

Rising Fashion Stars in Lamorinda

By Moya Stone



Photo Peter Goldie

Lamorinda's young fashion stars hosted their own fashion show August 19 at the Community Hall in the Lafayette Library. Twenty summer camp students from Sewnow in Lafayette, ranging in age from 7 to 16, sashayed down the runway in their own creations for the fashion studio's third annual show.

Former designer Susan Goldie, who opened Sewnow in 2006, said the end of summer fashion show is a way to showcase and celebrate these students' accomplishments.

Among the rising stars was 11-year-old Liz Messinger. She made a halter dress using a burnt orange print fabric. Messinger has been sewing

for three years and hopes one day to have a career in fashion. "I really like having the skills to make special dresses," she said after the show looking chic donning her dress and a pixie hairdo.

Messinger and her fellow sewsters are off to a good start with what was an impressive array of fashions

including skirts, dresses, hoodies, kimono-style robes and tote bags. Students were on top of the current color trend with orange a popular choice. Details like embroidered flowers, butterflies, and monograms on the totes reflected individual style. The hoodies had a new longer silhouette with added embroidery on the back and a colorful lining.

One of the hoodie creators was Izzy Pauletich. The 12-year-old appreciates sewing and creating because "it's yours." She's been sewing for three years and wants to continue to improve her skills.

Quilts were also part of the show and one was made by 11-year-old Catie Foley. She's been sewing for a year and says making quilts is her favorite. In addition to creating she also enjoys the people part of her classes. "I really like the social aspect of sewing," she commented.

The enthusiastic students say they enjoy all the steps of sewing from pinning to wearing, but for 11-year-old Harper Orr, it's drawing that attracts her. She says what's most fun is being able to make so many different things from her sketches.

But the show wasn't just about the clothes. Students had to learn how to walk down a runway with a certain sparkle and accessorize their outfits. Erica Chernne put together a unique look by sporting her tote over her head like a messenger bag and pairing her lime green skirt and white t-shirt with rain boots.

Beaming parents made up the audience that included Rachel Fracchia, who drove all the way from Rocklin to see her two daughters Isabella and Tuscany show off their wares. The sisters attended one week of camp while staying with their aunt who lives locally. Fracchia says the best part of the whole thing for her was seeing how proud her daughters were in their accomplishments.

Sewing is growing in popularity with kids and Goldie attributes that to a desire for individuality. "By designing and sewing your own garments," said Goldie, "you can make clothes that are modern and fun and that also fit the school dress code."

Moya Stone writes quarterly fashion column for Lamorinda Weekly and a fashion blog at www.overdressedforlife.com.

Moraga Native Places Ninth at Scrabble Championship

By Jennifer Wake

Although so sick he could barely stand, Moraga native Conrad Bassett-Bouchard finished in the top 10 among 73 world-class competitive Scrabble players for his division at the National Scrabble Championships (NSC) August 11-15 in Orlando, Florida. The 22-year-old former Campolindo High School student is currently ranked No. 7 in the top division for North America.

Bassett-Bouchard started competing at age 14 in 2004 and one year later was the youngest competitive Scrabble player to reach "expert" ranking at the time. Bassett-Bouchard has competed in approximately 100 tournaments across the globe since then, including a trip to Thailand and Malaysia last year.

"Scrabble is gigantic there," said Bassett-Bouchard. "We were in a crowded mall with loud, crazy rock music playing in the background. It was much different than tournaments

here where there are just a bunch of people quietly thinking in a ballroom."

