

Toiler ROTC Battalion Takes Top Honors at All-City Competition

On December 13, 2008, 56 cadets from Manual Arts JROTC competed against 17 JROTC programs in the annual All-City Drill Competition held at Monroe High School.

This school year six members competed in the All-City Staff Competition against 60 cadets from around LAUSD. All six placed in the top 20 with 4 cadets



placing 2nd, 3rd, 7th, and 10th. Cadet Lt. Lizeth Avila is ranked second highest out of 3800 cadets and Cadet Major Andy Alvarado is ranked third out of 3800 cadets in LAUSD. The following are the standings:

- Company Drill with 44 cadets placed 2nd
- Platoon Drill with 25 cadets placed 1st
- Armed Drill with 10 cadets placed 2nd
- Unarmed Drill with 10 cadets placed 3rd
- Color Guard Drill placed 2nd

This is the best finish in Manual Arts history and the first time an inner-city school has received the top honors at the All-City Drill Competition.

Academic Decathlon Team

The Academic Decathlon team has once again completed a successful season, bringing home a record number of medals and points for Manual Arts. Although their team roster was not as large as other schools in the area, the dedication to the team displayed by all members brought great results to this year's team.

The first phase of the competition was January 31 and the testing phase took place February 7. Despite the fact that they were short one team member, the AcaDeca team brought home several Gold Medals, including two in the Speech component where participants give a scripted speech, then are asked to give an improvised speech on a topic chosen by the panel with 30 seconds to prepare notes. "I felt nervous to say my speech in front of people that I knew, but I didn't care what the strangers thought," says gold medal Speech winner Edith "Bipsy" Alonso.

Coached by Mr. Ollie Channel since 1991, he described some of the struggles that the team has had to go through throughout the years. With no permanent housing, they meet in the attic of the Academy of Finance building and stay until 5:00 p.m. every day after school. They discussed lack of institutional and financial support, along with the stigma of coming from a large inner-city school. "We sometimes feel as though we have to prove

ourselves more, but we're stronger because of all that we have to overcome. When we get to the competition it's like, 'Yes, we're here and we're coming after you,'" explained team Captain Laura "Pixie" Santamaria.

The team discussed the goals for next year, which include qualifying for the State Competition (which they just missed by a couple of points this year), and developing friendships they have formed through their experience in the Decathlon. As Santamaria puts it, "It takes tremendous focus and sacrifice to be a part of this team, but we achieved something great and the skills we're learning are preparing us for life after Manual."

2008-2009 Academic Decathlon Team Roster:

Laura Santamaria, Jeannette Magana, Oscar Carvente, Gloria Ortiz, Edith Alonso, Bladimir Aguirre, Bryan Fiallos, Jose Calvillo, Erica Bravo

World-Caliber ISTA Students Continue to Excel in National Competitions

Led by Manual Arts teacher John Santos, ISTA students have continued their momentum and have had success in some of the most competitive robotics and engineering competitions.



In the 2008 robotics competition, Manual Arts placed first out of all LAUSD schools in the Los Angeles Regional. This year, twenty Manual Arts students will compete in the FIRST Robotics competition in late March in Long Beach. In the

National Engineering Design Competition, which includes a test designed for college juniors, the Manual Arts team of eight students have finished in first place in Division 7 (which includes schools from as far south as the Mexican border to as far north as San Luis Obispo) for the past three years.

The success has not come at an easy cost; both the students and faculty facilitators have put in long hours, including nights and weekends, into preparing for these competitions. But as Mr. Santos says, "It's not the competition itself that makes this a great experience, it's everything leading up to the competition."

A native of Los Angeles, Mr. Santos has been at Manual Arts for 13 years teaching Graphic Communications. He is the founder of the Imaging Sciences & Technology Academy (ISTA) at Manual Arts and, over the last six years, students who have matriculated from ISTA to a four-year institution have an 87% retention rate. He is nationally recognized for his "Viva Technology" program which caters to K-12 students in urban and rural communities interested in science, technology, engineering & math. He is also Manual Arts' MESA coordinator, a program that has been

recognized as the "Most Active Technology Program" in Southern California for two consecutive years.

In November '09, 10-12 ISTA and MESA Students working with CSULA engineering students will be attending the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) Conference in Washington, D.C. for three days, including a one-day workshop on Engineering Process at the CIA Headquarters in the Pentagon.

Music Department Enjoys the Sweet Sound of Success

The Manual Arts Music Department has made great strides in creating a comprehensive music program. Several groups have demonstrated success through participation in music festivals and competitions. Earlier accomplishments were with the Concert Band, which is now a class where students also study classical literature. The concert band has consistently been rated Excellent and Superior at LAUSD band and orchestra festivals.

The newly created Jazz Combo earned first place at the Santa Barbara High School Jazz Festival, second place at the Westlake Jazz Festival, and Superior ratings at the LAUSD Jazz



Festival. With the success of the Jazz Combo, the newly created Jazz Ensemble class meets every day after school. Last spring the Ensemble received first place in the Novice Division at the Santa Barbara Jazz Festival.

The success of these groups has created a buzz around campus and more students are joining the Marching Band and Color Guard. With fifty musicians and twenty color guards, MAHS boasted a total of 70 students on the field this season. The Marching Band took first place at the Granada Highlander competition and represented Manual Arts very well in other competitions.

The MAHS Concert Band is getting ready to enter a solo/small ensemble competition and the LAUSD Band and Orchestra Festival, in which the newly formed Brass Quartet will also compete. Both the Jazz and Concert Bands will enter five festivals.

Trained in classical performance, Music Dept. Chair and band leader David Zavala has been playing the trombone since age 10. Although he has traveled the world performing with different bands, teaching never strayed far from his mind. "I always knew that I wanted to teach, but I wanted to teach from experience, not give students second-hand info," he says. Despite the numerous awards and performances scheduled, the focus is certain: "the most important thing in our music program is education, not entertainment."