

Scout installs barn owl nesting boxes to earn Scouting's Hornaday Award



From left: Justin and Sam Higgins, with EBMUD Ranger Gerald Sylvester Photo provided

Submitted by Tyler Higgins

Last October, Sam Higgins led Scouts from Lafayette's Troop 219 to install five nesting boxes for barn owls at the Lafayette Reservoir.

Similar to his older brother Justin's wood duck nesting box service project at the Lafayette Reservoir in 2012, Higgins' service hour requirements for his Eagle rank, but also offered him a chance to earn the coveted Hornaday Award – Scouting's highest conservation award. In order to satisfy the Hornaday Badge requirements, Higgins selected a project category focused on fish and wildlife management that would help barn owls flourish at the Lafayette Reservoir.

The Lafayette Reservoir is a terrific recreational element of our community, attracting thousands of people annually. Unfortunately, many visitors leave food and trash behind, consequently increasing the rodent population. Helping barn owls flourish in the community is a natural way to reduce rodents, keeping wildlife balanced at the reservoir.

"Barn owls are a very beautiful raptor, and as someone who loves all birds and wants to help conserve habitat for them to thrive, I wanted to make sure that barn owls would have a secure place to hatch their young at the Lafayette Reservoir," said Higgins.

In conjunction with Scouting's Mt. Diablo Silverado Council's Hornaday advisor, Lillian Remer, Higgins worked with East Bay Municipal Utility District Ranger and Wildlife Biologist Gerald Sylvester to select sites for the barn owl nesting

boxes around the Lafayette Reservoir.

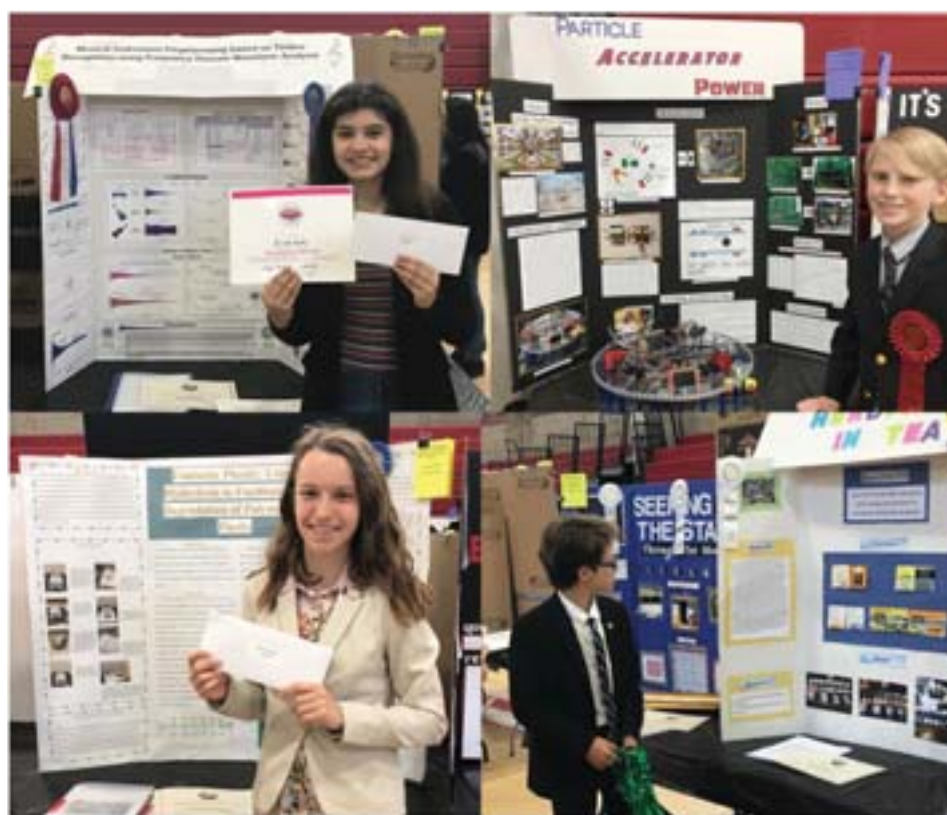
"My nesting box project was focused on helping increase the barn owl population as they are the resident owl species that do the most to keep rodent populations in check," added Higgins.

Visitors looking to locate the barn owl nesting boxes will see them in various locations surrounding the Lafayette Reservoir – both in lower elevations around picnic areas as well as upper elevations along the Rim Trail. Onlookers should be sure to keep their distance from the nesting boxes and not disturb the areas.

"At a young age, my family taught me about the importance of wildlife management. I am proud of my service project, give thanks to the Scouts that helped me, and hope that it raises awareness of the barn owl's important role in the ecosystem at the Lafayette Reservoir," added Higgins.

