

A day of math, engineering and science

More than 500 students compete against peers

By TARMO HANNULA
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN
SANTA CRUZ — The annual Math, Engineering and Science Achievement preliminary competition unfolded at UC Santa Cruz Saturday.

More than 500 educationally disadvantaged middle and high school students from partner schools in Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Salinas, Gonzales, Castroville and Soledad convened at the Jack Baskin School of Engineering to compete against their peers in a variety of science, technology, engineering and mathematics projects, that tested their design, presentation, critical thinking, problem solving and teamwork skills.

Students got to show off home-engineered projects such as prosthetic arms designed to accurately toss a ball and move objects, mousetrap cars designed to stop after an exact distance, balsa wood gliders and egg-drop contraptions.

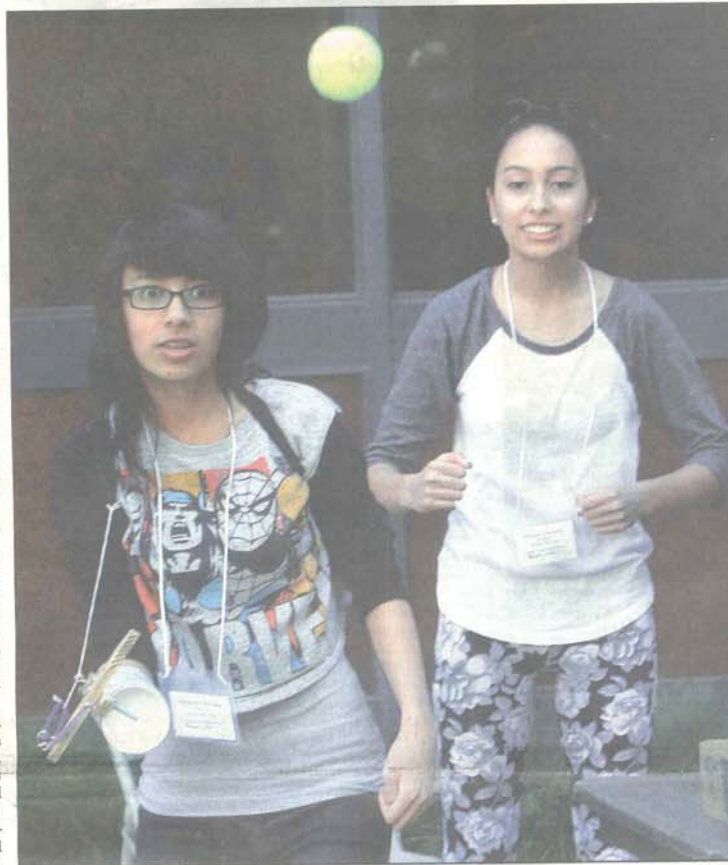
Antonio Hernandez, a ninth-grader from North Monterey County High, earned high marks for his mousetrap car that utilized old LP records as wheels.

"I got the idea to use records from a middle school class I was in," Antonio said. "At first I thought I was going to lose, especially after my first try. But on the second chance I did really well."

Indeed, on his second attempt to have his invention stop on a strip of tape after rolling about 8 feet, the rickety jalopy wheeled slowly past the mark, stopped and then backed up and parked nearly on target, triggering a roar of applause.

"I knew it was going to go backwards," Hernandez said.

This year's MESA Day competition featured new events, including video gaming and a prosthetic arm competition. In the video game design competition, which was held at an earlier date, a team of students from Alianza Middle School (Zuli Alcantar, Isa Moreno and Jose Campos) won second place in California and will now move on to the national competition.



Santa Cruz High School student Samantha Gervacio (left) tests her skill at tossing a tennis ball with a prosthetic arm that she and her partner, Morgan Gervacio, built for their entry in the MESA competition Saturday at UC Santa Cruz. BELOW: J.P. Chavez, a sixth-grader from Lakeview Middle School, tests his balsa wood airplane.

For the prosthetic arm competition, students must build an arm with movable fingers and use it to pick up objects, toss a ball into a target bucket and fasten screws into a board.

