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Mount Madonna students receive environmental award

REGISTER-PAJARONIAN STAFF REPORT
WATSONVILLE — On June 8, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that the 2015-16 fifth grade class at Mount Madonna School (MMS) in Watsonville will receive the President's Environmental Youth Award (PEYA) for their work to fight environmental threats faced by the Western Snowy Plover.

The awards are presented each year to students and teachers who demonstrate creativity, innovation, and leadership to address difficult environmental challenges.

"Through their year-long project, the students have both raised awareness about the threatened Western Snowy Plover shorebird and inspired the next generation of scientists," said Jeff Scott, EPA's Land Division Director for the Pacific Southwest. "By cleaning up local beaches and preserving critical habitat for threatened species, these students have demonstrated dedication to protecting the environment."

Students will be honored by an EPA representative in a ceremony today at Mount Madonna School. The class has also been invited to Washington, D.C. in late August for a national ceremony recognizing the 2016 PEYA awardees.

"We are pleased to honor these impressive young leaders who demonstrate the impact a few individuals can make to protect our environment," said EPA administrator Scott Pruitt. "These students are empowering their peers, educating their communities, and demonstrating the STEM skills needed for this country to thrive in the global economy."

The fifth-graders (now sixth-graders) at Mount Madonna won the 2016 President's Environmental Youth Award for their year-long environmental education and stewardship campaign titled "Shore Wars: The Shore Awakens."



Contributed

Mount Madonna Students will be honored for their work to fight environmental threats faced by the Western Snowy Plover.

Over the 2015-16 school year the students created an educational movie on the environmental hazards faced by snowy plovers; wrote letters to elected representatives; cleaned up local beaches, replanted habitat at Moss Landing State Beach, and prepared nesting habitat at the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve. Students collaborated with California State Parks to create informational signs to protect wintering flocks at Seabright State Beach; and worked with the Last Plastic Straw organization to encourage a movement to have restaurants voluntarily refrain from serving plastic straws. They also convinced school officials to switch to refillable whiteboard pens to reduce plastic waste.

The students created an educational video that was used to help educate the public, and presented at the Monterey Bay Aquarium's 2016 World Ocean Day celebration and Plastic Pollution Summit.

"As fifth-graders we really worked to educate the public about the environmental issues, and raising awareness about the dangers of plastic for the snowy plover popu-

lation," said sixth-grader Ronan Keith, after learning of the PEYA recognition. "I am super excited that we are being recognized for our work — and that what we did is making a difference."

"I am continually inspired by the passion of my students as they find their voice to create positive change within the world," said Jessica Cambell, fifth grade teacher and project mentor. "These kids are so dedicated to this cause and empowered as citizens. During this project, for weekend after weekend, recess after recess and hours and hours after school, they worked in so many ways to do all they could to protect this and other animals from various environmental threats."

This is the second time Mount Madonna School fifth grade students have received this national recognition. In 2015, students learned they were awarded the PEYA for their 2013-14 work to protect endangered sea turtles.

"In the end, it's not about making the world completely eco-friendly and fixing it all," said participating student Sam Kaplan, "it's about doing your part or all you can."

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SPORTLIGHT

Disappointing third act keeps 'Wonder Woman' from greatness

There is a great story at the core of "Wonder Woman." A story of an outsider trying to find their way in a world they don't fully understand but feel oddly attached to. A coming of age story with characters that were not only dynamic but also likable. A story of love and hate and the impact those two feelings have on humankind — why those two are the yin and yang of the world. It is a story that we can all relate to and get lost in for a couple of hours.

And that's where I was. I was blown away by Gal Gadot ("Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice") and Chris Pine's ("Star Trek") chemistry as Diana/Wonder Woman and Steve, respectively. I loved the World War I setting and opening third of the film on the Amazons' home island drew me in, too, despite the lengthy exposition at the start. And then, sadly, the music started blaring ... and the guns started firing ... and the bombs started falling ... and Wonder Woman started flipping tanks for no reason.

The first half of "Wonder Woman" is excellent. The characters are deep, the acting is believable, the set pieces are excellent and the comedy is well written — Pine kills every scene he's in with his perfect delivery. But the second half devolves into a CGI fight fest with more slow-motion action than the entire "Matrix" trilogy combined. Director Patty Jenkins ("Monsters," "The Killing") and writer Allan Heinberg drive "Wonder Woman" off the cliff with a whirlwind finale that throws common sense out the window and replaces it with leaping kicks and unnecessary romantic relationships. This film could have been great but it chose to veer into the lane of visual spectacle instead of staying on the path of character-



FOR THE LOVE OF FLICKS

Tony Nunez

development.

