

Local Artwork Hangs in D.C. Office



Photo Joanne Tan

Newly elected U.S. Congressman Mark DeSaulnier smiles with Lafayette photographer and poet Joanne Tan as they hold the 24 by 36-inch photo on canvas, "Mt. Diablo Under a Glorious Sky," he purchased from Tan to hang in his Washington D.C. office. DeSaulnier was sworn into Congress on Jan. 6. Tan owns her portrait studio, Poem and Art Studio, Lafayette. To view more of Tan's work, visit <http://poemandart.com>. Submitted by Joanne Tan

Finding Your Groove and The Sweet Spot

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Life-changing results, Carter writes, require undergoing the book's final processes: careful consideration of grudges, perfectionism, illegitimate fears, and tangled thoughts leading a person to believe he or she "has been a failure my whole life" and similar exaggerations. Essentially, studies show that getting hooked on negative

thoughts and interactions can become a way to avoid taking responsibility and course-correcting.

"Finding your groove" isn't easy, but once found, Carter's science-backed techniques operate from a position of power – the "sweet spot" athletes, artists, scientists and everyone desires.

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.

Burton Valley's AIM Class Shoots High to Raise Money for Youth Homes Inc.

Submitted by Cathy Martinsen



Cathy Martinsen's AIM Class at Burton Valley Elementary School presents a check for \$1,411 to Youth Homes before winter break. Photo provided

The Book Bonanza is an annual fundraiser that has been a long-standing tradition at Burton Valley Elementary School. Every year, the AIM (Alternative Instructional Magnet) class collects, prices and, of course, sells books – at incredibly low prices. (Some books are as cheap as 10 cents.) All proceeds go to a charitable cause, and this year the stu-

dents chose to support Youth Homes, the organization that helps neglected and abused foster children and adolescents. The whole class banded together to complete each step in the process, and after three weeks of collections and pricing, the two-day sale was on. Classes from the Burton Valley community came to support the AIM class, buying books and drop-

ping in donations to the donation jar. After the frenzy, the students counted their change bags and were thrilled to realize they had surpassed their goal and actually raised \$1,411. The students presented a check to Laurel Pendleton of Youth Homes right before winter break and felt good knowing they had made a difference in many disadvantaged children's lives.

TEEN SCENE

The Importance of Pets

By Andrew Wang

Lamorinda teens work hard. Between volunteering, studying and athletics there is hardly any time left for quality time with family, let alone the family pet. Almost 70 percent of U.S. house-

holds have at least one domestic pet, according to the American Pet Products Association, and recent studies have linked pet ownership with reductions in loneliness and depression, as well as other health benefits, so we must not forget to always cherish our most loyal and incorrigibly joyful family members, our pets.

When I was 8, I got my first pet, a meek jade-blue parakeet we named Perchy. Perchy still greets me with a welcome chirp every day when I get home. Our happiest time of day together is when I practice the piano; Perchy's loud chirping counterpoint is the best musical accompaniment. His secret hobby is biting the pages of my homework, much to the chagrin of my teachers.

I asked other local teens about their relationships with their pets. Cary Huang of Campolindo says that, ever since he received two brown and black kittens from a family friend, they have been his endearing companions. He calls them "Good" and "Bad," and jokes that sometimes Good is the bad cat and Bad is the good cat. "Good sleeps on my chest every other night," he says, "but after 20 minutes of pure silence she instantly jumps to the floor and dashes away, which always wakes me up. Then early in the morning, around six, she'll meow because she wants the window blinds open so she can sit on the windowsill. I open the blinds while half-asleep, before realizing that the bright sunlight pours in. But, I do it for Good because Good really likes it."

Kourosh Arasteh says his family's dog, Elvis, is not just "incredibly loyal" but also "channels the Lhasa Apso spirit. ... This breed was used to guard temples in Tibet. He literally warms up my day," he says, "mostly my feet, because he likes to lie on them." An-



Perchy the parakeet Photo provided

other Campolindo student adds that his favorite part of having a dog is "having a companion that loves me unconditionally."

For all animal owners, pets are heartwarming friends and usually considered an integral part of the family unit. Whether you are a cat, dog, rabbit, mouse, chicken, or iguana owner, take a moment to appreciate the love and entertainment your furry, feathered, or scaly family member has granted you. Treat him or her with a nutritious snack, safe toy and your loving attention. Your bond with your pet is truly special and deserves to be celebrated. Who owns whom is a question that cannot be answered.



Andrew Wang, the Director of Concerts for Be the Star You Are! charity, is a senior at Campolindo High School. Besides writing and reporting, he enjoys programming, playing the piano and violin, and throwing a good Frisbee.

The opinions expressed in Teen Scene are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly.

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