

2011 Winners - Third Grade Essay Contest

1st Place and Perpetual Trophy: *The Knox House Museum*

Haley Kaloustian, Flying Hills School

Amaziah Lord Knox and his family moved to the Valley in 1869. Now known as El Cajon Valley Mr. Knox worked for a man named Isaac Langershim that owned most of the Valley. He managed the planting of wheat and the building of ranch houses. He paid Mr. Knox a salary plus his choice of ten acres of land. The land he picked was between San Diego to Lakeside. He wanted to build a hotel, but it didn't happen til 6 years later.

In 1870 gold was discovered in Julian. Mr. Knox knew the small town of San Diego was a growing city. More people were traveling towards Julian for the gold rush. The distance between San Diego and Julian is about 61 miles. By horse, walking, or using a steam car that only went 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles per hour would have taken over 24 hours to reach their destination in 1870. Building a hotel half-way between the two spots would be his own gold mine.

In 1876 Knox hotel was built on the southwest corner of Main Street and Magnolia Avenue. Back then was known as the bend in the road, where the road turned north towards Julian. Originally a two-story, seven-room hotel that was also his residence. With all the miners, teamsters, and drovers that stopped to sleep over night, he had to add-on a kitchen and a dining room to meet their needs.

In 1915 the hotel was sold. The new owners moved the building to the back of the lot. In 1940 the property was sold to S.H. Mathews who had it moved to the corner of Lexington and Magnolia Avenue, due to construction work on the southside of Main Street. In 1972 the city of El Cajon purchased the hotel from the Mathews estate and once again moved it to its present location at 280 North Magnolia Ave-to become the historical focus of the city of El Cajon. The Knox House Museum reflects the years of 1895 to 1912.

Amaziah Lord Knox was the first businessman in El Cajon. He recognized the needs of the times. The location of his hotel was what made him so successful and the bend in the road became known as Knox corner. Two years later more than 25 families call the Valley their home. Once again Mr. Knox made his hotel part of history by making a portion of the hotel lobby in to the Valley post office, with Knox as El Cajon's first postmaster. If you would like to see part of El Cajon history go see The Knox House Museum.

2nd Place: *A Strange Day At the Fair*

Faith Campbell - Fuerte School

It was summer and I was at the Del Mar Fair. My name is Faith and I'm eight and a half years old. I was wearing a short sleeve top and shorts. I was on a big roller coaster when suddenly it disappeared and I dropped to the ground. I see a few old looking buildings, a dirt road, and horses. "What happened and where am I?" I say.

I see a flow of people dressed oddly going into a building. I follow them. Once inside I see a lot of people and a lot of produce. Suddenly I see a girl about my age. I go up to her and I see that she is showing off crayon sketches. She is wearing a long sleeve dress past her knees. Boy, she looks warm. People don't dress like this where I'm from. "Excuse me," I say to her. "Where am I and what is this?" The girl tells me that this is El Cajon and we're at the first annual El Cajon Fair. "Cool! Where are the games and rides?" I ask. "Oh, by the way, who are you?" the girl tells me her name is Edith Worcester and she is ten years old. She asks me what rides are. I say, "Never mind."

Edith then tells me it is August 28th, 1889. I freak out. Edith tells me that all the ranchers and farmers wanted to show the world all the wonderful produce grown in the Cajon Valley. She also explains about something she calls the vine disease. The vine disease is making the plants small and weak. The farmers were worried about the disease and the crops. To make themselves feel better they decided to hold a fair.

When Edith was done speaking I decide to look around with her. I see a hall that is decorated in many colors, with lots of palms, evergreens and flowers. Every inch of the hall is full. There are fruits and vegetables everywhere. This is what I see: dates, grapes, tomatoes, figs, pears, apples, currants, candied fruits, peaches, watermelon, quinces, bananas, oranges, dried prunes (ew), nectarines, plums, lemons, limes, raisins, pickles, blood peaches, a 120 pound squash, mammoth beets, corn, onions, beans, potatoes, sweet potatoes, cabbages (ew), persimmons, jams and jellies, peanuts, walnuts, cotton, tobacco, wheat, grape vines with one branch weighing 50 pounds, alfalfa, and lots of flowers. One man was even showing his dirt and telling about how fertile it was. I can't believe all of this was grown in the Cajon Valley. Edith corrects me and points out that the upper Sweetwater people contributed to the fair also.

