



NEWSLETTER

Vol. I, No. I, September 2015

Welcome to the inaugural edition of our Newsletter.

The Newsletter hopefully offers you a glimpse into what we are doing and to 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 Satinder Haer who put the newsletter together.

Enjoy and please feel free to contact me, Jim Hanson, with ideas, edits, omissions, thoughts, etc. This is a start and we plan to build and grow!

Click on individual stories to read about Climb the Mountain!

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Climb Speech and Debate Camp at PLU

From August 3rd to the 8th of 2015, Climb held a speech and debate camp for middle and high school students primarily from the Puget Sound area. We partnered with Pacific Lutheran University's forensics program to host the event on their campus. Jim Hanson, Executive Director of Climb the Mountain, worked with Justin Ecksten, Director of Forensics at Pacific Lutheran University to establish the camp. Justin and Jim's goals of promoting and supporting forensics in the Pacific Northwest aligned very well with the mission of the camp. Over 48 students and coaches participated across the six days of the camp—double the number Jim had expected. This great turn out meant we were able to offer labs in four different styles of debate (Policy-CX, LD, Public Forum, and Congress) and multiple speech events (Oratory, Expos, Extemp, Impromptu, Dramatic Interpretation, Humorous Interpretation, Dual Interpretation, and Interpretive Reading). In order to make this all possible, there were some very early mornings, including one where Jim was spotted awake well before 8 am! (Jim editorial comment: Blech)



Some (not all!) of the students and coaches who participated in the Climb the Mountain Speech and Debate Camp at Pacific Lutheran University.

It was quite an undertaking for our first camp but the feedback was very positive. The parent of one high school student remarked, "Our son is on Cloud Nine about today. Can't tell you how awesome it was for you to offer this experience." A student noted about what went well at the camp: "Can I say everything? Instruction content was the best I've ever received; I've never had such clear and precise coaches before. The best part was that we were always busy, not a second was wasted." Another student summed up his experience at the camp: "Thanks again for putting this incredible camp together!"



Nigel Ramoz-Leslie lectures to LD debaters; two policy-cx debaters engage in practices.

The Climb camp emphasized the characteristics of a great camp—individualized instruction in small labs, efficient use of preparation so students can focus on practicing with feedback and redos, and fantastic staff. Climb was fortunate to have an excellent coaching staff of current and former college debaters who presented lectures, watched debates and coached individual speaking events. Administrative support was provided by Jim Hanson, Nick Mauer and Justin Eckstein. Thank you to all the participants, coaches and staff for making our first camp a success!

- Policy-CX, LD, Public Forum Debate staff: Adam McKibben, Angie Tinker, Andre Earls, Ben Menzies, Carly Johnson, Emma Thompson, Kendall Dunovant, Kenny Torre, Malcolm Gabbard, Nigel Ramoz-Leslie, and Rachel Garnett.
- Congressional debate staff: John Julian and Lasica Crane.
- Individual events staff: Andrew Buchan, Isaiah Parker, Kendall Dunovant, and Rachel Garnett.
- Coach training staff: Sarah Sherry.



Pictures on the left show students engaged in a congressional debate (at top) and a public forum debate (bottom); on the right, staff talk with each other including Justin Eckstein having a humorous moment with Angie Tinker during a break at the camp (at top) while below, Andre Earls and Rachel Garnett discuss camp issues (at bottom).

The Kingston Clinic—Memory Lane for Jim . . .

Held at Kingston High School with the hosting and instructional help of coach Lasica Crane, Jim led up an all-star cast of staff including Chris McCool, Jeff Pearson, Nejat Kedir, Nick Mauer, John Julian, Lasica Crane, and Isaiah Parker.

It was memory lane for Jim because he quickly discovered Tiffany Wilhelm who had worked with Jim at the Western Washington University debate institute many years ago and Tiffany is now providing coaching help at South Kitsap High School. Additionally, one of Jim's very first debaters to coach, Jeff Pearson, joined in for the instruction. "It just made me feel great to see these two. They have grown so much over the years but their character and personalities that I really, really like remain intact. Just made me smilies. :)"



Coaches including Tiffany Wilhelm (left) and Jeff Pearson and Nejat Kedir (center), and John Julian (right) at the Kingston Clinic.

The clinic featured instruction in all kinds of debate and individual events and was a big success. The model from this clinic is the basis for the clinics we are doing in the Fall of 2015. Students and coaches participated and came away with cases, congress bills and speeches, practice speaking and debating, along with interp cuttings and practice. Additionally, participants were treated to a delicious lunch and snacks by parents and supporters of the Kingston High School program. Lasica Crane knows how to run a program!



John Julian and Isaiah Parker, top photos, enjoy food while they provided outstanding instruction; below students and coaches enjoy the delicious lunch. What a great group!

Foodies & Birthday Celebrations

While the students were busy with their labs and activities, the administrative staff was working hard to manage all the details--but primarily the snacks.

