

Listy's school wins state award for one of four best middle schools in California

Recently we received an E-mail from Listy, as follows

They had 40 applicants this year and chose seven to visit. From the seven they visited they selected four schools. Over the last three years, they have selected a total of 14 schools in the state of California to earn this recognition. So we'll fly up to San Jose in March and Wash. D.C. in June to talk about our program and share it with other principals and educators. Listy

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O'CONNELL ANNOUNCES CALIFORNIA'S 2006 MODEL MIDDLE SCHOOLS

SACRAMENTO – State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell announced today the names of four middle schools designated as California's 2006 Schools To Watch—Taking Center Stage model middle schools. All of the models have replicable practices in academic excellence, responsiveness to the developmental needs of young adolescents, fair and equitable education for all students, and organizational processes and procedures that foster and sustain academic growth.

"It is a pleasure to congratulate these outstanding middle schools and to designate them as California's 2006 Schools To Watch—Taking Center Stage model middle schools," said O'Connell. "This year our designated schools are geographically spread out from one end of the state to the other and represent the rich diversity of learners in California."

This year's designees are:

- **Gaspar De Portola Middle School**, San Diego City Schools, San Diego, San Diego County, **Principal Elizabeth Gillingham;**
- **R. H. Dana Middle School**, Wiseburn School District, Hawthorne, Los Angeles County, Principal Matthew Wunder;
- **McKinleyville Middle School**, McKinleyville Union School District, McKinleyville, Humboldt County, Principal Douglas Oliveira, and
- **Toby Johnson Middle School**, Elk Grove Unified School District, Elk Grove, Sacramento County, Principal Patrick S. McDougall.

Formal recognition will be given to the model schools, which join 10 other schools selected in previous cycles, at the annual California League of Middle Schools Conference in San Jose, March 9-12. There, the four schools will be given their first opportunity to showcase themselves and network with other middle schools from around the state.

As part of the designation process, schools submitted an application and completed a self-assessment last fall; each site was visited by a review team during January. Implementation of the recommendations and guidance given in California's middle grades handbook, *Taking Center Stage*, were some of the primary factors considered during the application process.

The minimum eligibility criteria for this year's designees was to have attained a 2004 Base Academic Performance Index (API) of at least 696 (the state's median API in 2004 for middle schools) or meet all API growth targets for the previous three years. In addition to these indicators of academic growth, the schools conducted an extensive self-study, completed a narrative application, and hosted a visitation team to their site. Designated models have strong articulated practices for diverse student populations that other middle schools can replicate.

A virtual tour of all previously designated model middle schools is available at <http://www.clms.net>. Schools were selected as model schools exemplifying the criteria for a high-performing middle school developed by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform. They also reflect the principles of *Taking Center Stage: A Commitment to Standards-Based Education for California's Middle Grade Students*.

We congratulate Listy and her staff for this achievement, and look forward to an account of her visits to San Jose and Washington.

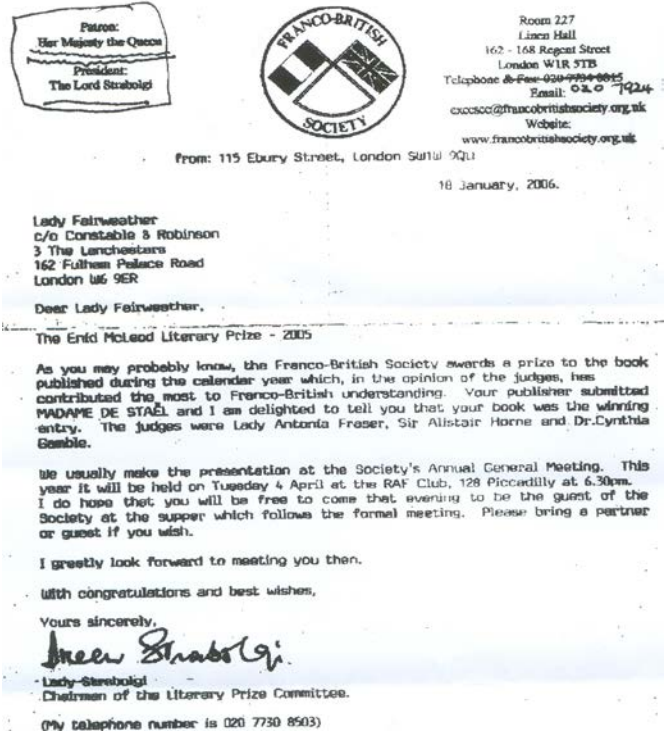
The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch the News

March, 2006

Grandma's niece wins award for latest book "Madame de Stael"

Recently Grandma received a letter from her sister-in-law, Isa Merica, who lives in Athens. With the letter she enclosed a copy of the Franco-British Society letter announcing the award.



