

Muralists

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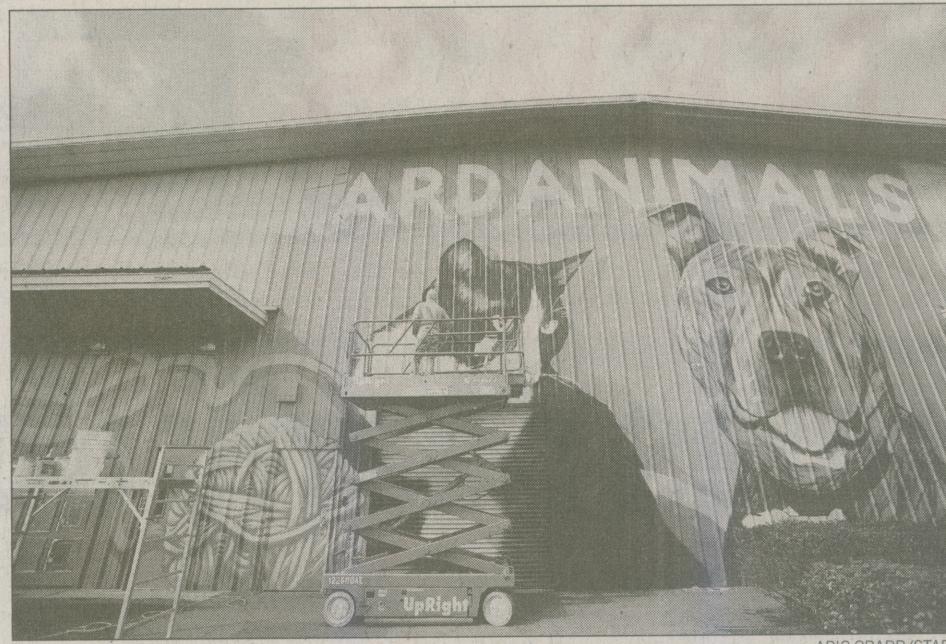
seven muralists: Jean Bidwell, Suzanne Gayle, Ben Goulart, Andrew Kong Knight, Linda Longinotti, Christine Pacheco and Josh Powell.

The anti-graffiti mural project was begun in 2008 by Greg Jones, then Hayward city manager.

"When I got here and realized what a large art community we had, plus the graffiti problem, it seemed a logical fit," said Jones, now a city councilman. "We were spending thousands of dollars painting over graffiti; why not spend some of that money on artwork?"

He said he was inspired by art-based anti-graffiti programs in Concord and Chico, where he had previously worked. And he also knew about the success of a project in Emeryville that covered utility boxes with artwork to fight tagging.

While the Hayward project's planning began in early 2008, it took off with the hiring of Neighborhood Partnership Manager Stacey Bristow, whose duties



ARIC CRABB/STAFF

Artist Wythe Bowart works Thursday on a mural at the Hayward Animal Shelter. The painting on the front of the shelter will be 30 feet tall and 150 feet wide.

include graffiti abatement, Jones said. The two decided to focus first on utility boxes, a popular graffiti target.

"The city manager said let's try a dozen utility boxes downtown and see if it works as a deterrent and what the community thinks," Bristow said. "It turned out to be successful; it was a great deterrent, and

the community responded positively."

Funded mostly with redevelopment money, the project was expanded to include more utility boxes and then, working with business owners, blank walls around town.

"We use local artists only, ones that had some significant tie to Hayward.

That was a council directive," Bristow said. "We didn't want someone from L.A. coming and painting murals in Hayward when we had all this local talent."

The mural project now covers 12 walls throughout downtown, a sound wall near the BART tracks close to City Hall, a retaining wall on Jackson Street and book

drop boxes at the main library. Almost 50 utility boxes are also covered in artwork, Bristow said. And more are planned as financing becomes available, which has been a challenge since redevelopment agencies were dissolved, Bristow said.

The latest project, at Hayward's animal shelter on Barnes Court, is being painted by Powell and Wythe Bowart. The animal-themed mural should be finished in March, said Powell, who has painted four others for the city.

