

Lafayette Youth Arts Society Contest Showcases Artistic Talents

Submitted by Uma Unni



Lafayette Youth Arts Society writing and photography contest winners, from left: Clare Fonstein, Cameron Fisher, Noam Franbuch, Kate Gilberd, Elie Singer, Sophia Benveniste, Isabel Rurka, and Clare Needs. Photo provided

More than 100 eager middle school students stormed the Lafayette Youth Arts Society website March 15, hoping to see their names listed as winners of the 1st Annual Writing and Photography Contest. The contest, run entirely by two Lafayette teens, Linnae Johansson and Uma Unni, received nearly 150 entries.

“Students seemed excited about the contest, and many expressed their interests in entering in the contest’s second year, starting in November of this year,” said contest co-founder Linnae. “One contestant said that she entered the contest because her teacher suggested it, but was pleased to find that one of the judges said that her work had potential to be sellable as a stock photo.”

The entries submitted to the contest were all incredibly creative, added Linnae, taking innumerable interpretations of the same topics. “The judges were stunned not only by this creativity, but also by the overall quality of the work, especially taking into consideration the ages of the photographers and writers.”

The contest was started to give an outlet for the more artistic kids in Lafayette who might have felt overshadowed by local sports stars. Not only did the contest achieve its goal, but it also succeeded in showing kids who never considered themselves to be artistic that they have potential.

To see the winning contestants’ complete work, and to learn more about the Lafayette Youth Arts Society, visit www.lyas.org.

The following are excerpts from the first, second and third place writing contest winners. To read more, go to www.lyas.org.

From “Untitled” by first place writing winner Kate Gilberd:

It was dark, and all around Anna, there was green, and black, and the moonlight soaking through the branches of the trees that enveloped her. The path was carpeted with dead leaves, which cracked against Anna’s boots as she ran. That was all that she heard for a while, the sound of her feet hitting the leaves, her heart pounding in her chest. And then, all of a sudden, there it was again.

A twig snapping behind her. Anna let out a short breath and halted. “Who’s there?” she shouted. She didn’t expect a reply, and there was none.” ...

From “Unburdened” by second place writing contest winner Cameron Fisher:

I had never experienced such terror as I did at this moment. Not for the reason that I was hopelessly marooned in a malevolent wood, or that an inky blackness had descended, or even that I’d heard an indistinct snap directly behind me. No. What struck such fear into me was the complete absence of distraction. During the idle activities of the day, one may escape the primitive worries lurking in the shadowy recesses of our minds. Simply by participating in modern civilization, the malice within oneself may be quashed, controlled, unnoticed. We believe we are secure, that nature no longer influences us. It is only when we venture into the frontier which is devoid of technology and ruled by chaos, that we realize our weakness and utter inferiority to the many forces we cannot control. ...

From “We Forgot to Write a Title!” says Author #1” by third place writing contest winner Claire Fonstein:

Margot is walking alone through the woods. All forms of communication are down. She hears a stick snap behind her. It is a bear. Margot runs as fast as she can until she reaches a ledge, where she is faced with possibly the last decision she would ever make Margot decides to jump. She slows her breath, thinks thoughts of peace and happiness, slowly leans forward, and falls.

“Ahhhhhhh!” Margot screams as she falls to her death.

“Wait! What? She can’t die. It was just the beginning of the story!” author #1 shouts.

“The story is over, so deal with it,” author #2 replies.

“But that’s a horrible ending!” says author #1.

“Well fine then. The story won’t end there, but I get to choose what happens next.” Author #2 begins to write. ...

(Elie Singer received the creativity award for writing; Clare Needs received the creativity award for photography.)

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First place photo by Isabel Rurka




Second place photo by Noam Franbuch



Third place photo by Sophia Benveniste

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