



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2020

Broncos Show Off Their Talent

Amherst students participate in annual mural making event

The effects that the worldwide pandemic has had on annual events has not gone unnoticed by those in the world of education, yet one thing that the presence of COVID-19 has not been able to put the brakes on is creativity in the classroom.

Earlier this month, four students from Amherst High School had the opportunity to let their creativity shine as they joined teams from thirty-one other Nebraska school districts for the fifth annual Hastings College Mural Day.

While the pandemic forced the event to move on-line this year, with Hastings College officials noting that the decision for a virtual Mural Day stemmed from their willingness to ensure the safety of the students, organizers of the event said that they still wanted to give students from across Nebraska the chance to participate.

"Mural day is really one of my favorite things about the entire school year. It is so exciting when we have something like 200 or 250 students here in our parking lot and everyone is working as hard as they possibly can," said Turner McGehee, a professor of Visual Arts at Hastings College, dur-

ing the on-line awards presentation. "When I heard that we were not going to be able to do that on campus this year, as you would expect, there was some disappointment.

McGehee, in his remarks to the participating students, said

that on the flip side, he was happy to have the chance to travel into their worlds.

"I got to actually go on a field trip myself. I got to go to your classrooms and see the humming activity that was going on," he said.

On Wednesday,

October 7th, students connected with Hastings College via Zoom to learn of the theme for this year's competition, which was 'Just Deserts.' Hastings College then used the online platform to connect with the participants throughout the day,

with their advisors being encouraged to share photos of the participants' progress as well as a final image of the mural for judging.

While this year's contest was different than in the past, Amherst art See - **MURAL** - page 3



AMHERST STUDENTS who competed in Hastings College’s Mural Day earlier this month included Taia Storrs, Hannah Adam, Kylee Erpelding, and Austyn Rumbek. The students were four of the more than 160 students from thirty-one other schools to participate in the annual event. (Courtesy Photo)

MURAL

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teacher Dana Dietz said that the 2020 competition’s format was the only thing that the students at Amherst have been able to experience.

“This was the first year we competed in the contest,” noted Dietz.

The students on Amherst’s mural team included sophomore Austyn

Rumbek and juniors Hannah Adam, Kylee Erpelding and Taia Storrs.

Dietz noted that at the end of the competition, she was extremely proud of the work her group put in, but would have loved to let the students experience the collaboration that comes with mural day.

“Our students enjoyed the experience, but they are really hoping to par-

ticipate in person in the future,” Dietz said.

With over 160 students competing in this year’s event, there was no lack of creativity as the teams worked to create a mural on a 36x76” vinyl banner. With such a whimsical theme, the contest featured numerous creative products, and Amherst’s effort was no exception. The high school’s mural

centered around the idea of ‘Sweet Livin,’ with that mantra scrolled in gigantic letters in the middle of the horizontal banner. Additionally, images of traditional sweets – such as donuts, suckers, and a cake, surrounded the theme with the entire banner featuring light and vibrant colors.

Amherst’s idea fit into the theme of ‘Just Des-

serts' and was unique. Additionally, it aligned with many of the other murals that the competition's organizers said featured a definitive undertone.

"I like the fact that there was so much humor in the paintings that were done. In my opinion, as a teacher of art, I feel that humor is the hardest thing to create," Professor McGehee said. "So many of your projects were just comedic masterpieces, let me put it that way."

Members of Kappa Pi, the art honorary, and senior members in Hastings College's Art Department, selected the winners of this year's contest. The schools that took home top honors included Lincoln North Star, which won the event, while Pawnee City came in second, and Ainsworth High School ended up in third.

"As judges we were looking for integration of the theme, creativity of the image in the mural, creativity in the paint application, elements of design, and the mural in its entirety," said Hastings College senior Carlee Norton who helped judge the contest. "It was in fact a very hard decision to choose as everyone submitted such amazing murals."

Other area schools to compete in Hastings College's yearly event included Kearney, Gibbon, Ord,

and Ravenna. "I picked up and returned—on Monday afternoon," she said. "I know we're going to have a big rush of people dropping off their ballots over the weekend, right before the election. So, that's why we're starting on Monday afternoon."

Poff said that on Tuesday, depending on how many ballots her office receives, they will either start counting at noon again, or later in the day. The Election commissioner said that the goal is that they are done counting the early ballots by 8:00 p.m.

"That way," said Poff, "the county can have its first set of early voting ballot results posted shortly after the early ballot return deadline that Tuesday at eight o'clock."

For anyone still uncertain about whether or not they are registered vote, what's on the ballot in the county, or where their polling place is, Poff emphasized that the Buffalo County website is a great resource.

"If people are unsure about where they can go to vote, they can go to the county's website and look up their address, and it will tell them where their polling place is," she said. "There's a ton of information on our website for those who want to look."