

~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

Miramonte student spreads awareness on Catalan Independence Movement



Photo provided

Inesi (left) talks to former Catalan president Quim Torra (right).

By Casey Scheiner

Most high school students focus on a mixture of academics, athletics, and social activities. However, one local teenager has an even higher priority: promoting awareness for a major independence movement in Spain.

Ardal Inesi, a junior at Miramonte, recently completed work on his documentary "A Case for Catalan Independence," which he filmed, narrated and edited.

Inesi was passionate about independence for Catalonia, a region in Northern Spain containing the city of Barcelona, from a young age. His Catalan mother brought him into an extended family passionate about lifting Catalonia from Spanish rule.

Consequently, Inesi is also fluent in Catalan, the primary language of the region.

"A lot of my family lives in Barcelona and its surrounding area, so they all speak Catalan around me," Inesi said. "My maternal grandfather is a major advocate for Catalan independence."

Last summer, Inesi followed his grandfather's connections in this sphere and traveled to Barcelona to speak with many prominent Catalan independence figures. In less than a month, he interviewed three Catalan presidents and three other separatist leaders.

"It was really cool to be in Barcelona talking to people who are so influential in resistance to Spanish control

of Catalunya," Inesi said. "I also got to go to Belgium to interview an exiled former Catalan president. All of these interviews really put the project in perspective."

It's impossible to condense Inesi's 72-minute documentary into a few sentences, but the crux of his argument revolves around Catalonia's history and culture being largely independent of those of Spain. Additionally, he defended the ideal of national self-determination and applied this principle to argue for independence, citing mass support for autonomy from Catalan citizens.

"For much of its history, Catalunya has been separate from Spanish affairs," Inesi said. "Today, Catalans believe it should return to such a system."

Along with the desire to promote Catalan independence, Inesi recognized the fact that many people are unfamiliar with the unique culture of the region. He sought to change that with this film.

"Most people have no idea how distinct Catalonia's history and culture are from those of Spain," Inesi said during the documentary.

The documentary, though a labor of love, was a time-consuming endeavor for Inesi, as turning his interview and narration footage into a compact film was a demanding task.

"I spent what felt like weeks at my computer in my basement grinding my project," Inesi laughed. "The

toughest part was making subtitles for all of the parts where Catalan was spoken."

Though his documentary was the culmination of his efforts surrounding Catalan

independence, many in the community already recognized Inesi as a vocal proponent of the cause.

... continued on Page B3

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