

15th annual Oratorical Contest set for Thursday

By Tim Keller
Special to The Chronicle-News

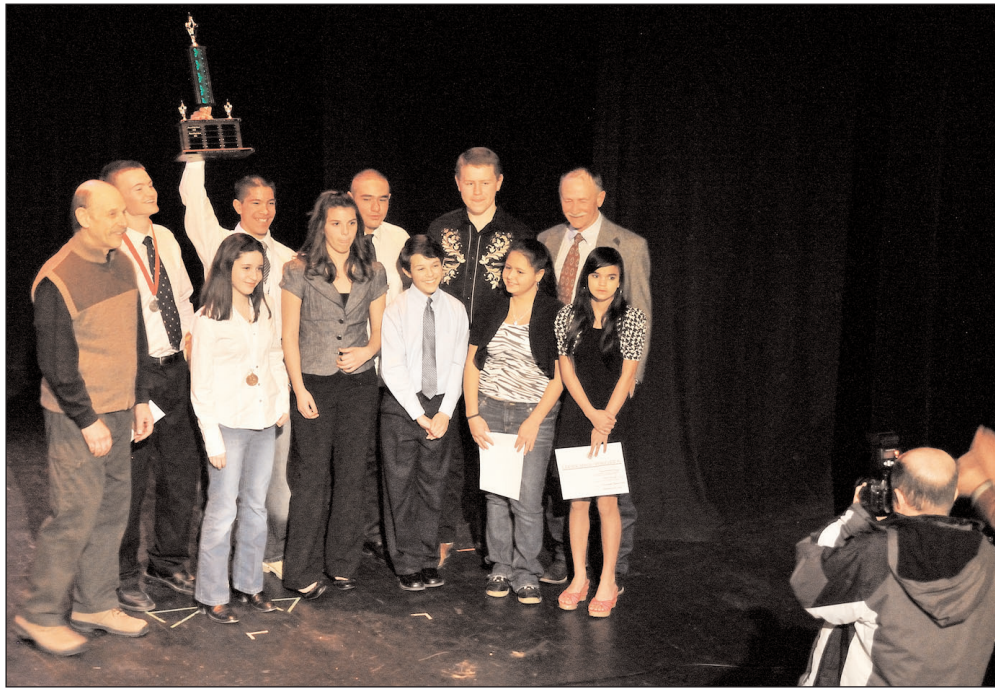
RATON — The 15th annual Oratorical Contest gets under way Thursday night at the Shuler Theater with 38 middle and high school students from Maxwell, Raton, Cimarron, and Trinidad competing for honors.

Sponsored by Raton's Knights of Columbus Coronado Chapter #1332, this year's contest sports a theme of "Life is a Song Title."

Each competing student has written an original essay with that theme; they'll deliver their compositions in speeches lasting from two to four minutes for a Shuler Theater audience.

Division I is comprised of students aged 12 to 14 years of age. Maxwell Schools, last year's team champion, returns with three students entered in Division I, but they'll be up against 13 students from Raton Middle School.

Division II, for students aged 15 to 18, will see Maxwell's seven students



Tim Keller/Special to The Chronicle-News

A triumphant Maxwell Schools team celebrates its domination of the 2011 Knights of Columbus Oratorical Contest at the Shuler Theater. The team, led by coach Rick Jones, is outnumbered this year by entries from Raton schools. Elizaveth Manfredi will represent Trinidad at Thursday evening's 15th annual event.

challenged by an even dozen from Raton High School, plus two from Cimarron High School and one - Elizaveth Manfredi -

from Trinidad High School. Prizes in each division will include savings bonds of \$100 for first place, \$75 for second, and \$50 for

third; winners will also receive medallions. There is also a grand prize winner and a team winner. First National Bank of New

Mexico donates the savings bonds. Randy Rubin from Sports Arena donates the medallions.

This year's judges will be Janice Louann Espinosa from Albuquerque, Vincent C. Garcia from New Mexico Highlands University, and Barbara Riley from Raton High School. Judging is weighted 50 percent on content, 25 percent on presentation, and 25 percent on appearance.

Division I entries include Kevin Fanelli, Rochelle Jackson, Austin Jones, Jami Lopez, Mia Maestas, Chyanne Martinez, Forrest McConnell, Mabry ReQua, Cheyenne Starr, Heather Sandoval, Makayla Schmauer, Shiann Trujillo, and Estrella Vargas, all from Raton Middle School. Competing with them will be Amanda Rodriguez and Jacob Sanchez from Maxwell High School and Leiandra Lucero from Maxwell Middle School.

Division II entries include Justin Apodaca, Bryan Berry, Natale Castellini, Chelsea Chavez, Mariah Fleming, Amy

Grubelnik, Megan Holland, Marisa McCarty, James Neary, Matthew Ortiz, Caylene Romero, and Blake Washburn representing Raton High School. Thomas Casper, Trent Deines, Tianna French, Rebecca Galli, Ray Lopez, Patrick Pacheco, and Eyleah Romero represent Maxwell High School. Cimarron High School is represented by Cody Pittman and Henry Sime, Trinidad High School by Elizabeth Manfredi.

"The Oratorical Contest was set up to allow our youth to speak and tell what they think," says Ed Fidel of the Knights of Columbus. "We have had topics from religion to world situations and everything in between."

Thursday night's youth public speaking event, beginning at 7p.m. and lasting more than two hours, is free to the public.

Last year's audience packed the Shuler Theater; with this year's entries up substantially from last year, another large crowd is anticipated.



Associated Press

Cadets walk the campus at the Air Force Academy near Colorado Springs, Colo., on their way to the dining hall for lunch.

