

Winners at CCC Science and Engineering Fair

Submitted by Theresa Maloney



Grace Carlson (3rd Place)



From left, Jonathan Oncena, Michael Chappell (4th Place), and Keyon Wozniak.

Five St. Perpetua Junior High School students - Michael Oncena - attended the Contra Costa County Science and Engineering Fair in March, with Chappell and Carlson placing fourth and third respectively.

Acalanes Student Wins Miss Teen Oakland/San Jose Title

Submitted by Sandra Williams



India Williams of Lafayette was crowned 2013 Miss Teen Oakland/San Jose April 6 at the Scottish Rite Auditorium in Oakland. Williams competed in the Miss Teen division ages 16 through 19 and displayed her personality, poise, and interviewing skills for the Oakland/San Jose judging panel during the competition. As winner of the Oakland/San Jose pageant, Williams won a five-night, six-day trip to Orlando, Fla., where she will represent Oakland/San Jose and surrounding communities at the 2013 National Competition.

Photo provided

SMC Production Deftly Tackles Tough Topics

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And in program notes, Murray breaks the "fourth wall" of theater to pose questions for the audience: "What secrets do we harbor? What damage are we willing to do in the name of bending reality to our desire? How do we learn to tell the truth when it is so painful?"

It sounds arduous, but fortunately Shepard is around to save the day and swoop us into high humor with brilliant, plain-speaking language. The script is not belly laughter inducing; instead, its dry wit tends to sneak in at the edges, ruffling funny-bone feathers just enough to cause a knowing smile.

"I'm not going to fight with you. I didn't come back for that," the actor playing Sally says to her brother, Jake.

"Oh, why not? What else are we gonna do?" he replies.

With proper timing, the line is funny and reveals in a mere nine words a lifetime of sibling rivalry, bickering and contradictory collusion.

"What (a character) is saying doesn't go along with what is happening," Murray says. "The love is fractured by violence, but the way they talk about each other is all about deep connection."

Adding to the characters' haunting, fractured internal worlds is a broken, lattice-style set by Michael Cook. The impression it makes is worn and layered and stripped of pretense, despite the skirted easy chair and mildly oriental rug. A rifle is mounted above the door; a nearby, seriously-large deer's rack suggests a hunter is willing to shoot to kill.

But what these families want, along with relief from their miseries, is to be heard and understood. It's a universal desire, an international pastime. And Shepard is at his best: constructing a play capturing both the pathos and the ironic pathway out of self-centric existence.

"What the play tells us is that we have to get outside of ourselves in order to experience ourselves," Murray concludes. "For those who can, they have a chance."

"Lie of the Mind" opens tonight and runs through Saturday, April 27 with shows at 7 p.m., and a matinee at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 28 at the Saint Mary's College LeFevre Theatre. For more information and reservations call the Saint Mary's College Theatre Box Office at (925) 631-4670. Tickets are also available online at www.brownpapertickets.com.

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