

## 2014 Poul Anderson Writing Contest Winners Announced

Submitted by Robin Jones

The Friends of the Orinda Library recently announced the winners of the 2014 Poul Anderson Creative Writing Contest, an annual competition open to all high school students who live or attend school in Orinda. Winning entries were selected by a panel of judges who included: Ginger Wadsworth, author; Sally Small, author; and Janet Boretta and Marian Nielsen of Orinda Books.

This year's contest included four categories: science fiction, short story, essay/memoir and poetry. First place prizes in each category were awarded \$250. In addition, honorable mentions were granted to deserving pieces. Entries were from students who attended Miramonte High School, Orinda Academy, College Prep, the Athenian School and students who were home schooled.

### Winners were as follows:

Science Fiction: Alexa Barger (Orinda Academy, Grade 12), "Short Circuit"  
Short Story: Neil Binnie (Miramonte High School, Grade 9), "The Soda Pop Bootlegger"  
Essay/Memoir: Kate Nerone (Miramonte High School, Grade 9), "Wave Goodbye"  
Poetry: Gabriel Ostler (Miramonte High School, Grade 12), "Ballad of the Creator"

### Honorable Mentions went to the following:

Short Story: Laura Li (Miramonte High School, Grade 10), "Alice"  
Essay/Memoir: Caie Kelley (Miramonte High School, Grade 12), "Why I Write"  
Essay/Memoir: Katherine Richardson (Miramonte High School, Grade 12), "Glimpses Through the Cracks"  
Poetry: Katarina Cohen (Miramonte High School, Grade 10), "Nothing Really"

## Moraga Library 'Artist of the Month' Captures Local Harmony and Balance

Submitted by Wenda Pyman



"Moonrise over Mt. Diablo"

Photo provided

The Moraga Public Library will feature "Luminous Landscapes – Intercepting Light," a solo landscape photography show by Wenda Pyman, a longtime Moraga Art Gallery member, through July 30 during library hours.

Pyman's body of work reflects her all-consuming passion to capture diverse patterns and imagery, both locally and worldwide. Her style reveals a unique perception of her surroundings. For her, it is not just about finding a perfect location or composition, but finding harmony and balance between elements of color, lines, texture and shapes that are both pleasing to her and the viewer. Photography for her is a means of self-expression as well as an outlet from the stresses of everyday life.

Pyman has been a Moraga Art Gallery

member since 2003. She was instrumental in relocating the gallery to its current location. Her exhibit venues cover Danville, Lamorinda, Oakland and San Francisco. Her photography has graced CD album covers, calendars and the walls of collectors, both locally and internationally. Her portfolio includes images from India, Europe, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and, more recently, Myanmar (Burma), Laos, and Vietnam. When she is not globetrotting, she wanders the hills of the East Bay, Lamorinda, Mount Diablo and beyond.

You can also see selected work at the Moraga Art Gallery, Rheem Valley Shopping Center and at Handworks of Danville, 155 Railroad Avenue, Danville. Visit her website: wendapyman.com or contact her at (415) 859-8030.

## Two Lamorinda Residents Part of 'Les Misérables' Cast at Woodminster Summer Musicals' 48th season opens July 11

Submitted by Kathy Kahn



Woodminster's "Les Misérables" ensemble cast members Ginnie Menezes of Lafayette and Lauren Bond of Orinda look at some music before their rehearsal. Photos Kathy Kahn

Lafayette resident Ginnie Menezes and Orinda resident Lauren Bond will join a cast of over 40 in the production of "Les Misérables" at Oakland's Woodminster Amphitheater, an open-air performance facility in Oakland's Joaquin Miller Park, located at 3300 Joaquin Miller Road in the Oakland hills. This stirring pop opera will be presented July 11-20 by Woodminster Summer Musicals, outdoors under the stars, with a live, professional orchestra.

Lauren, a 15-year-old student at Miramonte High School, is one of the youngest people in the show. She is making her professional debut in "Les Misérables" at Woodminster Amphitheater. Previously, Lauren has been involved in school productions, the most recent being Miramonte's "Shrek" in spring 2014. In addition, she has performed in shows such as "Guys and Dolls," "Once on this Island," "The Wiz," "Peter Pan" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Lauren also studies ballet, piano, tap and voice. Menezes has performed under the stars at Woodminster for over 30 years. She has also performed with the Lamplighters, Pacific Rep in Carmel by the Sea, and performs with the Children's Theatre Association of San Francisco.

