

Register-Pajaronian

WATSONVILLE PAJARO FREEDOM AROMAS CORRALITOS CASTROVILLE APTOS LA SELVA BEACH ROYAL OAKS ELKHORN MOSS LANDING

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75 cents

Smith ending pitch-perfect career as leader of the band

Director to play swan song with Watsonville Community Band

By TODD GUILD
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN
The band will play on, but the man who has led it for the past 45 years will step down Saturday. After a musical career that began when he picked up a trumpet in 1960, Eugene Smith, 61, will retire from his role as director of the Watsonville Community Band, and from his role as a

music teacher that has spanned three decades. He will lead his final performance at the Henry J. Mello Center this weekend. "I'm sorry to be leaving the band," he said. "It's a huge change for me. It's the next stage. It's a new adventure."

A true South County local, Smith started playing the trumpet five decades ago when he was attending Mintie White Elementary School. He stayed with the instrument through E.A. Hall

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Music director Eugene Smith leads the Watsonville Community Band in 2007 at the Fourth of July Parade in Aptos.

Tarmo Hannula/ Register-Pajaronian file

Students meet the MESA challenge

Video game design a new favorite at annual event

By FRANCISCO DIAZ
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN
SANTA CRUZ — The normally quiet Jack Baskin School of Engineering at UC Santa Cruz was shaken Saturday afternoon by a surprisingly loud, enthusiastic crowd of teenagers that cheered their teammates at the first of two days of MESA Day competitions.

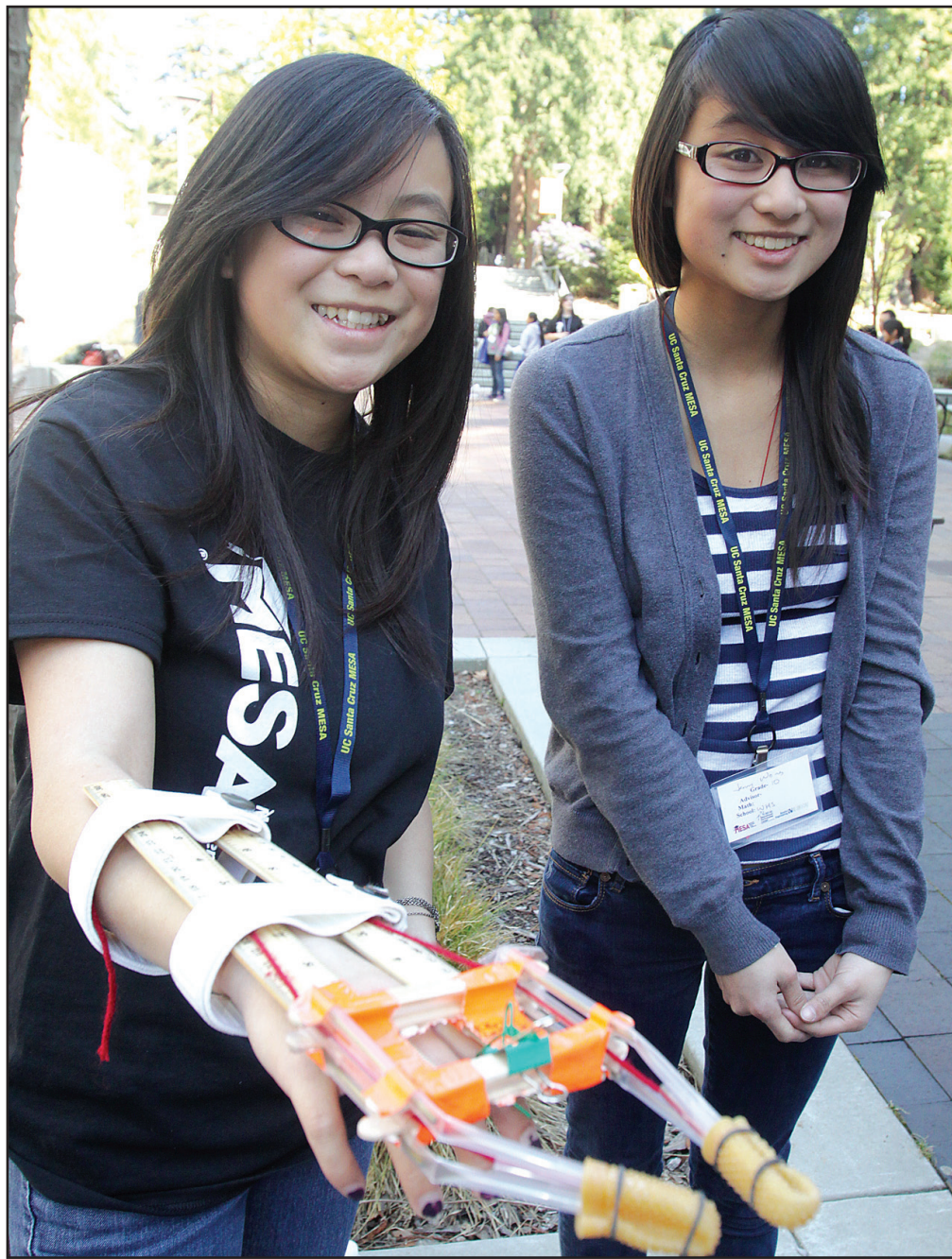
MESA (Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement) Day is an annual competition of educationally disadvantaged middle and high school students who compete in math, science and engineering events. The ultimate goal of the competitions is to get students on a path to college and success through competition.

