

Rosenberry: Girls win Design-a-Stamp prizes



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(Photo: Provided)

Two students from our east-side schools landed top awards in a nationwide art contest.

Bella Lexer from East Rochester Elementary School and Amy Ruan from Martha Brown Middle School in Fairport both won prizes in the annual Design-a-Stamp competition sponsored by the [Rochester Philatelic Association](http://www.rpastamps.org/ropex.html) (<http://www.rpastamps.org/ropex.html>).

The contest invites students in grades 3 through 8 to create a “Forever” stamp of their own design. Three winners are chosen in each of two age categories — third to fifth grade and sixth to eighth grade — and awarded cash prizes. This year’s contest attracted more than 60 entries from as far away as Wisconsin and Minnesota.



Bella Lexer, with her art teacher Ed Mandara, holds her second-place entry in the Design-a-Stamp contest. (Photo: M. Rosenberry)

East Rochester Elementary School fourth-grader Bella Lexer took second place in her division with her cheery springtime design, featuring a row of colorful flowers blooming beneath a bright sun.

Bella, age 10, completed her entry as part of East Rochester Elementary School’s fourth-grade Art Club, led by art teacher Ed Mandara.

Her choice of design was a bit out of the ordinary for the contest, Mandara said. When he introduces the project to his students, he shows them some previous examples and talks about patriotism.



In Bella Lexer’s design, colorful spring flowers bloom under a bright sun. (Photo: Provided)

“Usually, there’s a Statue of Liberty and someone will do a flag. ... Since they have to put ‘USA’ and ‘Forever’ on their stamp, I think they look towards those kinds of ideas. Ultimately, they all want to win.”

For Bella, though, flowers and sunshine just seemed right.

“I knew it was springtime,”

Bella said. “When I think of spring, I think of flowers and pretty stuff. I like outside and I know it’s always pretty nice in spring. So, I decided to draw flowers and I know it’s colorful, so I did colors.”

Bella’s entry was one of 28 submitted by Mandara’s Art Club students. This is the fifth year in a row in which Mandara has invited club members to participate in the contest, and at least one of his students has won a top prize every year.

Amy Ruan, a 13-year-old from Martha Brown Middle School in Fairport, took a different direction with her first-place entry in the sixth- through eighth-grade category.

Amy is a musician, having played cello since the fourth grade. She decided to illustrate her love for music, and the cello, when she designed her contest entry.

In her stamp, a musician is pulling a bow across a large, colorful cello, which is surrounded by artistic swirls, music scores and notes. To the side, text on a music scroll curling around another bow reminds us that “Music gives wings to the soul and teaches it to fly.”



Amy Ruan's stamp, depicting a colorful cello, reflects her love for music. (Photo: Provided)

"It was my first idea and I just drew, and thought of the design as I went along," Amy said. "Then I kept adding things to it."

Amy is one of several students in her school's Mural Club who entered the contest. The club is led by Martha Brown Middle School art teacher Christopher Sequeira.

The winning designs were officially announced at a recent awards ceremony at the Canandaigua Civic Center. Amy received a check for \$50 for her first-place entry, and Bella received \$25.

To see more of the winning stamp designs, and for information on how to enter next year's design-a-stamp contest, visit the Rochester Philatelic Association's website at [rpastamps.org/ropex.html](http://www.rpastamps.org/ropex.html) (<http://www.rpastamps.org/ropex.html>).

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