Taggers for the most part have left his murals alone, Powell said. The exception is the mural at the Harder Road underpass — depicting a geometric design inspired by Ohlone Indian decorative patterns — which occasionally is hit, he said.

"That was the most difficult one I've done to begin with. It had a lot of graffiti," he said. "It's a 100 percent improvement over what it was, but there's still a little bit of a problem."

Despite that, Powell said the murals are a deterrent.

"Most graffiti is usually just little kids tagging," he said. "Once they see artwork

on top of the graffiti, they respect the art and take their graffiti somewhere else. Or they get inspired to learn to create real art."

Powell said he's seen some anti-graffiti art projects in other East Bay cities, but not any as large. "The scale of this project in Hayward is amazing," he said.

Hayward's mural program was given an award by the League of California Cities in 2011. The Helen Putnam Award for Excellence recognized the city's program for its "beautiful works of art, reduction in graffiti and noticeable cost savings."

Most of the murals, especially the early ones, are visible to motorists driving through the city.

"We wanted something people would remember and associate with Hayward, something they would see as they drove through town," Jones said. "We wanted to give people a reason to stop here. And I think it looks better driving through Hayward than it did five years ago."

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Poet

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The Grand Lake poet describes her debut collection as a journey from childhood to adulthood with poems written about her single mother, brothers and sisters, her growing up and her coming into her sexuality and sense of herself as a young woman.

The poems, often dealing with abusive relationships, took 10 years to complete.

"There was this sense of how do I tell my story but also hold the truth in such a way that honors and also sheds light on relationships and dysfunction in a family," she said.

White took her title from a nautical term describing disheveled rope or wire; she liked the double meanings of a sense of confusion coupled with a nest.

"It brought the emotional sense I have of home — confusion, security — but at the same time, it's

"It (poetry) is my first passion, and I can't let it go. When I get to the page and want to express myself, the poem is what arrives first."

— Arisa White, poet

where you bump against your edges and really learn what you're made of," White said.

Along with learning more about herself, White used "Hurrah's Nest" to honor her colorful family, sharing with readers the ways the siblings protected one another and encouraged each other to follow their dreams.

The book motivated broad conversations within White's family.

"I think, in the end, what has been most important is the healing that has come out of it, the ability for us to step out of our shame and our darkness," she said.

"That's one of the things I didn't know I was doing for my family."

Though White also

FOR YOUR INFO

Arisa White: www.arisawhite.com

"Hurrah's Nest": Virtual Artists Collective, \$15

"A Penny Saved": Willow Books, \$17.95

writes essays and has done some playwriting, it is always the lyricism of poetry that draws her back.

"It is my first passion, and I can't let it go," she said. "When I get to the page and want to express myself, the poem is what arrives first."

The NAACP nomination came as a surprise. Seeing her name among those of her peers, including U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey, was

hard for White to believe.

The 33-year-old author credits her 2006 arrival in Oakland as a catalyst for change and a turning point in her growth.

"It's been enlightening," she said. "I've gained perspective about myself, my family, my country by removing myself from everything that's been so familiar."

White continues to explore issues of conflict and growth, writing "A Penny Saved" to re-imagine the true story of Polly Mitchell, a woman held captive in her home for 10 years, and studying Caribbean mythology, in part to write letters to her biological father, originally from Guyana.

"I'm wanting to take these personal questions and enlarge them to think about the role of paternalism and how we are in relationship to ourselves and our larger world," White said. "I'm wanting to tackle these bigger issues; I haven't done that yet in my work, and I'm really wanting to challenge myself."

highest in five years. From 2008 through 2011, the numbers fluctuated from 27 in 2009 to 20 in 2011, then went up 95 percent in 2012.

A new mandatory training program started in 2011 for all incoming students at UC Berkeley that employs what is called "bystander intervention" for sexual assault, stalking and domestic violence could be a factor in Berkeley's increase in reports, said Allan Creighton, who manages the EmpowerU program at University Health Services at UC Berkeley.

Creighton said about 7,000 students have received the 90-minute presentation.