1/28/06

My dear Frank & Edith
Do hope that Edith is well,
back on her feet.

I am sending you a copy of
Maria's (my eldest daughter)
great achievement! I know that
Edith will be as proud of her niece
as I am. I believe, Margaret met her
and Patrick during her tour in
Europe, ages ago.

The book is available in U.S.A.
Of course, you could find it through
the internet as well, if you
are interested.

Love to all the family
Isa

Maria, (now Lady Maria Fairweather, wife of Sir Patrick Fairweather) is the eldest daughter of Romulus Merica, Grandma's eldest brother (deceased) and Isa (Isabelle) Merica. Some of our family members have met Isa, who occasionally visits her youngest son, Michael, who lives in Vista.



Isa and Romulus



Maria



Maria in Iran, 1956



Grandma reads book



The picture at left was taken in 2000, when Isa visited Michael, Linda, and family. We were able to get the book through the internet, using the Amazon network.

Grandpa has not yet started the book, but his brief examination reveals that it is a biography of a real person, Madam de Stael, who was born in 1766. Her maiden name was Ann Louise Germaine Necker. In 1786 she married a Swedish diplomat, Eric de Stael. During most of her life she was in France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. She made her reputation as a brilliant writer whose thoughts had an important influence on European politics. She died in Paris on July 14th, 1817.

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Curtis Hartman visits parents/family – answers questions in interview

On February 25, 2006 we had a chance to interview Curtis, who was visiting his parents while on leave from his current duty station in South Korea.

RFNL - What can you tell us about your military duties in Korea?

My military duty in Korea primarily is liaison with local government officials, broken up into two groups: Korean military intelligence groups and Korean police forces. These are the two main groups we work with. My main mission with them is to exchange military intelligence, primarily anti-terrorism information, because the Korean government is relatively new at combating terrorism. Of course, we do a lot of training on that subject, also.



We deal with them on investigations of people who reside in Korea who are from predominantly Muslim countries. We help the local government find indications of terrorist activities. That's about it.

RFNL - What does the local population think about the presence of American military in South Korea?

That's an interesting question. The older generation, mostly those who fought in the Korean war or those who came directly after or the children of those who fought remember what things were like and so they are very appreciative of U.S. soldiers in South Korea. The younger generation, college students and others like that often are very opposed to the presence of U.S. troops in South Korea. Student groups, like the Hon Chon Yon, which is a nation wide steering group, have as a goal the reunification of North and South Korea, and are very opposed to the U.S. troops in South Korea – So, it's a very difficult climate. A good example was when a group of Hon Chon Yon students were attempting to pull down a statue of General MacArthur located in Inchon. An older Korean man, who had fought in the war, came up and started hitting them with his cane, and drove them away from the statue. They were disgracing their American brothers who had saved South Korea. So, it's a very interesting climate.

RFNL - What does the local population think about the separation of Korea into two segments, the North and the South?

That is a very difficult subject in South Korea. They do not like the North Korean government because it is very abusive

to its people. However, they do not hate the North Korean people. They are their uncles, aunts, cousins, brothers, etc, so it's a very sensitive subject in South Korea. They have had from the late 90's what is called a sunshine policy in the government, which includes a lot of financial aid given to North Korea. However, there are fears that a lot of it is being redirected toward the military, so it's a very difficult climate. They really feel for the military and people, but it is very difficult for them to be able to sort of give them everything they would want or really as much as they would want.

RFNL - How extensive is the South Korean military presence in Korea, and is it well trained and equipped? How about the North?

