



# NEWSLETTER

Vol. 3, No. 1, Fall 2017

## Welcome to the Fall 2017 Climb Newsletter.

The Newsletter offers a glimpse into what we are doing and highlights the stories of students, coaches, and Climb staff that are reaching for the highest levels of excellence in speech and debate. A **big** thanks to Zach Maghirang who put together the initial draft of the newsletter and to all the participants that shared their experiences.

Enjoy and please feel free to contact me, Jim Hanson at [jim@climbthemountain.us](mailto:jim@climbthemountain.us) with ideas, edits, omissions, thoughts, etc.

Click on individual stories to read about Climb the Mountain!

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## John Medica Thank You

This fall, Jim received a sad message from Bob Withycombe, Jim's former colleague and good friend. Bob informed Jim that John Medica, a strong supporter of debate and Climb the Mountain, had passed away. Jim's mind raced with shock. "It came out of nowhere. It hit me like a train. I just couldn't and still can't believe it." John, along with Megan Salzman Medica, have supported Climb since it started and have been long time advocates for speech and debate. John and Megan have provided opportunities for hundreds, indeed thousands of students to learn speech and debate at the highest level. Jim noted:

John and Megan's generosity has made Climb the Mountain possible. Their donations have given us the opportunity to reach out to so many students and they really care about the students they help, often keeping up with them after they graduate. John and Megan have been there for me on a very personal level—giving me support that lifted my spirits at a tough time in my life. John even spent time talking with me about future paths I should consider. That's the kind of person he and Megan are—caring, ready to help, providing wise advise and showing their supportive friendship.

John helped turn around Dell's fledgling laptop offerings in the mid-1990s (Jim is typing this on his Dell Latitude) and continued in the tech industry at Compal Electronics Inc., as a leader in the screen technology industry. Widely known for his engaging personality and incisive ability to get to the heart of the matter, John made a major impact in his life and on those who were fortunate enough to know him. From all of us at Climb the Mountain, we express our deepest sympathies to Megan and we fondly remember John.



Just a few of the many, many speakers and debaters John and Megan have helped.

# The Effort to find the Mountain: High School Summer Camp



We again offered a camp at Pacific Lutheran University to provide students with an immersive speech and debate experience giving them the competitive edge for the 2017 debate season. Featuring a talented and hard-working staff, we offered labs for Policy, Lincoln-Douglas, Public Forum, Congress, Individuals Events, and a coaching workshop.

Jay Busch, coach at Newport High School, shared his positive Climb camp experience:

Please accept my gratitude to you both for the investment of time and expertise shared in mentoring me as coach and administrator for Speech and Debate (SD8) at Newport High School. Each of your attention to the intricacies of coaching and administration for

success of SD8 was instructive and inspiring. I am looking forward to the coming year on behalf of our team at Newport, and in contributing to a robust season in the Puget Sound league/Washington State Forensics!

The Newport team has had a strong showing at local tournaments for this season and Jay's presence in the community has been great. Early in the season at the Grizzlies Forensics Invitational at The Bear Creek School, Jay offered to judge his first Lincoln-Douglas debate – in finals at the tournament! We are appreciative of Jay's commitment to providing an educational debate experience.

## In Search of the Mountain

At the camp, we hosted a student from China – Charles Xie. Jim, along with camp assistant Matt Aust, wanted Charles to experience a scenic view of Mount Rainier. If you are at the right spot in Tacoma where the camp at PLU is held, the view can be spectacular (fitting for Climb the Mountain!). Starting at the campus, the trio kept walking in search of a great view only to be blocked by trees, then houses, then buildings. After searching for over an hour, it turned dark before they could find a view, so they, sadly, were not able to show Charles the full beauty of Mount Rainier. Hopefully Charles returns next year so the group can continue the adventure and in the meantime, we provide a picture of the mountain here.



Climb would like to extend a special thanks to everyone – students, staff, PLU, and the PLU debate team especially Director Justin Eckstein – involved with the camp!

