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Double Representation for Moraga at the National Geographic Bee State Competition

Submitted by Charlie Gruebele



Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School sixth-grader Mason Gruebele at the geography bee state finals. Photo provided

Two Moraga students competed in the 2015 National Geographic Bee State Final Competition March 27 at Fresno State University.

Thousands of fourth through eighth graders from over 600 schools competed in National Geographic school bees throughout the state. Each school's Geo Bee champion then took a written test to qualify to be one of the 110 California state finalists. The finalists broke out into groups for preliminary rounds and had to answer eight rounds of questions about geography, cultural geography, and current affairs all over the world. Top students from the preliminary rounds advanced to the tie-breaker round, then 10 moved on to compete in the final round. The state champion then advances to the national competition in Washington, D.C., for a chance to win \$50,000 in scholarships and trip for two to the Galapagos Islands.

Mason Gruebele is a sixth-grade student at

Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School. He was Donald Rheem Elementary School's School Bee champ two years in a row, and went to the state finals last year. He is proud to have been able to represent JM at the state competition this year. In addition to his love of geography and current affairs, Mason loves playing the piano and French horn, and being a Boy Scout.

Andrew Navruzyan is a fifth-grade student at Donald Rheem Elementary School. This was his first time competing in the state competition. He was proud to represent Rheem Elementary in Fresno this year. In addition to his love of geography, he enjoys building model planes and playing piano.

Although Mason and Andrew did not advance to the final round, they enjoyed meeting other boys and girls who share the same passion for geography. They look forward to competing in the JM Geo Bee next year for a chance to advance to the state finals again.

'Stroke of Luck' Exhibition Features Works By Lafayette Students

Submitted by Darwin Marable



Springhill Elementary School first-grader, Landon, stands in front of his artwork. Photo provided

An exhibition of children's art, "Stroke of Luck," organized by Lafayette Partner's in Education or LPIE and selected by the County Arts Commission, AC5, is currently on display at the County Administration Building lobby, 651 Pine Street, Martinez through April 30.

Art Passages, founded in 1998, is an exhibition program highlighting artists and organizations throughout Contra Costa County. Each exhibition focuses on artists selected from one of the five county supervisorial districts. The exhibitions are on display from one month to six weeks and are open to the public.

Toward the end of each academic year each of the four elementary schools – Lafayette, Springhill, Happy Valley and Burton Valley – has an LPIE Art Fair Exhibition. The students select art from their portfolios to be exhibited at the Art Fair in May. Each child's name is submitted and one name is selected randomly to represent each grade level at their school site, thus, "Stroke of Luck." Every child has the opportunity to have their artwork framed, courtesy

of P & L Framing of Lafayette, and exhibited at various businesses throughout Lafayette.

The goal of LPIE's art teachers is to instill in kindergarten through fifth-grade students an interest in and appreciation of the arts. Art history is an integral part of the visual art program, thus, integrating art practice with academics. Picasso, Miro, Pollock and Diebenkorn are familiar names to the students. And the elements of art-line, form, color, light, texture and space are put into practice. Academics, theory and practice are integrated.

Several major artists have taken children's art seriously. Wassily Kandinsky collected children's art as early as 1908. And Paul Klee, Joan Miro, Jean Dubuffet and Pablo Picasso all looked to children's art for inspiration. Picasso said, "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up."

The exhibition is evidence of the continuing creative accomplishments of both the LPIE students and their art instructors, many of whom are themselves artists.

Three Lamorinda Odyssey of the Mind Teams Advance to World Finals

Submitted by Mai Angsupanich



The Orinda Intermediate School sixth-grade team, from left: Emma MacKenzie, Alyssa Angsupanich, Mai Angsupanich, Chloe Lai, Keira Taylor, James Donn and Kent Schechter. Photos provided



Lafayette Rotary team members, from left: Amin Edraki, Peter Kintner, Jonah Kallen, Kate Kintner, Julia Husch, Sophie Mcglothlen, Aneesa Edraki, Dylan Orsolini, Alex Shimotake, Cristofer Holobetz, Jake Dohemant and Jonathan Holobetz. Not pictured: Morgan Orsolini and coaches Tina Edraki, Margaret Kintner and Suzanne Roady

Eight Lamorinda Odyssey of the Mind teams competed among 210 teams in the State Finals at UC Riverside March 28. Two Lafayette Rotary teams and two Moraga Rotary teams competed as well a third-grade team from Del Rey Elementary School, a fifth-grade team from Glorietta Elementary as well as a sixth-grade team and an eighth-grade team from Orinda Intermediate School.