The South Korea military is predominantly made up of young men serving out their four years of mandatory service. The people who serve their mandatory four years are adequate soldiers – as much as they can get from conscripts. They live in very harsh conditions and endure a lot. They are paid next to nothing. They make about 12 – 20 dollars a month, depending on their rank. The professional army, those who stay in, is very good. They are there because they chose to be there, and they are very good at their jobs. They are an advanced, sophisticated, professional army. South Korea is changing their army to more and more of a shift to a professional all volunteer army, but without reducing their numbers. If that were to take place you would see an army very similar to the U.S. Right now they are similar to the U.S. army in the 1930's, in terms of personnel. About their equipment – a lot of the equipment they get is from America. It's good equipment, M 16's, infantry equipment, some of the older Kevlar vests, (which are good in fragmentation but won't stop a bullet) Abrams tanks. They are starting to develop a more sophisticated air force and navy, although that is in the younger phases. North Korea has the largest military force in the world, they number about 750,000. North Korea military has a lot of infantry. How well equipped they are depends on who you listen to. The North Koreans of course say they have an advanced nuclear threat. They have ballistic missals and artillery. They say that their infantry can shoot down Cruise missiles. How much is true you don't really know. We know they are big.... there are a lot of them. We know their special operations forces are good, and they number over 80,000. We don't know how well equipped and well fed they are.

RFNL - How good is the local economy? Is unemployment a problem?

No, in South Korea the economy is doing very well. There is some unemployment but it is not nearly as prevalent as in the U.S. If anything, there is a lower end labor shortage. There are a lot of jobs South Koreans see as being sort of unclean, or they just don't want to do them, like factory jobs or things like that. So, they will hire in large groups of people from all kinds of nations, often times Muslims from Pakistan or

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Indonesia. They bring them in as sort of lower level factory workers, on a one year contract.

RFNL - Tell us about life in a Korean city: shopping, movies, entertainment, restaurants, sports, etc.

It's very much like the west – it's a westernized place. They have movie theaters, shopping malls, great department stores that are equivalent to Nordstrom or Saks. So, it's very similar to being in America except that people speak Korean. Restaurants are mostly Korean. You will find some American restaurants and they are a little more expensive. Meat in general is expensive. Sports – they have baseball leagues and baseball is very popular here, as is golf and tennis, some of the more popular sports. Entertainment – You can go and watch American movies in Korean movie theatres, they'll usually have Korean subtitles at the bottom. Entertainment – We went to see a musical at the local opera house . It was in English and was a lot of fun.

RFNL How extensive and efficient is the school system. Is most of the population literate? Is knowledge of English or other languages common?

The school system in Korea is very interesting. It is very heavily controlled by teacher unions, which is both good and bad. Students are driven very hard. In middle school you basically select whether or not you want to go to a sort of arts/humanities path or a science/math path. The choice that you make at that point in time guides you all the way through your schooling, into college, and to your career. It is basically mandatory in Korea to attend after school private tutoring, called hochwan. You basically reinforce whatever education you are getting in school. It is also required for every student in Korea to learn English from very young all the way up. Many are very willing and eager to practice English if you speak to them, so it's pretty common to see. Also, at the college level we see a lot of classes in Spanish and Chinese.



RFNL - We understand you recently received an award for a presentation on the work you are doing. Can you tell us about it?

Yes, it was a coin I got from a Lt. Col. In charge of a signal battalion. It's an annual training award they are supposed to give, and I did a very good job of presenting the material and trying to make it interesting. It was an hour or so presentation. I had to work with them because they informed us in the morning and I had to get down to a half hour, so I had to be flexible to stay on top of that. He was very appreciative of that so at the end of my presentation he



came up and presented me with the coin. It is a gift to show appreciation, saying how you did a good job. It was really nice, pretty cool.

RFNL - How much longer will you be serving in Korea, and where might you be sent next?

The date I leave Korea is August 16, 2008, quite a ways from now. When I go from there I really don't know. I haven't set down and worked with my branch manager to determine where I will go next. There are a couple of possibilities I am interested in – going to Fort Meade, which is in Maryland, maybe going back to Fort Huachuca, in Arizona, or possibly staying in Korea up until I leave the army. So, they are all options I am looking at, but two years is a long ways away, so....

RFNL - SUSAN – How are things going with your college work, and what are your special interests and plans

It's kind of interesting right now because I'm looking to finish as quickly and efficiently as possible. Right now I probably have a couple more years to finish my two majors, music and physics. Knowing that Curtis is going to be gone for so long is hard because I really want to be where he is. It's kind of up in the air whether I'm going to stay here or whether or not I'm going to come back to San Diego. I may possibly go overseas, and then return for a while. I'm trying to figure that stuff out. Sometimes I really don't know...just get it done. I want to spend as much time with him as I can. I hope to be able to visit him this summer, hopefully for the entire summer, or as long as we can afford, and see what happens next.

