

## CURRENT WEATHER

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## COLUMNISTS

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Bryan Greeson

Mike Hackworth

Al Joyal

Tony Krizan

Ed Lyons

David Richards

Earlene Ward

## EDUCATION

### Poetry finals tomorrow

#### Poetry Out Loud will be featured at Yosemite High School; admission is free

By [Elizabeth Gabriel](#)

(Updated Wednesday, February 27, 2008, 2:05 PM)

Mary Lee Gowland, a poet, loves poetry and wants to pass on that love to the younger generation. That's why she makes the Poetry Out Loud contest in Madera County a priority.

The regional finals will be tomorrow at the Yosemite High School theater from 7 to 9 p.m. It's free.

Finalists are, from YHS, Alisa Choin, Nicole Rogers, Ashley Eggleston, Sierra Strobel and Winnie Cunningham; from Madera High School, Karmen Kaur and Nancy Ramirez and from Madera South High School, Alyssa Diaz and Amanda Valdez.

"Last year we were fortunate to be one of only 11 counties in California to participate in Poetry Out Loud, a national recitation competition for high school students founded by the National Endowment for the Arts and The Poetry Foundation," Gowland said. "This year 20 counties in California are participating."

In California the program is sponsored by the California Arts Council in conjunction with California Poets in the Schools and local arts organizations. The Madera County Arts Council administers the competition locally.

"This year I presented the program to teachers at high schools throughout the county," Gowland said. "Yosemite, Madera and Madera South decided to participate. Students selected two poems from the Poetry Out Loud online anthology to memorize and recite. One poem must be 25 lines or less, and one must have been written prior to 1900 (one poem can meet both criteria). I selected the nine school winners who will compete in the regional final on Thursday."

Sierra Telephone made it possible to offer cash prizes for the first-, second- and third-place winners, Gowland said. The state arts council helps the winner pay for the trip to the state finals in Sacramento on March 14, where winners will recite three poems.

Judges for tomorrow's competition are J.R. Froelich, a former Star columnist and Golden Chain Theatre participant; poet Izabel Ganz; teacher Liz Gorski, who has taught classes in public speaking and the oral arts plus English and theater skills; and Earlene Ward, former editor and longtime columnist for the Star.

For more information call Gowland at (559) 683-6876 or e-mail her at [www.maryleegowland.com](http://www.maryleegowland.com).

Here are some sites about the overall program: Poetry Out Loud, [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org); California Arts Council,

[www.cac.ca.gov/programs/pol.php](http://www.cac.ca.gov/programs/pol.php); Madera County Arts Council, [www.maderaarts.org](http://www.maderaarts.org) and California Poets in the Schools, [www.cpits.org](http://www.cpits.org).



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