

# A HAPPY ENDING



Sarah Waldrop, 16, of Williamsville North High School won \$1,000 for the ending she wrote to a Mark Twain short story in a competition for young writers.

Photos by DEREK GEE/Bufalo News

By CHARITY VOGEL  
News Staff Reporter

When Sarah Waldrop got a phone call from the Central Library in downtown Buffalo, at first she thought she had done something wrong. "At first I thought I had a really overdue book or something," said Waldrop, 16. Turned out, the library wanted to tell Waldrop she placed among the top three finalists in the Mark Twain Writing Competition for students from all over Erie

County. The contest challenged students to read the first half of Twain's 1876 short story "A Murder, a Mystery and a Marriage," and write an ending of their own for the tale.

At an awards ceremony at the library on Oct. 13, Waldrop was awarded first prize - \$1,000, a plaque, and the publication of her story on the library's Web site, [www.buffalolib.org](http://www.buffalolib.org).

"I was really excited because I never expected to win," said Waldrop, a Williamsville North junior who is the edi-



Caitlin Corr

tor of her school newspaper. "This is so exciting because I want to be a writer."

Placing second in the contest was Caitlin Corr, a Nardin Academy junior, who won \$500 and a plaque. Corr, 16, an aspiring writer and journalist, said she wrote her ending to Twain's story in her own style.

"I think it was more in my style than it was in his," said Corr. "That would have been too hard."

Third place went to Amanda Watkins

- who along with Waldrop took English at Williamsville North from teacher Mary T. Banks, who used the contest as a class assignment.



Amanda Watkins

"I had a lot of ideas but it was hard to put them into a story that actually made sense. Usually they only make sense to me," said Watkins, 16, who wants to study biology or biochemistry in college.

Watkins said she put the focus in her story on Mary Gray, the daughter who is looking for love in the little town of Deer Lick.

And, she said, she gave the ending a twist.

"She marries the foreign guy and goes off to Europe," said Watkins. "Because that's what I would have done."

For winning entries in the contest, check out the library's Web site at [www.buffalolib.org](http://www.buffalolib.org).

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## Twain Quiz:



1. What was Mark Twain's real name?  
a. Samuel Clemens  
b. Clem Samuels  
c. Samuel Smith
2. When did Mark Twain live in Buffalo?  
a. 1860-65  
b. 1880-85  
c. 1869-71

3. Around 1857, Twain learned what occupation?  
a. banking  
b. steamboat piloting  
c. railroading
4. What is the name of the character who has adventures on the Mississippi with a runaway slave?  
a. Slick Willy  
b. Dirty Harry  
c. Huck Finn
5. What is the slave's name?  
a. Jim  
b. George  
c. Tom
6. Name the girl Tom Sawyer got lost in the cave with.  
a. Sally  
b. Sarah  
c. Becky

Answers: 1. A 2. C 3. B 4. C 5. A 6. C

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