This summer, Climb will be hosting camps in Bellevue, with Jay Busch at Newport High School as well as continuing at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma and our middle school camp at Explorer West Middle School. Stay tuned for updates regarding the camps here:

<https://www.climbthemountain.us/hs-camp>

# The Smoke at the Middle School Camp



Middle School Camp Photo taken after the smoke finally cleared.

Our middle school summer camp was held again at Explorer West Middle School from July 31st to August 4th. We had students return for another year and were also joined by a new crop of aspiring debaters!

The camp was a success despite being surrounded by smoke! The spread of wildfires in British Columbia and the Cascades late last July, north and east of Seattle created a thick smoke over the entire city, but that didn't stop the debaters from having a great time both debating and during their fun breaks!

Still, Zach Maghirang, a lab leader, felt like the smoke had adverse effects on the students' endurance.

"We couldn't stay outside for long because the air felt so heavy and dry – making frisbee, basketball, or other games hard to play. All of the staff encouraged the campers to stay hydrated and kept the rooms cold as a way to combat the climate."

Just like the campers, the staff included both old and new faces – a wonderful group dedicated to preparing the middle-school campers for their upcoming season. This year also debuted a "Transitioning to High School Speech and Debate" workshop. One student was particularly drawn to dramatic interpretation and took initiative. After collecting a slew of books and working with staff member Tiffany Wilhelm, the student left the camp with an almost competition-ready dramatic interpretation!

One morning at the camp, a few staff members and a few students decided to start a campers versus staff debate. Aaron Yared and David Kelly, Explorer West Middle School Teacher and Camp Liason, debated two students on whether or not the earth was flat! Aaron and David had very convincing arguments in favor of a flat earth, however the campers prevailed. Jim's Comment: Thank Goodness. : )

The Middle School Camp is expanding to Bellevue, just like the high school camp. So, we'll have a middle school camp in Seattle at Explorer West as we have had and now, we'll also have a camp at Newport High School in Bellevue. More information about the Climb Middle School Camps is at: <https://www.climbthemountain.us/ms-camp>



## Online Debating! Jim takes a call from an East Coast “Heavy”

The online debate platform, iDebate.online, has a refreshed look! Working with Jim and Denise Vaughan, Director at UW Bothell, Dane Schoonover has been working diligently the last few months making vast improvements to the platform that create an even better online environment for debating. Most notable and Jim’s personal favorite feature is the awards ceremony – allowing students to congratulate one another online at the conclusion of the tournament as he presents, via live video, the awards for top competitors. While both big and small improvements are being made constantly to perfect the program, the site has revolutionized online debating.



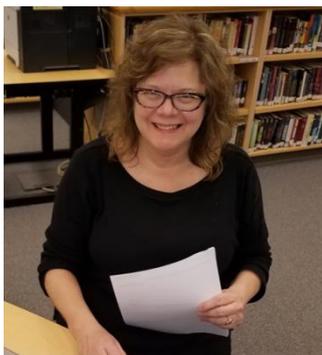
The versatility of online programs like iDebate has sparked interest from a major east coast NDT policy director. Along with the potential for programs to save thousands of dollars on travel costs and streamline practice debates for debaters at home on break, Jim spoke with this coach about using the online platform as a possible workaround to travel bans to states with discriminatory policies. A number of national championship tournaments have seen attendance plummet because states ban the use of school funds for travel to certain states. Online debate would allow debaters to engage one another from the comfort of their classrooms or homes. Can you guess the name of this coach? He is a “heavy” but Jim isn’t saying who at this time even if you are saying “not buying it.” : )

Online Debating has also shown itself to have more team based benefits, says Tony Penders, Bellevue College’s Coach:

Great practice today-- 2 hours with no glitches. I love iDebate. It has been wonderful and saved me at least three hours of travel between Tacoma and Bellevue and Renton every week, it has made impromptu practices possible, I am able to do weekend practices without abandoning my family . . . It’s been invaluable... thanks for all your hard work!

iDebate has already hosted 6 tournaments this season, with participants ranging from middle-school to high-school to college students at a variety of competitive levels. One student from BC academy was able to participate in a Seattle clinic practice debate because of the program! The Climb Big Questions tournament held on December 17th brought debaters from schools in Washington state and in Canada while online IPDA debates have consistently had competitors join in from Idaho and Montana as well as California.

