
CJCL NUNTIUS

WINTER 2004

www.cajcl.org

EDITOR J. CHANEY

Convention at Knott's

To commemorate CJCL State Convention's Golden Anniversary, Convention President Dave McCleary has spear-headed the project to hold a special party at amusement park Knott's Berry Farm. Delegates will have exclusive access to select areas of the park and to Knott's world-renowned fried chicken.

After a gruelling two days of Latin competitions – Certamen rounds exhausting players of their knowledge of Latin culture and Daily Life, Ultimate Discus pushing competitors to unknown bounds of physical strength, Jewelry Making workshops tapping crafters of their creativity – what better way to both relax and enjoy the company of fellow JCL-ers and celebrate fifty years of an enriched study of Latin!

Happy Birthday, State Convention! We owe countless memories and a whole new appreciation of Latin to you!

Photo courtesy of Knotts.com

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ars gratia artis

This year's Nuntius features exclusive student artwork, celebrating the continual classical influence on literature, art and other realms of modern culture.

MEMENTO: *In anticipation of this year's CA State Convention, we dedicate this issue of Ars Gratia Artis to last year's winners in the arts categories. Ashley of Los Angeles, CA commemorates the story of Prometheus. [First Prize in Comics, Middle School Division, 2004 State Convention]*



Interested in submitting your artwork to the Nuntius? Email nuntius@cajcl.org! Carpe Diem! We welcome all student work: short stories, comics, drawings, photographs, etc -- email us today!

WOODBRIIDGE CERTAMEN



Tom Yang of Woodbridge High recaps the First Annual Woodbridge Certamen Invitational:

Rain was pouring hard on the morning of Saturday, February 19, the day of the First Annual Woodbridge Certamen Invitational. As noon approached, however, the clouds parted and the sun shone brightly, foreshadowing the success of the events of the day.

At 1 p.m., as the Woodbridge JCL students finished last-minute preparations for the event, the teams began to arrive. The students and sponsors were warmly greeted and entertained by the Woodbridge sponsor Martha Altieri as well as lively Woodbridge students. In all, twenty-two teams from six schools (one of the teams came all the way from Nevada!) arrived, with six sponsors and nine certamen machines. After everyone had checked in, Tom Yang, the WHS JCL Academics Co Chair and the organizer of the event, welcomed everyone and gave an overview of how the event would be run. The eager competitors then made their way over to the J Building, where all the competitions were held.

The three preliminary rounds passed in quick succession, with each team trying their best to earn the most scores to advance to the final round. Students found the questions to be extremely challenging. On this subject, Josh Geller of Harvard-Westlake exclaimed an oft-repeated expression, "What's with the questions?!" Despite the difficulty of the questions, however, students and teachers alike felt that the organization and flow of the event was superb. After the mind-tiring preliminary rounds were over, participants enjoyed a break from competing and replenished their brainpower with refreshments provided by WHS JCL. Meanwhile, the volunteers tallied up the scores to determine what teams would go on to the final: from Level I, Willows A, Woodbridge A, and Woodbridge C; from Level II, Garden Grove, PVP, Woodbridge A, and Woodbridge B; and from Level Advanced, Garden Grove, Harvard Westlake, and PVP qualified. After the break, the teams that qualified for the finals went to their assigned rooms, and the rest became spectators to watch the top teams battle it out for the win. Fifteen finals-worthy questions later, the victors were decided.

Congratulations to the winning teams: Willows A (Level I), Woodbridge A (Level II), and Harvard-Westlake (Level Adv)! The top three teams of each level later all received handsome certificates to commemorate their achievement. The event

Regardless of winning or losing, everyone had a fun time at the Certamen Invitational. Cathy Li and Valerie Powers, CJCL Board President and Parliamentarian, respectively, said they greatly enjoyed themselves and commended WHS JCL for such a well-run event. Margaret Cheng, last year's Convention President and now a student at UCI, said "I was really impressed to have come back to WHS JCL and find many eager JCLers from all different schools." Adam Klein, a volunteer from WHS JCL, noted that "the Certamen Invitational was a perfect blend of fun and Latin competition for enthusiastic Latin kids all over." Bonny Davis, the WHS JCL Secretary and one of the proctors for Level I on Saturday, eloquently noted, "I thought that the whole event was a lot of fun. The questions were stimulating, and all of the competitors did a wonderful job. JCL is only going to get better with these fine new additions."



**Participating Schools
and teams**

Woodbridge [6 teams]
 Aliso Niguel [4 teams]
 Palos Verdes Peninsula [4 teams]
 Garden Grove [2 teams]
 Willows [2 teams]
 Crossroads [2 teams]
 Harvard-Westlake [1 team]
 Del Sol from Nevada [1 team]

Woodbridge JCL would like to thank to all the sponsors, players, and volunteers that made the event possible, and encourage more schools and teams to participate in the event next year.

COMPLETE RESULTS					
{Level I}		{Level II}		{Level ADV}	
1 st	Willows A	1 st	Woodbridge A	1 st	Harvard-Westlake
2 nd	Woodbridge A	#8211			#8211
		2 nd	Woodbridge B	2 nd	PVP #8211
3 rd	Woodbridge C	#8211		3 rd	Garden Grove
		3 rd	PVP #8211		

Verbi Rationibus

The Winter Issue of the CJCL Nuntius presents an exclusive interview with Tony-Award-winning playwright Mary Zimmerman, who adapted several stories from Ovid's Metamorphoses for the stage in her play Metamorphoses. She discusses the enduring relevance of the myths and offers a few enlightening words for classics students.