"So, who is running the fair?" I ask. Edith tells me that the fair is run by the Horticultural Society and the Ladies of El Cajon and Sweetwater Valleys. She also points out the following important people: W.H. Somers, President of the Association, Mrs. Miller, Chairman of the Decorating committee, and George Swan, a man who seems to know everything. Edith then tells me the names of the people showing off their produce. Here are their names: T.J. Cox, J.T. Gordon, Uri Hill, Chris Johnson, E. Brayton, J.B. Rea (who is showing a mammoth beet), Judge Ogden, J.M. Asher (who is showing 27 kinds of grapes, that's awesome!), Major Levi Chase (who is showing 15 kinds of apples!), George Swan, D.B. Mcfadden, Mr. Peel, Mr. H.P.

McKoon (who is showing off his dirt), W. H. Somers and Mrs. Somers, Mr. G.M. Hawley, Mr. A.L. Holt (who is showing a large tobacco plant), Mr. J.P.R. Hall, Mr. H. Culbertson, Mr. G.H. Bower, and finally Mr. T.F. Miller (who is showing 15 kinds of jelly), "Oh, there's some lemonade," I say. Edith tells me it is for sale. We buy some. I'm amazed how cheap it is. The lemonade is delicious!

Edith tells me that almost all the people of El Cajon are at this fair. I look around and see a few hundred people. "This is all the people? In 2010 there are a little more than 94,000 people living in El Cajon!" Edith doesn't believe me. In the meantime, people are staring at me probably because, to them, I'm dressed oddly.

In the afternoon, there are speeches by: Mr. Somers, Mr. R.H. Young of The Great Southwest, and by Mr. Berry, Editor of The San Diego Union and The Daily Bee. Mr. Berry says that the fair is "the most forcible and eloquent proofs possible of the great horticultural and agricultural resources of the valley." I think the speeches are boring.

Somebody tells us to taste the produce. I do. I try the fruit but not the vegetables because I don't like vegetables. The fruit is sweet and yummy.

I tell Edith I need to leave and she points to a horse and carriage outside. I hop in the carriage and fall asleep. I suddenly wake up on the rollercoaster at the Del Mar Fair. "Was it all a dream?" After the ride ends I go home and research the El Cajon Fair of 1889. Here's what I find out: Edith was real and the fair really happened. The fair was held for 2 days on August 28th and 29th of 1889 and 1890. It was also held on August 26th and 27th in 1891. I couldn't find any more information on this fair after 1891. In 1890 and 1891 the fair was held at the Cajon Vineyard Company Packing House near the railroad station. The building was bigger than the original hall and the location made it easy for city people to come to the fair. In August 1892 the vineyards of El Cajon were examined and were found healthy. The vine disease was no more. The fair brought all the people of El Cajon together in a tough time. I thought the whole fair was interesting, except for the speeches, but there is no place like home.

3rd Place: *The El Cajon Fire Department's History*

Chynna Sengebusch, Flying Hills School

I chose to write about the history of the El Cajon Fire Department because fire fighting is an important job in a city. It can be dangerous, but they save lives every day. Another reason is because my dad is a Fire Captain for the Santee Fire Department and I know all firefighters work very hard.

On July 1, 1892 the first fire recorded in El Cajon happened in a saloon; it was started by a cigar. The townspeople used wet blankets and buckets of water to put it out. The city's first fire alarm was made in 1913 out of a broken locomotive wheel that hung from a wooden frame. Someone would use a hammer to bang on it so everyone who heard it would come to help put the

fire out.

The El Cajon Valley Fire Department was officially formed on March 1, 1923. When it started, it was all volunteer and the first fire chief was Mr. Rex Hall. The city held fund raisers such as a Fire Fund Ball to help buy the fire truck called the "Reo Speed Wagon" that arrived on January 20, 1924. It cost \$5,350.00. There were only four incidents recorded in the first year, which is a lot less than the 12,000 calls they ran in 2010.

Ray Halgren was the first full time paid fire chief. He was voted in by the city council in January 1948. Two other men, Herbert Teeples and Thomas Owen were also paid firemen. Seven volunteer firemen were paid \$2.00 for each call. The whole department became fully paid by the late 1950's.

It was very interesting learning the history of the El Cajon Fire Department. I went to visit station #6 and interviewed firefighter John Nevin. He was very nice and told me about some significant events in the department's history. The first was a crash of an F-14 at Gillespie Field. One person died and six were hurt when the unmanned plane slammed to the ground and slid into a row of airplane hangers. The other events were the 2003 and 2007 wildfires that their firefighters helped fight. My favorite part was when he told me about Tank and Haddy, the two specially trained search and rescue dogs that the fire department has. The dogs went to New York to help find people trapped in the 9-11 tragedy.

I hope I showed you how the fire department is an important part of El Cajon's history.

Fred and Nettie Kersten - Judges' Award: *The Kumeyaay*

Ryan Stahl, Rancho San Diego School

The Kumeyaay are the first Native Americans who lived in southwest. They've lived in the area for over 12,000 years. The Kumeyaay is made of two groups, the Ipai and the Tipai. The Ipai lived in the north and Tipai lived in the south of California and Mexico.

