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# ECHS Archiving Project Newsletter

**Newsletter Issue XXX**

**April 2012**

## What's Below

Justin Tipping '03

Sergeant Rex

Creedence Fans

Memorial

## World Wide Fans

Recently, on a bright, sunny day, 12 Creedence Clearwater Revival fans from Belgium, Germany, Spain and Switzerland visited El Cerrito High School to learn more about some of our schools' distinguished alumni. They wore jackets and shirts with their musical heroes emblazoned on them.



**2003 GAUCHO GRAD WORLD  
PREMIERES AT BERLIN  
INTERNATIONAL FILM  
FESTIVAL!**

Justin Tipping grew up in El Cerrito. His graduate thesis short film, NANI, was one of fourteen shorts screened at the Berlin International Film Festival in February. He directed and co-wrote the script inspired by his own relationship with his grandmother.

For those who aren't familiar with Creedence Clearwater Revival, here is a brief history. Brothers Tom and John Fogerty, Stu Cook and Doug Clifford met while attending Portola Junior High School. They became friends and, with their mutual love of music, formed The Blue Velvets. After a while they changed their names to The Golliwogs to be followed by Creedence Clearwater Revival.

Joann Steck-Bayat, Kathie Weinstein, and David Bilyeu showed them around the ECHS museum, gave them a history of the original El Cerrito High School and a tour of the new school. After meeting with Principal David Luongo and seeing the theater, the group enjoyed seeing the music department's showcase and studios. They were amazed that the school had such a grand facility. A couple of people commented that in their countries, there were no facilities for students to take music until they went to the universities. While showing them pictures of the former school, Kathie was asked which was her favorite Creedence song and the group gave an impromptu performance of "Proud Mary." (Creedence would have been proud!)

The group also had the opportunity to see the library and a display of every year book in ECHS history. (Several people said that they have some of our yearbooks, which they bought on

His work focuses on conflicting emotions with teens struggling with identity, peers and searching where they fit in society. A dilemma faced in every family and every society.

Maryanne Redpath, Generations Program Director from Berlin states, "As soon as we saw NANI during the selection process we knew it would be an instant favorite with the Generation 14plus audiences...NANI is deeply humane. It deals with serious topics in a warm and humorous way, it is about individual freedom and boundaries of society. It is compassionate and loving towards all its characters..."

The film is twenty-one minutes and is about Oscar, a graffiti artist, (played by newcomer Johnny Ortiz) who does community service at a nursing home. There he meets Isabel, an 84 year old woman challenged with dementia. Tsai Chin, who appeared in The Joy Luck Club and whose acting career spans over five decades, plays Isabel. The two form an unexpected friendship.

Locally, NANI, screened at San Jose Cinequest and the San Francisco International Asian-American Film Festival. Recently, NANI, was one of six shorts showcased at the Directors Guild Academy in Los Angeles, awarded Best Short Film at the San Diego Latino Film Festival and has been selected as a finalist for the Golden Reel Awards for Excellence in Short Film at the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival.

Justin attended UC Santa Barbara and earned his bachelor's in film and media studies. He completed his MFA in Directing from the American Film Institute in June 2011. Currently, he is co-writing a feature which he hopes to film in the bay area.

eBay!) Proceeding along the second floor they saw the Career Center, James Morehouse Center and the Tech Labs, where a teacher explained the curriculum. The group had the opportunity to see the various Archiving Projects showcases and students milling around and to peek into some of the classrooms. They were impressed with the sports showcase near the gym, the Hall of Fame photos and the gyms.

After a visit to the cafeterias, it was time to say our goodbyes. They were going to spend the rest of their time seeing the homes where the boys lived, Fantasy Studios were they recorded, and the "El Cerrito's Music Scene" paver of Creedence on San Pablo Avenue at Columbia Street.

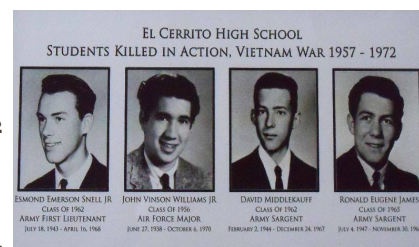
Before they left, they presented us with a box of Belgium chocolates and a scarf with John Fogerty on one side and Rockin' All Over the World on the other side. We will soon be adding the scarf to our school museum.

They were here in America to connect as much as possible with their music idols. We thank these special visitors for coming to see ECHS. They were all appreciative of us for sharing our school and knowledge of Creedence.

