

NEWS RELEASE  
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## **Essay contest for Cupertino residents announced in conjunction with Silicon Valley Reads**

An essay contest with \$1,200 in prizes is asking Cupertino adults and high school students to write about the outsider themes of the Silicon Valley Reads 2009 book selection, *Not A Genuine Black Man: My Life as an Outsider* by Bay Area radio personality Brian Copeland.

Sponsored by the Cupertino Library Foundation, the essay contest will award \$500 to the top entry, \$300 to second place and \$200 each to two third place winners. It is open to adults who live or work in the City of Cupertino and students in grades 9-12 at Cupertino area high schools.

Copeland's book is a funny and poignant memoir of his experience growing up in the 1970s as one of the first African-American families in San Leandro. The book is based on Copeland's one-man play that he has performed throughout the Bay Area, Off Broadway, in Los Angeles and other U.S. cities.

The essay contest asks writers in connection with their reading of the book to describe their experience or reactions, in 500 words or less, about people being labeled, as Copeland was, as an "Oreo" (white on the inside), a "banana" or a "coconut" and other aspects of being labeled a "non-genuine" minority. Entry deadline is January 7, 2009.

Winners of the essay contest will be announced on Wednesday, January 21, at a Silicon Valley Reads event at Cupertino Community Hall featuring a talk by Brian Copeland and a panel discussion on the same topic as the essay. The event is free and begins at 7 p.m.

Other Silicon Valley Reads events will take place throughout Santa Clara County between mid January and the end of March. Information is available on the Silicon Valley Reads website, [www.siliconvalleyreads.org](http://www.siliconvalleyreads.org).

Silicon Valley Reads is presented annually by Santa Clara County Library, Santa Clara County Office of Education, and the San Jose Public Library Foundation with funding from corporate and individual donors and community organizations such as the Cupertino Library Foundation.

For entry forms and more information about the essay contest and the Cupertino Library Foundation, visit the website [www.cupertino.org/SVRCupertino](http://www.cupertino.org/SVRCupertino) or [www.cupertino.org/libraryfoundation](http://www.cupertino.org/libraryfoundation).

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