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1 Bates Blvd., Suite 200, Orinda

New book underscores teens' truth

By Sophie Braccini



Four Intuitive Writing Project authors, (from left) Charlotte Houston, Sofia Ruiz, Maddie Alvarado, and Veronika Pister

Photo provided

"Declare What You Know To Be True" is a manifesto and an ode to the freedom and creativity felt by a group of Lamorinda teen girls. The recently published book is a compilation of original texts from high school students who have participated in one of the Intuitive Writing Project classes. Some of the young authors will read passages Aug. 20 at Orinda Books, where the book can be found.

Elizabeth Perlman started the Intuitive Writing Project – an after-school writing program for teen girls to find their voice – in Orinda four years ago. Perlman, who said she struggled as a teen to find her true calling, developed the different multi-week sessions to support young women's desire for empowerment and authenticity.

In this first edition the young women share their vision of what the world is like to them today. They write poetry, fiction, non-fiction and describe the struggles, the battles, the joys and triumphs of this generation of girls "who were made for these times."

While these young authors all have unique voices, each of them very different, they all exude a comfortable confidence in their writing. Some are feisty – "I've got my own back," "let all of life be guided by your 'unfettered howl'" – others talk about politics, about

love, about philosophy, about finding who they are and reclaiming it proudly, about getting respect, about finding their place in the world.

Perlman says that the texts are very personal and always tell something about the author, even, she explains, when fiction work reveals a piece of us covered in metaphor. In her classes, Perlman uses the Amherst Writers & Artists system that encourages everyone to create art, while all comments highlight only the positive aspects of the work. The result is a compilation of high-caliber texts that are well constructed and creative, each with a purely genuine style.

The girls in the classes have written much more than what is in the book. What is published there is what they were ready to share with others, with their names in print. The different categories in the book are journalism and creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry.

Perlman explains that most of the fiction writing comes from girls in the "Heroine's Journey" class where girls 13 and up learn to say their truth. Perlman says that when the girls write their stories, they discover things about themselves, learn to value what is inside them, and trust their intuition. There is no grade, no judgment in these writing groups, the expression itself is enough, she says. What is shared

in the class stays in the class. Perlman adds that she would share with parents if a danger to self or others emerged.

In the class called Intuitive Leadership the students develop their ability to articulate what they are most passionate about. Perlman says that many of the texts produced in that class were too personal to be shared in a book.

In "Our World, My Voice" the girls reflect and write after sharing texts that address global issues. The nonfiction part of the book certainly comes from that workshop. But also, as Perlman notes, a lot of the poetry in the book comes from these reflections that underscore deep emotions in the young women.

In the introduction of the book, Melissa Quiter, who directs the middle school program, wrote that the work of the Intuitive Writing Project is to build a movement of intuitive self-trust, supporting all people to speak from the heart and declare what they know to be true. This book is the tangible manifestation of this goal.

The Orinda Books presentation is scheduled for Sunday, Aug. 20 from 1 to 3 p.m. Genuine Goodness will provide refreshments. Registration is \$10. For reservations, visit <http://bit.ly/DWYKTBT>

Battle of the Bands at the Roundup

By John T. Miller



One Night Stand plays at the Roundup Saloon.

Photo John T. Miller

In front of a packed house at the Roundup Saloon in Lafayette, four bands competed in a Battle of the Bands July 21 to see which one would get a paying gig to open the Lafayette Art and Wine Festival next month.

Playing good time party music, One Night Stand beat out the other three cover bands for the opportunity to play on Saturday, Sept. 16, from 10:30 to noon on the main stage.

Opening the evening's entertainment was Rubber Soul, a tasteful Beatles cover band. The Dark Side played next with alternative

'80s-plus music, followed by Definitely Maybe, a rock cover band with a focus on the '90s, and One Night Stand rounded out the evening.

The winning band plays around locally as The Jesters, but for the Roundup event they used a stand-in drummer and bass player. It's unsure which band they'll play as for the Art and Wine Festival. The other three bands all have the opportunity to play Sunday, Sept. 17.

The event was sponsored by the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, the Music Cooperative and the Roundup.

Jennifer Grossi, the founder of Music Cooperative, put on the event, saying, "It was absolutely awesome. All the musicians were amateurs. Some of them were dads and grandpas who played music over the years and came back together. The competition was challenging and I'm glad I wasn't a judge."

Ryan Lentz, a musician and instructor at the Music Co-op, and Johnny Koeller, a musician who used to book all the entertainment at the Roundup, did the judging. Jay Lifson was pegged to represent the Chamber of Commerce, but with the trauma of the recent fire he was given the night off.

The Music Co-op, with studios on Tice Valley Boulevard and Golden Gate Way, works closely with the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. They give their students gigs while providing music and entertainment for the city's events, such as Earth Day and A Taste of Lafayette.

For more information on the Art and Wine Festival visit the Chamber of Commerce website at www.lafayettechamber.org.



From left: Don Richardson - Keyboards, guitar, harmonica and vocals; Nelson Martinez - Guitar and backing vocals; Brian Macintosh - Bass and backing vocals; and Scott Moe - Drums

Photos provided