That being said, "Wonder Woman" is without a doubt the best film to come from the DC Comics Extended Universe. The bar is not set very high — "Suicide Squad," "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice" and "Man of Steel" being its three predecessors — but Jenkins and Co. clear it with room to spare.

Overall, Jenkins does an OK job in keeping the pieces moving from the opening scene until about the midway point of the movie when rational thinking begins to fall away. She masks Gadot's weaknesses and showcases her strengths beautifully in every scene. Her action set pieces in the first half of the film were well developed and had enough stakes behind them to feel important. Jenkins also pulled out solid performances from Pine, Connie Nielsen and Robin Wright. Nielsen and Wright, playing high-ranking Amazonian officials during the first third, are not in the movie very long but both left a lasting impression that is wistfully thrown away in the finale. Saïd Taghmaoui, Ewen Bremner and Eugene Brave Rock also turn in fine showings as Pine and Gadot's ragtag team of misfits but Danny Huston and Elena Anya felt like there were in another movie as the film's 1-2 antagonistic punch.

The film really shines whenever Gadot and Pine are on screen together. The fish-out-of-water moments from Gadot are comedic gold — their first long interaction

See MOVIE, page A7

Building bit by bit

By BEK SABEDRA
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN
LIVE OAK — Live Oak resident James Harkins always knew he enjoyed playing surf music and garage rock, but finding synthesizers and circuit bending has inspired him to take his playing in a new direction.

In essence, he integrates and recreates the most popular noises and sounds from older video games and consoles.

Some of the most popular 8-bit chip tunes and noises are recognized from games such as Nintendo's Super Mario and Zelda. Acquiring these sounds requires "circuit bending" or hacking into a console or device to pull out the music.

"I've always wanted to learn how to circuit bend, and I also love Nintendo — it is what I grew up on," he said. "8-bit music — it just sounds awesome and it is a certain kind of sound."

The Atari Punk Console was the first one he used almost five years ago, and according to Harkins, the sounds are almost identical to those used in Nintendo systems.

"It's the same exact chip they used," he said. "When I heard it, I just wanted to know, 'how do they make that sound?'"

Originally, he said people would hack into the actual games to pull the music out. Now some people add guitar.

"There is a resurgence in DIY synthesizers," Harkins said. "The sound modules I make are analog because I am working towards an '80s, danceable kind of sound. If I could take Mario Brothers and play that all the time, that would be cool."

Harkins, who writes his own music, ideally wants to project videos of video game characters that will emphasize the unique sounds.

"I want to recreate the sounds, not necessarily the songs," he said.

When it comes to circuit bending and creating this kind of music, Harkins said he



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

James Harkins plays his small electric guitar on Friday.

wished people knew how easy it can be.

"It's way easier than anybody thinks," he said. "I think everybody should try it — normally you buy products and have to wait for someone to come out with something, the whole point is to learn and see and listen to how it sounds

and make what you want."

While he says he is still developing his skills, and the book he is learning from is already falling apart, he says he is still amazed it is possible and how fun it is. Even when he does integrate it in his music, it is all original — incorporating things like organs, electric drums, guitar

and heavy chip tunes.

"If I can get something good going, I will sample it to save it and use that and layer it through the whole song," Harkins said. "Then have drums over it and play surf guitar. It will integrate all three things — it is what I want to do."

Having had a desire to circuit bend "his whole life," he said at first listen, there is a shock value, then it is fun.

"How can you be 'yeah bro, I'm at a chip tune show?'" he said.

But what first got him
See 8-BIT, page A7

8-bit music — it just sounds awesome ... it is what I want to do.

— James Harkins
Musician

LIVE MUSIC

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THURS 6/15						Don McCaslin & The Amazing Jazz Geezers, 6 p.m.
FRI 6/16	Sonido Amistad Caracas, 9 p.m.					Hot Fuse, 7:30 p.m.
SAT 6/17	Endless Summer Fest, 3 p.m.	10 O'Clock Lunch Band, 8 p.m.			Coral Price, 6:30 p.m.	Live Again, 8 p.m.
SUN 6/18			Fireside Players, 6 p.m.			
MON 6/19						
TUES 6/20						7th Wave, 6 p.m.

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8-BIT

From page A6

involved was access to cheap sound making toys with batteries.

"I had seen shows about it and you get any toy from Goodwill and it makes it really easy to modify," Harkins said.

Having only recently moved to Santa Cruz County, he said he is still looking for new band mates. In the meantime, he practices his music, builds synthesizers, skates and surfs.