Nick Mauer, a member of the administrative staff, shared, *“When I got hired for the camp, my job was Camp Assistant, I didn't think anything of it, I assumed everyone was a Camp Assistant. It was not until the first day of camp that I realized I was Jim's personal assistant, and that my responsibilities primarily involved covering the morning shift and being responsible for snack time.”*

Yes, Jim is very fond of his foodies. It's one of the reasons Climb has such great events! :)



Students and staff enjoy the dessert and snack break at the camp.

The second day of the camp also happened to be a debater's birthday. Jim found out just in time and Nick was sent on a mission to obtain three different kinds of ice cream and three ice cream scoops in under half an hour. The debater was pleasantly surprised when everyone sang her happy birthday and they all got to enjoy ice cream after a long day. Unfortunately, as dairy eaters often forget, not everyone can enjoy ice cream. One camp participant had to miss out on the celebration.

In order to reconcile the previous day's event, Jim insisted on sorbet the next day. This time everyone could have the dessert and Jim continued his long standing tradition of providing excellent foodies at his events!

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, placed in late elimination rounds at multiple Northwest debate tournaments, and has served as a program director at a law firm.



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 for more than thirty-three years. As coach, his speech and debate team 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. [More on Jim](#)



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, including 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 and marketer. He is currently a design director at Accenture, board member at Firelight Foundation, founder and board member at Post+Beam, and was a nationally competitive debater including elimination rounds at CEDA Nationals, 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



Praise for Jim Hanson!

You can't be a part of the speech and debate community without knowing Jim Hanson. He has been involved in speech and debate for over 39 years, in every capacity possible--competitor, coach, and director. Jim's latest contribution to the community, began in August of 2014, the Climb the Mountain Speech & Debate Foundation. The Foundation came to life with the mission of empowering Speech & Debate coaches and students in an effort to increase participation, encourage a supportive community, and to seek excellence in competition.

Many supporters of Climb already personally know Jim and his extensive work in the speech and debate community but we wanted to highlight some of the great things that were said about his work with Climb:

"Working with Jim was such a treat. He is an Administrative maestro--seamlessly coordinating the camp. Seriously, the man is a debate camp whisper. But the best part of working with Jim? Wherever Jim is, snackies are not far behind." - Justin Eckstein, Director of Forensics at PLU

"This camp was the first time that I worked with Jim Hanson for a period of time longer than a weekend. I'm grateful for the experience and youthful energy. I'm excited about climb the mountain, & I look forward to this season. Thank you Jim." -Nick Mauer, judge in the Pacific Northwest forensics circuit.

Jim was also awarded the Thomas S. Foley's Ambassador for his dedication and support to forensic education in January (2015). Jean Tobin, who Jim worked with at Walla Walla high school's speech and debate team, alerted Jim to this recognition. Jim noted that: "I'm humbled and honored. David Smith, director at University high school, is one of the kindest and hardest working coaches on the circuit, and that makes this award even more meaningful to me."

Thanks to Jim's leadership and efforts, in just over a year, we've been able to host over a half dozen clinics, run three mini-camps, provide individualized speech and debate coaching for several local schools, and raise over \$15,000 to help fulfill our objectives. Thank you Jim for your hard work, we support you!

For anyone interested in helping us continue our mission, please visit <http://www.climbthemountain.us/donate.htm> to donate money or <http://www.climbthemountain.us/how-you-can-help.htm> to read the different ways you can volunteer your time.

Debaters Trek From the Tri-Cities to Participate

When planning first began for the PLU camp, it was intended primarily for commuters. However, registrations began surpassing the expected turnout and some of those participants were not local. While we were excited, we had to figure out how to accommodate the awesome results! Being quick to adapt, Jim secured a block of hotel rooms that coaches and students who did not live within commuting distance of Pacific Lutheran University could stay book, effectively resolving the issue.



Marcos, on the left, with camp lab leader Kenny Torre, and Lukas on the right.

Or so we thought. Jim got a call the day before the camp from Marcos, a camp participant from the eastern side of Washington. Marcos, his brother Lukas, and another student, Todd, had driven all the way from the Tri-Cities to Tacoma for the camp. Upon their arrival, they were told by the hotel that they could not stay without an adult present at all times. After several frantic calls, they worked out with the hotel an adult that could supervise them during their stay at the hotel, enabling them to participate and benefit from the camp.

One of Marcos' camp coaches, Emma Thompson, shared a great story with us about Marcos's participation in the camp:

"Marcos came in with no knowledge of debate, and at first he couldn't get through a whole crossfire or speech but by the end of the week not only was he getting through the whole crossfire, he was dominating."

Go Marcos! And go all camp participants!

And . . . hopefully this rooming issue will be a problem of the past in the future as the plan for the 2016 camp is to have on-campus residence living.

A Year In Review

As we reflect upon the first year of Climb and its successes, we want to highlight the key happenings:

June –September 2014:

- Jim starts the work to create Climb the Mountain Speech & Debate Foundation. The facebook page for Climb was created. If you're not already a member, join here:
 - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/258436737697090/> for updates and news as it happens!
 - The application to found Climb as a non-profit 501c3 goes under review and planning for clinics is already underway.
 - Climb the Mountain Speech & Debate goes into full operation and the first Board meeting is held, September 3, 2014.