"The idea is to look at real-life situations that have happened at Cal and other campuses and to intervene when they see it happen," Creighton said. "There are

a lot of barriers to reporting (sexual assault), which means only 5 percent of people will tell UC staff, but up to two-thirds will tell best friends."

Creighton said the training urges those friends, who have been told of an assault, that they have a responsibility to report it or get the victim to report it.

"That has meant for UC campuses that there has been a rise in people reporting," Creighton said. "We try to demystify reporting as much as possible and give them the names of people who are very easy to report to. Students become more familiar with what it means to report and who to report to."

Doug Oakley covers Berkeley. Contact him at 510-843-1408. Follow him at Twitter.com/douglasOakley.

Challenge

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been before, it's a chance to discover them," says Emily Hopkins, a park district spokeswoman.

You don't have to be a fitness fanatic. There are walks for people of all levels.

In fact, there are several short loop easier walks. These include select trails in Coyote Hills and Quarry Lakes regional parks in Fremont; Iron Horse Regional Trail in Dublin; Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline in Oakland; Martinez Regional Shoreline; Garin/Dry Creek Pioneer Regional Parks in Hayward; and Tilden Regional Park in Berkeley.

"It's not like a marathon, which might be unattainable to some people," says Chris Abess, a board member of the East Bay Regional Parks Foundation.

"Everybody and anybody can enjoy the parks."

The Danville resident, his wife, Mary, daughter, Brooke, 9, and dog, Jiminy are Trails Challenge veterans. Abess said that taking hikes several times a week has taught his daughter to enjoy the outdoors. Unlike so many children, I might add, who spend all their time indoors on video games and mobile devices. Then we wonder why so many are obese.

We are also fortunate in the East Bay not to have frigid East Coast weather that makes going outside about as appetizing as having your fingernails plucked out.

So what are you waiting for? It's time to hit the trail.

Tammerlin Drummond is a columnist for the Bay Area News Group. Her column runs Tuesday and Sunday. Contact her at tdrummond@bayareanewsgroup.com or follow her at Twitter.com/Tammerlin.

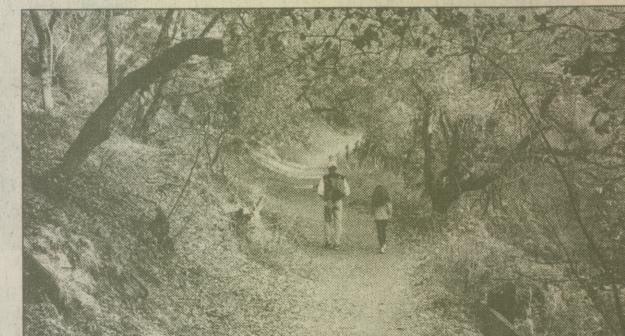


PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS ABESS

Chris Abess and his daughter, Brooke, enjoy a hike at Tilden Regional Park in Berkeley.

Rapes

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tims probably is much higher than the official number because victims don't always come forward.

"I don't think it's that easy to report a rape," Wengraf said. "There's a lot of stigma associated with it. I know it's complicated because it's one thing to report it and another to follow up and want to get an arrest. I think it's pretty alarming in a city like Berkeley to have that number up there. I think it needs to come back on people's radar."

Berkeley police Capt. Andrew Greenwood said the reports of rape in 2012 originated from neighborhoods primarily around the UC Berkeley campus,

where approximately 35,000 students live. About half of the cases involved drugs or alcohol, he said, and in almost all cases the victim and suspect knew each other. "Stranger rapes" are extremely rare, he said.

"It's impossible to know if this year is an indication of a trend or an outlier year," Greenwood said. "Time will tell, and we are monitoring it very closely."

Both Greenwood and police Chief Michael Meehan said the city is interested in working more closely with UC Berkeley officials on prevention and reporting education. UC Berkeley police investigated two rapes in 2011 and two in 2012 on university properties, said spokesman Eric Tejada.

The 2012 rape numbers were not just up over the year before, they were the

highest in five years. From 2008 through 2011, the numbers fluctuated from 27 in 2009 to 20 in 2011, then went up 95 percent in 2012.

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