

Local Mom Takes the Stage

Lafayette writer reads essay on being cool – for a mom

By Jennifer Wake



Francie Low

Photo provided

Lafayette blogger/writer Francie Low was one of 11 winners of the “Listen to Your Mother” essay contest that landed her an opportunity to take her essay about motherhood “from the page to the stage” at the Brava Theater Center in San Francisco May 3. “It’s like an American Idol for writers, at a local level; 32 cities across the nation are doing the same thing, all around Mother’s Day,” says Low. A portion of the proceeds went towards the charity, Chicks in Crisis.

“It’s not every day a writer goes live, reading their work to a ticket-paying audience in the name of charity,” Low writes on her blog at shoezle.com, so named, she says, by her hubby’s polite nod to Low’s endless shoe col-

lection dominating their closet. “Us writers are happy to read aloud to anyone – for free,” writes Low. “Give us a stage and a mic and we feel like Ellen Degeneres for a night.”

Low writes funny, witty posts about the fun and frustrations of motherhood, food, fitness and fashion. She says much of her blog material comes from her two teen boys who have “a bent for parenting the parent and her husband, a cycling and anything-organic enthusiast.” Her winning essay, titled “Cool For A Mom,” describes how “cool” is in the eye of the beholder and how teens can quickly derail any mom’s misconceptions about it.

In the essay, she writes about when she wore a navy sweater sprinkled with “understated jewels” from J. Crew at middle school pick-up and about her 13-year-old’s reply: “‘Get in the car before my friends see me with you in that sweater! Is it new? It looks old.’”

She continues by describing her high-schooler’s response: “As he gets into the car he exclaims, ‘Is that new? When did you get it? It looks old. I don’t like it.’ He sees my new bright yellow tote in the back. ‘Did you get a new purse too?’ He’s practicing to be a husband.”

“Days later,” she writes, “we talk about being cool. I ask the boys, ‘Am I ok? My mom was so not cool.’ At least I don’t remember her that way. And really nobody’s mom was cool like today’s moms. I just can’t imagine I am like my mom. I don’t wear the same orange, polyester no-press pants; mine are black and called yoga pants. I don’t listen to elevator music while I iron handkerchiefs either. My boys’ response, ‘You are cool for a mom. You are not cool for a teenager.’ I can live with that.”

Low says she was honored to be in the San Francisco cast of “Listen to Your Mother” and was equally honored on behalf of her own mother, who inspired her to write with wit and humor. You can read more about Low’s experience on her blog at shoezle.com.

Spring Reveals Itself

Klein Gallery and Parkmon Vineyards collaborate for Art Reception May 9

Submitted by Emily Van Engel



“Catching the Light” by Lynette Cook

Photo provided

Although the change in seasons in California is subtle compared to other parts of the country, there’s still a notable difference in how we take in the world around us when winter transitions to spring. Klein Gallery invites the community to explore these changes through the eyes of several artists in its show “Air and Substance.” The reception is from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Friday, May 9; local winery Parkmon Vineyards will pour wine and jazz trio Flanovo will energize the event with live music.

The show will feature new works of art from six Bay Area artists, including Deborah Ashley, Camille Young, Karen Mason, Lynette Cook, Jennifer Wolpert, and Mary Lou Correia. Collectively, the art focuses on the landscapes, birds and flowers that become prominent during springtime.

“We titled the show ‘Air and Substance’ because it aims to capture the theme of spring, with birds flying, and our heightened connection to feeling the substance of the earth,” said Carrie Klein, owner of Klein Gallery. “I’m just in love with the work coming in for this show; it really inspires

me to pause and feel the warm nourishment of spring.”

Klein Gallery is located in central Lafayette, at 50 Lafayette Circle. Since its opening in October 2013, the gallery has aimed to support Lafayette’s art community in a bigger way. Currently, the gallery partners with local businesses for its opening receptions and donates artwork to the Whole Planet Foundation to support its work in alleviating poverty. The gallery also shares a building with The Art Room, a studio that has been offering clay, painting and mixed media art classes to children and adults for 15 years.

“Partnering with local businesses for our receptions is one way that we’re fostering a larger art community in Lafayette,” Klein said. “And we’re lucky that our location sits us next to an art studio, as the school and gallery complement each other nicely.”

The reception for “Air and Substance” will take place in the gallery, outside as weather permits, and in the classroom spaces at The Art Room where youth art lines the walls.

Submit stories and story ideas to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com

Lamorinda Theatres – A Little for All!

By Derek Zemrak

“The Amazing Spider-Man 2”



Photo courtesy Columbia Pictures

As Hollywood gears up for the summer blockbuster season, we have a few movies at the Orinda and Rheem theatres for all ages to enjoy. First, swinging into theatres nationwide is “The Amazing Spider-Man 2”

starring British actor Andrew Garfield as Peter Parker/Spider-Man.

You may remember Andrew from his outstanding supporting role in “The Social Network,” which earned him a Golden Globe nomination. I enjoy Andrew in the role of Spider-Man and he holds his own in developing a likable, caring Peter Parker. In this sequel, Spider-Man is facing danger once again in New York as Elector, played by Oscar recipient Jamie Foxx (“Ray”), is on a mission to destroy Spider-Man and everything that stands in his way. Once again, Golden Globe nominee Emma Stone (“Easy A”) returns as Peter’s love interest, Gwen Stacy. Dane De-

Haan (“Kill Your Darling”) delivers a solid performance as Harry Osborn. DeHaan reminds me of a young Leonardo DiCaprio and it will be interesting to follow his career.

Is “The Amazing Spider-Man 2” the best super hero movie this year? No. But it is an enjoyable film that will hold your interest for 2 hours and 22 minutes running time. “The Amazing Spider-Man 2” is rated PG-13 due to violence and it is already spinning large numbers at the box office nationwide – 33 million on opening day.

“Fading Gigolo”



John Turturro as “Fioravante” and Woody Allen as “Murray” in “Fading Gigolo.” Photo courtesy of Millennium Entertainment

If you are looking for a sophisticated comedy, I highly recommend the independent film, “Fading Gigolo,” written, directed and starring veteran actor and Golden Globe nominee John Turturro (“Quiz Show,” “O Brother, Where Art Thou?,” “The Big Lebowski”). Turturro plays a floral designer who agrees to become a professional Don Juan to help his best friend Murray (Woody Allen) make a few extra dollars. The friends quickly find themselves in a triangle of love and money. The film also co-stars Sharon Stone and Sofia Vergara (“Modern Family”).

In a recent interview with Turturro he explained that he worked and reworked the script for over a year, while openly taking input and corrective suggestions from the master of “sophisticated comedy” scripts, Woody Allen. When Allen agreed to play the role of Murray, Turturro knew he had something special. Don’t miss this gem of a movie. “Fading Gigolo” opens at the Orinda Theatre Friday, May 9.

“Fading Gigolo” has a fast 90-minute running time with an R rating due to adult themes, sex and language. This comedy is an excellent example of what all independent filmmakers strive for. Listen to Derek every Saturday morning at 8 a.m. on Real to Reel, 1450AM KEST.



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