

SENTENCING SET FOR TEACHER IN TEEN SEX CASE

No contest plea
entered Feb. 11

By EMILIE CROFTON

The formal sentencing hearing for Robb Hunt, the Homestead High School teacher arrested last year for having sexual relations with a 17-year-old Lynbrook High School student, has been set for June 2.

At the sentencing it will be determined whether Hunt, who was 30 at the time of his arrest, will have to register as a sex offender.

"The defendant didn't want to register, but he is exactly the type of person that needs to register," said Erin West, deputy district attorney.

Hunt was charged with four felony counts of sexual acts with a minor and one misdemeanor count of child annoyance. He pleaded no contest on Feb. 11.

San Jose police officers on May 17 responded to a call from the Lynbrook campus after a witness informed staff about the sexual relationship between Hunt and the student.

Officers arrested Hunt at his home on May 23 after investigating the report. They recovered text messages and e-mails between the victim and Hunt, and witnesses said that on one occasion they saw Hunt leaving the victim's home.

Before his arrest Hunt had no criminal history in the state of California.

Hunt was a student teacher at Lynbrook during the 2005-06 school year when he met the victim. The following year he began teaching American literature at Homestead, on the border of Cupertino and Sunnyvale, until the investigation began.

☛ **Sentencing**, page 11

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Local artists
open their
studio
doors

page 18

Show Offs

Photograph by Jacqueline Ramseyer



Sherry Cordova creates one-of-a-kind jewelry pieces using silver, recycled glass and semi-precious stones.



Artist Isabelle Stachnick shows off a special project she did for her back yard—a backsplash mural of Savannah-Chanelle Vineyards painted with acrylic onto Italian marble.

Visual Venues

Open Studios let art lovers get close and personal

By EMILIE CROFTON

Photographs by JACQUELINE RAMSEYER

Residents interested in viewing or purchasing art won't have to travel far during the month of May. The nearest gallery could be right down the street.

Hundreds of artists, including several from Sunnyvale and Cupertino, are taking part in the 22nd annual Silicon Valley Open Studios.

Open Studios is a non-juried event that offers a chance for the general public to go into artists' studios and shared spaces to view or purchase their art on May 3-4, 10-11 and 17-18.

Artworks vary from paintings, mixed media and photography to sculpture, jewelry, calligraphy,

ceramics, pottery, mosaics, metal work, glass, drawing, printmaking and woodworking.

This year there are more than 145 open studios throughout the Bay Area including Cupertino, Atherton, Saratoga, Sunnyvale, Los Altos, Campbell and San Jose.

Sunnyvale resident Sherry Cor-

dova, who has been making jewelry for 10 years, says she's excited to participate in Open Studios for the first time this year.

She and three other jewelry makers will feature their work in Cordova's studio and the back yard of her home at 731 Gail Ave. on May 10-11.

"It's always a good thing when

the community is able to get together," she says. "It's nice that they can come here to see our work. It provides a more comfortable and intimate environment."

Cordova uses glass, silver, stones, gold and pearls to make her jewelry.

For years Cordova worked as an engineer and says her background,

which required experimentation and logical thinking, has helped with her jewelry making.

"I love challenges and experimenting with different things. People said there was no way to combine glass and silver but I found a way to make it work," she says.

Now Cordova works from a small studio in her home, creating necklaces, rings, earrings and bracelets.

"This is my creative outlet. I wanted to make my own ideas and designs," she says. "I've always loved working with my hands. I like having an idea in my head and being able to make it happen."

Cordova says her jewelry is inspired by her love of travel and scuba diving.

Several of her necklaces were inspired by the flowing, white, ruffled skirts she saw women commonly wear in Barcelona, Spain. Another piece includes etchings she made that were inspired by a visit to ruins in Honduras.

Cordova has also been a scuba diver for more than 20 years, and she says she attempts to portray the beauties of the sea world into her art.

"It's so peaceful down there. It's like flying, hiking and being in an art gallery all at the same time," she says. "There are so many interesting shapes that I'm constantly being amazed by."

Cordova is also a big believer in recycling and protecting the environment. Although she uses inspirations from the sea for her work, she never takes the coral or shells from the ocean. Instead, she makes moldings of the items using a mold compound to later etch them into her jewelry.

"When you take away coral or shells, you're taking away the habitat of sea life," she says.

Isabelle Stachnick, a Cupertino resident, spends hours every week creating colorful oil paintings, although she says her artistic talent came late in life.

Coming from a family of artists, Stachnick says she grew up without the artistic touch.

"I always wanted to be an artist but never thought I could," she says.

It was not until she took an oil painting course with a friend 11 years ago that she discovered her ability, and she has been painting ever since.

For the last 10 years Stachnick has been taught and coached by famed local artist Stefan Baumann.

"I learned everything I know from him," she says. "He unleashed a whole new world for me and has given me the means to express with oil and brush what is in my soul."

The majority of Stachnick's art is paintings of landscape and animals. When traveling and visiting new sites, she will often bring her paint tools and sit down to paint an image that moves her.



The bottle ring that artist Sherry Cordova is wearing was created from recycled bottle glass that she breaks, fires and tumbles with water to achieve its color and shape.

"I'm attracted to the colors of the water, the textures of rocks and hills, the green of the trees," she says. "I become aware of my surroundings, take it all in and express myself. It makes me feel a part of nature."

Stachnick paints about 10 hours a week, and while she does several pieces on commission, her ultimate goal is to start her own business selling her work.

This is the third time Stachnick will participate in Open Studios, but the first time she will show from her Cupertino home at 7763 Squirehill Court, May 17-18. Jessica Liu, who makes jewelry, will also show her art

from Stachnick's home. Stachnick plans to work on a painting as visitors pass through, so they can see her in work in progress.

No invitations or appointments are needed to visit the artists,

although visits must be between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. on the weekend that they are showing.

"It's great to be able to lose yourself into the painting; it creates a really good feeling," Stachnick says.

"It makes me who I am — happy."

For more information on Open Studios, visit www.svos.org. For more information on Cordova and Stachnick, visit www.sherrycordova.com or www.artwithsoul.com.

Showings in Cupertino

21471 Columbus (May 17-18)

7763 Squirehill Court (May 17-18)

21060 Tulita Court (May 10-11, 17-18)

Showings in Sunnyvale

950 Kennard Way (May 10-11)

978 Astoria Drive (May 10-11)

731 Gail Avenue (May 10-11)

870 Helena Drive (May 10-11)

928 Mackenzie Drive (May 10-11)

872 Brookline Drive (May 17-18)

950 Susquehanna Court (May 2-3, 10-11, 17-18)

1183 West Olive Avenue (May 2-3, 10-11, 17-18)



Isabelle Stachnick has been painting with oils for the last 10 years, both from her home studio and on location.