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ALHAMBRA HIGH SCHOOL

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Alhambra Moor Takes on Rare Baseball Scholarship from San Jose

BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD Senior Gary Acuna has high hopes for his future after signing with San Jose State, a university that boasts one of the best baseball teams in the nation.

MICHELLE PAULINO
Staff Writer

It was in November of 2011 when senior Gary Acuna received the scholarship of his dreams. Left-handed and equipped with a strong curveball and what his coach Steve Gewecke describes as “great movement,” University of California colleges expressed interest since his sophomore year. After receiving a letter from UC Irvine around the end of the season that sophomore year, a door of opportunity beckoned.

“That’s when I knew I had what it takes. I wanted to try harder from [that point forward],” Acuna said.

According to the National Collegiate Scouting Association (NSCSA) athletic recruiting profile, Acuna received numerous

awards since his first season in high school, including Defensive Player of the Year.

Transferring to Alhambra for his sophomore year, he was chosen to play on the North San Gabriel Valley 16-18-year-old Babe Ruth All Star Team.

Impressed by Acuna’s skills, San Jose State University, a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I school,

showed an interest in Acuna, and they offered him a scholarship to pitch for their team.



When asked about initial reactions to the scholarship, Acuna recounted, “I was shocked [and] relieved.

I [finally] got that scholarship... I worked hard for it.”

Gewecke, who has been head baseball coach at AHS for 17 years, emphasized the tremendous prestige in pitching for the NCAA Division I requires.

“It’s a great opportunity for [Acuna]. Guys don’t get that chance very often [and the] odds

for getting [the scholarship] are less than one percent,” Gewecke said.

It was through communication with coaches and a curiosity for committing to the sport that eventually led Acuna to apply for the scholarship. By taking initiative and undergoing challenging obstacles, Acuna succeeded.

When addressing advice for future athletes, Acuna accentuated that with determination and hard work one can accomplish what they want.

“Work hard because there is always stuff to work on,” Acuna said.

Acuna will pitch for San Jose State University in the fall while pursuing a major in business.

MOOR photo by STEWART RYDMAN-ESPINOSA

Poetry Out Loud: Showcasing Students’ Interpretive Talents



DEBORAH CHEN
Staff Writer

Every year, students at Alhambra High School participate in many different competitions through organizations such as Speech and Debate, Academic Decathlon, Science Olympiad and Poetry Out Loud.

Poetry Out Loud is an annual nationwide contest that showcases high school students’ poetry reading skills. As they advance from one level to another, the students compete in more challenging environments, ranging from classrooms and schools to districts and eventually nationals.

“I have found that students actually like poetry when we are done. Some stu-

dents even begin writing it on their own,” English teacher Dorothy Burkhart said.

Each high school holds a competition where two students are chosen to compete. Should the first winner be unable to attend, the runner-up will be sent instead.

“[This experience] made me realize [each] that poem ... [has] a message written carefully to convey its meaning and that it’s up to the reader to do just that,” sophomore Diana Ly said.

During the competition, the teachers

determine the champion, and the chosen student advances to the state finals which consists of three rounds. This year’s state finals for California will be taking place on March 26. The winners from the state finals each receive \$200 and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. where they will go on to compete for nationals. The state winner’s school is awarded with a \$500.

After three rounds, a national winner is determined and is awarded a total of \$50,000. The champion also will be given \$20,000 to be used at the university of their choosing.

“When a poem works, as it often does, it taps you on the shoulder, gets all inside of you and says, ‘See me. Hear me. I’m here. I will not be ignored.’ That’s what a poem does, and if you open up your heart and accept it, it will change you,” Shamsuddin Abdul-Hamid, the Poetry Out Loud 2010 champion, said on the Poetry Out Loud website.



AHS sophomore Diana Ly recites her poem in the district-wide Poetry Out Loud competition.
PHOTO courtesy of THE MATADOR

Fungicide in Orange Juice Not a Threat, Officials Say

JENNIFER PIERCE
Copy Editor

Last month, a fungicide called carbendazim was found by Coca-Cola Co. in their orange juice and their competitors’ orange juice as well. They alerted federal officials about the unapproved fungicide and that Brazilian growers use the fungicide as pesticide on their orange trees.

According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), carbendazim is legally used in Brazil to combat mold that grows on orange trees. The use of fungicide on plants has not been approved of in the U.S. but is permitted in non-food items.

The fungicide is potentially harmful when people are exposed to high levels; among the especially susceptible are children, pregnant women and sick or aging people. Concern that this incident will cause a drop in orange juice sales sent prices

plummeting.

“That’s really scary. The thought of having possible [harmful substances] in orange juice makes it really hard to trust [the companies],” junior Karen Tsuchihara said.

As Brazil produces about 11 percent of all the orange juice consumed in the United States, Coca-Cola Co., PepsiCo Inc. and the FDA are taking this matter very seriously.

These levels are currently low (less than 80 parts per billion), but the FDA is checking orange juice sold in supermarkets and all imports. Three shipments from Canada were cleared while samples from Mexico, Canada and Brazil are still under testing.

Nonetheless, the Environmental Protection Agency has said that the fungicide consumed at low levels should not cause any safety concerns.

MOOR graphic by SHARON TRANG