The Kumeyaay hunted small animals like rabbits and birds, big animals too, like antelope and deer. The Kumeyaay used bows and arrows to hunt big and small animals. They use a weapon called a Rabbit Stick to kill rabbits and small rodents. Kumeyaay were hunting and food gathering people. They gather Acorns, Prickly Pear, Agave Plants and Pinion nuts. Acorns are staple of the Kumeyaays' diet. They gathered acorns and crushed it into a powder and cooked into a cake. They fished fresh and salt water fish.

The Kumeyaay built their homes from willow trees. They used the branches with the leaves still attached. Their houses were circular domed shaped. The home had a small door opening. At night they would cover the door with a large basket or a woven mat to keep the cold air out. They use rabbit fur on the ground or built a small fire inside to keep them warm on a cold night.

Work activities were a part of the Kumeyaays' way of life. They made baskets out of juncus and deer grass. They used them for carrying water or to give as a gift. Pottery was also made. It was used to store food, water and ashes. Pottery was made from clay. Obsidian was carved to make arrow heads and tools. They didn't just work, the Kumeyaay played games too. They played a game of chance called Peone. They danced and played music to tell stories about their past. They used the flute and the rattle to make their music.

Today the Kumeyaay live in many different reservations. Kumeyaay are well known for their casinos. The money they make from the casinos helps their tribe.

Virginia Stead Award- Natural Life: *Kumeyaay Plants*

Tamara Cruz, Bostonia School

I'm going to tell you about Indian plants that they use to use for medicine close (sic) and other things. I'm going to tell you about Prickly Pear is a kind of cactus that has flat stems that are all together. It has yellow or pink flowers that bloom in the early spring. It also has a fruit called tunas that is purple when it is ready to eat. Also they ate the fruit of this cactus raw. Or they actually would fry or boil the green pad to eat. Sometimes they used the needles for tattooing. Also poison oak has liquid like a yellowish oil. It can grow from 4 to 20 feet. The Indians used a liquid as an eye wash. I was thinkingg how the Indians could survive with just eating plants to eat and leaves, shells, and other stuff to wear.

Also I wondered how they get cured without doctors? At this time we have lots of hospitals but back then no. Even now we use plants for medicine, tea and some shirts. There is now places where the Kumeyaay live as in Jamul Indian Village and Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians. They also have beautiful traditions one of them is Pow Wow. Where Native American and non-native American people meet to dance, sing, socialize, and honor American Indian culture. There is generally a dancing competition.

Finally I really enjoy learning about Kumeyaay, plants, and Pow Wow dances. Also of Indians. I love to learn this kind of stuff.

Heritage Award: *My Life Story,*

Sara Noriega, English Learner, W.D. Hall School

My mom came from Mexico and my dad came from Guatemala. In Mexico the streets are full of dirt. In Guatemala is a rainforest when it rains everything turns green. My grandpa and grandma build my mom's house. In my mom's neighborhood it was peaceful and my great-grandma lived close. My dad says when he grew up there was a lot of gangsters in his neighborhood. There was a little bit of police in his town. There was a lot of seafood to eat and fresh fruit trees.

My aunt told my grandpa to come to San Diego to work with her because in Mexico there weren't any jobs at all. My mom left when my grandpa gave them money to come to San Diego and live here with her sister and two brothers and my grandma. From San Diego my grandpa had a lot of money that they went back to Mexico and one of her brother's got sick and couldn't drink Mexico's water. That is when they moved to El Cajon. When my mom was nine years old she came to the United States. They arrived first at San Diego. They came by plane and my dad came by buses through Mexico. The police wanted to arrest my dad because he wasn't Mexican. When my grandma and grandpa got a job at Los Coches they moved to El Cajon. Because my grandpa and grandma got a job here and at Mexico there wasn't any jobs. Then, they had a close job to their house.

Because my grandpa and grandma wanted a better life for their kids they moved to El Cajon. Then another child was born in San Diego. My dad had to move from Guatemala because gangsters wanted to kill people. My parents met at church and got married and then they had Sara and Moises. I like to live in El Cajon California.

Originality: *The History of Chase Avenue School*

Juanito Diaz, Chase Avenue School

Chase Avenue Schools was built out of red bricks in 1952. It was named after Major Levi Chase. He was a lawyer who helped Isaac Lankershim with the land grant known as the El Cajon Rancho. The first principal of Chase Avenue was Mr. Karl Nielsen. The two red brick buildings facing the street are today the office and the first grade classrooms. Three years later the third wing and kindergarten were added.