There are still opportunities to compete at one of the online events – see <https://www.climbthemountain.us/tournaments> for more information including for registration. All competitors are encouraged to participate in this innovative, inexpensive, and forward thinking way to debate!

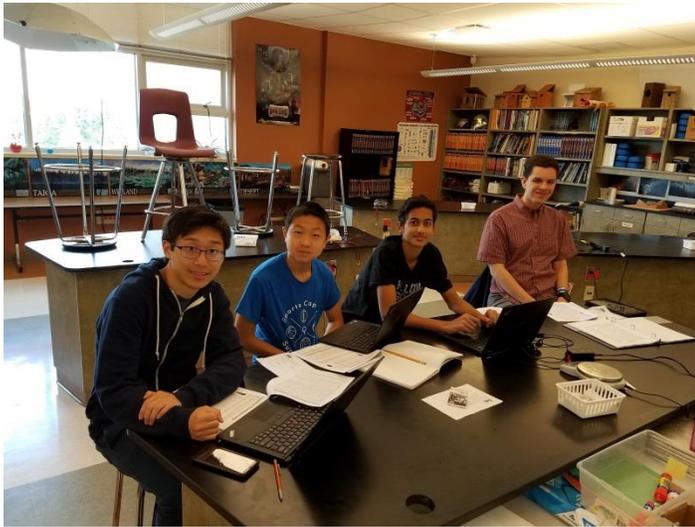


Lisa Weber, Interlake High School Coach: “Online debate is awesome, because you still have an actual debate, with the convenience of competing and judging, without time and energy wasted on travel!”

David Airne, Director at University of Montana Missoula: “They work in our schedules and let us get in more tournaments so we are not getting rusty when we would have otherwise have some long breaks between tournaments.”



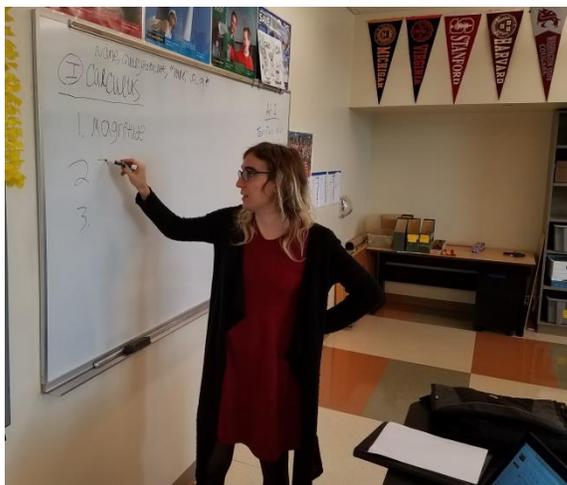
## Bellevue Clinic—So big, parking ran out!



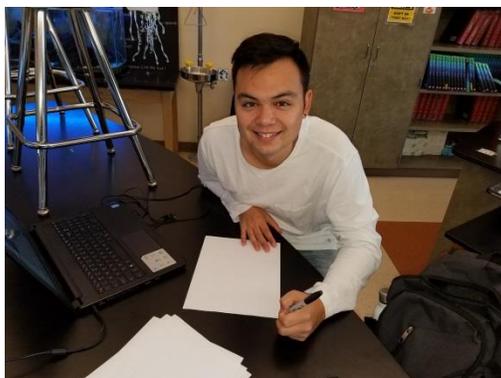
October gave Climb its biggest clinic showing yet – consisting of a total of over 70 participants that included students, judges, and coaches. Hosted at Newport High School, Climb would like to extend a special thanks to Jay Busch and Tyler Julian for the hosting—getting rooms, promoting the event, working with their administration—we are really thankful. We also thank Lisa Weber for helping out at the beginning with judge training. We thank everyone helping to get the clinic to run smoothly amidst the slew of activities that were taking place on that Saturday at the school. And, of course, our staff did a fantastic job working with students.