### Another Vietnam War Causality, Esmond Emerson Snell Jr ECHS '62, Identified

The school's museum has a section devoted to World War II, Korean and Vietnam ECHS graduates who gave their lives for our country.

The ECHS Vietnam War memorial includes John Vinson Williams, Jr Class of 1956, David Middlekauff Class of 1962 and Ronald Eugene James Class of 1965.



We look forward to someday screening NANI here at home!

A new classmate joins their group.

According the Vietnam War Memorial website, Esmond Snell Jr was an Army First Lieutenant serving as an operations and training staff officer.

He started his Vietnam tour August 26, 1967 and lost his life April 16, 1968 in armed ground combat. He was 24 years old. He was a member of the ECHS Class of 1962.

Please visit the museum to see the new memorial to Army First Lieutenant Esmond Emerson Snell Jr.

A thank you to 1961 graduate, BJ Kortright, for identifying Esmond Snell as a Vietnam War causality. If you may know of other war casualties, please let us know at jsbayat1@comcast.net.

## Quick Links

[ECHS Website](#)

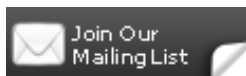
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## Packed House for El Cerrito High Grad Who Wrote "Sergeant Rex" Book

Among El Cerrito High alums who've achieved distinction is former Marine Mike Dowling, who spoke in Kensington Monday about the amazing stories behind his book,

BEN RUST MEMORIAL CONCERT  
October 20, 2012  
7pm  
ECHS Performing Arts Center

The ECHS concert band will play host to world class cellist Rebecca Rust, daughter of Ben Rust, who taught at the high school in the 60's. Rebecca will play number of solos and accompany the ECHS Wind Ensemble.

BEN RUST (1913-1974)

The students of El Cerrito High School dedicated the 1965 Yearbook to Ben Rust.



This dedication describes Mr. Rust being an educator, author, historian and craftsman and being a prominent figure in the faculty of ECHS and in the community. Mr. Rust began teaching in 1939 after graduation from University of California, Berkeley in 1938. During World War II he was an engineer, ship fitter and a draftsman.

He was President of the California Federation of Teachers for seven years. Before his state level position, he was president at the local and county levels.

In 1958, Mr. Rust wrote a paper titled Study on the Costs of Classroom Instruction. The result of his paper and presentation to the State Senate Special Committee on Government Administration was the passing of two state education laws. He was educational consultant for the Senate Governmental Administration and Efficiency Committees for three years and served on several national advisory boards in education. In 1974, the El Cerrito Jaycees honored outstanding community leaders, awarding Ben Rust the 'Outstanding High School Educator' award.

Mr. Rust's vocation was teaching, his avocation sculpturing. He has made twelve violins, one viola and one cello and numerous pieces, representational and abstract.

REBECCA RUST

Cellist Rebecca Rust, daughter of Ben Rust, former El Cerrito High School teacher, lives in Germany with her bassoonist husband Friedrich Edelmann. After studying with Margaret Rowell in Berkeley, Bernard Greenhouse in New York and Mstislav Rostropovich, she has been concertizing regularly in Europe, Asia and America. In November 2010 she was invited to perform for Their

"Sergeant Rex: The Unbreakable Bond Between a Marine and His Military Working Dog."

It's probably rare that an El Cerrito High School grad gives a talk about his recent book on the same day that his subject makes national news.

But that was the case Monday night when ex-Marine Mike Dowling told a packed house the story behind his 2011 book, Sergeant Rex: The Unbreakable Bond Between a Marine and His Military Working Dog.

The event for about 75 "close friends and family," as Dowling described it, was at the Kensington home of Pauline and Roger Iliff. It was standing room only, with most guests seated on folding chairs filling two rooms.

Dowling thanked those who came as supporters of his Marine career from 2001-05 and 2008-10, the first including seven months in 2004 in the heat of battle in Iraq with German shepherd Rex.

He also told of the the news that broke that day: the Marine Corps had cleared Rex, sometimes called Sexy Rexy or T. Rex for his on-command ferocity, for adoption by his subsequent handler, former Cpl. Megan Leavey of New York. Leavey and Rex had survived the blast of an improvised explosive device that ended Leavey's career, but Rex continued active duty until last year.

Dowling, 32, who was born in Berkeley and effectively grew up in El Cerrito while living at his family home in the Richmond Annex right off San Pablo Avenue, recalled another Rex, his childhood pet dog.

