

JM and OIS Debate Teams Compete in Claremont Championship Tournament

Submitted by Mark Moore



The Joaquin Moraga Intermediate Debate Team from left: Coordinator/Teacher Don Read, students Peter Moore, Conor Hanvey, and Shea Danforth
Photos Mark Moore



The Orinda Intermediate Debate Team from left: Coordinator/Teacher Terry Eubanks, students Daniel Ginsburg, Jonathan Zhou and Aaron Baum

The Joaquin Moraga Intermediate and Orinda Intermediate School debate teams represented their schools Saturday, April 21 at the 10th Annual Championship Tournament of the Middle School Public Debate Program sponsored by Claremont McKenna College in Claremont, Calif. The program began 10 years ago and has gotten more popular each year, having expanded as far as Louisiana, New York, New Jersey and Washington D.C. with 90 teams and 270 students participating in this year's tournament.

As Professor John Meany, CMC Director of Forensics, said, "Debate is having an opinion which is informed

and defensible. All I have to do is bring educators to see one debate, saying nothing, and they want to join. Everyone is a winner in debate because it is about acquiring a skill, no matter how a team scores. This skill is useful in terms of public speaking and classroom participation. It is the hardest of the forensic sciences because no matter how elegant and thorough your argument, your opponent will always tell you you are wrong!" The co-creator of these debates, Professor Kate Shuster, said parents everywhere curse her under their breath for teaching teenagers to argue better, but she believes strongly in "creating a better democracy one 11-

to 14-year-old at a time."

The Lamorinda teams punched their ticket to the Championship Tournament by performing well at the local level in the league championship held March 24 in Fremont. The East Bay Debate League was started five years ago by a group of local teachers including Don Read and Patti Forster from JM and Terry Eubanks from OIS. "The first couple years were a steep learning curve for participants in the new league," said Mr. Read, "but it is now a more mature league" and continues to expand. After splitting two times into Sacramento and South Bay leagues, the East Bay League now features eight teams, including an Oregon team that participates in the league's season of five debates. At some schools debate is an after-school club, but at JM and OIS it is offered as an elective class for seventh- and eighth-grade students.

At the Championship on April 21, each team of three students competed in five debates during the day. Topics included "Tax Increases are good for America;" "The U.S. should establish a national DNA database of all residents;" "States should require drug tests to receive welfare benefits;" and "Students should be allowed to carry registered guns on a college campus." Most of the debates were very close and the Joaquin Moraga Intermediate team was fortunate to go 3-2 on the day; the Orinda Intermediate team had an identical record. Individual speaker honors went to Aaron Baum and Daniel Ginsburg (30th and 24th places) from OIS. The OIS team also finished as the 22nd best team of the tournament. The day concluded with a final, public debate between the top two teams, a raucous affair with the spirited participation of the audience.

The debate season ends Saturday, May 12 on the JM campus with the NorCal Championship, which has a similar format. Make plans to attend and prepare to see what middle school students are capable of!

Headhunters

By Sophie Braccini



Image provided

The Orinda International Film Showcase is offering a rarity this month: *Headhunters*, a fast-paced perfectly mastered thriller with a brilliant scenario that will surprise viewers until its end (and don't count on me to tell you what that will be!) This new Swedish movie leaves *Millenium* far behind.

Roger Brown (Aksel Hennie) is a successful headhunter who works for a large corporation, has money and is married to a beauty, Diana (Synnøve Macody Lund). A bit insecure because of his relatively small size, he feels that she will stay with him as long as he can provide for her, yet at the beginning of the movie, his financial situation starts to dwindle. Brown, who is cynical and manipulative, begins to steal paintings to keep up his lifestyle. When he meets Clas Greve (Nikolaj Coster-Waldau), an executive who collects artwork, he thinks he's found

the perfect victim.

Director Morten Tyldum builds his story around Brown's and Greve's rivalry. The scenario is extremely well constructed and it does not insult the viewer's intelligence – not so common for a thriller. There are even some very funny moments, like a chase scene on farm tractors. The main character takes a lot of punches, certain scenes keep the spectator riveted, and the storyline is quite unpredictable. The movie also portrays a series of truculent characters such as the accomplice who loves arms and Russian prostitutes, the charismatic bad guy, and the very sexy woman.

A very well-cast and directed action thriller, Tyldum's film will surprise and delight viewers. The movie will show from May 18-24 at the Orinda Theatre. For tickets and show times, visit www.lfef.org or Lamorindatheaters.com.

Walk-Around at Lake Cascade Promotes Beautification Project

Submitted by Diana Kennedy



Participants learn about Lake Cascade, the Orinda Historic Landmark that has been a long-time haunt of area walkers and bird watchers.
Photos Joan Andrews

Orinda Garden Club hosted a Community Awareness/A Walk-Around Lake Cascade Saturday, April 21 to build support for its Lake Cascade beautification project. Orinda Garden Club began the beautification project in the 1940s when it planted the Cork Oak trees and in the 1960s, the Club initiated another project to regenerate native shrubs around the shoreline. They began the new project in 2010 and finished

clearing the north side of Lake Cascade in 2011 where the Cork Oak trees were restored, weeds and invasive plants removed. The committee plans on finishing the two remaining segments around the lake in 2012/2013, with an estimated cost of \$13,000 to complete the work. The Club is certain that this project will provide a better experience of Lake Cascade and its wooded landscape for the community to enjoy.



Friends of the Orinda Garden Club walk to raise financial support for the beautification of Lake Cascade.



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