The biggest problem: Parking! While there were many other events happening at the school on that Saturday—Climb’s Clinic left Newport High School without parking—literally none. People wound up parking at the nearby Factoria Mall to be able to attend! Jim has vowed to improve the parking at next year’s planned clinic. Further, Jim has talked with Interlake coach Steve Rowe and they want to add a mid-year clinic for students to prepare for the second half of the season.

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The high level attendance was no daunting task for Jim, and the clinic played a huge role in advancing students’ speaking and debate abilities – whether they came in as strong or brand new competitors. Lab leaders for each event noted immediate improvements in speeches or performances, which paves the way for Climb to assist with bigger clinics like this in the future.



## Kent-Meridian Clinic—Pizza Order Overload

Washington speech and debate teams will have to be on the lookout – a new school is working hard to make a strong showing at a local tournament before the season’s end! Don Hauck, English teacher at Kent-Meridian High school, reached out to Jim to rekindle speech and debate program efforts that began in the previous year. A successful clinic was held at the beginning of winter break, featuring 10 eager students looking to take part in the benefits stemming from speech and debate.

Jim and Zach spent seven hours at the school, teaching the speaking essentials in Public Forum debate as well as providing a brief overview on the January topic – Catalan Independence from Spain. Each of the students who joined had no prior debate experience, and each student left more confident in their speaking having given multiple practice speeches, laying the groundwork for successful debate futures. Don hopes to bring the Kent-Meridian team to a tournament before the 2017-2018 season end, so if you see them there be sure to give them a warm welcome!



Jim was busy instructing so he had Zach order pizza. With the potential upside of motivating the new debaters, Zach accidentally ordered an entire large pizza for each student! When the pizzas arrived, Jim reacted, “that’s a lot of pizzas.” It’s a good thing that the students’ hard work made them hungry though some students took some leftover pizza home.

## Outreach Efforts—We rev it up!

Climb spent the fall and early winter contacting middle schools, high schools, and colleges in western Washington in search of students, teachers, or anyone else interested in starting and maintaining a speech and debate program. Although the season is winding down, Climb’s efforts will remain strong in our efforts to create new programs.

If you know of anyone wanting to start a program that seeks help for starting a squad, email Zach Maghirang ([zach@climbthemountain.us](mailto:zach@climbthemountain.us)) or Jim Hanson ([jim@climbthemountain.us](mailto:jim@climbthemountain.us)) and we can help with gathering resources and support needed for creating a strong speech and debate team!

In addition to program support, Climb the Mountain’s most recent outreach goal is the formation of a speech and debate coaching endorsement as an additional option for students in teacher certification programs at local colleges and universities. Prospective teachers would participate in an extensive program that introduces them to speech and debate and prepares them to successfully coach and sustain a team.

## We Like Speech and Debate because . . .

Lucy Sun – “You get to widen your scope of knowledge about world events. Even more important, it gives you fundamental persuasive skills that will help you in your life.”

Edward Qin – “Speech and debate is fun - you win (or you work hard to win).”

Matthew Aust – “Judging debate is fun because students are always coming up with interesting new interpretations of motions that I'd never considered before! Alternatively... judging debate is fun because it gives me a chance to participate in a community where critical thinking is valued rather than discouraged.”

Mia Chen – “Speech and debate is really enjoyable because it is a great way to learn how to "argue" effectively with your family and peers. That always comes in handy :)”

Serena Fitzgerald – “Teaching high school debate is a way to rediscover the excitement of learning or discovering something for the first time by sharing it with a younger debater.”

Nick Li – “I find it fun because you get to make a lot of diverse friends at tournaments and you get to learn real world skills.”

Hannah Foster – “I find debate fun because its competitive while letting you learn about different topics.”

Angie Tinker – “No matter what the politicians of today are doing, debate gives me hope for the future.”

Jasmine Kim—

- Jean says: Debate is fun because you can argue very subtly with other people.
- Sue says: Debate is fun because you can express your opinions, and make reasons against other people's opinions as well.

