

other kinds of sexual assault, rose from 20 in 2011 to 39 in 2012, ac-

Area Women Against Rape. "Our standard feeling is there certainly

down slightly. Blackstock, whose organiza-

tions are more trusting that they won't be blamed if they report an

See RAPES, Page 2

Top treasure in East Bay? It's the parks

I had vowed to go to the gym at least twice a week in 2013. Before I knew it, January was over. I had taken my exercise bag out of the trunk of my car where it lives maybe twice the entire month.

My fitness program was in desperate need of quick start.

So a few days ago, I signed up for the 2013 Trails Challenge sponsored by the East Bay Regional Parks Foundation.

In order to complete the challenge, you have to walk at least five of the 20 featured

trails in Alameda and Contra Costa counties or hike 26.2 miles over the course of the year. It's a self-paced program based on the honor system

where you go online and log your progress.

The program is free for all residents of Alameda and Contra Costa counties thanks to support from Kaiser Permanente. Some parks charge for parking, so check the website beforehand.

I logged my first 2.2 miles at Don Castro Regional Park on the Hayward and Castro Valley boundary. From Don Castro, you can access the Bay Area Ridge Trail and the Chabot-to-Garin Regional Trail, among more than five miles of trails in the Five Canyons Open Space. Breathing the fresh pine and taking in the sweeping vistas, I could feel my mind relax with every step. I tracked my progress on a pedometer app called Accupedo.

I took my dog along. One of the great things about the East Bay Regional Park District is that most of its parks are dog-friendly. Some allow dogs to roam off-leash as long as they are under voice command. Some parks charge a \$2 dog fee.

Don Castro and Five Canyons are just one tiny part of the massive district.

In the East Bay, we are blessed to have the largest urban regional park district in the country. There are 65 parks and more than 1,200 miles of trails. Unfortunately, a lot of the parks are not near public transportation. If you don't have a car, you have no way of getting to them. So it doesn't matter if they are free or not.

I am glad that the district has a program called Parks Express that provides low-cost transportation for low-income schools and groups that serve children from low-income families, seniors or people with disabilities.

We need to do everything we can to make this wonderful free public resource accessible to as many people as possible.

The goal of the trail challenge is to encourage Alameda and Contra Costa residents to take advantage of this treasure in our backyards. Last year, 10,000 people participated.

"For people who have spent a lot of time in the parks, this introduces them to new trails, and for people who've never

See CHALLENGE, Page 2

HAYWARD

Mural masterpieces

Fighting graffiti: Works designed to halt tagging featured in exhibit



ANDA CHU/STAFF ARCHIVES

Artist Andrew Kong Knight works on a mural in August 2011. He is one of seven muralists who will be featured in "Mural Hayward."



ARIC CRABB/STAFF

Artists Wythe Bowart and Josh Powell work on their Hayward Animal Shelter mural Thursday.

By Rebecca Parr

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HAYWARD — Blank walls that used to be an open invitation to taggers now support the creativity of muralists and their view of the city, its history and residents.

Motorists driving south on Foothill Boulevard and entering downtown are now welcomed by a bucolic view of the Hayward shoreline before the area was settled. Murals depict a 1930s vintage Hayward postcard and a salute to the shoreline community once known for its blues music and former name — Russell City. Other walls portray a view of downtown through a magnifying glass, an homage to the city's Latin heritage and vignettes of notable buildings and

'MURAL HAYWARD'

Exhibit featuring work of seven muralists

Where: Foothill Arts of the Bay Gallery, 22394 Foothill Blvd., Hayward

When: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays

Through: Feb. 23

Details: <http://haywardarts.org>

locales.

The murals are featured in an exhibit, "Mural Hayward," which runs through Feb. 23 at the Foothill Arts of the Bay Gallery. The display includes photos, tools, sketches and information about the work of

See MURALISTS, Page 2

ARISA WHITE

Grand Lake poet explores growing up in collection

Work is nominated for NAACP Image Award

By Marta Yamamoto
Correspondent

OAKLAND — As a poet, Arisa White is not afraid to tackle important issues, something she has demonstrated in her coming-of-age memoir, "Hurrah's Nest," a collection of poems that examines

the troubles and joys of growing up in Brooklyn, N.Y., as the second-eldest of seven siblings.

To read this collection and listen to White articulate her long journey is to recognize a deep literary talent and understand why "Hurrah's Nest" was nominated for an NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work in Poetry.

See POET, Page 2



COURTESY OF SAMANTHA FLORIO

Author Arisa White has lived in Oakland since 2006.

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JON FURNISS/INVISION/AP

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