

NEW MEXICO NEWS

40th 'Youth in Art' show is biggest one ever

By **TIM KELLER**
The Chronicle-News

Artist Erica Hopper again walked away with "Best of Show" honors Wednesday night when Raton Public Schools presented its 40th Anniversary

Youth in Art 2010 exhibit in the new John Krivokapich Media Center at Raton High School. Hopper's "Behind Blue Eyes" won the top award from judges Marv Newton and Terry Bumpass. It was Hopper's second consecutive show topper; when she graduates

this month, she'll leave an open field for next year's younger artists.

Artist Marv Newton's return was especially sentimental: it was Newton who, as RHS art teacher, founded the awards show and oversaw its growth for 26 years. Beginning with his successor Kathy Vertovec, speaker after speaker shared stories of Newton's important presence in the local art world over the years. Vertovec introduced RHS Art Club President Heather Cochran, who made further introductions before introducing School Board President Arthur Salazar.

Salazar addressed the packed house with praise for the impressive growth he's seen in Raton's arts programs over just the past 7 years. He said the audience in front of him was three times larger than the first he'd seen those few years ago. Salazar emphasized the valuable roles the arts play in a community, though he said both he and the next speaker, RHS Principal Mike Sparaco, were both limited to drawing stick figures.

After Sparaco's reminiscences of teaching with Newton at RHS and the growth of the arts in Raton, Hilary Bayliss took over the presentation of the night's awards. Two dozen local organizations and individuals donated \$1150-in cash prizes and gift certificates. Newton and Bumpass had the unenviable job of judging more than 200 artworks in several media, distributing the awards among 57



Photos by Tim Keller

Raton High art teacher Kathy Vertovec began the awards presentations, then handed over the proceedings to Art Club president Heather Cochran, seated at right.



For the second consecutive year, senior Erica Hopper walked away with the "Best of Show" award.

separate pieces, each winning a prize ranging from \$10 to \$100.

The top award winners in various media included Marly Moore for acrylic/oil, Autumn Hunnicutt for watercolor, and Lakken Medina for drawing. Eden Richards won the top award for scratch board, Joshua Trujillo for abstract art, and Hilary Bayliss for pastel.

The photography divi-

sion was won by Chantele Sanchez, master study by Erica Hopper, and computer-aided design by Alexis Hester. Beki Henson won the illustration division, Kelli Ortiz block prints, and Hopper graphic design.

The judges also awarded \$40 prizes for the best art from each class, led by Hopper. The junior award went to Caitlin Romero, sophomore to Peyton Richards, freshman to Santana Rodriguez, and

mid-school award to Mikala Vertovec.

After last year's show was held in the International Room of International Bank during the high school's construction project, it was impressive to find the new media center so perfectly adaptable, becoming a great art gallery. Raton can look forward to at least 40 more spring Youth in Art shows in the huge but comfortable new room.

Spring concert brings musical treats to the Shuler

By **TIM KELLER**
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The night's program listed 74 Raton teen musicians taking the stage as Raton Public Schools presented its Spring Concert 2010 at the Shuler Theater Tuesday evening. With 90% of the theater's seats filled, the concert was a success on all counts as many performances brought loud applause from the appreciative crowd.

Music director Russell Woods brought all three of his musical ensembles together for the annual spring performances, a last chance for local audiences to see and hear the groups before the school year closes. Raton's music program has been growing in both size and achievements since Woods arrived two years ago.

The Raton High School Singers opened Tuesday night's show with a program of five songs, including a medley from "Beauty and the Beast". The folk songs "Drill Ye Tarriers, Drill" and "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" joined the medley as crowd favorites, the nine girls and three boys blending voices beautifully before Woods' baton. The group's pianist, Linda Trice, lifted the band's vocals atop her solid accompaniments; she received roses from the



The Raton Middle School Tiger Band wait in the balcony for its turn on stage.



The Raton High School Concert Band brought its award-winning talents to the Shuler stage.

singers as the set drew to a close.

The huge Raton Middle School Tiger Band filled half the balcony listening to the singers and awaiting its own turn. The young musicians' set opened with "Pride of the Regiment", downshifted into "Chesapeake Serenade", then brought the excitement level back up with "Gypsy Dance". Slowing again for "Love Is" from Beverly Hills 90210, they then closed with a fun and raucous blues, "Rock to the Max, Mr. Sax."

The Raton High School Concert Band took the stage following several weeks of triumphs, winning Superior ratings in Los Alamos, Excellent ratings at the New Mexico State Concert Band Championships, and 2nd place in its division at the St. Louis Heritage Festival, where it also won the "Spirit of St. Louis" award for attitude and citizenship.

No wonder, then, that the seasoned performers appeared so calm and confident. They opened with one of their showpieces, "Bandology", then segued into the peaceful "A Call for Peace". Next, just for the bands' own fun, they'd quickly worked up a new three-part piece called "Pirates" that was challenging for them, yet their enjoyment was infectious, carrying the audience right along with the musicians.

In the "Senior Exhibition", the band's graduating seniors joined together to play three songs, opening with

"Louie, Louie" and closing with "Tequila", the audience shouting along on the last song's refrain. Two-thirds of Woods' high school concert band is graduating, which might make him nervous for next year except that the size and quality of the middle school band indicates that he's already built a good farm system with a deep supply of fresh talent. It's an exciting prospect for Raton and its music lovers.

As the high school band closed the show with "Thunderscape", the middle school musicians were in the balcony, stamping their feet to the beat, hands bouncing off their knees in time to the music. The future is in good hands.

Photos by Tim Keller

Some of the middle school Tiger band girls have fun on the Shuler stage.



Music director Russell Woods conducts the Raton High School Singers at the Shuler Theater.