MARY ZIMMERMAN

Photo
courtesy of
pbs.org

Nuntius Editor J. Chaney: *How did you originally discover Ovid's Metamorphoses? Did you study Latin in school?*

Professor Mary Zimmerman: No. I read the myths as a child in my mother's copy of Edith Hamilton's Mythology. I remember the simple vivid line drawings in that book very well, and Metamorphoses the play even sort of imitates one of them, when Psyche is looking down at the sleeping eros (although this isn't even one of Ovid's stories). Hamilton would list her sources at the top of every chapter and it was almost always Ovid. When I started to do the show, I went to the original Ovid.

J.C.: *Why did you decide to adapt Metamorphoses for the stage?*

M.Z.: "Decide" is a verb that doesn't really apply to how I work. I feel completely compelled, driven, to do things. Ideas sort of seize me – there isn't any choice about it. In a performance art class we had had an assignment to stage a single image from a myth using only light – no sound, no speech, no nothing except ourselves, a light source and whatever objects we wanted to use or to make. Those performances were often very powerful and moving. Myths seem to speak quite authoritatively and directly to what it is like to be a person; to experience loss, the knowledge of death and transformation.

J.C.: *Do the specific stories from Metamorphoses have a special significance for you? Why did you adapt those stories in particular?*

M.Z.: I knew from the beginning that I wanted to do the myths in a pool of water.... That was an idea that was simultaneous with the idea of doing the myths. So in part I was drawn to stories that would use the water, that could be amplified or underscored by the water – stories on the sea, or where people dissolve in water; or where the water could have symbolic value – as lust, as drunkenness, as tears. But whenever I'm adapting something from -a collection of stories – like the Arabian Nights, or other things I've done—I try to pick the saddest, the funniest, the most typical of whatever genre of story it is I want to include. And I'm looking for a balance, a variety – both in tone and in even length. So, a lot of the considerations are purely formal ones. In the end, though, I'm just picking the stories I'm most drawn to, that are vivid, strange, and beautiful.

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Verbi Rationibus cont.

J.C.: *Have you ever seen any parallels between these stories and your life?*

M.Z.: Well, I think the stories have hung around so long – thousands of years – because we can all see in them the losses and changes that we go through, inevitably as human beings in our lives.



J.C.: *Why did you design the stage with a reflecting pool?*

M.Z.: Again, it was an idea from the very beginning. Water seems to me utterly bound to the idea of change. Rituals with water such as baptism mark changes in our lives and there are expressions in very culture that use “crossing water” as a metaphor for irreversible change. Gods come out of the water a lot in myths around the world. On a literal level, water can be a solid, a liquid or steam, so it is changeable itself; and it changes anything that is left in it for any amount of time. It is a purifying and a corrupting element – it causes a “sea-change” in whatever it gets a hold of. Beyond that, the Greco-Roman culture was a marine one – these myths came from little islands surrounded by water.

J.C.: *In some of the stories adapted, the characters speak the translation of the poetry itself, whereas in other stories, the characters speak in modern day, colloquial terms. Why did you decide to vary between the two?*

M.Z.: Again, its not much of a conscious decision with me... it seems like the right thing to do. The formality of the poetry seems to fit the situation sometimes, and sometimes something else seems to fit. I think characters in plays should speak differently – in Shakespeare there is a lot of alteration between prose and verse.

J.C.: *Do you feel these stories take on a special significance in the present day? Do they still have meaning and power today?*

M.Z.: I think the stories prove their relevance by the very fact that they are still around a quite present in the culture. If they had nothing to say to us they would be long gone and forgotten. Stories earn their keep: they are remembered only as long as they have something beautiful and useful to say that we still understand. Movies, TV shows, all kinds of stories that might be wildly popular at one time, often disappear utterly as the particular cultural moment they address passes.

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Verbi Rationibus cont.

J.C.: *In the scene “Erysichthon”, the narrator says, “The godless are always hungry...there can be only one end to such a man....He will destroy himself.” Do you believe this applies to modern man? Do you have a strong sense of spirituality?*

M.Z.: I think that I do feel that one has to believe in something –have faith in something, but it could be as simple as faith in the work one does, or friendship. Whatever is a high value to oneself is one’s “god” I suppose. It seems that people who disdain everything end up rather miserable.

J.C.: *In the beginning of the play, Midas underlines his success monetarily but the word “family”, and clearly its significance, eludes him. In the final scene, as he is restored, Midas is freed from his golden-touch and embraces his daughter – both he, and his values, have thus changed, or perhaps metamorphosed. Is Midas meant to represent man? Do you believe that man today is career-driven, but will one day recognize and appreciate his family?*

M.Z.: Well, maybe. But I think I was interested initially in just pointing out that people talk a bit fat line about their families all the time, but their actions show they aren’t, in fact, all that interested in their families. Indeed, Midas does change, as you say. All of these readings – that man today is career-driven, etc. may well be very legitimate, but when I was working on the play I was thinking of a particular type of person, or this particular person.

J.C.: *What do you hope your audience comes away with after seeing Metamorphoses?*

M.Z.: Well, it is a really sensual experience; it is really beautiful. And there is some comfort in seeing that people have always had to cope with essentially the same difficulties in being a person: that we’ll die; that we aren’t always with the person we want to be with, etc.

J.C.: *Do you have any words of wisdom for Latin and Greek students who are often accused of studying subjects “of no practical value”?*

M.Z.: Only this: you are right and they are wrong. To strip one’s life down to things that are only of practical value is to take away all the thrill of living. You might ask them what practical value there is in their watching their favorite sports teams. There is none: but it gives great pleasure; it takes them out of themselves; it makes them feel part of something. You can tell them that your classical studies do the same for you. I wouldn’t try and make the argument that it IS of practical value – although that argument can be made. Our language comes from those languages; we become better speakers and writers when we know the origin of words; and in grown-up life he who articulates best usually wins his way.