

The Buzz

'Fiesta at 50' deadline looms

Young journalists who signed up to compete in The Reporter's "Fiesta at 50" writing and photography competition are reminded that the deadline to enter submissions is 5 p.m. Friday.

Stories and photos can be e-mailed to dbarney@the-reporter.com, or dropped off at The Reporter's office, 916 Cotting Lane, by 5 p.m.

The competition is part of The Reporter's Newspapers in Education program and is open to Vacaville, Fairfield, Suisun City and Dixon students between third-grade and high school.

About 30 young journalists were given special press and asked to cover Fiesta Days events in Vacaville, which lasted from May 21 to 28.

Award-winning entries will be shared with our readers on The Word/Campus Star pages in the weeks to follow.

KITTY CARGO



Have cat, will travel

Maverick decided to take the easy ride on Jordan Rayburn's back. This photo by Hannah Rayburn earned the Buckingham Charter Magnet High School student an honorable mention in the high school division of the photojournalism competition of The Reporter's Campus Star competition. Hannah is a junior in Jared Austin's classroom.

Vacaville rises to comfort family

By Hunter Mercado-Hood
2nd place, Opinion Writing
Division 5-6 grade

On July 29, 2006, the Cowan family was in a car accident in Arizona. There were two fatalities and two survivors. Chad Cowan, 12, and Ashley Cowan, 15, did not survive the tragic accident. The survivors were the parents of the children, Scott and Lori Cowan. Because of this tragic event, the community of Vacaville and surrounding cities rallied together and assisted in providing aid to the grieving family.

I was a little surprised that the community was so giving of itself. Members of the community really seemed to put themselves in the family's shoes; they adopted the Cowan family's pain and suffering as if it was their own. The community was determined to assist the family in paying for the children's transportation home and funeral costs to lay them to rest.

The community came up with different game plans, organizing several different fundraisers.

There was a car wash, a music concert, car shows, and a charity baseball game. The local news came out to the car wash and put the word out that the city of Vacaville and surrounding cities were attempting to aid the family at a time of need.

Local merchants donated raffle prizes for the charity game at the Thunderbird Stadium. The owners of the Thunderbird Stadium not only hosted the game, but also gave part of the proceeds from the snack bar. Local sports leagues gave monetary pledges of support to the family.

T-shirts and bracelets were made in memory of the children. Local Realtors were also very generous in pledging part of their commissions of their monthly sales. There were many silent supporters who have gone unnamed and who gave generous monetary pledges.

Chad Cowan was a friend of mine. We played baseball together. I was so amazed by the overwhelming support for my friend and his family. His family is one of the most giving, caring, and compassionate families I know. They have so much faith in God. And I know for a fact they would have done the same for any family in need.

I am proud to be a part of a community that was so supportive to such a deserving family in their tragic time of sorrow.

The author is a sixth-grader at Notre Dame School in Vacaville.

MEMORIALS DEFACED

Vandalism leaves school mourning again

By Ally Souza
2nd Place Newswriting
Division: 5-6 grade

I think we were all shocked and saddened when we discovered the tree missing from Jenny's memorial site. It's hard to understand why someone would do something so cruel and heartless," said Vickie Nixon, Jennifer Corral's former sixth-grade teacher, about vandalism that happened at Browns Valley Elementary School in Vacaville.

Jenny's memorial, which consisted of a bench, a crape myrtle tree, thyme and a rose, and Alex Gilbertson's memorial, with a bench and carved climbing bears, were brutally vandalized. Jenny's tree and rose were torn out, and Alex's poles were broken.

"I was really upset that someone vandalized that," said Linda Phelan, Alex's third-grade teacher.

Luckily, the two broken bear poles (not the carved bears) were replaced at a cost of around \$50 and are back in place in Millennium Park. But Mrs. Nixon is unsure about replacing the tree, afraid it might happen again. "It would have been a lovely place to sit and enjoy the shade and the beautiful red blossoms from the tree in the summer," said Mrs. Nixon.

Jennifer Corral was an award-winning student in Mrs. Nixon's class last year. She passed away on June 3, 2006.

In May 2006, she was voted student of the year at a school board meeting.

Alex Gilbertson was a student in Ms. Phelan's class before he passed away in March of 2002 of a brain tumor at age 8.

Mrs. Jacqueline Pelton, Browns Valley's former principal, helped to design his memorial in Millennium Park. "I like to walk out and look at that (Alex's memorial) and remember Alex," said Ms. Judy Baker, Alex's second-grade teacher.

"It was a place for people who knew Alex to sit and reflect on the memories that they shared with him. It was a place for healing," said Mrs. Chris McCouff, school secretary.

Some kids are broken hearted about the incidents. Collette Wylie, a sixth-grader in Mrs. Nixon's class said, "I think it's very selfish and self-centered to do that."