Sex assault reports rise at AF Academy

By Dan Elliott
Associated Press

DENVER — Nine years after a sexual assault scandal at the Air Force Academy sent shock waves across the military, the Defense Department last month announced a spike in reported assaults at the school — and days later the Air Force filed sex-crime charges against three cadets.

It isn't clear whether the disturbing news means sexual predation is on the rise at the academy, experts and school officials say. It could reflect the academy's efforts to encourage cadets to report any kind of unwanted sexual contact.

"I don't think anybody knows how to read that data," said Lory Manning, director of the Women in the Military Project at the Women's Research & Education Institute in

Washington and a retired Navy captain.

The number of assaults reported at the academy since the 2005-06 school year, when comprehensive record-keeping began, has varied widely. From 10 in the first year, the totals rose to 24 two years later, plummeted to eight in 2008-09 and then rose again, to 20 in 2009-10 and 33 last year. Nearly 80 percent of the academy's approximately 4,600 cadets are male.

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said Wednesday nearly 3,200 sexual assaults were reported across the military last year, but he said the real number is probably closer to 19,000 because so few victims report the crime.

Panetta said the Pentagon would prepare initiatives to reduce the number of assaults.

It's a battle the Air Force Academy outside Colorado Springs, Colo., has been waging since 2003.

In January of that year, female cadets came forward to say that when they reported being sexually assaulted, they were punished for minor infractions as drinking. Some went to a local rape crisis clinic instead of academy officers, saying they feared

their military careers would be damaged if they spoke with commanders.

Top leaders at the academy were replaced and programs put in place to prevent sexual abuse and to encourage cadets to report incidents.

It's impossible to measure how many crimes the training may have prevented, said Teresa Beasley, the academy's sexual assault coordinator. "How do you measure prevention?" she said.

"The number of reports have gone up," said Col. Reni Renner, vice commandant of cadets for climate and culture. "But it's hard to draw a correlation between the number of incidents and the number of reports."

Beasley and Renner say they believe the school is making headway. They point to a growing number of cadets coming to Beasley's office after speaking with cadets who came forward and were treated well.

Other cadets ask for help with repercussions from an assault that occurred before they enrolled. The academy said five of the 33 incidents reported in the 2010-11 school year occurred

before the victim entered the military.

"My sense ... is that we really are seeing an increase in trust in our system," Renner said.

Manning said she has no doubt the academy is sincere in its efforts.

"As to the effectiveness, well, they've got three guys charged now," Manning said.

The academy announced on Jan. 5 that three male cadets had been charged with sex crimes stemming from unrelated incidents between February 2010 and May 2011. Academy officials said the three cases were announced together because the investigations happened to end at about the same time.

Robert M. Evenson Jr. is charged with rape, Stephan H. Claxton with abusive sexual assault and Kyle A. Cressy with aggravated assault. Evenson and Claxton face other, non-sex-related counts.

Cressy's civilian lawyer, Richard Stevens, did not immediately return a phone call. Claxton's military attorney, Capt. Nicole Torres, declined comment. The academy said Evenson's civilian lawyer asked not to be identified.

Family of historic Trinidad figure returns to town

By Cynthia Hough
Special to The Chronicle-News

Take a walk to the Trinidad post office on West Main Street and you might happen to glance at the Bacca House standing grandly across the street.

But take a closer look at the sign designating Chestnut Street and you will see the brown historic marker for "Historic Hough (pronounced Huff) Street."



HOUGH

Many local residents are not aware that Felipe Bacca was not the first owner of the house now named for him, but that John Simpson Hough built the two-story adobe home in 1870. In fact, a city survey reveals the street was originally known as "Hough Street," but was later changed when there was a push to rename the local streets after trees.

The historic marker was erected in 1988 when it was found how much Hough contributed to the growth of Trinidad. Arriving in 1869, he opened a mercantile store between Commercial Street and A Street with his brother-in-law John Powers (who Powers County is named for).

Advertisements in an 1870 newspaper bragged the popular store contained "The largest stock of dry goods, groceries, tobaccos and liquors in the entire Colorado Territory." His younger brother Silas opened a beef trade here and brought steers from New Mexico and Texas and shipped them out to points as far away as Chicago.

Before coming to Trinidad, John Hough and his family called home, Boggsville, a small settlement along the Purgatoire River where he shared a home with Kit Carson. It is here that Kit Carson gave young Hough a fringed buckskin jacket, which is

now on display at the Denver Museum. It was this jacket that was used by artists in the creation of the Pioneer monument in Denver.

Upon Carson's death it was Hough who took charge of his funeral and later oversaw the removal of Carson and his wife's remains to Taos, New Mexico as Kit had requested before his death.

John Hough, along with his wife and daughters, left Trinidad in 1873 and moved to Las Animas, then Lake City. There, Hough not only became a prominent judge, but also was responsible for starting the first fire department, constructing what is now known as the First National Bank of Lake City and the Hough Building. In 1876, he was elected to the Colorado Constitutional Convention. In 1880 he ran for the first governorship of Colorado but was defeated by Fred Pitkin.

Fast-forward to 2012 and you will find that John Hough has finally returned to Trinidad. Moving from the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York, John Hough, the fourth generation nephew of his famous uncle, recently bought a house here in Trinidad. "I knew Great Uncle John had settled somewhere out in Colorado, but was never sure where," says Hough. "You should have seen my face when I read the historic marker over on Chestnut Street." He jokes that he tried to buy back the Bacca House, but they just wouldn't part with it.

Hough, an avid outdoorsman and retired Navy veteran, hopes to uncover many interesting stories of his great uncle's life and plans on joining the local historical society and American Legion. "I am very proud to have an ancestor in such a great place as Trinidad and hope Uncle John is getting a kick out of seeing me back in town."

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