One of the most popular musicals in history, "Les Misérables" is set in 19th Century France and tells the story of Jean Valjean, a peasant who has been released after serving 19 years in prison for stealing a loaf of bread for his sister's starving child. In his quest for redemption and

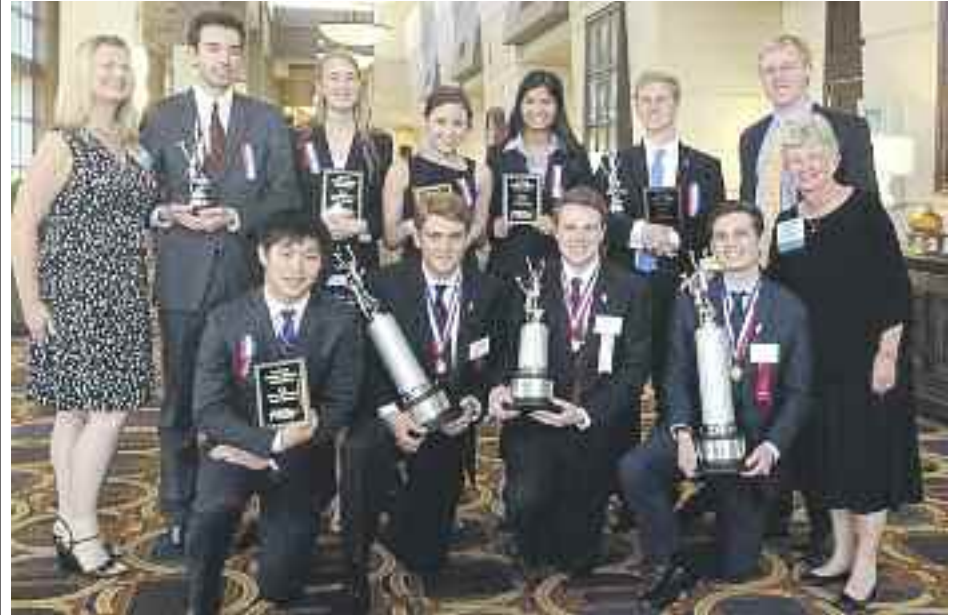
peace, he decides to break parole, but is relentlessly pursued by a policeman, Javert. Their story intertwines with several others, culminating in the Paris student uprising of 1832, and a dramatic and romantic climax where justice triumphs. The production will be directed by Joel Schlader, with music direction by Brian Allan Hobbs. The music from "Les Misérables" includes several songs that are already popular standards, like "I Dreamed A Dream," "On My Own," and "One Day More."

Tickets are available by phone, at (510) 531-9597, online at www.woodminster.com, or in person at Woodminster Amphitheater 11-4 daily or at the box office before any performance. Performances are July 11 (opening), July 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, and 20, all at 8 p.m. For information about tickets, check www.woodminster.com or call (510) 531-9597. Woodminster is continuing its popular *Kids Come Free* program, where children and teens 16 or younger who are attending with paying adults can get free tickets on performance nights. Producers Associates is seeking sponsors for this longstanding program, which helps families introduce their kids to live theater in a relaxed and affordable environment.

The final dress rehearsal of "Les Misérables" on July 10 will be open to the public as a "preview performance." It will start at 8 p.m.; all tickets are \$18 at the door, and seating is open, first-come, first-choice. No group rates, "Kids Come Free," or other further discounts apply for preview performances.

## Miramonte Public Speaking Wins Top 10 in the Nation!

Submitted by Cecelia Andrews



Back row, from left: Kristen Plant, Charles Hinman, Cecelia Andrews, Caie Kelley, Fatima Hasanain, Asher Kalman, and Bennett Stehr; front row: Alex Jang, Connor Meckfessel, Ethan Miles, Noah Goldstein, and Sandra Maguire. Photo Gloria Jang

While many high school students enjoyed their first swims of the summer, Miramonte public speaking teacher and head coach Kristen Plant flew with 10 of her top competitors to the 84th annual National Speech and Debate Association National Tournament in Overland Park, Kan. From June 16-20, these talented Matadors competed alongside over 3,300 students in the largest academic competition in the world, participating in a variety of events ranging from persuasive oratory-style speech to intense two-vs-two debate. Although Miramonte had a lot to prove after placing in the top 10 schools in the country last year, the team exceeded all expectations with their incredible success.