In 1958 an auditorium was built that included a kitchen, a faculty dining room, and a stage. Today that kitchen is now a teacher workroom. Food is brought in each day for the

students.

Beginning in 1989, portable classrooms were built because each year more students come to Chase Avenue School. From 1989-1997 ten portables were built. Today they are used for kindergarten classrooms, bilingual classrooms and Extended Day Program.

In 2005 our new library was built. It measured forty-six feet by fifty-two feet. It faces the front of the school and is built with red bricks to match the other buildings in the front.

In 2009 the portables in the "Village" that were EJE became the third grade classrooms. Also extra classrooms were added for science and music rotations.

This year Chase Avenue School is getting a track that was awarded by Jimmy Johnson. Jimmy Johnson is a "Nascar" racer who went to school in El Cajon. He wanted students to have the benefit of a good education.

Each year Chase Avenue School keeps growing, and growing, and growing. Each school year, Chase Avenue gets more and more students. This school is a great school.

Honorable Mention - *Taylor Guitars*

Azren Carter, Vista Grande School

Westland Music Company opened its doors in October 1974. Kurt Listug, Steve Schemmer, and Bob Taylor were the owners. Bob Taylor did most of the guitar making. They wanted to come up with a name for the guitars. Taylor fit on the top of the guitar and the owners figured nobody could pronounce Listug. So the name of the guitars was Taylor and eventually the name of the company change to Taylor Guitars.

Taylor Guitars has been in East County San Diego for thirty six years. The guitar factory has been in El Cajon now for eighteen years. When Taylor Guitars began it was a one room shop. Now not only is there a factory in El Cajon but in Tecate, Mexico and they just opened a distribution store in Amsterdam, Europe. In the beginning the shop began with three employees. They tried hiring more but could not afford to keep them, so they had to fire them. Now, Taylor Guitars has about 720 employees. That makes Taylor Guitars the 7th major employer of El Cajon.

I had the honor to interview Bob Taylor, who now co-owns Taylor guitars with Kurt Listug and I asked him a few questions. I could tell Bob Taylor really likes what he does. When I asked him why he started a guitar company, he told me he just really likes to make guitars. In the first year of business they made 12 guitars a year. Now, Bob says they make five hundred guitars a day!

If you watch a music video, or even a cartoon, you might notice the artist may play a Taylor guitar. Taylor Guitars has helped to start a woodworking shop class at Valhalla High School. They also donate guitars in partnership with the San Diego Music Foundation to

different public schools around San Diego for music classes. Not many people know Taylor Guitars is in El Cajon. People come from around the world to visit Taylor Guitars. Taylor Guitars has made guitars for artists like Prince, Zac Brown Band, Taylor Swift, Dave Matthews Band— just to name a few. When Taylor Guitars first began, they were lucky to make \$200.00 a week, now they are a multi-million dollar company. Bob Taylor and Kurt Listug started Taylor Guitars with passion and dedication. That is what continues in the company today.

Honorable Mention, *My First Day of Training*

Spencer Dreher, Flying Hills School

The year was 1942 when I woke up in my cot, I was ready to start my first day of parachute training. All the other men were already up. There were 600 of us, both men and officers. We were at Camp Gillespie. About 70 men graduated from this parachute school every month. My training took me six weeks, and when I finished I started making fifty dollars more a month!

First we learned about weapons, and how to read maps. My favorite weapon to use was the Thompson Submachine Gun. We called them Tommy Guns and they fired fast! Then we learned how to pack our parachutes and flotation devices. I really paid attention in this class! I didn't want to take a chance with my parachute not opening up right. We finally learned how to jump. We started by jumping off the towers at Camp Gillespie. The towers were 256 feet high. This was so fun for me. The one bad thing is we weren't allowed to have a wife, so I got kind of lonely.

Camp Gillespie was named after a brave Marine named Archibald Gillespie. He helped take San Diego away from Mexico. Forty percent of the men didn't pass the training at Camp Gillespie. I was one of the lucky ones who did. I joined the Marines because we were at war, and they needed soldiers to fight in battle. I needed the money.

It is a few years later now and I am on my way to Iwo Jima. That is in Japan. I am sitting in a Douglas R4D waiting to parachute out onto the island. This plane is loud and slow. We call it the Sky Train, and it has two propellers. I am part of the Fifth Marine Division now and we are ready with our weapons, and our parachutes. The Marines need us for this battle because parachuting is the safest way to get onto the island. I am scared to fight in war. I am also worried about parachuting onto the island of Iwo Jima. I hope nothing happens to us. I do feel very happy I had six weeks of training at Camp Gillespie. They trained me well, so I know I will be alright. Well, it is time to jump now. Wish me luck, I hope we win this battle, and I hope we win the war!

Sincerely,
Private Dreher