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Dos Pueblos High Students Sweep High School Design Competition



The Santa Barbara County High School Architectural Design Competition Finalists are, from left, Yuyang Fu of Dunn School, Pica Zhuang of Anacapa School, Kris Camargo of Dunn School (Honorable Mention), Rose Hillebrandt of Dos Pueblos High School (Second Place), Chloe Stevens of San Marcos High School, Allison Larinan of Dos Pueblos High (First Place), Sullivan Israel of Laguna Blanca School (Honorable Mention), Frank Chang of Santa Ynez Valley Union High School, Nick Sabatini of Dunn School, Anna Nesterenko of Anacapa School, Vivian Zhan of Dunn School and competition organizer David Goldstien. (Stephanie Christoff photo)

By Jeremy White for the Architectural Foundation of Santa Barbara | Published on 03.20.2016 7:00 p.m.



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The **Architectural Foundation of Santa Barbara** recently held its annual **High School Architectural Design Competition** in Santa Ynez. Although 39 students from eight schools competed, the top three winners all hailed from **Dos Pueblos High School** in Goleta.

Allison Larinan took first place, Rose Hillebrandt took second and Annebel van der Meulen came in third. All three students are juniors.

Larinan's name will be engraved on the competition's perpetual trophy, joining the names of past winners dating back to 2003. The trophy will spend the coming year on the campus of Dos Pueblos High.

"It will sit above the football trophy," jested David Goldstien, principal organizer of the event.

The competition and initial judging took place in [Santa Ynez Valley Union High School's](#) gymnasium on March 15,

followed by a juried review at [Santa Ynez Valley Presbyterian Church](#) on March 19.

Students spent seven hours in the gym designing a hypothetical 6,200-square-foot children's museum. Inspired by MOXI, the new [Wolf Museum of Exploration + Innovation](#), under construction in Santa Barbara, the competition's program challenged students to create a multisensory educational experience. Competitors had to design spaces, walls, ramps, roofs and other architectural features using pencil, paper, T-square and triangles, drawing a site plan, floor plan, elevation, and sketch or diagram of a building.

Drawings were scored by how well the student solved the design problem, and by the quality of presentation.

One of the challenges posed by the competition program was the requirement to create spaces that would engage each of the five senses. A variety of solutions were presented, including mazes designed to be crawled through in the dark, giant eyeball-shaped installations, fragrance gardens, "taste windows," sunlight-filled glass domes, and Larinan's heart-shaped space designed to pulsate and hum, generating visual, aural and tactile sensations.

The program was written by Jacob Niksto, an architect in Santa Barbara and former competitor. He won the competition in 2000.

Judges were [Cassandra Ensberg](#), Tom Jacobs and Duffy Smith, all local architects. They selected 12 finalists who had four days to prepare a four-minute presentation on Saturday morning. Standing in front of their drawings, each finalist pointed out important design features to a jury that included architects, architectural educators and the chief executive officer of MOXI, Steve Hinkley.

Allotted seven minutes to ask questions and make comments about the drawings and the design solution, the jury then had to write comments and score each finalist.

"It's really amazing to think these kids did all this in seven hours," said Dennis Whelan, associate campus architect at [UC Santa Barbara](#), and one of the competition's jurors.

"It reminds me of my design exam for my architect's license years ago."

After the competition, Hinkley reinforced that sentiment, remarking that "some of the ideas presented by these students are under construction right now at MOXI."

David Goldstien and his wife, Linda, have run the high school design competition for 25 years, with the generous assistance of Greg Pensa and others from the [Rotary Club of the Santa Ynez Valley](#), as well as volunteers from the Architectural Foundation of Santa Barbara.

This year it was supported by donations from the Santa Ynez Valley Rotary, while the

12 finalists won a combined \$1,200 in prize money donated by the Architectural Foundation.

Besides the top three winners, [Dunn School](#) senior Kristoffer Camargo and [Laguna Blanca School](#) ninth-grader Sullivan Israel won Honorable Mentions.

The other finalists included Dunn sophomores Yuyang Fu and Vivian Zhan and junior Nick Sabatini; [Anacapa School](#) senior Pica Zhuang and sophomore Anna Nesterenko; Santa Ynez Valley High sophomore Frank Chang; and [San Marcos High School](#) junior Chloe Stevens.

“Each finalist presented their project with confidence and poise,” David Goldstien said. “It was like they discussed their work with design professionals every day.”

Larinan, the winner from Dos Pueblos High, had never taken a design or drafting class before. Linda Goldstien noted that “Dos Pueblos and other schools used to have drafting classes, and they would send a busload of kids to compete. Now the students come on their own.”

Santa Ynez Valley Union High School is an exception.

“It still has a drafting class and it sends the largest contingent of competitors to the event,” Linda Goldstien said.

Larinan’s interest in architecture started very early, nurtured by summer camps and programs such as [Kids Draw Architecture](#) run by the Architectural Foundation of Santa Barbara. She is working to complete her [International Baccalaureate](#) at Dos Pueblos High, a curriculum of advanced placement courses culminating in a thesis. Larinan is currently researching architect [Frank Lloyd Wright](#), using the program to learn as much as she can about architecture.

“This event,” Hinkley said, “is the sort of moment that kids remember. It’s the kind of event that can set a kid on their way.”

Hinkley was so impressed by the finalists that he offered to give them a tour of MOXI, which is under construction on Lower State Street.

Stephanie Christoff, vice president of the Architectural Foundation, and Saad Sadig, head of the [Architectural Technology Department](#) at [Allan Hancock College](#) in Santa Maria, were the other two jurors Saturday.

[Click here for more information](#) about the High School Architectural Design Competition. [Click here for more information](#) about the Architectural Foundation of Santa Barbara.

— *Jeremy White is board president of the [Architectural Foundation of Santa Barbara](#).*