

BRIDGE-BUILDING



BILL LOVEJOY/SENTINEL

Science teacher Jeff Blauer and his science club from Fesler Junior High in San Luis Obispo take a final look at their entry in bridge building at Saturday's MESA finals. Middle and high school students from 60 schools around the Central Coast and Central Valley participated in Saturday's regional competition for the Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement Schools Program, or MESA, at UC Santa Cruz. Several hundred students gathered to display windmills, manila folder bridges, prosthetic arms and a host of other items at the Baskin School of Engineering. MESA is part of the campus's Educational Partnership Center, which reaches out to college-bound students who are interested in science. For more information, visit http://epc.ucsc.edu/site/MESA_Schools_Program/65 or call 459-1819.

John Roberson, longtime Scotts Valley builder, dies at 58

By ALIA WILSON
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SCOTTS VALLEY — John Roberson, the son of one of the founding families of Scotts Valley, died in his home Wednesday. He was 58.

Roberson was often spotted riding his electric wheelchair up and down Scotts Valley Drive with a "God is my copilot" bumper sticker on the back.

He was the son of C.R. Roberson, one of Scotts Valley's original city council members and owner of Roberson Construction company. Having grown up in Scotts Valley, Roberson was instrumental in building wells, buildings and parks in the city.

As a teenager, Roberson was a member of the city's teen council that organized dances for youth out of the old airport hangar where

the community center is today. After graduating from Soquel High in 1969, Roberson worked for his father for several years. He later developed the Scotts Valley Businessman's Association, which did volunteer construction work for a town that was just getting off the ground.

"The Robersons have a lot of history here; John lived here all his life," Scotts Valley Councilman Dene Bustinchi said. "A lot of founding families of Scotts Valley, we are in their debt. They took a little town incorporated in 1966 and had a vision for what Scotts Valley should be. We've become pretty good little community and a lot of these pioneers had a lot to do with that."

Through the Scotts Valley Businessman's Association, Roberson helped dig a well that the water district still

JOHN ROBERSON

DIED: April 21, 2010
HOME: Scotts Valley
OCCUPATION: Owner of C.R. Roberson Constructions, Scotts Valley RV Center
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Helped build Siltanen Park and the foundation for Scotts Valley City Hall. Dug several wells in Scotts Valley through the Scotts Valley Business Friends Association.

uses today. He donated his time and resources to help build the foundation for the City Hall building. The Siltanen Park football field was named after him because of his role in helping build the park.

"We couldn't have asked for a better place to grow up," said Rick Bowen, a Soquel High classmate of Roberson's. "John was always laughing, always smiling and cracking jokes. He was never sad about his position despite problems with diabetes."

Scotts Valley City Councilwoman Donna Lind said after Roberson lost his eyesight more than 10 years ago, his hearing remained sharp.

"I remember seeing him in a grocery store and when he heard my voice he said 'Donna Lind,'" Lind said. "It's just incredible when someone cares so much about their town and the people in it and you see his sons continue to give back to the community. It's obvious they have a great love for their community. It really has been admirable."

UC SANTA CRUZ

Four professors elected to Academy of Arts and Sciences

Sentinel staff report

'The men and women we elect are true path breakers who have made unique contributions to ... the world.'

LOUIS W. CABOT, academy chair

SANTA CRUZ — Four UC Santa Cruz faculty members were elected fellows of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences this month.

The elected fellows include Michael Dine, professor of physics; Gary Glatzmaier, professor of earth and planetary sciences; Susan Strome, professor of molecular, cell and developmental biology; and John Thompson, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology.

"The men and women we elect are true path breakers who have made unique contributions to their fields, and to the world," said academy chair Louis W. Cabot. "The Academy honors them and their work, and they, in turn, honor us."

The new class of fellows will be inducted at a ceremony on Oct. 9 at the academy's headquarters in Cambridge, Mass.

