



Cheer Force All-Stars advance

Glenda Mahon
OVN contributor

Four local youths earned the opportunity to compete at the United States All Star Federation Cheerleading Worlds 2006 held in Orlando, Fla. Sharylyn Long, Caitlyn Mahon, Triana Leal and Kendall Weavil, all from Ojai, are members of the Simi Valley-based Cheer Force All Stars. The team earned a "bid" to Worlds in a Sacramento competition at the beginning of this year.

The Worlds competition brings together the top U.S. and international teams from each Competitive Cheer organization as determined at regional, and then National competitions. The Worlds bid came following several national championship wins by Cheer Force.

The Ojai girls joined Cheer Force after spending several years developing and honing their skills with other competitive teams in Ventura and Oxnard. They made the move with hopes of a more challenging season and the ultimate dream of qualifying for the Worlds competition. The move paid off. After several hours of practice each week and a full season of competitions, the team ended its regular season winning a national championship in Florida, flew home to practice for a week, then flew back to Orlando for Worlds.

In order to reach their goal each girl had to try out and qualify for Cheer Force top team, then travel to Simi Valley several times a week for practices. Competition season added travel to the busy schedule. Cheer Force Diamondz is composed of four boys and 31 girls aged 18 and under. Competitors drive from several cities in Ventura and Los Angeles to compete on the prestigious team, with the girls from Ojai driving over an hour each way several times a week.

The Worlds competition



Submitted photo

Sharylyn Long, left, Caitlyn Mahon, Triana Leal and Kendall Weavil from Ojai are members of Cheer Force All Stars, which recently took home a bronze trophy from the Worlds Cheer Competition in Orlando, Fla.

turned out to be unlike anything the team experienced at other competitions. With more than 150 teams and only a handful of divisions, the Diamondz faced 34 top teams. The team survived a first-day elimination round, followed by a final competition the next day, to emerge with the bronze trophy and the highest score of any California team.

When people think of cheerleading, they think of pomps and ponytails. But Competitive Cheer is different. All-star cheerleading is very athletic and entertaining. The sport involves advanced tumbling, dance, and aerial stunts all performed to music, and not the audible cheering typically heard at a football game. Common routines involve throwing the girls up to 30 feet in the air as they spin, or touch

their toes, synchronized dancing and human pyramids topped by difficult poses. Every year the sport becomes more competitive and challenging. Spectators who see the competitions for the first time are usually surprised and amazed at the athleticism and talent competitive cheer involves. Competitive Cheer teaches teamwork, dedication and time management. Competitors have to balance schoolwork and practice, with schoolwork taking priority. Most hope to win one of the many scholarships in the sport offered by several colleges and universities.

The competition will be aired on ESPN2 on Saturday, June 17, at 4 p.m.

For more information about Cheer Force, go to cheerforce.com, or call the gym at 527-9461.

SALUTING GRADUATES

VPS Class of 2006

Richard Kilohoku Ray Akuna
Elena Rae Arnold
Katie Aileen Austin
Gene Alfred Auyeung
Morgan Murell Ball
Michael Andrew Biersmith
Victoria Borchard
Alexander Sky Byrd
Joyce Ko Chieh Chen
Theodore M. Chiella
Lin Yu "Darlene" Chiu
Nam Jae Cho
Anna Clause
Nicole Crilly-Larsen
Shelby Nicole Daniel
Thomas Michael DeSantis
Max Carson Dohmeyer
Stephanie Ann Egizi
Margaret Catherine Engesser
Sean Michael Forster
Spencer Dean Foster
Jacob G. R. Garrett
Adrian Alejandro Gutierrez, Jr.
Harrison Rutherford Haas
Stefany E. Hedman

Scott Michael Heirshberg
Brittany Lauren Helson
Nathaniel Paul Henson
Alyssa Michelle Hernandez
Koji Hirota
Andrew James Tadao Ishibashi
Young-Yi "Lena" Jin
Jeffrey Keith Johnston
Kaitlyn Elizabeth Kirby
Morgan J. Kortlander
Max Baylor Krimmer
Kari Anne Kristiansen
Ryan Alan Kudla
Courtney Yeun Kum
Sarah Langelier
Evan Dean Laszlo
Christopher P. Laubacher
Jungeun "Laura" Lee
Hwayong Lee
Matthew J. Leighty
Yun-Cheng "Eric" Lin
Chow Kae "Greg" Liu
Tzu-Hao "Kevin" Liu
Emily Rose Luttrull
Andrew Phillip Malkin

Ashley N. Martinez
Kyle Michael McDonough
Emily Margaret McRae
Naomi A. Norton
Antonio Novelo Ibarra
Ian James Ogg
Jaclyn Rose Orgel
Mackenzie Ryan Oroke
Hye-Jin Park
Shin-Min "Sam" Park
Courtney Breann Ralston
Pitcha "Pete" Ratanawong
Andrew Ballard Reich
Jeehun Rhim
Nicholas Alexander Rochin
Janelle Joy Rohweller
Henry William Sanicola
Nicholas Turin Scolari
Brittany Nicole Smallwood
Joseph A. Stein
Erica Teresa Valle
Wei-Hsiang "Wayne" Wang
Marissa Pauline Warner
Mary Elizabeth Wiggins
Chia-Yu "Jenny" Yu

Oak Grove School

One Oak Grove School graduate was inadvertently omitted in the story that appeared in the Friday, June 9, issue. Ian Pereida-Perry will study history at Evergreen State University. Oak Grove School's graduation was held June 14.

Ventura College

Sixteen students completed the rigorous Ventura College School of Prehospital and

Emergency Medicine Paramedic Studies program, participating in the certificate presentation ceremony on June 2 at the Ventura College Theatre. This is the seventh graduating class from the program.

Ojai resident Sean Davy was among the proud honorees, and graduate Paul Davis was recognized as the Class of 2006 valedictorian.

The Ventura College School of Prehospital and Emergency Medicine is the only fully

accredited paramedic training program in the county, training emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics (highest level of EMT certification), who provide urgent care in any location or while transporting patients in ambulances or helicopters. As first responders in the delivery of emergency services, these men and women apply lifesaving medical techniques to the injured.

Contributed by Alisa Sparkia Moore.

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