



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer
Dallas High School student Ami Pope reads her first poem Thursday at Ink Blot's poetry slam. *Ink Blot*, the school's literary magazine, hosts an event each month.

Dallas High's literary magazine hosts events for creative expression

By **Jolene Guzman**
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Jeff Baer, a Dallas High School English teacher, had two words of wisdom for former DHS student Emily Moore after she read one of her poems.

"Publish it."

The poem was entitled "Two first-class tickets to Australia, please," and Moore read the piece at Thursday's *Ink Blot* poetry slam contest at Dallas High.

Ink Blot is the school's popular literary magazine, which holds either an open mic night or poetry slam in DHS's "little theater" every month.

"But you are not sorry," Moore read, a sudden forcefulness in her

voice. "And if you were, you would have called. You would have told me Merry Christmas or happy birthday, but you didn't and you won't. But that's OK because I've replaced you like you did me."

Baer and Charlotte Fisher, *Ink Blot* interim adviser and also a Dallas High English teacher, served as judges for the competition, offering the young poets critiques.

They playfully fought over who should speak first after Moore's reading. Fisher won.

"It was so powerful," she said. "It was very well done ... all the way through. You

did an excellent job."

Moore, a recent DHS graduate and sophomore at Chemeketa Community College, wrote the piece, about her father, just days before the poetry slam.

Thursday was the first time she read and received constructive criticism before an audience.

"I just recently got into poetry," said Moore, a former *Ink Blot* editor. "Getting their feedback will help me grow. I'm looking at becoming an

English teacher and getting that will help me grow as a writer, therefore leading to me being more effective as a teacher in the future."

Thursday's event was short on attendance and participation —

which is not typical — but heavy on artistic talent. Many of the poems, like Moore's, were intensely personal — all the more powerful because of the emotions they hinted at.

"Here's the strength of that poem, you have a lot of really personal things in there that we can't know exactly what you mean, but the beauty of poetry is that it's ambiguous,"

Baer said to Moore. "We have to kind of guess at what those things are and we start to place our own understanding of what it means into it. That's what

"Open your eyes.
Hear me speak.
Open your eyes.
Listen to me please.
There's three words.
That are great.
That are common.
That are ambiguous.
What three words?
A grand puzzle?"

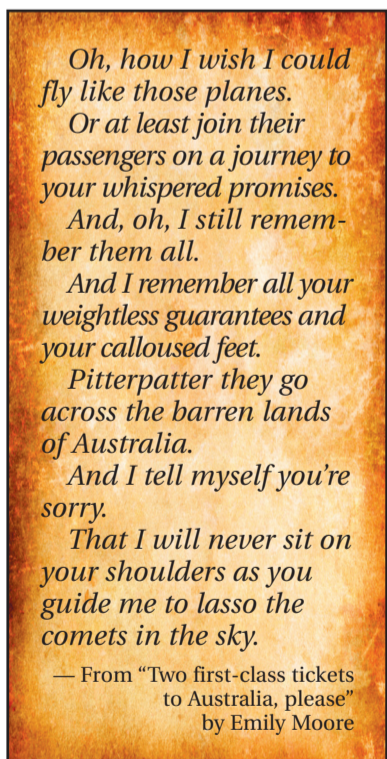
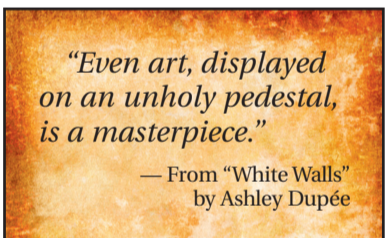
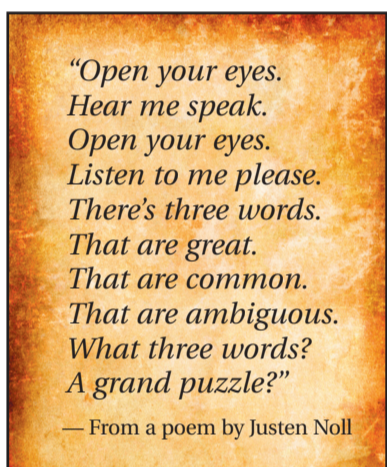
— From a poem by Justen Noll

"Even art, displayed
on an unholy pedestal,
is a masterpiece."

— From "White Walls"
by Ashley Dupée

Oh, how I wish I could
fly like those planes.
Or at least join their
passengers on a journey to
your whispered promises.
And, oh, I still remember
them all.
And I remember all your
weightless guarantees and
your calloused feet.
Pitterpatter they go
across the barren lands
of Australia.
And I tell myself you're
sorry.
That I will never sit on
your shoulders as you
guide me to lasso the
comets in the sky.

— From "Two first-class tickets
to Australia, please"
by Emily Moore



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer
Philip North listens to a critique of his poem and performance. Critiques are a key part of the poetry contests.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer
Judges, and teachers, Charlotte Fisher, left, and Jeff Baer, were impressed with the quality of the poetry read Thursday, but still offered tips for young writers.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer
Shealyn Ihne and Ashley Dupée take in judges' comments after Dupée's emotional reading of her poem "White Walls" Thursday night at Dallas High School.

really good poetry does."

As Thursday's showing demonstrated, there's no shortage of good poets roaming the halls of Dallas High School.

Fisher said poetry slams are experiencing a resurgence in popularity, largely due to people posting videos on social media.

"It's like we are beatniks again," said Shealyn Ihne, *Ink Blot*'s club president. "It's trendy."

The event suffered from a lack of advertisement and only drew six competitors, but usually there are around 20 poets and 50 people in the audience, Fisher said.

Ihne won the last poetry slam and said reading her poems in front of a crowd has helped her grow as a poet and person.

"It's fantastic," she said. "It's definitely good for self-confidence and it's nice to

get feedback."

Fisher said, in her opinion, the criticism offered by poetry slam contest judges is a necessary part of the event.

"These are people who are serious about fine-tuning their craft and I think it would be a disservice not

to give them that," she said. Ihne hopes the poetry slams — originally suggested by last year's adviser, Erich Berg, in the spring — will become a regular event.

"This year, we really like this, so we are trying to keep doing it," Ihne said.

LUCKIAMUTE DOMESTIC WATER COOPERATIVE BOARD MEETING
Monday 7:00 p.m.
March 9th
503-838-2075
Location: Business Office
8585 Suver Rd. • Monmouth

Sudoku Solution

4	5	6	2	7	3	8	9	1
2	8	1	6	4	9	3	5	7
7	9	3	8	1	5	2	6	4
9	6	2	5	8	1	7	4	3
8	3	4	7	6	2	5	1	9
1	7	5	3	9	4	6	2	8
6	1	8	4	2	7	9	3	5
5	2	9	1	3	8	4	7	6
3	4	7	9	5	6	1	8	2

24 hour Service **squirrels Taxi Service Inc.** **Pick up & Drop Off**

Merlin D. Berkey (971) 240-1208

Furniture Upholstery

All types: for homes, offices, equipment. Also, repairs, RV cushions, slipcovers, High Quality since 1966

Winters Sewing
503-838-4999 or 503-375-9266
440 E. St • Independence, OR 97351
Serving Polk County 16yrs

www.winterssewing.com