



DATE: September 23, 2013

AGENDA ITEM # 3

AGENDA REPORT

TO: Historical Commission
FROM: Zachary Dahl, Staff Liaison
SUBJECT: Margaret Thompson Essay Contest

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide input on final draft of Margaret Thompson Essay Contest Commissioner Manual

BACKGROUND

In order to standardize the process for managing the annual Margaret Thompson Essay Contest, Historical Commissioner Denise Welsh took on the task of preparing a manual for use by future commissioners.

DISCUSSION

Attached is the final draft of the Margaret Thompson Essay Contest Commissioner Manual for review by the Commission.

Attachments:

- A. Draft Margaret Thompson Essay Contest Commissioner Manual

Margaret Thompson Essay Contest Manual

Los Altos Historical Commission &
Los Altos History Museum Education Committee

Flow Chart and Responsibilities

1. OCTOBER/NOVEMBER:

- a. Los Altos History Museum Education Committee (LAHMEC) selects a prompt theme, reviews and revises the prompt, the teacher directions for prompt, reviews judging rubric, and obtains approval from the LASD Asst. Superintendent.
- b. A copy of the prompt, teacher directions, and rubric are sent by LAHMEC to the Historical Commission in November.
- c. The Essay contest is available to any Grade 3-6 students in both public (LASD) and private schools (City of Los Altos), plus City of Los Altos home-schooled students and students in Montclair School—Cupertino Union School District – in Grades 3 – 6.

2. DECEMBER:

- a. The Los Altos Historical Commission sets the date for the Ice Cream Social and Awards Ceremony held on LAHM patio.
 - i. First City Council meeting in May (2nd Tuesday)
- b. The LAHC notifies the School Principals of the Contest Topic and the schedule by mail and email. This includes the notification to all Public and Private schools. The package (mailed) includes 10 copies of the Teacher Instructions, 20 copies of the prompts and 10 copies of the Rubric used to judge the essays.
- c. The LAHC sets up the website of City of Los Altos with the information about the contest and copies of the Prompt and Teacher Instructions that can be downloaded. The *Town Crier* website will also have the prompt and the teacher directions to be downloaded. Hard copies of the Prompt will be distributed to the libraries (on San Antonio and Grant), the History Museum and the City offices for contestants to pick up if they cannot get them on line.
- d. LAHM website will be set up with the prompt, directions, and the rubric.

3. JANUARY:

- a. The last week of the month, the LAHC ensures the prompt, teacher directions, and rubric have been emailed to along with the schedule for the contest and the related events:
 - i. LASD office and the Administrative Offices of the 7 elementary public schools: *Almond, Gardner Bullis, Covington, Loyola, Oak, Santa Rita, Springer.*
 - ii. The Administrative Offices of the 8 private Los Altos schools: *Canterbury Christian School, St. Simon, Los Altos Christian School, Miramonte, Waldorf of the Peninsula, Pinewood, St. Nicholas, Heritage*
 - iii. Administrative Office of *Montclair School* (Cupertino Union School District, K-5)
 - iv. Administrative Office of *Bullis Charter School* (Santa Clara County Charter School in City of Los Altos)
- b. The LAHC establishes the schedule for the Contest including the judging date, site (typically Hillview Community Center), and arranges for the judges. LAHMEC also provides Historical Commission with judges.

4. FEBRUARY:

- a. Students write the essays, due to their teachers by 1st Friday in March.
- b. Email all judges a copy of the prompt and rubric for judging the essays and a reminder of the judging time, place, and responsibilities.
- c. The Commissioners confirmed their tasks and report appropriately on the progress of their task.

5. MARCH:

- a. Essays are to be collected by the teachers on the first Friday in March and turned into either:
 - 1) The LASD office (LASD essays only);
 - 2) The Los Altos History Museum; or
 - 3) Los Altos City Hall by Wednesday of the 2d week in March.The Teachers are to submit a list of the participants from their class with the total number of participants on a cover sheet with their name, grade and school.
- b. The assigned Commissioner will collect all of the essays from the sites and take a tally of the number of essays by grade and school.
- c. The assigned Commissioner will confirm, by email, the judging time, place, judging procedures, and panel of judging volunteers.
- d. The last Saturday in March, the essays will be judged by grade to select 1st/2nd/3rd Place winners (estimate 2-3 hours depending on the total number submitted)
- e. Following the judging, the Historical Commission prepares:
 - i. A list of winners by grade (1st, 2nd, and 3rd places)
 - ii. Sends a list of winners by grade to LAHMEC
 - iii. A list reflecting by grade and "place" the winners' names, teachers, and schools (see samples)
 - iv. A list for LAHMEC, so teachers with 5 essays or more can be paid \$25 stipend by LAHM
 - v. Congratulation letters for the winning students with a copy for each principal
 - vi. Winner certificates
 - vii. *Town Crier* press release