Saturday's event opened with a keynote address by Danielle Feinberg, an animation expert from Pixar Films. She explained to students how math is used in animation using examples from the Oscar-winning film, "Brave."

Alexandria Leckliter, MESA director, said about 200 students, who would have been left out of the event due to funding restrictions, were able to at-

See MESA, page A6



Comet Pan-STARRS on parade in western sky

By TARMO HANNULA
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN
WATSONVILLE — The comet Pan-STARRS is putting on a show in the early evening sky for the rest of this month. Traveling inside the orbit of Mercury, the bright comet can be spotted in the western sky with the naked eye.

According to Earthsky.org, "the comet should be visible, and at its brightest because it is passing closest to the sun — as close as our sun's innermost planet, Mercury, about 28 million miles away. Comets are typically brightest and most active around the time they are closest to the sun when solar

heating vaporizes ice and dust from the comet's outer crust. Expect the comet to brighten quickly around this time. Look for it low in the west after sunset. Bring binoculars to help you spot it in the twilight sky."

Dates of special interest include tonight and Wednesday when Pan-STARRS passes close to the crescent moon. The tight conjunction tonight will offer sunset photographers a dramatic photo opp. Observers should look low and west.

Officials say the best viewing time in our area is about 30 minutes after sunset. The sun sets about 7:10 p.m.



This photo, made available by spaceweather.com, shows the comet Pan-STARRS seen from Queenstown, New Zealand.

PV trustees to consider budget, testing

School board to hear report on new academic standards coming in 2014

By TODD GUILD
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN
WATSONVILLE — The Pajaro Valley School District Board of Trustees Wednesday will hear a positive budget report, meaning that the district is projected to maintain a positive fund balance over the next three years.

But the news will come with a caveat, as the district's long-term health is still an issue.

That's because of \$20 million that has been cut over the past five years, affecting classrooms, programs and services throughout the district.

Proposition 30, passed by voters in November, used a series of new taxes for education but only allowed the state to avoid further cuts to education.

While it allowed the district to avoid a \$7.69 million reduction, it did not allow for an increase in revenues. Still, under the new law district officials must determine how the funds will be utilized.

The problem is further compounded by uncertainty from Sacramento, where Gov. Jerry Brown has proposed a shift in the way schools are funded.

In his January 2013 budget proposal, Gov. Brown

proposed a plan to fund to all schools based further funding populations of low and English language learners.

PVUSD stands for from the plan, but, much won't be known Brown's budget is later this year. Schoolers must still prepare their budget: the uncertainty.

To make matter the federal seque could force districts to slash \$4.9 million.

The trustees will hear a report about new academic standards set to be fully implemented throughout California in 2014.

That's when it will become one begin testing student their knowledge mon Core Standards mathematics and language arts.

The Common Standards will replace standardized Testing porting system, known as the STA

Educators say system will help a tech-savvy world boosting students solving skills and

See SCHOOL

2 nabbed for alleged bringing drugs to jail

By TODD GUILD
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN
WATSONVILLE — Two women were arrested Monday after allegedly bringing tobacco and marijuana for an inmate at the Rountree Lane Sheriff's Detention Facility in Watsonville.

Michelle Cacchiola, 50, and Jasmine Prasad, 29, allegedly brought the contraband during a scheduled visit, according to Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Lt. Shea Johnson, who oversees the facility.

Sheriff's deputies patrolling grounds saw the women drop an envelope into bushes. Upon investigation they found approximately seven grams of marijuana and an unknown amount of tobacco, Johnson said.

The deputies also observed the vehicle as it entered the secure gate, which gave them a description and a license plate number.

"It was good observation on the part of our officers," Johnson said.

The driver, a male, did not get out of the vehicle while at the facility and was not arrested.

Deputies are not armed while in the jail facility, so

they allowed the leave.

Using the deputies stopped at the corner and Freedom building within five minutes.

"If you're going to get an arrest, it's best to have the tools at your disposal," she said. Johnson said to smuggle contraband occur, but are less since jail officials contact visits.

Occasionally inmates doing laundry will ask to stash drugs in the grounds to retrieve. They are upon their return contraband still in behind the gate said.