RFNL - CURTIS - Now that you are off to a good start in your military career, do you have any career advice for your cousins?

I don't know if I am qualified to give career advice. The military turned out to be a good experience for me. It's frustrating at times, very frustrating, but it can be a lot of fun and a very good job. Whether or not I'm going to stay and be able to forever...I really don't know. I will take whatever I have learned in the army and apply it to different things. It's not for everyone but for some people the military can be a great help and a great way to get you started on going to some very interesting and exciting places.

Thanks, Curtis, for all the interesting things you have told us about your life in South Korea. The family wishes all the best for you and Susan, and we look forward to your next visit to San Diego.

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Donors replace Encanto school fund

Dear Corporate Headquarters,

I am writing you to alert you of a situation that I think you will want to resolve. It involves a US bank playing a role in taking money from an inner city poor school, Encanto Elementary in San Diego. (Encanto Elementary, 822 65th St., San Diego CA 92114) I saw the news program on channel 10 news and contacted the school to learn the name of the bank that was acting in such an unethical way. The show reported the bank as having no comment. The last time I checked if two signatures were required to cash a check and only one signature was provided and it this signature did not match the signature on file, the bank is in error and should return the money to the Encanto School. This is really a very bad mark on an otherwise good bank. Here is the story on channel 10

<http://www.10news.com/news/6407388/detail.html>

I understand the bank has agreed to match the highest donation and a good citizen donated 4,000 so that they could get back their 8,000. The US Bank owes this school 4,000 and I hope you will resolve this problem.. As faculty at Pepperdine University and online instructor in Educational Technology I reach the leaders in this field. The web makes it possible to share a story like this with a larger number of people very quickly. But I would like to think that you will want to look into this and resolve it because this is about public schools. The schools belong to all of us and I am sure that you will care as much about this problem as I do. It affects the lives of kids. Please let me know if you can resolve this matter. The amount is small to you, but huge to the teachers and students from Encanto, who work with so little to do so much good.

Margaret Riel
Concerned Citizen

Dear Margaret Riel,

Thank you for using U.S. Bank's email service. We do understand the disposition that this has put the school in. If the school has filed a fraud case we will be working to resolve the case for them. This is shame that a former janitor of Encanto Elementary has done this to the school and the community. If you would like to talk about this further please contact our media relations group at 612-303-0784. They would be happy to talk to you about this situation. Thank you for voicing your concerns. Please let us know if you have any other questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Cristy
U.S. Bank 24-Hour Banking and Financial Sales



Encanto's New Friends

THANK YOU,

Thanks to your very generous donation, Mom and Dad, and many other people including, current teachers' families, Teacher's that used to teach at Encanto, parents, kids that used to attend Encanto, and Channel 10's spot adding new friends' of Encanto, we have just over \$12000.00 back in our ASB account! The best part had to be the really nice letters we received and knowing that people do care about us. We had a Thank You assembly for all the people that donated money along with Channel 10 to do a follow up story. It was a really neat day for Encanto's kids to see the faces of people from all over including a representative from Barbara Boxer's office from Sacramento, and various other people that gave to our cause. There were some very inspiration speakers and stories. My favorite was from the 5th graders at Birdrock Elementary in La Jolla. They heard that the money we had earned for our 5th grade promotion had been taken and they felt bad for us so decided to donate half of what ever they earn from their weekly bake sales ending in April. Parents in the area are giving a little extra towards our cause and they think it will be about \$400.00! It's means a little more when kids help kids. Also, a retired law enforcement agent saw our story on channel 10 the same day he received an unexpected check. He knows our schools' area and stopped by and gave us a check for \$4000.00 which turned out to be two fold as the bank said they couldn't afford to give us everything back but would match our largest check!

Thanks again for all the nice emails and words from everyone in the family...YOU ARE WONDERFUL!
Carol
A HAPPY ENDING TO THE STORY !!!!!