Tate Adams – “Teaching speech and debate is fun because as a coach I get to witness how uniquely creative and innovative debaters minds are at solving complex problems.”

Neo Cai – “Speech and debate is fun because not only do you get to make real tight friends through the stressful moments, you also get to just have fun really getting to know how the real world works.”

Chris Coles – “It allows for you to engage with the multiplicity of different ways subjects approach the discursive, and thus the world!!”

Ronna Liggett – “Teaching/judging debate is a treasured activity of mine because I love to listen and savor the intellectual combat and conversations which occur.”

Katelyn Kim – “Debate is fun because it allows me organize my thought and be vocal about my opinions”



## The Board

The Climb Board is five highly accomplished professionals who strongly believe in the value of speech and debate.



### Jared Phillips

Mr. Phillips is the Chief Executive Officer and Treasurer of the Foundation, handling many of the business functions of Climb the Mountain. Mr. Phillips has been a nationally recognized All-American debater (placing thirty-third in the nation), coach of the 17th team in the nation, and placed in late elimination rounds at multiple Northwest debate tournaments. He is currently the Co-Founder and CEO of Minutes.City, a company focused on improving civic engagement of citizens with local government.



### Jim Hanson

As the Executive Director, Mr. Hanson is responsible for the instructional creation and organization of the Foundation. Mr. Hanson has been a Professor of Rhetoric and Argument and speech and debate coach including now at Seattle University. As coach, his speech and debate teams won 5 squad NDPA national championships, first place CEDA team in the nation (Jessica Clarke and Adam Symonds), first place NDT speaker (Charles Olney), and first place NPDA speaker (Miranda Morton) as well as over 1000 debate awards and 500 individual speaking events awards.



### Char Main

Ms. Main serves as Vice President of the Foundation and provides organizational goals and objectives advice. She is a litigation attorney with a nationwide practice, and she oversees the work of litigators across the country. She is formerly a nationally competitive speaker and debater (placing fifth in the nation at CEDA Nationals and second in the nation at Pi Kappa Delta Nationals), an "All American" debater, and placed first and was awarded first speaker at many Northwest debate contests. In law school, Ms. Main was a finalist and coach in national moot court competitions. She has coached at both high school and college levels, leading multiple teams to elimination debates.



### Rowland Hobbs

Mr. Hobbs serves as a board member, providing expertise in promotion and development. He is a nationally recognized, award-winning, product designer, marketer, and advisor to leaders of global organizations. He is currently managing director at Teneo, a global CEO advisory firm. Previously, he was product design director at Accenture, board member at Firelight Foundation, founder and board member at Post+Beam, and was a nationally competitive debater advancing to elimination rounds at CEDA Nationals and the NFL National championship, placing ninth at the Heart of America, and earning first speaker in Washington State.



### David Perry

Mr. Perry serves as Secretary recording meeting minutes and compiling Foundation documents. He is an award winning legal counsel for a business, a nationally competitive speaker and debater in both parliamentary and policy debate including elimination debates at national championship tournaments (placing fifth at the DSR National Championship).

## Nick Mauer

A Facebook post told the story—Nick Mauer had passed away. Jim was really saddened. Nick Mauer helped Climb the Mountain in its first years. He served as assistant camp director and tournament assistant for several years with Jim. He also instructed students in individual events and he helped judge at Climb tournaments in speech and debate. Jim noted:

Nick was a truly caring person. He was always so upbeat—providing kind and uplifting words to students and coaches. He was a real help to me—getting food, setting up computers, assisting with check-in, judging and so much more for Climb. He did it with a smile and a willingness to get things done.

Nick had moved to Southern California over a year ago but was on our list to judge upcoming online debates; sadly, that never happened. We miss Nick and send his family and loved ones positive thoughts and we remember Nick as someone who made people smile because he was enjoying speech and debate.



## Another Camp Picture!



## July through December 2017 in Review . . .

Climb highlights from the second half of the year!

