

30th annual Lions' International Peace Poster Contest a success

Submitted by Robert Murtagh



Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, from left: Teacher Moose Wesler, Meera Phadnis, Emmie Cimperman, Ava Filer and Principal Joan Danilson. Photos provided

This year's local winners of the 2017 Peace Poster contest sponsored by the Lamorinda Lions were among more than 600,000 entries submitted worldwide by students aged 11 to 13 years old, located in more than 200 countries. The contest encourages young people to think about peace, creatively express what it means to them, and share their own unique vision with the world. This

year's theme was "The Future of Peace."

In addition to Lions efforts toward conquering blindness, the Lamorinda Lions Club has made a strong commitment to community service and helping youth throughout Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda.

For more information about the Peace Poster contest, contact Lion Bob Murtagh at (925) 283-1841.



Stanley Middle School, from left: Teacher Robert Anke, Hailey stripling, Isabel Clingerman, Tessa Chan and Ceil Murtagh (Lamorinda Lions Coordinator).



Orinda Intermediate School, from left: Gabriella Bertot, Sharh Yang, Lilia Insalaco, and teacher Susan Weiss.

Raiders icon Al Davis

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The book chronicles both the successes and failures of Davis's picks, and the methods he used to decide on a player. He often ignored the wisdom of his scouts while looking for the strongest arm at quarterback or the fastest 40-yard time for each position.

Perhaps his biggest blunder was picking Todd Marinovich, a quarterback from USC with drug problems and a questionable work ethic, over Brett Favre, whom the scouts preferred. Favre went on to a Hall-of-Fame career, while Marinovich was out of the league in two years.

Davis would often scapegoat a staff member who had agreed with him on a pick and very rarely admitted a mistake.

Since the book deals almost exclusively with Davis's life in professional sports, the reader is left wondering what his early years were like and how they influenced the type of person he eventually became.

Speaking about the book, Kingdon, who has lived in Lafayette since the Raiders moved back from Los Angeles after the 1995 season, related that the focus was on the Al Davis they knew. For those interested in his background, Kingdon recommends a 1991 publication, "Slick: The Silver and Black Life of Al Davis."

Asked how they lasted so long with Davis, Kingdon responded, "If you did your job and didn't embarrass the organization, Al was very loyal to you. It was a challenge and fun to try and keep up with him. He was a very bright man."

After running the book by five major publishers, the trio formed Rather Be Feared Publishing and self-published. They are now in their second printing. The book is available in hardback, kindle, or audible form through Amazon, or can be purchased at behindtheshield.net.

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.

Moraga Garden Club honors parks maintenance leader

Submitted by Karin Biasotti



From left: Anna Lum, MGC President; Edric Kwan, Public Works Director/Town Engineer; Rena Munson; Ruben Ochoa, Maintenance Leader; Penny Walwark; Kyle Salvin, Public Works Maintenance Manager; Ute Kelley; Connie Coutts; Carolyn Westoff; Gisela Volkmer and Beverly Nelson. Photo Karin Biasotti

The Moraga Garden Club recently honored Ruben Ochoa, Moraga Parks Maintenance Leader, for all the support and assistance he has provided. A framed plaque was awarded to him to show their appreciation.

MGC maintains garden spots around Moraga, which includes the Moraga Commons, the Hacienda Perennial Garden, the Library Urn and the Urns on Country Club Drive.

Carolyn Westoff, who spearheaded the planting of the urns on Country Club Drive, stated "Ruben is a Gem! Moraga is lucky to have such a dedicated and conscientious employee. The restoration of the historic urns on Country Club Drive wouldn't have been possible without his enthusiasm for the project. He dug out the old, compacted soil, repaired the irrigation and filled the urns with composted soil from the Hacienda. All was made ready for the Garden Club to plant and have fun. I know he loves his job and takes great pride in his work."

Rena Munson, chairman of the Hacienda

Perennial Garden, stated: "We took over the care of the Hacienda perennial garden in 2016 after a year of extreme drought and many stressed out plants. After consulting with Ruben, he and his crew removed several overgrown, diseased bushes, wild grasses and trimmed back the rambling invasive ivy. The island between the lawn and our garden was cleared of many volunteer oaks, and other weedy plants, in order to make our garden more visible from the lawn area and the Hacienda. Large boulders were relocated, and a beautiful antique birdbath was rescued from a hidden obscure place on the grounds.

"While adding new soil in existing larger flowerbeds around the grounds, Ruben shared some of it with us as well as a few impatiens being planted in the fountain and by the long wall framing the lawn. The ongoing project is to make the MGC perennial garden a more important part of the greater park. With the help of Ruben and his team we will eventually have another corner at the Hacienda to sit and enjoy our beautiful Hacienda de las Flores."

Cold Weather Clothing Program helps county homeless endure winter cold

Submitted by Steve Spraitzar



A man without shelter shows the warm coat that he received from White Pony Express' "Cold Weather Clothing Program." Photo courtesy White Pony Express

White Pony Express has just launched its third Cold Weather Clothing Program for the upcoming winter. The program's focus is to help the homeless in Contra Costa County endure the cold and often wet winter.

WPE's ambitious program, being handled by its "Free General Store," is to distribute at least 10,000 articles to the homeless for the 2017-18 winter, such as warm coats, pants, shirts, socks, hats, gloves, scarves, underwear and boots.

White Pony Express' CWCP originated in January 2016 when two men without shelter died in Walnut Creek from exposure to very low temperatures. It was that sad situation that spurred WPE's founder and Principal Advisor, Carol Weyland Conner, Ph.D., spiritual director of Sufism Reoriented, to ask that warm clothing be procured and provided to the homeless to enable them to endure the freezing cold. FGS was able to provide hundreds of items to many homeless persons who were most at risk.

Earlier that winter, "Roy," a man without shelter, had told a WPE volunteer that he was looking for some thermal pants, as he knew that a very cold winter was coming and that he was sleeping out in the open. WPE happened to have a large thermal jumpsuit that had just been donated to the Free General Store, which the volunteer gave him.

A year later, as the same volunteer was giving a new pair of jeans to a man who had been wearing the same pants every day for

three months, Roy came on the scene and exclaimed, "White Pony Express saved my life last winter. You gave me that thermal jumpsuit!"

WPE is primarily asking for monetary donations to help with purchases of clothing for WPE's Cold Weather Clothing Project. These can be sent to White Pony Express, 1966 Tice Valley Blvd., #101, Walnut Creek, CA 94595. Donations of coats, etc., are also being accepted, but they need to be new or like-new donations of cold weather clothing.

This excludes stained, torn, or clothing that shows wear. Garments should be in a condition that might be given to a close family member. Donations of new or like-new clothing can be delivered to Suite 101, 3380 Vincent Road, Pleasant Hill, during hours of operation listed online at www.whiteponyexpress.org/donateclothes.

Volunteers are also needed for WPE's Food Rescue program, which picks up 5,000 pounds of surplus fresh food (fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy/deli/dry goods, bread/pastries and eggs) every day and delivers it to nonprofits that feed the hungry in our county - all free of charge. In just over four years, WPE has rescued more than 5.2 million pounds of quality, nutritious food that have would otherwise gone to waste.

Those wishing to volunteer for WPE should contact Mandy Nakaya at (925) 818-6361 or at mandy@whiteponyexpress.org.

For more information about WPE, visit www.whiteponyexpress.org.