

Special night shines spotlight on young South Routt poets

With permission from Kari Dequine Harden, [as printed in Steamboat Today](#) May 9, 2018

YAMPA — Articulating on everything from the cuteness of dragons to wanting to be a Navy Seal, approximately 50 young poets participated last week in South Routt Elementary School's annual "Poetry Night."

They expressed their fears (like vampires), their favorite things ("when my mom snuggles me") and ways to describe themselves in two words ("pizza eater and Lego-builder").

Teacher Kate Anarella has been putting on the event for close to 20 years. About one-third of the school typically participates, she said, taking a turn at the microphone to recite their poems in front of a packed gymnasium.

They dress their best with girls in sparkly dresses and their hair in curls and many of the boys in vests and ties.

A giant pale green parachute dips from the ceiling, along with added lights transforming the gym into a much softer setting.

"The reason I most like Poetry Night," Anarella said, "is that it gives young students a chance to listen to and perform language in a way that is outside the narrative or expository writing paradigm. Children come naturally to poetry, to using language in inventive and poignant ways."

It is up to the teachers to find their own ways to teach poetry, she said, with some giving various structures or themes to follow. The students are also given the freedom to recite anything they've written throughout the year.

South Routt Elementary School in Yampa hosted its annual Poetry Night last week.

One popular theme was the welcoming of spring, as expressed by kindergartener Nathan Jerriel, "Flying butterflies, Green

grass, And my sweet mom." He stepped down from the podium before remembering to return for the final line, "Hello spring."

Or by fourth-grader Emily Rossi, who described, "Spring is piglets rooting in the sloppy, wet mud. Spring is lambs escaping to chase the tender blades of grass growing."

For the youngest poets still learning to read, two middle-school emcees were at their side to help.



Poetry comes easily to kids, Anarella said, "because they're imaginative people. And when they realize they can say whatever they want to without rules, they really love that."

Other students reflected on "some of the things I think about," which included everything from "fishing with my grandfather" and "Pokemon," to "being part of the Army and a rock star," and "the Titanic because it was supposed to be unsinkable."

There was humor, description, introspection and serious contemplation with a few poems mourning the loss of a beloved pet.

Third-grader Alyssa Martindale said she likes writing poetry because "I think it expresses how I feel."

"You can repeat. You can rhyme. You can have fun with it," said fourth-grader Alayna Edwards.

"Everybody does it differently," said Anarella of both the teachers' instruction styles and the kids' approach to their poetic voice. "Once introduced, children tend to enjoy the idea of manifesting images and feelings with words. It is heartening and marvelous to hear their inventiveness, expression and feeling. Given the chance, they'll run with it. It's so much fun to watch."

In her poem "Drifting Feathers," fourth-grader Kaylee Ebaugh sets the scene, "In the morning the breeze is still, As I wait for the rising sun. A white mist like thing floats and drifts through the cold, dark air."

"It makes me feel better," said Kaylee about writing poetry. "I get to write down whatever comes to my mind."



"Color Poems" were another popular theme.

Second-grader Lily Ackerman wrote about blue: "Blue is right before dark. Blue tastes like fresh blueberry muffins. Blue smells like fresh air in the sky." Lily, who also writes jokes and song lyrics, said she enjoys "that you get to share your feelings."

In addition to learning about the beauty of language and the value of expression, Anarella said the kids get some experience in public speaking – and listening.

She said she's appreciative of the support of the teachers and administration over the many years that have turned poetry night into a long-standing tradition. And the kids look forward to

it every year, Anarella said – always asking her early on, "When's poetry night?"

After each student took their turn – reciting their poems with impressive clarity following two practice sessions – they were rewarded with chocolate cake and fruit punch flowing out of a fountain.

Clearly an evening of fun for both the poets and the audience, poetry night is also an opportunity for teachers and families to see the kids in a slightly different light, Anarella noted.

"Their spark, cares, humor and joy shine through.

South Routt music program earns Superior ratings, again!

Our music program is clearly one of the best small school music programs in Colorado. The quality of music and incredible leadership of Kelli Turnipseed is moving. At the CHSAA (Colorado High School Activities Association) Large Group Music Festival both our high school concert band and 7th & 8th concert band received Overall I Superior ratings. This rating included performance and sight reading! Did you know that 50% of our secondary students participate in music class one way or another? One of the extra special band and choir activities is the brain child of Kelli Turnipseed called "Project." "Project" is a collaborative musical effort between SOROCO, Hayden, West Grand and Middle Park that provides student musicians an opportunity to learn, rehearse and perform otherwise inaccessible repertoire in a "large" concert band and choir setting. This effort also affords directors a rare opportunity to work with a large ensemble and observe rehearsal/conducting techniques of their colleagues. And then there is our extracurricular jazz band ([read more here](#)). SOROCO music is leading the way and demonstrating the value of music education in our small school.

SOROCO Track & Field student-athletes sign to compete in college



The track and field athletes at SOROCO are feisty and inspired and just plain talented. Take Mattie Rossi for example. She's made a name for herself with sheer grit and determination and has hurdled her way onto a college team at Fort Hays State University. She is a state champion in the 100H, holds two individual school records (100H, 300H), and is also a member of the 4x400m relay team that broke a ten-year-old record more than once this spring.

Ben Kelley is a seven-time state champion, (800 in '16-'18, 1600 '17-'18, 3200, and Cross Country), school record holder in five events (800, 1600, 3200, 5000m, CC standard and CC short course), and state record holder in the 2A 800m (1:52.77) and 1600m (4:17.23). Next year Ben will be running for the Ivy League Lions of Columbia University in the city of New York. [More #SorocoRams T&F](#)



What's next for SOROCO Class of 2018?

SOROCO seniors are busy planning for the path forward! Graduates plans include:

Colorado Mesa University
Colorado Mountain College
Colorado Northwestern Community College
Colorado School of Mines
Colorado State University
Columbia University

Entering the workforce-paid internship
Feather River College
Fort Hays State University
Lincoln Tech Denver Vocational School
Maui Community College
Northeastern Junior College

Red Rocks Community College
United States Coast Guard
United States Marine Corps
University of Wyoming
Western State University
Whitman College

Congratulations to all of the graduates and the teachers and staff for helping these young citizens take the next step!

South Routt Education Endowment Fund is managed by the **Yampa Valley Community Foundation**

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