"I didn't like it very much," replied Kendra Skerbeck, also a sixth-grader and a friend of Jenny's.

The author is a sixth-grader at Browns Valley Elementary School in Vacaville.



Ally Souza

“It's hard to understand why someone would do something so cruel and heartless.”

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Vickie Nixon

Substitute loves her job

By Darrylisha Denson
2nd Place, Feature Writing
Division: 3-4 grade

My substitute teacher, Mrs. Donald, comes to a school and teaches a class when the regular teacher is absent.

Mrs. Donald really likes her job. Forever, students try to get away with bad behavior when their teacher is not here. She had to have a bachelor's degree and she is currently working on earning her credentials. Mrs. Donald had to pass the CBEST test, which is a basic skills test for teachers.

Also, to meet the qualifications, she had to have a bachelor's degree. Mrs. Donald went to Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, where she earned her degree in liberal studies. Before that, she went to Solano Community College. Now she is in the credential program, called Cal State Teach.

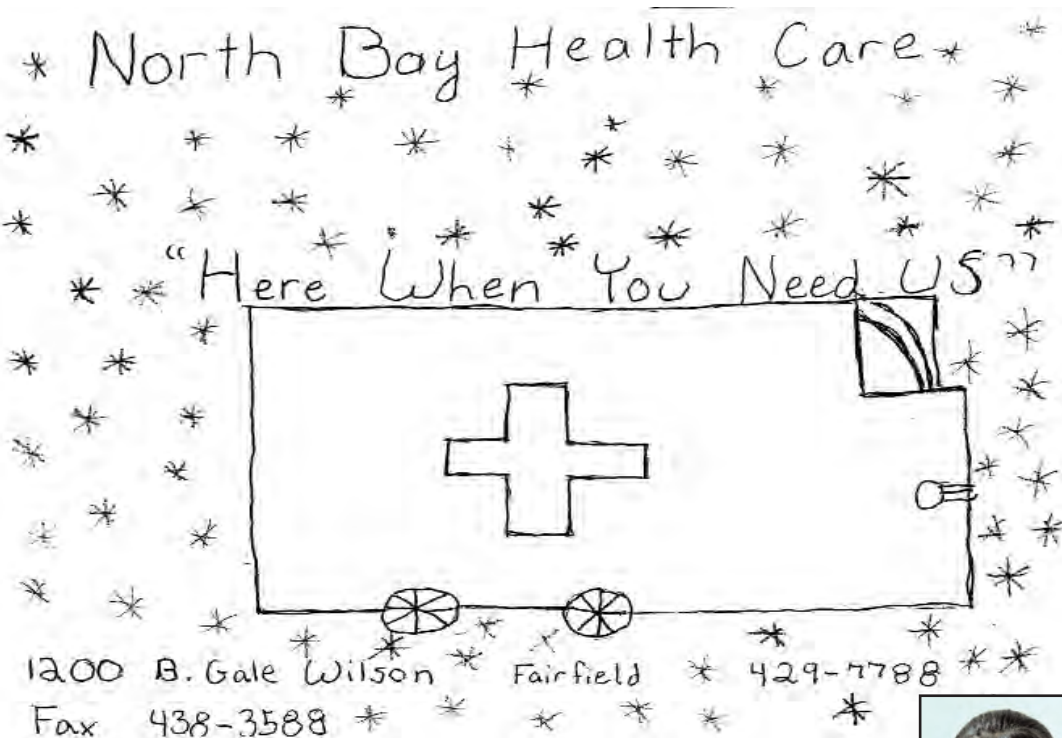
Mrs. Donald likes to work with students. It is very rewarding to see them learn and grow, she said.

The author is a fourth-grader in Laurie Carranza's classroom at Dan O. Root Elementary School in Suisun.



Darrylisha

Design-an-Ad winner



Samantha Samayoa earned third-place honors in the 3-4 grade division of the Design-an-Ad contest for this advertisement she designed for North-Bay Healthcare in The Reporter's Campus Star competition. Samantha is a fourth-grader in Lori Carranza's classroom at Dan O. Root Elementary School in Suisun City.



Puzzles, Games, Comics winner

Day at the Beach

s u n m a g e n e i r e f
a m z k m w f j k l l o i
n b e a c h m q s e z n s
d r s e m p i n v g x s h
c e r q b l r o c e a n b
a l m i a e h s y e a o c
s l v z l s w i m i l v e
t o w e l v q b u c k e t
l m w u m b r e l l a z k
e b l a n k e t s l s a s

Word Bank:

Beach	Swim	Bucket	Towel
Sun	Ocean	Fish	Ball
Sandcastle	Blanket	Umbrella	Shovel



Regienna L. Dela Cruz tied for third-place in the 7-8 grade division of the puzzles, games and comics category in The Reporter's Campus Star competition. Regienna is a seventh-grader in Paula Williams' class at Vacaville Christian School.