More than 500 students from surrounding counties ranging in age from 12 to 18 participated in Saturday's engineering challenges. The experiments involved the development of low-cost mousetrap cars, wind energy windmills, wood gliders and prosthetic arms. Contestants had to research, design, build, test and compete with their contraptions.

The prosthetic arm challenge, for example, required teams to develop a device that would mimic the movement of the wrist, hand and fingers. Performance was judged as it related to the greatest strength-to-mass ratio and dexterity of the device.

The latest add-on to the competition, however — the video game programming competition — was the students' overall favorite.

"The competition requires contestants to perform live programming (with an Xbox 360 remote control) and they need to effectively manage their time too," said Jacob Martinez, the project director for Watsonville Technology Community Education (Watsonville TEC) program.



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

ABOVE: Lily Wong (left), a senior at Watsonville High School, shows a prosthetic arm that she and her sister, Jenny, created for MESA's prosthetic arm competition at UC Santa Cruz Saturday. BELOW: Antoinette Olivares (right), a Lakeview Middle School sixth-grader, tests her skills designing a computer game from the ground up in a timed event at the competition Saturday.

"Although they are having fun they are learning complex mathematical equations and applying calculations."

Most of the students are returning contestants who have become captivated by the rush of competition.

Mauricio Yescas, 18, from Soledad High School, has participated in the program for four years and has achieved regional recognition for his engineering

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Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

Council mulls replacement for Bersamin

Martinez: Wait for a vote in November

By TODD GUILD
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN
The Watsonville City Council tonight will discuss the procedure for filling the District 1 seat after Councilman Manuel Bersamin on Thursday abruptly announced his retirement.

Citing his mother's failing health after a fall that broke her arm, Bersamin announced that he will step down as soon as his replacement is found.

Bersamin has served District 1 since 2003 and has been mayor and vice mayor. His current term ends in November.

But exactly how the council will choose the new council member is unclear, and could

bring up a controversial decision in 2010 that allowed outgoing Councilman Luis Alejo to vote for his own replacement.

Alejo was elected to the 28th State Assembly District on Nov. 2, and submitted his resignation to the city the next day. The council voted 4-3 to allow him to participate in the vote to appoint his successor.

But councilman Emilio Martinez filed a motion for a restraining order to stop him.

At issue was whether Alejo's resignation created a vacancy on the council, and whether that resignation made him ineligible to vote for his replacement.

In deciding in favor of the city, however, Santa Cruz County Superior Court Judge Timothy Volkman said the plaintiffs did not show that allowing Alejo to vote for his replacement would cause irreparable harm.

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'Catz win CCS



Glenn Cravens/Register-Pajaronian

Watsonville High's Alex Cibrian leaps into the arms of teammate Luis Orendain (22) during the second half of the Wildcatz's Central Coast Section Division I championship game against Menlo-Atherton on Saturday at Garcia-Elder Field in Gilroy. The Wildcatz won 3-1 to win the school's ninth CCS championship. Cibrian scored the Wildcatz's second goal. Get all the details in Sports, B1.

New county fair managers hold first meeting tonight

REGISTER-PAJARONIAN STAFF REPORT
Two months after it was established, the Santa Cruz County Fair Management Team will hold its first "State of the Fair" public meeting Wednesday night.

The public is invited to the meeting, where members of the leadership team will make a presentation on the current state of the fair and begin talks they hope will lead to a new strategic plan.

Put into place on Jan. 3, the eight-member, all-volunteer leadership team is tasked with trying to stay afloat after fair organizers last year overspent the budget by more than 100 percent.

The plan to allow a team of volunteers to run the fair allows more people to get involved in the fair's operations, thus spreading out duties and

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Weather
A few scattered showers
Tonight might be wet.
Wednesday: mainly sunny.
Tonight's low: 30s to 40s
Wednesday's high: 50s
Details on page A8.

Lottery
Monday's Daily 3s
1st: 9, 6, 0 2nd: 6, 2, 8
Monday's Fantasy 5
15, 19, 21, 22, 31
Saturday's Super Lotto
2, 4, 6, 7, 18; M=8