He spoke also of dropping out of college to enlist and accidentally becoming a war dog handler, participating in raids and firefights, and being in the lead Humvee heading for Fallujah.

"Every house had insurgents shooting at us," Dowling recalled of the battle. And

Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo. In July 2011 she played benefit and charity concerts for the victims of the earthquake and tsunami of March 11th, 2011, in Japan (in Sapporo, Kobe, Kyoto, Sendai and many other places). She has recorded 13 CDs which are internationally available.

Article

Inspired by the Fall Theatre Showcase piece "Coffee Shop Pantomime" we are pleased to offer 12 ounce bags of

**EL CERRITO GAUCHOS**  
**COFFEE SHOP BLEND**

for \$10 a bag!

Roasted by McLaughlin Coffee, Emeryville  
Founded by Mike McLaughlin '57 and Barbara Marsicano McLaughlin '68  
Mike is also a former teacher of students from Helms, Crespi, Kennedy and Portola

\$4 of every bag sold goes to benefit the **ECHS Theatre Program! JUST IN TIME FOR MOTHER'S DAY!!**

The blend is McLaughlin's Max's blend which is a dark roast, full-bodied coffee with a smooth finish.



**PRE-ORDER NOW!! WHOLE BEAN OR GROUND**

How do I order? Send your cash, check or money order made out to "EC Supporters of the Performing Arts" along with your attached order form. Please specify your delivery option and provide contact information. Orders can also be delivered to the front office at ECHS.

Delivery options: Student pickup lunchtime 5/10 & 5/11, Delivery to ECHS staff, El Cerrito or Kensington volunteer delivery by the Saturday before Mother's Day, customer pickup at ECHS Theatre Showcase\*, or by priority mail to all other CA locations for up to 2 bags for an additional \$5.

See order form for details.

**ORDER DEADLINE FRIDAY 4/27-** we are trying to custom pack this to order!

\*Pick up your pre-orders at our ECHS Theatre Showcase on Friday May 18th - before the show- between 6 and 7 pm.

Not organized enough to pre-order?

Some Gauchos Coffee Shop Blend whole bean will also be available to purchase at the May 18th Theatre Showcase for \$12.

**MAIL PAYMENT AND ORDER TO :** GAUCHOS COFFEE c/o Tracy Giles 3020 El Cerrito Plaza, #507, El Cerrito CA 94530.

Will accept pre-orders via email - but no delivery until payment.

**\*\*CAN DELIVER ORDER WITH PAYMENT ATTACHED TO FRONT OFFICE OF HIGH SCHOOL**

Questions? Email [gauchoscoffee@att.com](mailto:gauchoscoffee@att.com).



although the dog sometimes did things his own way, "that was the beauty of Rex. He knew it was the real deal." Dowling, now living in San Diego and studying at UCLA Extension, also explained how the book arose from his dog blog, which attracted author Damien Lewis to propose the project.

Asked how it was selling, he quipped with a grin, "On Amazon.com, it's the number one book on dogs."

A movie based on the book may be in the works, he said. "Mike and Rex were one of the first dog teams to be sent to the front lines of war since Vietnam," his mother Lorraine Dowling, who attended the event, told Patch before the gathering.

Among those who attended the talk Monday was Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia, whose district includes El Cerrito and Kensington.

### **Executive Board**

**President-Patricia Durham,'68,  
Vice President/Secretary-Jackie Fonken,'56,  
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Roddy Lee,'67,  
Community Liaison/Oral History-Janet Abelson,  
Product Marketing-Donna Houser, Publicity.**

**Standing Committees: Athletics-Hall of Fame - Larry Quirico,'58,  
George Austin, Roddy Lee,'67, Museum - Sandi Genser-Maack,'63,  
Lynn Maack,'63, Linda Takimoto, Joann Steck-Bayat,  
Scholarship-Bobbi Griggs, Roddy Lee,'67, Howard Mackey,'44,  
Gregg Mayer,'76, Donna Houser, Joann Steck- Bayat, Lu Tipping.**

**El Cerrito High Archiving Project Mission Statement:  
Support the development of a strong El Cerrito High School alumni body - Collect,  
preserve and celebrate the history of El Cerrito High School -**

**Develop connections to current students and the El Cerrito community.  
email: [ecarchproject@aol.com](mailto:ecarchproject@aol.com)**

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