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Sweet and sappy: Kalamazoo Nature Center holds Maple Sugar Fest. Kalamazoo Nature Center's Maple Sugar Fest Sunday included maple syrup production, a pancake breakfast and nature demonstrations. Pictured above, brothers Andy Barkman, 7, and Alex Barkman, 5, of Kalamazoo, sample the maple sap right at the tree during the festival. Photo: John A. Lacko | Special to Kalamazoo Gazette

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Holland: Black River students take art show awards

Friday, March 14, 2008

By Myron Kukla
The Grand Rapids Press

HOLLAND -- Two Black River students took Best of Show and First Place honors in this year's Debut Awards, presented by the Holland Area Art Council at the annual high school student art show Thursday night at the Padnos Gallery.

Cassidy Stock, a senior at Black River High School, received Best of Show for her oil painting titled "Dunce," while junior Molly Miller won first place for her digital image "Suffer for Fashion."

"I think it's very cool to have two of our students finish as the top two award winners in the show," said art instructor Peter Middleton, noting the best Black River had finished in previous council shows was a second place.

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"Cassidy is a senior and headed for art school, so this will look great in her portfolio," Middleton said.

The free juried art exhibit runs through April 30 at the Holland Area Arts Center, 150 E. Eighth St.

Emily Chilvers, of Zeeland East, received third place for "Boardwalk," and Mackenzie Craymer, also of Zeeland East, was awarded fourth place for "Vase With Oranges."

Honorable mentions went to: Amanda Barto, of West Ottawa, for "Katrina Refugees"; Jacey VanDyke, of Jenison for "Out of Reach"; Whitney Williams, of Saugatuck, for "Self"; Alexandra Munch, of Saugatuck, for "After Matisse"; Brittany Lacy,

of Saugatuck, for "The Color of Friendship"; and Chad Volkers, of Holland Christian, for "Tedium No. 24."

The winners were selected from more than 400 art pieces submitted from high school art programs in West Michigan.

"This is always one of the strongest exhibits of our season," said Lorna Freestone, the council's executive director. "The show is always fresh, exciting and dynamic -- and this year's show is no exception."

"I have to say it was a pretty intimidating task to select just 100 pieces from all of the wonderful works submitted," said Saugatuck-based artist John Leben who juried this year's show.

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"What I looked for in the juried selection was art that really grabbed me, craftsmanship in the work, and for pieces that had more than one meaning for the viewer."

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Just being selected for inclusion in the show is an honor for students said Saugatuck art teacher Christa Wise.

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"When I tell a student they have talent, they think I have to say that because I'm their teacher," she said. "But when they have their art selected to be shown in art gallery from among the works of hundreds of other artists, it is validation for these students they are really doing great work."

"I couldn't believe mine was picked for the show," Soma Honda, an exchange student from Chiba, Japan, enrolled at West Ottawa High School, of his digital print titled "Cubist Geisha."

"I was just doing it for myself, but my teacher thought it was very good and sent it for the show," he said.



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