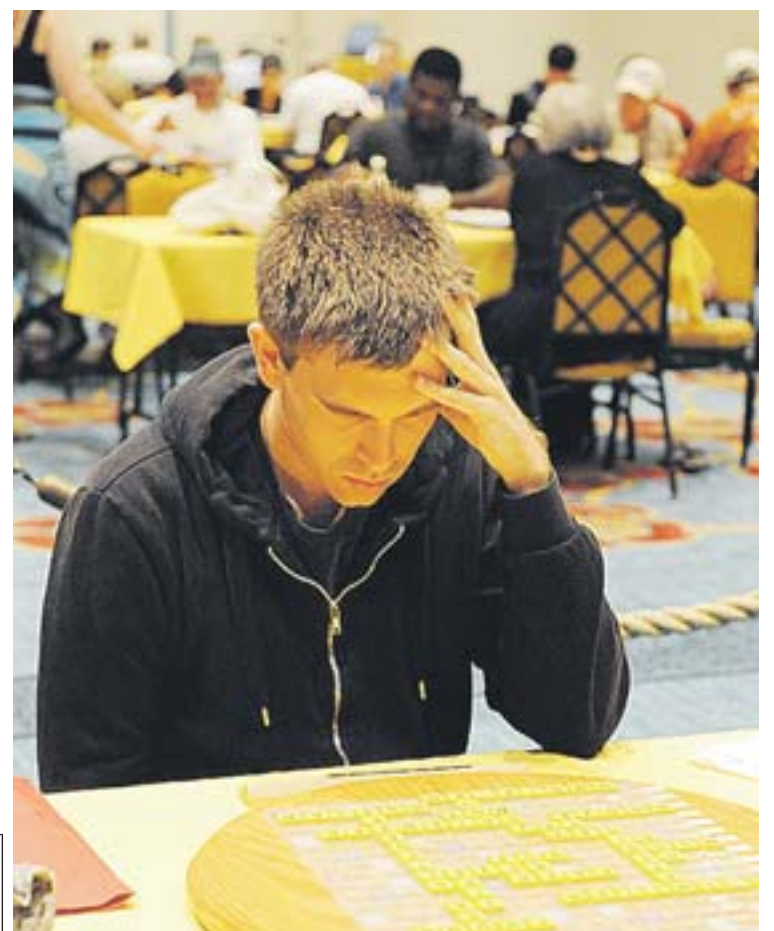
Unlike the casual game of Scrabble played on family room tables, competitive Scrabble is much different. An article in the Journal of Experimental Psychology stated successful competitive Scrabble players require three cognitive abilities: word fluency, because the game requires the rapid retrieval of appropriate words from memory; visuospatial ability, because the spatial layout of words and letters on particular squares on the board determines the point value of a play; and numerical ability, because players need to calculate probabilities and rapidly use the numerical properties associated with different combinations of words located in different places on the board. Tournaments are timed, with an average of 11 to 13 plays per player in the game or about two minutes per play. Points

are deducted for each minute players go over their allotted 25 minutes of playing time.

"Competitive Scrabble is more about probability and expected value," said Bassett-Bouchard. Expert players need to estimate the probability of retrieving certain remaining tiles, and rapidly add the point values for different possible words placed on different squares on the board to determine which of several possible words will yield the highest point value, noted the article.

To prepare for competition, Bassett-Bouchard practices about the same amount of time each day deciphering anagrams using a word-study program called "Zyzyva" and the Leitner Cardbox Method to study the dictionary, but said it would take thousands and thousands of hours to memorize the entire thing. "I haven't memorized it," he quipped.

What Bassett-Bouchard likes



Conrad Bassett-Bouchard concentrates during the recent National Championships

Photo Provided

most about competitive Scrabble are the many people he's met over the years. "Jerry Lerman from Foster City has had a huge impact on me, and I learned everything online from Kenji Matsumoto in Berkeley," he said. "Nationals is like a family reunion in a sense. It's really cool to know so many people. I can pretty

much show up anywhere in the country and know someone."

Bassett-Bouchard's next major tournament will be at the California Open November 2-4 in San Francisco. If you have any questions about competitive Scrabble, you can contact Bassett-Bouchard at conradbb@gmail.com.

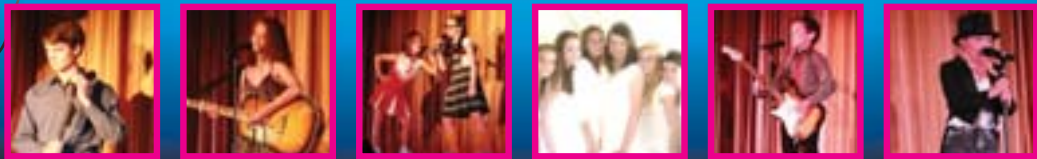
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