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Jessica celebrates birthday and departure for her new job

On March 3rd Jessica was honored with a party, held at Emilanos Mexican Restaurant on Mission Gorge Road. A group of family and friends enjoyed a delicious Mexican buffet dinner. The occasion was twofold, first a birthday and then a farewell as Jessica will be leaving for Houston, Texas to begin her flight attendant training with Continental Airlines. She will be working hard to learn her new duties. One of the tasks is to memorize the symbols for all the cities she will be visiting. Her class, about thirty beginners, will be housed in a hotel, and the instruction period is about one month. Upon completion, she will take up residence in Newark, New Jersey. We wish the best for her, and look forward to some reports as she travels about the world. Carol and Jeff are already looking forward to some bargain air travel available to flight attendants parents. We had a great time at the party, and everyone wished her well in her new career. (and a HAPPY BIRTHDAY)



G'Day Mate!

March 10, 2006 Australia is Beautiful and I feel very much at home here! The trip over was long but the time went by very quickly. I watched half of the first season of Grey's Anatomy on my DVD player, Lani, thank you for that! So far, I have given a presentation to the sales staff for the distributor, and it went very well. They are already adding in more

workshops for when I return. I am definitely getting the VIP treatment and it is a blast here. Sunday I have the day off and we are going to the Brisbane zoo. I will look out for the kangaroos and local animals. I hear we are flying over to Melbourne for the commonwealth games, like our Olympics. That should be really fun! Miss all of you and wish you were here. I have prep day for my big show on Tuesday, today, and I hope everything goes well. This is a huge production with dancers and about 12 models besides. I am not stressing too much about it but it will feel good to get today under my belt. We are eating at fabulous restaurants and the food is unbelievably good. I have

managed to avoid the dreaded vegemite, but I think I will have to try some before I return. Thanks to all of you with your patience and support for me. I cannot tell you how lucky I feel to have all of you behind me. This opportunity comes from years of practice on all of you, hahahaha. Thanks again for that and more! **FRANCIE**

Tim Riel planning cross-country bike ride this summer — Recently we received a nice letter from Tim, and it included some information on his planned participation in the Bike and Build program. We do not have space to print the entire letter, so we have selected the paragraphs describing the plan.

The trip, called Bike and Build, will bring me and 29 other energetic students together on a 4000 mile trip from Portsmouth, N.H. to Vancouver, B.C. to raise money to build affordable housing units for low income families. While on the road we will meet with members of the communities we pass through, inform them about our trip and the affordable housing issue, and help them become involved in efforts to alleviate the problem. There will be several days when we will take a break from riding and help in the actual construction of affordable homes with Habitat for Humanity and other local housing organizations. In order to participate in Bike and Build, each cyclist must raise \$4000. The proceeds will be distributed to affordable housing groups throughout the United States to finance projects executed by young adults.....During the course of the trip we as riders will evaluate and discuss the applications and – as a group – decide which proposals to fund. I am writing to ask for your supporting sponsoring me by making a tax-deductible contribution. Your donation, together with contributions from hundreds of other concerned citizens, will have a serious impact on the affordable housing landscape throughout the country. Please take a look at our website, www.bikeandbuild.org for more information. As part of my commitment to the Bike and Build, I will be working with them until the start of the trip, learning about affordable housing issues and – of course – helping to build homes....To make a donation go to the web site and click the "Make a Donation" link, via PayPal donate there. Be sure and put my name in the "Payment For" field on the PayPal page. It's exciting for me to have this opportunity to see the U.S. in such an interesting way, as well as finding myself in the service of a great cause. I hope you will consider making this donation, and thank you in advance for your support. Sounds great, Tim, good luck and keep in touch!!

ISO
Invitation

Salon Support would like to invite you to attend an evening not to be missed. The evening will include a full demonstration from International Platform Artist, Francie Sorem and will feature the latest texture, cut and colour techniques, using the new ISO range.

International Platform Artist
Francie Sorem
ISO Artistic Creative Team Francie Sorem loves to communicate, and not just with words. For more than 30 years, she has spoken to others with her innovative cut, colour and texture techniques. On stage as a member of the ISO Artistic Creative Team, she reaches out to her audience in hope of finding its core.

- Full Show Includes: Professional models from Katz Management
- Models clothing: Natalie Denning and Forza
- Entertainment: Cuba to Brazil and Raw Metal

Date: Monday the 13th of March 2006
Venue: The Tivoli
52 Costin Street
Fortitude Valley
Time: Arrival 6.30pm to 7.00 pm
Show commences at 7.15 pm
Cost: \$25 per person
RSVP: Monday the 6th of March

Food and Drinks available at bar prices.
To confirm your seat payment in full is required before the event. No refund is available once the payment has been processed.

To book your place contact Salon Support PH: 07 3397 3933