

Caldecott Medallion Castings Unveiled

By Cathy Dausman



Springhill Elementary School student Chaya Tong, age 10, sits next to her winning medallion at the unveiling in Gilroy. Photo Moona Nandi

Six East Bay students, including two from Lamorinda, were offered a first look at the Art Deco medallions each student designed to grace the Caldecott Fourth Bore tunnel archways when it opens later this year. The medallions were extracted from their rubber molds during a ceremony June 21 at the fabrication plant in Gilroy.

Student artist/winners Daniell McCann of Acalanes High School, Chaya Tong of Springhill Elementary School, and Penelope Watson of Pleasant Hill Middle School, as well as Nuala Gorshow, Aoife Gorshow, and Ellina Bartholomew Coutts (all from Alameda County) attended with their families.

“When we first arrived, we saw only four medallions. Two were missing, including Chaya’s,” said Chaya’s mother Moona Nandi. “Then we found out they had saved two medallions to break out of the mold [during the visit]. One of them was Chaya’s. So we literally were the first to see it.”

The casting itself was a multi-step process. Sculptor Johnathan Roberston-Beery initially translated the students’ paper artwork into a 3-D high-density foam model. Next, the models were coated with a clay veneer. Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete was placed over the clay, creating a “mother mold.” The clay was removed when the GFRC dried, and liquid polyurethane rubber was poured into the gap. The foam and GFRC were removed after the rubber set, leaving a negative mold for the concrete casting. The last step was an 18-20 hour curing.

The rubber was removed with help from the artists themselves, and the medallions were revealed. The six hexagonal medallions are approximately three feet in diameter and will be permanently secured above the tunnel openings at the eastern and western ends of the Fourth Bore later this year. “I had a lot of fun [at the unveiling],” said artist Chaya Tong. “They did an amazing interpretation,” added Nandi. More information about the Caldecott Fourth Bore medallions is available online at www.caldecott-tunnel.org.

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No Limits:

Living with Tourette Syndrome

By Jennifer Wake



Nick VanHole Photo Jennifer Wake

Earning honors and fulfilling leadership roles at a school of American Kenpo Karate – a martial art which emphasizes creative expression of various self-defense concepts through physical, mental, and spiritual training – is something Lafayette resident Nick VanHole says simply reflects his knowledge and experience, and underscores his dedication as a practitioner of martial arts. But Kenpo Karate has also been an outlet for VanHole, a way to harness the energy he feels before a sharp, twitchy right arm tic – one of the symptoms of Tourette Syndrome he has dealt with since his diagnosis 22 years ago. Like many “touretters” diagnosed with the condition that causes involuntary motor and vocal actions referred to as tics, VanHole says activities like karate can relieve his symptoms and the energy connected to them, offer a little break from it all, and put his tics towards greater purposes. “For me, like many others, my symptoms often do recede once I’m involved in some activity which simultaneously involves both mental and physical action,” says the former Kenpo instructor. “Although the tics and touretic energy that I experience are truly involuntary, over time I’ve been able to grasp a greater sense of control over them and, through my own breathing and habit-reversal techniques, have attempted to direct my tics and touretic energies towards whatever ends I choose.” “Overall, due to impact from tics, I’m certainly not a physically gentle person,” he adds, “but sometimes I like a break from it.” While VanHole loves sparring, freestyle skiing, and fly fishing, he

also has his more cerebral side, having worked as an archivist intern at Yellowstone Historic Center and as a visitor services representative intern at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. He currently works independently as a contract researcher, aspiring to continue his involvement in the field of disabilities education/studies and historical research after earning his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in history from the University of Montana. In his master’s thesis, “Shared Consciousness: A Social History of Tourette Syndrome and its Treatments,” VanHole describes the history of Tourette Syndrome treatments and the evolution of personal management strategies to alleviate motor tics such as head jerks or flailing limbs, or vocal tics such as tongue clicking, clearing of the throat or prolonged screeching. He explores the evolution of treatments beginning in the 1800s that included public shamings, the use of blistering agents and even leeches to the treatments of today that include biofeedback techniques and the use of certain medications. “My writing was never meant to sensationalize outlandish treatments and clinical theories of the past,” he says, “but rather to make sense of the events and circumstances that led up to the varieties of touretic experiences that exist today.” For VanHole, writing his thesis was an incredible journey. “While I understand myself to be part of the social whole in which I wrote of, and know that I have a right to my own experiences, I really enjoyed taking a step back from the big picture to write an intriguing but impartial history,” he says. ... continued on page B4

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