But it is the soldering that obsesses him. Calling it addictive, Harkins says now he can sit for more than eight hours at a time building synthesizers.

"I never would have thought I would sit here with headphones just listening to sounds going, 'that's not good enough,' and then tweaking things, blowing everything up," he said.



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

Small devices like this can be programmed to create video game effects and sounds.



'Sculpture IS'

Cynthia Siegel of Santa Cruz created "When She Begins to Dance" from her "Drift Series" out of white stoneware clay, which is currently showing at the annual "Sculpture IS" outdoor exhibit at Sierra Azul on East Lake Avenue.

Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

MOVIE

From page A6

in a pool is perfectly written and played — and the majority of their conversations not only move the story forward but both of their characters, too.

There is plenty to like about "Wonder Woman." There is also plenty to love about it and some moments to hate, too. The good easily outweighs the bad in this case. "Wonder Woman" isn't the bat-flipping, hands-raised-to-the-sky grand slam I was expecting. It's more akin to a two-run triple that squirts through an outfielder's glove and hits off the wall. But in a summer that's been

overwhelmingly disappointing, I'll take it.

7/10

BOX OFFICE REVIEW

1. "Wonder Woman": \$58,520,672 (Week 2); Warner Bros. Total Gross: \$206,343,175.
2. "The Mummy": \$31,688,375 (Week 1); Universal.
3. "Captain Underpants: The First Epic Movie": \$12,180,704 (Week 2); Fox. Total Gross: \$44,443,216.
4. "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales": \$10,704,103 (Week 3); Buena Vista/Disney. Total Gross: \$135,830,397.

5. "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2": \$6,312,367 (Week 6); Buena Vista/Disney. Total Gross: \$366,431,539.

COMING SOON

- "Cars 3" — Lightning McQueen sets out to prove to a new generation of racers that he's still the best race car in the world. Director: Brian Fee. Cast: Owen Wilson, Cristela Alonzo, Chris Cooper, Nathan Fillion
- "Rough Night" — A group of friends are horrified when the male stripper they hired for a wild bachelorette party in Miami winds up dead. Director: Lucia Aniello. Cast: Scarlett Johansson, Kate McKinnon, Zoë Kravitz,

Ilana Glazer

- "All Eyez on Me" — Tells the true and untold story of prolific rapper, actor, poet and activist Tupac Shakur.

Director: Benny Boom. Cast: Demetrius Shipp Jr., Danai Gurira, Kat Graham, Annie Ilonze

- "47 Meters Down" — Two sisters vacationing in Mexico are trapped in a shark cage at the bottom of the ocean. With less than an hour of oxygen left and great white sharks circling nearby, they must fight to survive.

Director: Johannes Roberts. Cast: Mandy Moore, Claire Holt, Matthew Modine, Yani Gellman

FROM FACEBOOK

Watsonville Police Department report shows no homicides in 2016. Robbery rates also down

Great work from Chief Honda, all the detectives, patrol officers, corporals, captains, specialists and K-9s!

— Daniel Dodge Jr.

This is wonderful news for Watsonville residents. Fantastic job WPD.

— Esperanza Castaneda Aceves

Woot woot for our community.

— Donna Jean Brown

Born and raised Watsonville singer Coral Price aiming to take her career in a fresh direction with a new solo act.

Great article — Watsonville is lucky to have you Coral!

— Julie Rienhardt

A total of 2,200 riders are participating in the AIDS/LifeCycle, a 545-mile fundraising bicycle ride from SF to LA

Lupe Noble and Rosario Noble are riding it. Go Nobles!

— Carmelo Miraglia

"When She Begins to Dance" Sculpture IS outdoor exhibit

This is the place we were talking about!

— Julie Rienhardt

Teen arrested with gun at school

Shaking my head... What is this, Fresno?

— Dave De Leon

PV Chamber "thank you" flash mob

That was so thoughtful! I got a little choked up watching. Shaz, you're one special person. Thanks for shining your sweet light and making a huge difference in our town! You are appreciated!

— Cynthia Morrison Brown

CONGRATULATIONS

Carmen Herrera Mansir on becoming May's Reader of the Month!



