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Teen-run Arts Contest celebrates its fifth year

By Charlie Keohane



Top row, from left: Jonah Kunis, Ella Easley, Naama Elhasid, Ethan Sawyer, Katrina Ortman, Ella Thompson, and Meredith Levandowski; bottom row: Stella Bobrowsky, Claudia Cruse, Aubrey Fitzsimmons, and Emma Uffelman. Photo Tim Keohane

After months of waiting, a dozen eager middle schoolers and their family members gathered in the Lafayette Library's Community Hall in April to claim their prizes in a local

writing and photography contest.

The fifth annual contest was put on by the Lafayette Youth Arts Society, an organization run completely by teenagers who are passionate about promoting the arts in Lafayette. The contest ran from Nov. 13 to Jan. 31, attracting dozens of students and had about 200 entries. The contest is open to all middle schoolers living or attending school in Lafayette. Students choose one of five prompts and then are free to start snapping photos or writing their stories.

Local writers and photographers generously donated their time to judge the entries anonymously, before 18 kids were awarded prizes. This year, prizes included checks up to \$100, books, and gift cards to local businesses such as Chipotle and Susie Cakes.

The small but dedicated group of teenagers spend months

fundraising, promoting, and organizing the contest. For the teens running the contest, it's all about promoting arts, boosting the confidence of budding artists, and bringing a sense of community to Lafayette. They are excitedly anticipating the sixth annual contest, which will open Nov. 12 later this year. LYAS is always looking for more motivated volunteers to assist contest duties, and interested teenagers can find more information at www.lyas.org.

This contest relies completely on the support from sponsors in the community, notably the Rotary Club and Lori Legler of Alain Pinel Realty.

The LYAS contest is the only Lafayette writing and photography contest open exclusively to middle schoolers. For more information about the contest and to see all the winning stories and photographs visit www.lyas.org.

Looking Good in Lamorinda Chill out in a dress

By Moya Stone



Adrianna Papell dress available at Glamorous Boutique. Photo Moya Stone

Summertime is travel time and I kicked off the season with a visit to New Orleans, where temperatures reached the high 90s, as did the humidity. While there I checked out the fashion scene and I noticed that women's approach to beating the heat was with the classic dress. What can be cooler than a dress? Short-waist, column, maxi or mini, dresses keep us comfortable and up our fashion game.

Eliza Jamkochian from Glamorous Boutique in Lafayette is a big fan. "Dresses deliver comfort as well as instant chic," she says. "They are a true classic that will never go out of style." For the next few weeks dresses and everything in Glamorous Boutique is on sale for \$25. Now that's a hot deal!

Speaking of dresses and heat, artist Frida Kahlo had her own stylish way of dealing with the hot weather of her native Mexico. We can take a peek at Kahlo's style at the current exhibition, "The World of Frida" at the Bedford Gallery in Walnut Creek. This exhibit includes a series of works by artists inspired by Kahlo and photographs of her by Nickolas Muray, an Hungarian portrait photographer and close friend of Kahlo's. The World of Frida runs through Sept. 16.

Coming up later this summer is the annual American Craft Council show at Fort Mason in San Francisco, Aug. 3-5. ACC is the largest juried craft show in the country, featuring more than 250 craftspeople offering one-of-a-kind jewelry, clothing, and home decor pieces. In addition to shopping there are other fun activities including home decorating showcases and Style Slam, a regular customer favorite. Local fashion designers and stylists will shop the show and put together two ensembles each, demonstrating how to incorporate wearable art pieces into our everyday fashion.

Contra Costa fashion designer and stylist Kristen Ikeda-Jones joins Style Slam for the first time this year. She says her approach to the styling task will be to look "for top level craftsmanship along with the perfect subtle detail to set a piece apart." Many of Ikeda-Jones' clients are familiar with her styling skills. "I believe less is more but that doesn't mean you won't make an impression," she explains. While busy planning a new capsule collection for this fall, Ikeda-Jones says she's excited about the unique opportunity to work with ACC and Style Slam. You can catch what Ikeda-Jones puts together along with the other three stylists at the ACC show on Saturday, Aug. 4. <https://craftcouncil.org/shows/show-programs>.

Keep it cool this summer and go forth in style. Moya Stone is a fashion writer and blogger at www.overdressedforlife.com.



Matadors win big in Fort Lauderdale

By Brendan McFeely



Back row, from left: Kristen Plant, Kelly Zheng, Elizabeth Eddy, Janet Lee, Keely Fuller, Sandra Maguire; front row: Matthew Gill, Asim Khan, Taisuke Fox, and David Deng. Photo Kelly Zheng

Miramonte High School was one of the top 10 teams in the nation this year, returning from the June 18-22 National Speech and Debate Association's tournament in Fort Lauderdale as a "Team of Outstanding Distinction." Head coach and teacher Kristen Plant led 10 students to victory with the help of retired coach Sandra Maguire, where, for the first time in the team's history, every student returned home with a trophy for their preliminary event.

In Congressional Debate, where students model the legislative process and speak on pieces of legislation, graduating senior Elizabeth Eddy placed 16th and rising senior Brendan McFeely placed 11th.

In public forum debate, rising seniors David Deng and Matt Gill advanced to elimination rounds and graduated seniors Asim Khan and Taisuke Fox set a new record for Miramonte by placing 13th in their debates on the North American Free Trade Agreement. Graduating senior Anna Miskelly, as part of a dis-

trict-wide team with students from Monte Vista in Danville and Dougherty Valley in San Ramon, placed in the top 16 teams in World Schools Debate.

In speech events, Miramonte students excelled as well. In Original Oratory, graduating senior Keely Fuller advanced to the top 60 of over 200 competitors with her speech about "Why Don't We Do What We Know Is Good for Us?" For her third time visiting the National Tournament, graduating senior Kelly Zheng placed in the top 30 in International Extemporaneous Speaking, in addition to being the San Francisco Bay Area District Student of the Year. Graduating senior Janet Lee placed fifth in Impromptu Speaking with her speech on the John F. Kennedy Space Center.

Even the coaches received awards. Kristen Plant and Sandra Maguire earned their second and seventh diamond awards, respectively, given after successes of students coached. Overall, the most important aspect to those attending wasn't the trophies won, but the memories made.