- tutored Bellevue kids in interpretation, debate, and speaking events
- participated in the bc academy showcase event and received an award for coaching
- attended the middle school coaches meeting
- setup the middle school and high school camps including schedules, hiring, web page updates, notifications to participants, etc.
- met with Justin Eckstein to talk about partnering climb tournaments with Northwest Worlds Style Debate Scrimmages
- gave two presentations on debating for the Korean and Japan Nationals tournaments.
- did accounting including relevant taxes
- met with our chief officer Jared Phillips to begin the transition to his taking over accounting for Climb the Mountain
- reviewed process for hiring our new positions running clinics and tournaments and engaging in outreach to schools to start programs
- e-met with online tournament software person to bring new and better service for debating online
- tutored students preparing for debate tournaments
- hosted our high school camp**
- established and hired new positions for outreach and clinics and tutoring; congrats to Zach Maghirang, Angie Tinker, and Dylan Thomas
- held the middle school camp providing training in debate
- engaged in talks with three non-profit community organizations to do tutoring, clinics, and camps
- setup the Bellevue clinic
- held meetings to complete outreach plans with Zach Maghirang
- improved and completed contact lists for middle schools, high schools, and colleges with thanks to Dylan Thomas, Kathryn Starkey and Zach Maghirang
- Angie Tinker began outreach to colleges to set up speech and debate training for new teachers
- held Skype sessions, edited cases, **worked with students leading to Korean and Japan National Championships** (in addition to in person practices and training)
- tutored student from Sumner High School
- announced our online tournaments for high school and college students
- helped at Bellevue College camp providing instruction in IPDA and NPDA debating with thanks to Tony Penders and Kinny Torre for their great efforts
- worked with students in Bellevue area to help them as they participate in a new high school program
- met with hopeful new climb staff member to discuss forensics in Washington State
- worked at mini-camp with students presenting on public forum, ID and IPPF debate
- held two clinics, Skype sessions, edited cases, preparing students for national circuit tournaments
- ran the Northwest Parli Warmup college tournament
- held three college online tournaments
- held the Bellevue Clinic providing instruction for 60+ high school students, judges, and coaches
- tutored high school students from the Overlake School leading to late elimination awards at two tournaments
- tutored middle school students from the Bellevue area
- engaged in outreach to Puget Sound high schools and community colleges to encourage them to begin programs
- engaged in outreach with college education programs to provide training for speech and debate coaching
- met with coach and held clinic to boot up program at Kent Meridian High School
- Skype instructed Toronto students in public forum debate

**In our next Newsletter, we will tell you about our latest support for speech and debate.**

**We are climbing and we are ready to hit new peaks of engagement with your help and support!**

## Contribute to the Climb!

For anyone interested in helping us continue our mission, please visit <https://www.climbthemountain.us/support-us> to donate a gift of money or your time.

## Donors keep us Climbing!

We are incredibly grateful for the support of so many people even though we have just begun our official fundraising. People have donated money. People have donated their time. People have reached out to others to bring them into the world of speech and debate. We thank everyone for their efforts including these donors below (donations from June to December 2017). *Did we miss you? We are very sorry for the omission and we want to correct it! Please email Jim at [jim@climbthemountain.us](mailto:jim@climbthemountain.us) and tell him. :)*

- **Char Main and Chris Dunlap**
- **David and Shari Barsky**
- **Jared Phillips and Loan Lam**
- **Megan Salzman Medica and John Kevin Medica (The Salzman-Medica Family Fund)**
- **Mike King and Nancy Neraas**
- **Rowland Hobbs and Angelo Boccia Cedeño**
- **Sean Collins**

Thank you to these volunteers

- **Mike Bartanen**
- **Ronna Liggett**
- **And to all of the people that have helped our community grow!**

- **With thanks to the National Speech and Debate Association for providing grants for a big question tournament where over 20 people participated!**
- **With thanks to Matt Fraser and Education Unlimited for purchasing advertising on our new web pages which helps us fund our projects to grow speech and debate!**
- **With thanks to the Voices Foundation for helping provide scholarships for students attending our high school camp.**

[Click here to donate and make a difference](https://www.climbthemountain.us)

## We are climbing the mountain!