With numerous on patrol around and steep penal risky proposition said.

Cacchiola and Prasad facing felony charges for bringing in contraband and as many as in jail.

Anthony Al

See J.



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

A model rocket launches skyward during one of several demonstrations during MESA Day.

MESA

From page 1

tend thanks to funding provided by the Santa Cruz County Medical Society. Dr. Jack Watson, who is on the board of SCCMS, is a long-standing judge for the biology-related events at MESA Day.

"He was outraged that students who wanted to attend MESA Day would not be able to because of a lack of funding," Leckliter said. "He suggested that MESA request funding from SCMS to cover the costs of the additional students, which was granted. The competitions at MESA Day provide an opportunity for students to apply their knowledge in science and engineering in a hands-on, creative way that's exciting and fun. It's

also important for students to spend the day with scientists, engineers, and other experts in the field who act as role models."

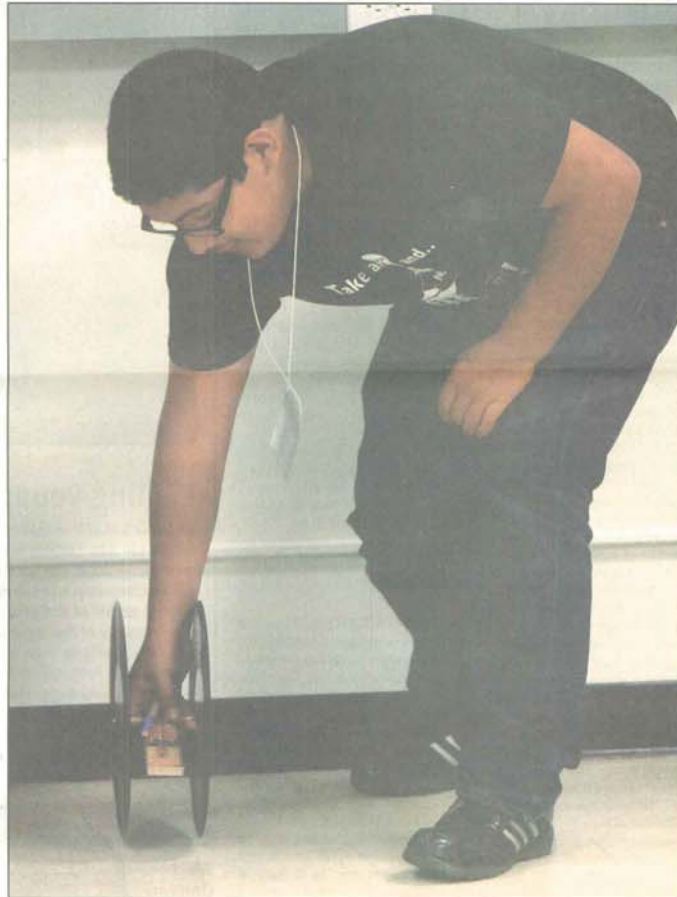
Santa Cruz High School students Samantha Gervacio, grade 12, and her sister, Morgan, ninth grade, teamed up to build a prosthetic arm.

"It took us many, many hours to build," Morgan said. "It was not easy. But it worked. We even tossed one of the tennis balls into the target bucket. That was amazing."

Her sister said tossing the ball with the device was "really difficult."

"You kind of have to use your whole body to throw the ball," Samantha said. "It took me a while to figure that out."

Jose Moreno, an assisting academic intern at UC Santa Cruz who now works with



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

Antonio Hernandez of North Monterey County High School launches his mousetrap car.

middle school students, said his education in engineering stemmed directly from his experience with the MESA program when he was in middle school.

"Even when my inventions failed or messed up I came away from it a better student because I was still learning," Moreno said. "It made me want to get in

there and do better. By the time you've gone through four years of MESA events you've really learned a lot. MESA gave me the opportunity to learn about college as well, because you feel welcome and you're invited to get to know what a university is like."

In the "speak easy" competition students randomly chose one official topic that they had to deliver a short, focused, impromptu oral presentation on. For the "model human brain" event students constructed original displays and models of

a bisected human head and addressed questions drawn from an assigned list using reading material provided in the MESA Day curriculum.

