

To: Letter to the Ojai Valley News Editor
From: City of Ojai Arts Commission, Literary Arts
What: O-Haiku for Peace Poem Award Ceremony

On January 19, 2023 at Ojai City Hall, the Ojai Arts Commission Literary Arts branch had their O-Haiku for Peace Poem Award Ceremony. It was beautiful to see a well attended audience including the Ojai International City of Peace organizers, Jill Lowry from Ojai Creates who donated two awards, Ojai Artist Ted Gall of sculpture "Peace in Man's hands" and friends and family of our winners. And a very special honor for Mayor Betsy Stix to attend via zoom!

Chumash, KC Rodriguez, the cousin to Julie Tumamait-Stenslie, opened the O-Haiku for Peace award ceremony. KC was recipient of third place and recited her entire 11 Haikus entry. Followed by second place winner Elizabeth (Libby) Ward, who shared how inspired she was by the hand in Ted Gall's sculpture with the 2 fingers pointing upward. And first place winner Al Carter read his entire 16 Haiku entry and the atmosphere in the City Chamber room felt suspended in time, as the imagery and feelings in his Haikus created an overall feeling of peace.

Indeed, it was a celebration of Peace and creativity.

The ceremony led by O-Haiku creator, Arts Commissioner Valerie Freeman, gave a special thanks to all of the participants and to the Ojai Arts Commission and City Staff for their O-Haiku support. She expressed a huge thank you to the Ojai Valley News, Laura Rearwin Ward for their thriving support for the arts and their amazing staff with special thanks to Mimi Walker for her beautiful design layout for the finalists' announcement in the OVN. Each winner and artist Ted Gall, signed the enlarged copy of the winner OVN announcement.