D**
- 1) Evka Whaley-Mayda (12th Grade, Bentley)
 - 2) Marina Kawata (11th Grade, Miramonte)
 - 3) Cassandra Cronin (11th Grade, Miramonte) & Tina Curriel (12th Grade, Campolindo)
- Honorable Mentions**
- Daniel Coleman (12th Grade, Miramonte), Jessica Leimone (12th Grade, Miramonte), Caitlin MacAdam (12th Grade, Campolindo)
- 3D**
- 1) Daniel Coleman (12th Grade Miramonte)
 - 2) Deeqa Mohamed (12th Grade, Bentley)
 - 3) Andrew Girardi (11th Grade, Acalanes)
- Honorable Mentions**
- Kate Sciamanna (12th Grade, Miramonte), Remy Miller (12th Grade, Miramonte), Bailey Tumas (12th Grade, Miramonte), Jaques Avalos (12th Grade, Miramonte), Peter Nork (12th Grade, Acalanes)
- Photography**
- 1) Macy Miller (12th Grade, Miramonte)
 - 2) Ruthie Shapiro (11th Grade, Campolindo)
 - 3) John Kennedy (12th Grade, Acalanes)
 - 3) Sam Crossley (10th Grade, Campolindo)

Scouts Meet Garbage

Submitted by Kana Ryan



Photo provided

The Wolf Scout den from Pack 505 recently toured the Contra Costa Transfer Station in Martinez. The tour was a part of learning about their living world. The scouts got to see how the

garbage trucks dump the garbage inside the transfer station and how the bulldozers push the garbage into holes where it is piled into semi trucks for transfer to the landfill. Our tour guides, Jennifer Brennan

and R.C. Ferris, explained how much garbage is brought in each day (over 2000 lbs) and how often there are recyclable items in the garbage. The transfer station doesn't do any sorting so those recy-

cles end up in the landfill along with the other garbage. The mounds of garbage and of course the smell made a big impact on the scouts. The scouts committed to double their efforts at home to help their families reduce, reuse and recycle.

At the end of the tour the scouts were rewarded with a real treat. One of the drivers, Mr. Manuel Martinez, graciously answered some of the scouts' questions and even invited the boys to look under the hood of his semi-truck. He let each one of them climb into the seat of his truck and honk the horn. At the end, in response to our thank you's, Mr. Martinez told the boys the one thing they could do for him in return was to do a good deed for someone else, as that was the only thanks that he needed.



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Teachers in the Red



On March 4th, teachers from the Moraga School District wore red in protest of the State budget cuts that threaten the schools. In the picture, 23 teachers and staff from Camino Pablo Elementary were joined by ten teachers from Rheem Elementary, five from Los Perales and five from Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School. Photo Sophie Braccini

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