Maria Rocha Ruiz, executive director of the Educational Partnership Center, said she was "very encouraged" by the outpouring of attendance Saturday.

"These students are here to learn and have a good time," she said. "It's a great environment for them to use math and science in a fun way."

SCHOOL

From page 1

them to think critically. PVUSD has already implemented the change schools, with teaching sessions.

The state plans to implement the system by the school year.

Similar to the S the new assessment given during the last of school.

Under the new system students will take tests earlier and be given projects such as reading and answer in-depth in essay form.

Additionally, scores will no longer be tests. Assessments will be given through eighth-grade at the end of 11th grade.

Older students will have a real-world situation several days to work with their fellow students.

The Pajaro Valley School District Board will meet Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the District Office at 292 Green Valley in Watsonville. For information visit www.pvUSD.net.

Got news or a local event?

Email the Register-Pajaronian your news tips, releases, meeting or letters to the editor.

newsroom.register-pajaronian.com



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

Sheriff deputies team up with Watsonville Police Monday on a vehicle stop on Airport Boulevard after deputies spotted one of the occupants toss a bag of marijuana over a fence at the Rountree Lane Sheriff's Detention Facility.

JAIL

From page 1

Inmate they were visiting, will face conspiracy charges and will be shipped to the significantly more restrictive Main Jail, Johnson said.

The women will also be

barred from future jail visits, while Alvarez will not be able to take part in programs offered to low-risk inmates such as substance abuse counseling, anger management and GED classes.

Alvarez was in the Rountree facility on drug sales and possession charges. The women were described as family members.

"(Being housed at the Rountree facility) is an opportunity for them to change their lives, and we're not going to put up with this," Johnson said. "We're zero tolerance on any sort of contraband coming in. It poses a danger not only to the inmates, but to the deputies as well."

Watsonville Today

Sunny to mostly sunny, very nice

High 70 / Low 47

Extended Forecast

Wednesday

Sunny and very mild

High 75 / Low 47

Thursday

Mostly sunny, dry and pleasant

High 71 / Low 45

Friday

Partly cloudy, breezy

High 70 / Low 45

Saturday

Partly cloudy

High 68 / Low 44

Sunday

Mostly cloudy, cooler, late showers

High 60 / Low 42

Monday

Partly cloudy, scattered

Almanac

Temperature

Yesterday's High 70°
Yesterday's Low 38°
Normal High/Low 64° / 42°
Record High 84 in 1916
Record Low 27 in 1912

Precipitation

Yesterday's Precip 0.00"
Month to date 0.36"
Normal Month to date 1.48"
Year to date 12.94"
Normal Year to date 19.98"
Water year runs July 1 to June 30

Sunrise/Sunset

Sunrise: 7:22 AM
Sunset: 7:12 PM
Wednesday 7:20 AM 7:13 PM
Thursday 7:19 AM 7:14 PM
Friday 7:17 AM 7:15 PM

Forecast not made prepared by DayWeather, Inc. Cheyenne, WY www.dayweather.com

be blizzard, cloudy, fog, heavy rain, heavy snow, light snow, mostly cloudy, mostly sunny, partly cloudy, rain, showers, snow, sleet, thunderstorms, wind

Monterey Bay

Today Tonight

50's 40's

Santa Clara Valley

Today Tonight

70's 40's

Around The Region

	Yesterday	Tomorrow
Local	Hi Lo Prec.	Hi Lo W
Gilroy	75 40 0.00"	78 46 0.00"
Hollister	75 37 0.00"	78 47 0.00"
King City	78 36 0.00"	80 45 0.00"
Morgan Hill	73 43 0.00"	76 46 0.00"
Saltinas	69 36 0.00"	73 46 0.00"
Santa Cruz	75 37 0.00"	67 45 0.00"
San Jose	70 40 0.00"	77 48 0.00"
Regional		
Oakland	69 43 0.00"	71 50 0.00"
Los Angeles	67 49 0.00"	84 55 0.00"
San Francisco	64 43 0.00"	65 51 0.00"

Tomorrow's Regional Map