"The William T. Hornaday Award is rarely earned because it requires a significant contribution to one or more areas of conservation. The Mt. Diablo Silverado Council serves over 10,000 youth each year, and yet Sam Higgins is one of only a few Scouts in our Council to apply for the Hornaday Badge in the last several years. Sam did an excellent job of learning about the important role barn owls play in the ecosystem, and building nesting boxes for them to flourish is a natural way to help curb the rodent population at the Lafayette Reservoir," said Lillian Remer, the outdoor ethics advocate of the Mt. Diablo Silverado Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

Top honors awarded to Lamorinda teens at Contra Costa Science Fair



Contra Costa Science Fair winners

Photo provided

Submitted by Isabelle Katz

At the Contra Costa Science Fair this spring the Jaguars of Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School were well represented with winners in the physical sciences and engineering categories. Seventh-grader Henry Johnson won second place for his project: "Particle Accelerator Power" in the seventh-grade engineering category and Daniel Berkes won third place in physical sciences eighth-grade for his project investigating the "Presence of Dangerous Herbicides Atrazine and Simazine in Popular Tea Brands." Isabelle Katz, a JM eighth-grader, won first place in physical science (eighth-grade) for her project "Characterizing Musical In-

struments using Signal Analysis," and she also won the middle school Junior Sweepstakes, which is awarded to the top three middle school projects at the fair. Isabelle was chosen to represent Contra Costa County at the California State Science Fair at the end of April along with Campolindo High School Freshman, Cathy Kenderski, who won first place at the county science fair in physical science (ninth-grade) for her work on "Fantastic Plastic: Using Hydrolysis to Facilitate the Degradation of Polymers in Plastic." Good luck to Isabelle and Cathy at the State Science Fair, which is being held April 29-30 in Los Angeles at the California Science Center.

Kindness 'rocks' at St. Perpetua Parish



A few third-grade students with their "kindness rocks."

Photo provided

Submitted by Domini Tarman

For St. Perpetua's third-grade students recently, kindness came full circle.

On Feb. 23, these children placed colorful, handwritten "kindness notes" throughout the St. Perpetua church pews, with messages such as "Be kind," "You are awesome," and "You are bright as sunshine."

"The children wanted to sprinkle the pews with kindness, like confetti," explained Kristine Kvochak, director of St. Perpetua's Faith Formation Program. And they certainly did.

The children's notes so delighted and impressed a small group of St. Perpetua's parishioners (composed of Helen McKinnon, Betty Delisio, Mary K. Drennan and Domini Tarman) that they began a localized version of "the kindness rock project," which began in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. This endeavor involves painting rocks with

kind, positive messages, and leaving the rocks randomly throughout the community. The parishioners painted rocks with bright, vivid colors and added uplifting sayings of kindness on them, such as "Spread sunshine," "Hope" and "Trust in God."

These same parishioners wanted to ensure the St. Perpetua's third-graders, who had so generously given kindness to others, could now receive kindness back. So the four women presented a personal, kindness rock to each of the children, and encouraged them "to pass on the kindness" by sharing their rock with a friend or family member, or leaving it randomly in the Lamorinda community to be discovered by another.

"The children certainly taught us all that kindness is catching," shared Domini Tarman, one of the four St. Perpetua's rock-painters. "We are so grateful to them for planting the seeds of kindness in our community – see how they grew!"

Community Service: We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions may be sent to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com with the subject header In Service to the Community.

Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 250 words) to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com, and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.

In Memory

Donn L. Black (1930 – 2019)



Donn L. Black died peacefully on March 10, 2019 at the age of 88.

Donn was born on July 12, 1930 in Baker City, Oregon. He lived with his parents Ren and Flora Black at separate times in Ogden, Utah and Fairbanks, Alaska and graduated high school back in Baker, Oregon where he served as student body president his senior year, class of 1948. He attended Oregon State University where he completed a double major in Business and Industrial Arts and was elected student body president (1951-52). Donn attended law school at New York University in 1956. He was married

to Arlene Marie Stone in 1954 in France while serving his ROTC active duty commitment at the U.S. airbase in Dreux as a Judge Advocate General (JAG). Donn joined the law firm of Orr, Heuring & Wendel in 1959 where his primary client was the East Bay Regional Park District, spanning nearly 40 years. Donn and Arlene raised three children in Lafayette, California. The first mayor of Lafayette, Donn and a dream team of other council members accomplished Lafayette's incorporation in 1968. Donn served as a city councilmember for many years afterwards. Donn was a decades-long Rotarian, serving as president of the Oakland Club (1981-82). Donn moved to St. Helena upon his marriage to Antonia Allegra in 1996. In his retirement he continued to be a committed and contributing member of the St. Helena Rotary Club, Rianda House Senior Center, and founded the Franklin Society, where friends met to discuss the issues of the day.

Donn is survived by his wife Antonia Allegra, children Katherine Black, Jenny Black Zogg and Alex Black, Toni's children, John Griffin, Deanna Griffin and Paul Griffin, grandchildren Madeline Goldberg Black, Alex Goldberg Black and Ethan Zogg, as well as Toni's three grandchildren.

There will be a small family memorial service.

A devoted husband, loving father, and grandfather and faithful friend. He will be missed.