

Boy Scout Troop 200 Announces Four New Eagle Scouts

Submitted by Andrew A. Bassak



Clockwise from top left, Alexander D. Kaviani, Robert J. Sicotte, Diego K. Mountin, and Andrew James Bassak (seated). Photo Terry Riggins

Boy Scout Troop 200, sponsored by Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Lafayette and under the leadership of scoutmaster Mark Weyland, announced the elevation of four scouts to the Eagle Scout Rank, the highest rank in Scouting. Robert J. Sicotte, Diego K. Mountin, Andrew James Bassak, and Alexander D. Kaviani were recognized for earning the rank of Eagle Scout at a Court of Honor ceremony held on May 21 at Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church.

JM Middle school's Creative Arts and Writing Contest celebrates its 40th year

Submitted by Claudia Benner



JM Vice Principal Brian Sullivan, CAW Chair Claudia Benner, judges Moraga Mayor Teresa Onoda, Nancy Comprelli, Wynne Bacon, author Mitali Perkins, and JM principal Joan Danilon.

The Joaquin Moraga PTA-sponsored Creative Arts and Writing Contest, run by parent volunteers, has been encouraging middle schoolers to express their creativity in writing, music and visual arts for the past four decades.

This year, organizers received over 430 entries in 15 different categories. The awards ceremony was held on April 28. Students, parents and teachers packed the auditorium

and cheered enthusiastically as the winner's names were called out.

The guests of honor were Moraga Mayor Teresa Onoda, Nancy Comprelli and Wynne Bacon. All three have been judges in the contest for over 17 years. The special guest was local author Mitali Perkins, who awarded a copy of her novel "Bamboo People" to the winners of the Short Fiction and Long Prose categories.

Lorie honored as Moraga Teacher of the Year

Submitted by Jonathan Lance



Karen Sakata and Amanda Lorie.

On May 12, Contra Costa County Office of Education Superintendent of Schools Karen Sakata visited the classroom of Amanda Lorie at Donald Rheem Elementary School. Lorie, a 10-year instructor, was recently named Moraga School District's Teacher of the Year. For the past couple of

years, Lorie has been teaching kindergarten at Rheem Elementary. Prior to her current position, she has taught grades K-2 at both Rheem Elementary and Quail Run Elementary, in San Ramon.

When asked about her philosophy of teaching, Lorie answered, "Teaching is a delicate balancing act of science, systems, culture, and heart. I believe in the socio-cognitive model of learning, and that students learn what they live, not only in the home, but in the classroom as well," she said. "To be truly successful in school, students need to feel connected and safe. They need to feel valued and that their teacher knows who they are, what is important to the child (interests, hobbies, etc.), and that their teacher thinks the child matters. Lasting, caring relationships, in addition to systems and routines — these are the things my students and I work on, and build together, all year."

On the evening of September 28, the 22 Contra Costa County TOYs, class of 2017-18, including Lorie, will be introduced and honored at the annual Teacher of the Year Dinner Celebration, held at the Concord Hilton.

Loto Rickman named Moraga's Employee of the Month

Submitted by Kevin Reneau



From left, chamber president Wendy Scheck, Loto Rickman, Moraga Royale GM Dianne Wilson, Rotary President Kevin Reneau.

Loto Rickman, the assistant director of the Moraga Royale Senior Living Community in Moraga, has been named the Moraga Employee of the Month for April.

Rickman has served Moraga residents for the past 10 years in a variety of roles at Moraga Royale. She began with the company as a receptionist and worked her way through several departments including office manager and activity director and is immensely popular with the residents.

"Loto's most valuable asset is her dedication to both our residents and our company," said Moraga Royale Executive Director Di-

anne Wilson. "When I am away, I know that I can depend on Loto to run the building and take care of any issues that arise. But most importantly, I am confident that our residents will always come first and their needs will be met with Loto."

In winning the award, the Moraga Rotary and Chamber of Commerce will award Rickman a gift card to Safeway as well as a gift card to Sushi Fighter in Moraga. Rickman was presented with her award and gifts at the Moraga Rotary meeting on May 9 at Saint Mary's College.

'Drowsy Chaperone' delights

Submitted by Lori Anders



From left, Diana Van Gilder, Rachel Rosenbaum, Finn Anders and Sofia Koepke.

Photo Eموke Veres

On May 12 and 13, The Saklan School in Moraga presented its ninth annual Middle School Musical at Town Hall Theater. They presented the 2006 Broadway Musical "The Drowsy Chaperone."

The story centers around the Man in the Chair, who plays a record to take the audience on a personalized tour of his favorite Broadway show (the fictitious "Drowsy Chaperone"). Throughout the show the audience is privy to the Man's secrets and his life, and why the show is special to him. In dealing with emotions and complicated life themes, it is a prime example of the purpose of theater education in today's culture.

The middle school production is unique at Saklan in that the entire middle school collaborates to put together the show. From roles on the stage, to stagecraft, costume de-

sign, sound, and stagehands — all students work together to put on a high level musical production.

The production is directed and produced, choreographed, and musically directed by Grace Chaffey, the music and performing arts director at Saklan.

Students themselves have a lot to say about the process, "Theater is important because it helps you express your feelings. You can be yourself on stage," says Saklan student Kylie Choi. Sofia Koepke says, "Theater taught me social skills, like working with people and solving problems," and Casey Stevens comments, "I learned that a play relies on everyone for them to function properly." As these students move on to high school, they take these valuable life lessons with them.

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