With the help of teachers and coaches Plant and Franck Reyherme, as well as retired coach and six-time Diamond Award winner coach Sandra Maguire, graduated seniors Noah Goldstein, Connor Meckfessel, Ethan Miles, and Bennett Stehr continued Miramonte's tradition of excellence in Congressional Debate, an event in which students debate legislation in a format similar to the actual U.S. Congress. Stehr will attend Georgetown University's renowned School of Foreign Service next fall. "I was most inspired when the chair of Congressional Debate pointed out that America is the greatest country in the world, not because here everything is perfect, but because here anything is

possible," noted Stehr. In an outstanding culmination of his high school competitive career, California state champion Meckfessel placed in the top five for the third year in a row, earning second place in the country, and solidifying his legacy as one of the most successful Congressional Debaters in the Miramonte program's rich 35 year history.

Because Miramonte was so successful in both speech and debate events, the school was awarded the tournament's highest honor of School of Outstanding Distinction as one of the top 10 schools out of the over 1,000 schools who qualified to compete at nationals. As much as the students and coaches worked hard to achieve this goal, the program would not be possible without the generous support of the Educational Foundation of Orinda. EFO's sponsorship of specialized coaches, state-of-the-art resources and technology, and highest-level competitions allows the voices of the 220 students enrolled in Miramonte's program to be heard. Kalman and Meckfessel have earned debate scholarships to Lewis and Clark College, where they will be roommates and Parliamentary Debate partners. Rising senior Alexander Jang commented, "The week we spent in Kansas was one of the most challenging experiences I've ever had, but I'm also incredibly happy with what we accomplished. I proved that I can debate well, but I also learned a lot about how I can get better."

## OIS Student Earns License Early

By Cathy Dausman



Cameron Nielsen, 12, of Orinda is a newly licensed amateur radio operator. Photo Cathy Dausman

Cameron Nielsen, 12, is barely out of seventh grade and already has his license – an amateur radio license, that is, with a personal call sign of K-K-6-M-V-U.

Cameron was by far the youngest student in a Technician's level license class recently taught by Lamorinda Area Radio Interest Group president Keith Riley. All amateur radio operators must pass a test before being licensed by the Federal Communications Commission; the test is heavy on science and math, and there is no child-friendly version.

According to the Amateur Radio Relay League, there are more than 700,000 radio amateurs in the U.S. licensed as Technician, General and Extra class. Cameron first learned of the training opportunity through his Boy Scout troop. He'd already earned his Communications badge and wanted to work on his Radio badge. Of all the members in his troop (Orinda's 237), "no-

body signed up [for the radio class] except Cameron," said his father, Ken Nielsen.

The Nielsen family was already acquainted with amateur radio, having been neighbors with Ham Radio Outlet owner and founder Robert Ferrero. Cameron found it fascinating people could talk to someone as far away as Brazil so easily. The license class was a series of six two-hour sessions with optional practice test-taking exams online. A written license exam was administered at the final meeting.

"It took me a little longer to take the test," Cameron said, but he passed it the first time.

The older Nielsen is justifiably proud of his son's math abilities, saying his son easily memorized the household's 26 digit alpha-numeric Internet access code.

Both father and son credit Riley for working with Cameron to learn radio protocols, earn his license and become involved with LARIG itself. "He's invited me to work [communications for] the Moraga TreeLine Triathlon and the Orinda Fourth of July Parade," Cameron said.

But Cameron has had little time even to listen in on his Icom multiband radio yet, a gift from Berkeley Yacht Club's Michael Whitfield, because of his other activities: He's just finished playing baseball, and is currently sailing and taking acting classes. That's a full plate for the Orinda Intermediate School student, who's content to "sign off" his radio for now.

To learn more about amateur radio events and activities in Lamorinda, go to <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Lamorinda-Area-Radio-Interest-Group/252700361590786?fref=fnf>.