The OIS sixth-grade team of Alyssa Angsupanich, James Donn, Chloe Lai, Emma MacKenzie, Keira Taylor and Kent Schechter placed first in solving a technical problem requiring the construction of rubber band-powered devices. They will represent California in the World Finals May 20-23 at Michigan State University. The team was also awarded first place in style for their creative and artistic use of rubber bands in their props, costumes and musical presentation.

The Glorietta team of Tom Inouye, Finn Jordan, Degen Naldoza, Jason Ritchey, Samantha Scott and Owen Younger placed third in a classics problem with a video-game spin on the Greek myth Pandora's Box, which the team creatively symbolized with a six-foot origami tree. Speaking of thinking outside the box. The Del Rey team of dinosaurs featuring Diego Aguilar, Cameron Berg, Sam Laudy, Issac Reader-Taates and Paul Stephan placed eighth among 14 teams in Division I of the rubber-band power problem, a solid performance for a third-grade team competing as the youngest age group in their division.

The OIS eighth-grade team of Luca Argast, Margaux Clarke, Ariel Everette, Jane Fong and Sonika Renjen placed ninth among 20 teams in a performance problem involving the old art of silent movies; imagine producing and presenting a humorous movie with no sound effects or spoken lines.

Lafayette Rotary (Division III) took first place at the state finals for the Pandora's Box problem and the Lafayette Rotary team (Division III) took first place for the Silent Movie problem. Each team also received the highest score for "Style" in their respective problem. The Pandora's Box team was also recognized with the Omer Award for exceptional creativity. Both teams will compete at the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals. Moraga Rotary Team A (Division III) finished third for the Pandora's Box problem and Moraga Rotary Team A (Division I) finished seventh for the Runaway Train problem.

For over 35 years, Odyssey of the Mind has provided creative problem-solving opportuni-

ties for students from kindergarten through college. The international educational program promotes creativity by challenging teams to solve divergent problems with more than one solution. The teams bring their solutions to competition on the local, state and World level. Thousands of teams from throughout the U.S. and from about 25 other countries participate in the program.

Each year, teams are formed and five new competitive problems are presented for teams to solve. These long-term problems are solved over weeks and months. Some of the problems are technical in nature, while others are artistic or performance based. On competition day, the teams are given eight minutes to present their long-term solutions in the form of a skit. They are also given an on-the-spot "spontaneous" problem to solve within five to ten minutes as a team. The combined long-term score, style score and spontaneous problem score determines the teams' standings in competition.

The Odyssey of the Mind has its roots in the Industrial Design classes of Dr. Sam Micklus, Odyssey of the Mind founder. As a professor at Rowan University in New Jersey (formerly Glassboro State College), Dr. Micklus challenged his students to create vehicles without wheels, mechanical pie throwers and flotation devices that would take them across a course on a lake. He evaluated them not on the success of their solutions, but on the ingenuity applied and the risk involved in trying something new and different. Word spread and this led to the development of a creative problem-solving competition for school children.

All of the Odyssey of the Mind teams are coached by parent volunteers, but the solutions are entirely created by the team members without the help of others.

This year, Amy Inouye and Michael Kim took over the important role as the Odyssey of the Mind coordinators for all of Orinda. In addition to spreading word on the program, they coordinate membership registration for all five OUSD schools and Orinda Rotary Club (for non-OUSD students), organize team practices for the spontaneous component, and provide invaluable support to new coaches.

Students and parents interested in forming teams next year can contact Amy Inouye at aei2pld@gmail.com to obtain more information. A GoFundMe page (<http://www.gofundme.com/lafayetteOdyssey>) has been setup to help raise funds to cover the costs for the Lafayette teams to compete at the World Finals.