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Winners of Aldo Leopold Writing Contest Announced!

October 28, 2009 – Albuquerque, NM – In September, the Aldo Leopold Centennial Celebration offered a writing contest for New Mexico youth in grades 6 – 12. They were invited to write a letter to Aldo Leopold telling him how or why his writings are important today. The contest required students to be creative and thoughtful, while revealing their understanding of Leopold's land ethic.

A total of **465 entries** from around the state were received! The Centennial Celebration is honored to present prizes of \$750.00 to each of the three category winners:

<u>Student</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>School & Home Town</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
Zena Stevenson	8	Eagle Nest Middle, Red River	Janet Martin
Tita VanFleet	7	Cottonwood Valley Charter, Socorro	Kim Berlat
Sierra Smith	12	Bosque School, Albuquerque	Dan Shaw

The three winners will read their letters at The Quivira Coalition's Annual Conference in Albuquerque on November 4th, 2009. An additional \$500.00 will be awarded to the school attended by the overall winner; this award will be announced at The Quivira Coalition's Annual Conference.

Honorable Mention and \$75.00 is awarded to each of the following students:

<u>Student</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>School & Home Town</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
Jenna Melanson	6	Cottonwood Valley Charter School, Socorro	Kim Berlat
Donovan Roä	6	Cottonwood Valley Charter School, Socorro	Kim Berlat
Román Velazquez	6	Homeschooled, Albuquerque	Julie Velazquez
Raina Wellman	7	Academy for Technologies & Classics, Santa Fe	Dana Johnson
Holden Hyer	9	Bernalillo High School, Bernalillo	Robin Verdugo
Jaíme McCarthy	10	Silver High School Silver City	Corinne Riggle
Jemimah Ogunsanya	11	Eldorado High School, Albuquerque	Dorene Kahl
Megan Bradford	11	Eldorado High School, Albuquerque	Dorene Kahl
Tyler Crawley	11	Eldorado High School, Albuquerque	Dorene Kahl
Gianna May	12	Cibola High School, Albuquerque	Travis Lytle

The judges included: Anthony Anella, Architect and Co-Chair of the Aldo Leopold Centennial Celebration; James Burbank, UNM Professor of English; Sheryl Chard, Head of Middle School, Bosque School, Stanley Damberger, Retired DePaul University Professor of English; Verne Huser, Naturalist and Retired Albuquerque Academy Teacher of English; Craig Newbill, Executive Director, New Mexico Humanities Council; Robert Peters, Architect and Co-Chair of the Aldo Leopold Centennial Celebration; Sheryl Russell, Assistant Coordinator, Aldo Leopold Centennial Celebration; Jane Sprague, Retired, City of Albuquerque Public Art Program; Andrew Wooden, Head of Bosque School.

Many thanks to the students, teachers, parents, and judges who participated in this contest. Thanks also to the generous sponsors of the Aldo Leopold Writing Contest: Jerry Ginsburg, Steven Foster, Mary Anderman Anella, and the New Mexico Humanities Council.

Reading and writing about Aldo Leopold encourages the next generation of conservationists and environmentalist to make their own contributions to the health of the land.

About the Aldo Leopold

Aldo Leopold is most widely known as the author of *A Sand County Almanac*. Published in 1949, the book is a classic in Western literature. Leopold believed our idea of “community” should be enlarged to include non-human elements such as soils, waters, plants, animals, “or collectively: the land.” He called this “the land ethic” and asserted our economic well-being could not be separated from the well-being of our environment. Leopold also believed in the power of shared community effort. While he is rightly honored for his beautiful articulation of a land ethic, he stated clearly that an ethic is not something that evolves in isolation but is a “product of social evolution.” “Nothing so important as an ethic is ever ‘written,’” Leopold explained; it evolves “in the minds of a thinking community.”

About the Aldo Leopold Centennial Celebration

A group of Albuquerque citizens who believe that careful consideration of Leopold’s legacy in the Southwest could guide us toward a healthy, sustainable and vibrant future initiated the Aldo Leopold Centennial Celebration. The Centennial is a grass-roots celebration that intends to provide individuals and organizations throughout the region an opportunity to engage in a rich and varied conversation among ecologists and architects, philosophers and accountants, poets and politicians, artists and conservationists, students and teachers.

Leopold arrived in Albuquerque in 1909 as a recent graduate of the Yale School of Forestry and spent the formative years of his professional life in New Mexico and Arizona. In 1922, he submitted a proposal that resulted in the Gila National Forest in southwestern New Mexico becoming the first designated Wilderness Area in the United States.

In honor of Leopold’s contributions not only to New Mexico but to the nation, Governor Bill Richardson proclaimed February 8th through 15th of this year to be Aldo Leopold week. The Council of the City of Albuquerque has proclaimed 2009 as the Year of the Aldo Leopold Centennial Celebration.

For information about the Aldo Leopold Centennial Celebration, visit www.LeopoldCelebration.org.

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