The four scientists will join 20 other UCSC faculty members who are fellows of the academy and are among 229 leaders in the sciences, humanities and the arts, business, public affairs, and the nonprofit sector.

Dine is a theoretical physicist who has contributed to supersymmetry and string theory studies. Theories developed by Dine and others will be tested for the first time in experiments this year at the Large Hadron Collider in Europe, the world's most powerful particle accelerator.

Glatzmaier develops computer models that simulate the structure

and dynamics of planet and star interiors. Her work has been featured at the American Museum of Natural History and in the NOVA television program Magnetic Storm.

Strome is a developmental biologist whose research focuses on germ cells, the cells that produce eggs and sperm. Her research has been funded by the National Institutes of Health, American Cancer Society, National Science Foundation and Guggenheim Foundation.

Thompson's research focuses on how coevolution between species organizes the earth's biodiversity. Thompson is a past president of the American Society of Naturalists and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Royal Entomological Society of London. In 2008, he received the Per Brinck Oikos Award for Extraordinary Contributions to the Science of Ecology.

Other fellows elected this year include astronomer Geoffrey Marcy, who earned his doctorate at UCSC in 1982; UCLA Chancellor Gene Block; and director Francis Ford Coppola.

REGIONAL ECONOMY

Monterey Bay Area hotels see increase in business this month

By LANE WALLACE
Monterey County Herald

SEASIDE — Monterey County's hotel industry showed a "strong surge" of visitors around Easter that could be an indicator of a good summer, the general manager of the Monterey Marriott told an economic forum on Friday.

Rene Boskoff said his informal talks with other major hoteliers on the Monterey Peninsula showed occupancy was in the 70 percent to 80 percent range in the three weeks around April 4, Easter Sunday.

That kind of business is very exciting, given the recent bleak times for the local industry, said Boskoff, a speaker at the Monterey

Bay Regional Economic Forum at the Embassy Suites in Seaside.

The optimism comes after a year and a half that has been "pretty depressing" for the hotel industry locally and nationally, Boskoff said. He is chairman of the California Hotel and Lodging Association.

The occupancy rate for the first quarter in Monterey County, compiled by the Convention and Visitors Bureau, was 45 percent, down from 54 percent in the first quarter of 2008.

The average room rate dropped from \$148 in the first quarter of 2008 to \$134 this year.

Monterey County's main competitors for in-state tourists, Napa and Sonoma counties and Lake

Tahoe, posted similar occupancy rates.

A key to the local industry, Boskoff said, is to "resolve the water problem." While the Monterey Peninsula faces the possibility of rationing, "our industry has reduced consumption by 50 percent" for the last 25 years, he said.

Boskoff said the hospitality industry would like to see improvements for Highway 156, a gateway to the peninsula. The Napa-Sonoma region, Lake Tahoe and the peninsula "are all hard to get in and out of," he said. The region that puts in better roads first "will have a competitive advantage."

Boskoff said he'd also like to see more events at Laguna Seca, an

expanded conference center, more things to see and do in downtown Monterey and more ways to promote Monterey Bay as an attraction.

The county's wine industry, is a "\$1.5 to \$2 billion opportunity," said Boskoff, who would like to see more of the grapes grown in Monterey County processed here.

Boskoff was part of a panel discussion that included Jason Smith, president of the Monterey County Farm Bureau and general manager of Valley Farm Management and Paraiso Vineyards.

The economy has put the squeeze on winemakers, Smith said, especially for those producing higher-priced wines.

"It's wonderful for the consum-

er," Smith said. Companies making wine in the \$8 to \$12 range "are flying," he said.

The bankruptcy of SK Foods last year "was so huge," Smith said.

"There were so many other companies affected. Some suppliers were out millions of dollars," he said, and other companies had to sell their equipment and lease it back.

Jon Haveman, an economist from Marin County who often visits Monterey, told the audience of 175 that it would be "the end of 2014 before we reach pre-recession levels."

The forum was sponsored by the Monterey County Business Council and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments.

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