October-November, 2014:

- A clinic is held at Bellevue College for coaches & students.
- An informal kick off dinner is held to celebrate Climb's launch.
- Jim works on the new climb web pages--a hub of information and resources for speech and debate programs, coaches, students and parents.
 - Jim assists individual programs with getting coaches in place so students can attend tournaments and setting up private clinics for schools.

December 2014-January 2015:

- Jim helps with the PLU-Puyallup tournament.
 - Working with Justin Eckstein, Jim begins planning for the August camp at Pacific Lutheran University.
 - The Kingston HS Clinic happens and is a success. Jim views it as a model for future success, inclusion, and growth.
 - Climb works with several local high schools on public forum debate practices.
 - Jim is awarded the Thomas S. Foley's Ambassador for his dedication and support to forensic education.
- Congratulations Jim!

February through May 2015:

- Climb is recognized officially by the government as a 501c3, meaning we are an official educational non profit!
- The August debate camp is announced and outreach begins slowly but surely.
- The Climb Facebook group hits 300 members!
- We continue working with schools throughout the Pacific Northwest and further develop the infrastructure in place for the organization.
 - Registration opens to participants for the August camp and the camp registration grows and grows, ultimately doubling Jim's expected numbers.
 - Calvin Horne and Satinder Haer join Climb as assistants.
 - Olivia Kipper and Jeff Pearson join Climb as fundraisers.
 - We receive a \$10,000 donation and two \$1,000 donations in addition to several smaller but also important donations. Big thanks to our donors, we are fortunate to have your support!

June-August 2015:

- Lots of administrative work to ensure Climb has a bright future. Continued support of programs and schools who reach out to Jim.
- The Climb the Mountain Speech & Debate camp happens at PLU with enormous success!
- We successfully run the climb "forensi-palooza" on Orcas Island providing training to 16 students in congress and LD debate over a 3 day period.
 - The Climb the Mountain fundraising dinner is planned.

In our Next Newsletter, we will tell you about September 2015 and beyond:

- Yes we had another mini-camp. Yes we are set to have another in October plus a clinic with numbers far exceeding expectations! News on these is coming . . . In the meantime, see our Facebook pages and our next Newsletter for what we've done in September 2015 and later. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/258436737697090/>
 - **A huge amount of growth in just one year, with plenty more to come.**

The Forensi-palooza at Orcas Island

When Katie Blaine talked with Bob Withycombe, her former professor, about a camp for her students—Bob immediately recommended Climb the Mountain. Katie along with coaches Joan Pedrick and Ian Lister worked with Jim to establish Climb's first mini-camp. Jim managed to convince Bob and Jean Tobin who he had worked with at Walla Walla High School to provide instruction. From there, the fun began! Packed into nearly 3 days, Jim, Bob and Jean taught LD debate and Congressional debate to the students.



Bob, the quintessential professor, pleads “no more photos” and Jim instructs students in his typical humorous manner.

The accolades for the camp came in from students, coaches, and Jean, Bob, and Jim. Jean said, “teaching debate camp has never been such a beautiful experience. Orcas Island is a beautiful setting with gracious and kind folks.” Bob said, “It was great to come out of retirement to do this. Only Jim Hanson, Jean Claire Tobin, and Katie Blaine could have gotten me there. I had a wonderful time with the kindest bunch of parents, coaches, students and friends. I gained 3 pounds.” Jim emphasized what a great time he had. “Joan, Katie, and Ian were incredible hosts. We were treated to delicious meals, provided a wonderful home to stay in, and the gracious, kind, and fun hospitality were off the charts. Coupled with getting to work with Bob and Jean again, along with great students, this was just one of those I’ll never forget it experiences.”



Jean shows off her “you’d better impact your argument” serious side and her kind, encouraging, and energetic “we are all learning” side.



Some of the students at the Orcas Climb Camp. Jim, Jean, and Bob were very pleased with the progress and growth these students made.

Donors to 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 up to Oct. 9, 2015). *Did we miss you? We are very sorry for the omission and we want to correct it! Please email Jim at jim@climbthemountain.us and tell him. :)*

- **Ben Menzies**
- **Bill DeForeest**
- **Bob Withycombe**
- **Char Main and Chris Dunlap**
- **Chris McCool**
- **David and Kristi Perry**
- **David Herning**
- **Emma Thompson**
- **Emily Cordo**
- **Jared Phillips and Loan Lam**
- **Jean Tobin**
- **Jeff Pearson**
- **Jessica Gates and JJ Howland**
- **Jim Hanson**
- **John Henry Heckendorn**
- **Jose Trejo**
- **Justin Eckstein**
- **Megan Salzman Medica and John Kevin Medica (The Salzman-Medica Family Fund)**
- **Michael Bartanen**
- **Microsoft Corporation**
- **Nicholas Thomas**
- **Rowland Hobbs and Angelo Boccia Cedeño**
- **Sarah Sherry**
- **Steve and Sara Rowe**
- **Taylor Reynolds**

[Click here to donate and make a difference](#)

We are climbing the mountain!

