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Five Lamorinda Odyssey of the Mind Teams Advance to World Finals

Submitted by Keum Roberge



Moraga Rotary Team (Division I). Back row, from left, Coaches Jason Akel and Thomas Wang; middle row from left: Beatrice Roberge, Nicholas Aiken, Jordan Rodino, and Benjamin Wang; front row from left: Tyler Akel, Sophia King, and Joseph Pak. Photo by Mary Pat Aiken

You Can," a problem that requires designing, building, and operating three vehicles that travel from a multi-level parking garage to a secret meeting place while creating distractions to avoid being followed. The Glorietta team also earned the highly coveted Ranatra Fusca Award, named for the water strider insect, that is given to teams or individuals who display outstanding creativity during competition.

A Division II team, also sponsored by the Moraga Rotary and coached by Jenny Clare and Zunilda Ramos, won first place in the "Spontaneous" category and took second place for "Odd-A-Bot," a problem that involves designing, building, and operating an original robot that demonstrates human characteristics when performing tasks.

Two veteran Division III teams will compete in the World Finals. A Moraga Rotary Division III team, coached by Lydia Oxendine and composed of seven Campolindo High School students, won second place at the State Finals for "It's Time, Omer." The team, which also competed in the World Finals last year, has been together throughout their high school years.

Last but not least, a Division III team representing the Orinda Rotary and coached by Michael Kim, took first place in the "Ready, Set, Balsa, Build" challenge. Over the years, this accomplished team has represented California at State Tournaments and World Finals.



Moraga Rotary Team (Division II). Back row from left, Zac Yu, Sebastian Fojut; front row (from left): Ryan Erickson-King, Alex Clare, Vishal Lashkari, Jack Erickson-King. Photo Zunilda Ramos

Ten teams from Orinda, Lafayette, and Moraga competed in the Odyssey of the Mind State Tournament at Heritage High School in Brentwood on March 25, where they joined just under 200 teams from all over California. By placing first or second place in their respective divisions and categories, five Lamorinda teams have advanced to the World Finals. Three Moraga Rotary teams, one Orinda Rotary team, as well as the Glorietta Elementary School Blue Team will represent California at the Odyssey of the Mind 2017 World Finals on May 24-27 at Michigan State University.

A Division I team, sponsored by the Moraga Rotary and coached by Jason Akel and Thomas Wang, took second place for their solution to "Ready, Set, Balsa, Build." The problem includes building a balsa wood structure of no more than 15 grams that must hold as much weight as it can. The team, composed of fifth graders from Glorietta Elementary and St. Perpetua School, also placed first in the "Spontaneous" category, for their creative solution to an impromptu problem-solving challenge.

Another Division I team representing the Glorietta Elementary Blue Team took first place in "Catch Us If



Moraga Rotary Team (Division III). Back row from left, Stone Mao, Jake Oxendine, Michael DaRodda, Maria Wong; front row, from left, Kendall Schmidt, Andrea Calderon (Bennett Coates not pictured). Photo Lydia Oxendine

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