



PHOTO/RICK EATON

Longtime photojournalist Manny Ramirez (second from left) was honored Dec. 28 by Supervisor Greg Cox aide Luis Monteguido Jr. with a county proclamation recognizing Ramirez' contribution to the community. Ramirez and his wife Emilie moved over the New Year's weekend to live in the Philippines.

DINING & ARTS

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Councilman says McCann's statements deserve elaboration

MAYOR: MCCANN WILL SHARE IF HE NEEDS TO

By Tawny Maya McCray
STAFF WRITER

Chula Vista City Councilman

John McCann still hasn't publicly elaborated on comments he made to an online news outlet regarding Chula Vista's finances and allegations he made that a former city manager was "cooking the books," but at least one colleague suggested that McCann's statement needs to be

taken seriously.

"There was a lot going on at City Hall about it after he said that," Councilman Rudy Ramirez said, adding that he hasn't yet spoken to McCann since the holidays. "It's unusual for someone to say that."

McCann was quoted on Dec. 20

in an article by *voiceofsandiego* columnist Scott Lewis saying, "I don't know how I can eloquently say this but, off the record, the former city manager was cooking the books."

When Lewis told him he hadn't agreed to go off the record and that he was quoting him Mc-

Cann said he had to get to meeting and hung up the phone.

Ramirez said McCann should address the comment one way or another, whether it's to retract or to substantiate it.

"He shouldn't make an infla-

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matory statement unless he can back it up," he said. "If there was something improper or illegal going on we need to get to the bottom of it."

Mayor Cheryl Cox said "if (McCann) has information that needs to be shared then he'll share it."

After numerous calls to McCann over the Christmas and New Year holidays, McCann returned calls to *The Star-News* Wednesday afternoon, but he said it wasn't a good time for him to discuss the matter.

"I have meetings all day," he said. "Why don't you give me a call tomorrow in the afternoon."

The Star-News goes to press Wednesday evenings.



Mayor Cheryl Cox said if Councilman John McCann has information to substantiate his claim that city finances were altered, she will wait for his explanation.

TEACHERS

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tors to work within the library system and tutor students who have signed up at one of the participating libraries utilizing space provided at the library. The target audience is adult learners, however, there has been an opportunity at the Chula Vista Center to have five elementary students who attend with their parents. These students are studying English at school and it is reinforced one evening a week by a Laubach

tutor. Ross, center director for East County Laubach Literacy Centers, noted that about a year ago, the County Library System approached them to train tutors and provide ESL programs in County libraries. Currently, such programs are operating in Bonita, Descanso, Lakeside, Ramona and Vista with 20 Laubach tutors serving more than 50 adult learners. Programs should start soon at libraries in Casa de Oro and Poway.

For further information on the tutoring training program in February, contact Reynolds at (619) 427-4567.

We appreciate your input: editor@thestarnews.com

Former resident has

By Tawny Maya McCray
STAFF WRITER

Long time Chula Vista resident and storyteller Steven Gregory and his musician wife Reiko Obata have been telling multicultural musical folktales for years at schools, libraries and multicultural fairs. This year Gregory decided to put one of those tales in book form and published *The Lion's Drum* this past October.

"There is a lack of good tellable tales out there from all over the world," he said, "and there aren't enough stories that made it over here from Africa."

Gregory's 32-page colorfully illustrated book tells the story of a young African hunter named Ajani who discovers a lion playing a magical tree stump deep in the jungle. When the chief and people of his village don't believe him when he tells them what he's seen and heard, Ajani sets out to prove them wrong.

Gregory said the story is important because it tells the origin of the most prominent instrument in Africa, the drum, specifically the West African djembe, which he said is now the most popular hand drum in the world.

The book's vibrant colored-pencil illustrations were done by his sister-in-law Claudia Obata, who lives in New York and has her bachelor's degree in art from UC Berkeley as well as a teaching credential in art from the California College of Arts and Crafts.

"She's always wanted to do cre-

ative artwork," Gregory said. "We took something she did and combined with some of our own love and are getting it out there so other people can love it too."

Gregory's love for writing was fostered at Palomar Elementary school where his third and fourth grade teacher Mr. Donahoo so much enjoyed a story he had written that she asked him to read it aloud to the whole class.

"She had a cockpit in the classroom that we could finish assignments, tests," he said. "She wrote a story about a child escaping around the classrooming the kids. She had



• Saturday

 **Mater Dei**
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

PROSPECTIVE PARENT INFORMATION NIGHT