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	John Michael, 7:30 p.m.		Eldrin, 8 p.m.	Jazz Night, 6 p.m.		
	Wild Blue, 7:30 p.m.	Nina Gerber, 6 p.m.	Billy Martini, 7 p.m.	Bargetto: Meet the winemaker, 8:30 p.m.	Kehlani, 8:30 p.m.	THURS 6/15
Golden Shred, 7:30 p.m.	Bombshell Bullys, 8 p.m.		Jake Nielson Triple Threat, 8 p.m.	AGVA Cats, 7 p.m.	Corey Feldman, 8:30 p.m.	FRI 6/16
Tammi Brown, 7:30 p.m.	Extra Large, 8 p.m.		The Joint Chiefs, 8:30 p.m.	Dave Muldower, 7 p.m.		SAT 6/17
	Grateful Sundays concert, 5:30 p.m.		Jesse Sabala Pro Jam, 7 p.m.	Myhaylo K, 7 p.m.		SUN 6/18
		Open Mic, 5:30 p.m.	Alex Lucero acoustic, 7 p.m.		Raekwon 8 p.m.	MON 6/19
	Tuesday Blues Night, 7:30 p.m.			Trivia Night, 6 p.m.	SuicideGirls, 8 p.m.	TUES 6/20

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Rivers in US West turn dangerous as days warm, snow thaws

ASSOCIATED PRESS

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK — Massive waterfalls in Yosemite National Park and rivers raging in mountains throughout the western United States are thundering with greater force than they have for years — and proving deadly as warm weather melts the deepest mountain snowpack in recent memory.

Record snowfall on towering Western peaks this winter virtually eliminated California's five-year drought and it is now melting rapidly.

But it has contributed to at least 14 river deaths and prompted officials to close sections of rivers popular with swimmers, rafters and fishing enthusiasts.

In Utah and Wyoming, some rivers gorged by heavy winter snowfall have overflowed their banks, and rivers in Utah are expected to remain dangerously swollen with icy mountain runoff for several more weeks.

The sheer beauty of the rivers is their draw — and represents a big danger to people who decide

to beat the heat by swimming or rafting with little awareness of the risks posed by the raging water.

This year's velocity and force of the Merced River that runs through Yosemite Valley is similar to a runaway freight train, said Moose Mutlow of the Yosemite Swift Water Rescue Team.

"You step out in front of it, it's going to take you," he said. "You're not going to stop that, and that's what people need to get their heads around."

Heavy storms this winter covered the central Sierra Nevada mountains with snow that remains at twice its normal level for this time of year.

While officials celebrated an end to drought in much of California, the snowmelt is so dangerous that park rangers fear its impact on the crowded park that drew a record five million people last year, when four people drowned.

So far this year, one 50-year-old man is believed to have drowned at Yosemite after falling into the Merced River from

a winding trail. His body has not been found.

One of Yosemite's deadliest days was in 2011, when three young church group visitors were swept to their deaths over the 317-foot (97-meter) Vernal Fall.

Elsewhere in California, there have been at least 11 drownings since the snowpack started melting in May.

At the San Joaquin River near Fresno, 18-year-old Neng Thao drowned last month swimming in the river during a picnic with his family days before he was set to graduate as the valedictorian of his high school.

And six people have died in the rugged Tule River south of Yosemite. Some drowned, but others suffered injuries suggesting their bodies were beaten to death by the river water slamming them against the riverbed.

"The force of that water pounds people into rocks and sends them over waterfalls," said Eric LaPrice, a U.S. Forest Service district ranger at the Gi-

ant Sequoia National Monument in central California.

At the Kern River in central California, officials last month updated a sign warning that that 280 people have died in it since 1968. The sign is already outdated, with four more drownings since then.

And in northern Utah, a 4-year-old girl playing at the side of the Provo River fell from a boulder into the water last month. Her mother and a man who was nearby jumped in to try to save the girl. All three drowned, illustrating how quickly one tragedy can multiply.

"As little as six inches of water can actually sweep an adult away at the rate of speed that the water is traveling," said Chris Crowley, emergency manager for the county where Park

City is located.

In Reno, Nevada, rising temperatures that have accelerated snowpack melting prompted officials to erect a sign next to the Truckee River warning people to stay away from it.

In Idaho, snowpack at double normal levels have prompted warnings from officials that densely populated areas near the Boise River could flood.

And in Wyoming, officials have placed sandbags and flood barriers to protect homes and public infrastructure from rivers and streams swollen with the snowmelt.

On his first trip to Yosemite, cartoonist Andy Runton, 42, steered clear of the turbulent Merced River.

He took a selfie at a safe distance from a grassy meadow

with Yosemite Falls far behind him. Within a few hours of entering the park, Runton said the sweeping vistas and raging waterfalls had left a lifelong impression.

"You can see the power of the water," Runton said. "You can feel it. Nature doesn't slow down."

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In this photo taken May 25, the water in Bridalveil Creek rushes through boulders at Yosemite National Park.

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