



TARMAC

Newspaper of the Chaminade Flyers

Chaminade High School, 340 Jackson Avenue, Mineola, New York 11501-2441

(516) 742-5555

<http://www.chaminade-hs.org>

est. 1934

TARMAC ONLINE

JUNE 2010

Crimson and Gold Goes Green

Envirothon Team Captures First at Regionals, Tenth at States

by Nikolas Bentel '12

With all but one of last year's Envirothon team members graduated, the young Chaminade environmentalists needed to redouble their efforts in order to continue the Flyers' tradition of success in the New York Envirothon.

"With only one senior on our team, we knew it was not going to be easy to win this competition," said Team A member Danny Ebanks '11. "We were determined, however, to do our best."

After almost a full academic year of preparation, two Chaminade teams, each comprised of five students, competed in the 2010 Long Island Envirothon.

Going up against stiff competition from high schools all across Long Island, the Flyers' A and B teams fared very well. Because of their success at the regional competition, Chaminade's Team A was able to move on to the next phase of the competition, the New York statewide event, which was held on June 2 and June 3 at the Keuka College Campus, situated in the Finger Lake Region.

The ten Chaminade participants were divided into two teams. Team A consisted of Tim Healy '10, Andy Koche '10, Danny Ebanks '11, Sean Dvorak '11, and James Agolia '12.

With over 500,000 participants worldwide, the Envirothon is the largest science competition in North America.

The competition, which focuses on ecological sciences, is comprised of three separate events. The first stage is regional competition, open to any high school team of five students. The second and third stages are state and national championships, in which only regional and state champions are invited to compete.

"Our success at the Envirothon competition shines a light on the students and our school. It also highlights our efforts as a community to be environmentally sensitive," said moderator Bro. Benjamin Knapp. "It is especially important because we started a recycling program this year."

Competitors were required to study many aspects of environmental science, including soils, forestry, aquatics, wildlife, and a current issue. The students took five exams, each pertaining to these fields.

"The Current Issue," in particular, was designed to challenge students to demonstrate a practical knowledge of the environment and how to address the social, economic, and political problems pertinent to the environment.

"Every year that I participate in the Envirothon, I learn more about how the environment works," said Team A member James Agolia. "It helps me realize how important it is to protect the environment."

Students must also apply their knowledge to a specific given scenario and present their findings to a panel of judges.

This year's oral presentation topic was "Protection of Groundwater Through Urban, Agricultural, and Environmental Planning."

Taking on the roles of independent consultants, the Chaminade environmentalists had to present a comprehensive construction proposal for a nanotechnology factory in an imaginary county in New York State.

After the student presentation, judges posed questions challenging the students' proposal.

At the regional competition, the team's proposal garnered top honors, and the students took to the stage to present their findings to all of the participating Envirothon teams.

Chaminade's Team A finished in first place among the 34 Long Island teams that participated.

Aside from the invitation to participate in the New York State competition, Team A also received a Canon digital camera and a \$500 scholarship, as well as an environmentally friendly fluorescent-light bulb. Chaminade also received a Canon color printer.

Team B – which consisted of Brendan McFadden '11, Casey McGinley '11, Rich Barakat '11, Connor Murphy '11, and Matt Walsh '13 – finished in third place in Nassau County.

In the wake of the regional competition, Team A had three weeks to prepare for the state event. As the state contest approached, however, it became apparent Team A's only senior, Tim Healy, would not be able to attend the state competition. Rich Barakat participated in his place.

Despite losing Tim's experience at the New York State Envirothon, Chaminade's Team A placed 10th overall, with a second-place finish in the forestry event. All team members received medals, and the school received a 10th place trophy made entirely from recycled biodegradable materials.

"We were fairly satisfied with our showing at States," said Sean Dvorak. "None of us had ever competed at the state level before this."

With four returning upperclassmen, the team looks forward to continued success in this event. And there is no time to spare for next year's Envirothon, as next year's current issue, "Estuaries and Freshwater Streams," was released as the event concluded.

"I am happy for what we have accomplished this year," said Danny Ebanks. "I look forward to returning to this event next year." ➔



(l.-r.) Andy Koche '10, Sean Dvorak '11, Tim Healy '10, Danny Ebanks '11, and James Agolia '12 finished in first place among the 34 Long Island teams that participated in this year's Envirothon.