6. APRIL:

- a. The second week in April, the assigned Commissioner mails letters of congratulations to the WINNERS, their teachers and the principals
- b. The LAHC submits a request to the City of Los Altos Finance Director for processing the winner's checks (see sample)
- c. The LAHC emails invitations to the list of winners, their teachers and notifications to:
 - i. Mayor (to confirm the schedule for the event)
 - ii. Council Members
 - iii. City Staff supporting the Historical Commission (e.g., liaison, Administrative Assistant, Finance)
 - iv. *Town Crier* for a reporter and photographer (Editor, Bruce Barton, bruceb@latc.com, 650 948-9000 x301)
 - v. Margaret Thompson (483 Los Ninos Way , LA 94022 - 948-1346) (Mail her an invitation!)

- d. The original essays are given to the Los Altos History Museum to be kept in their archives. Winning essays are posted online with the:
 - i. The City of Los Altos website
 - ii. *Town Crier*
 - iii. Historical Commission website

7. **MAY:**

- a. Confirm the *Ice Cream Social* and the *City Council Awards Ceremony* (First City Council meeting in May (2nd Tuesday), and coordinate with the Mayor the preferred sequence of events. Typically:
 - i. The Ice Cream Social is to introduce the winners for each grade level and give each student a certificate and check, as well as recognition to the teachers. (The Mayor may deliver his/her awards at the Council meeting.) There is time for all of this AND pictures before the winners and their families head off to the City Hall at 6:45.
 - ii. Introduce LAHMEC chair to present the 25th anniversary trophy to winning school.
- b. Coordinate the History Museum Garden Patio set-up with the History Museum (tables and podium)
- c. Purchase Root Beer Float supplies (60 persons) for the *Ice Cream Social*
 - i. Paper goods (cups, spoons, napkins)
 - ii. Root Beer
 - iii. Vanilla Ice Cream
- d. Arrange for serving help by the Historical Commission
- e. Write a press release for the *Town Crier* and arrange for a representative to attend and take a picture of the winners
- f. Per the pre-established program sequence:
 - i. Introduce the VIPs: Commissioners, teachers, principals, Margaret Thompson, etc.
 - ii. Historical Commissioner presents the winners with a certificate and check from the City of Los Altos (Practice pronunciation of winners' names).
 - iii. Introduce chair of the LAHMEC, who will present the 25th anniversary trophy, to the school with the most winners
 - iv. Photos are taken with Margaret Thompson for the *Town Crier*
 - v. Adjourn in time for all to arrive in the Council chambers before the meeting begins at 7pm
 - vi. Mayor of the City of Los Altos introduces Margaret Thompson (if present) and the winners from each grade level
- g. Have a "lessons learned" recap meeting for Historical Commission and History Museum

8. RECAP:

| Historical Commission | History Museum | Council | Teacher | Student |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| <p>Coordinates judging of the essays; Arranges all PR; Provides notification of the winners; Responsible for all event planning & coordination; Responsible for printing hard copies and distributing them in the schools, libraries, City Hall and the History Museum. Make copies available on the City website, the <i>Town Crier</i> and the History Museum (in pdf format)</p> | <p>Selects the theme; Revises the teacher directions and rubric; Obtains approval from LASD Assistant Superintendent; Notifies the 7 LASD schools' newsletters; Responsible for prompt, etc. on LAHM website</p> | | <p>Works with the students to meet the essay deadline; Submits the essays to the administrative offices with a cover sheet that includes the count of the entries</p> | <p>Writes an original essay</p> |
| <p>Collects the essays and records the count by class level, schools and total; Prepares a list of winners, as well as a list of all participating teachers and number of essays per teacher; Coordinates the judging to include supplies and refreshments; Receives a copy of winning essays for their files</p> | <p>Receives a list of all winners; Receives a list of all participating teachers with number of essays for each; Receives the winning essays to archive</p> | <p>Receives a digital copy of all winning essays</p> | <p>Receives a copy of the letter to the winners</p> | <p>Receives a letter from the Historical Commission, certificate, and prize money</p> |
| <p>Hosts the event activities of the Ice Cream Social; Gets the refreshments and helps with the set-up and clean-up.</p> | <p>Hosts the location and set-up of the Ice Cream Social</p> | <p>Present certificates, checks and recognizes their achievement</p> | <p>Attends the ice cream social with winners from their class and the principal</p> | <p>Attends with family</p> |