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STRATH HAVEN WINS 2005 DELCO HI-Q ACADEMIC CHAMPIONSHIP

STRATH HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL, March 15: The final contest of the oldest academic quiz competition in the United States, Delco Hi-Q, was a scholastic “cat” fight among the Garnet Valley Jaguars, Penncrest Lions and the Strath Haven Panthers. For Strath Haven’s scholars and for their audience, it was as good as it gets! Victory is always welcome at home or away, but when you have an entire school, your teachers, your best friends, and your peers all in the audience cheering for you, and you come through with the big win...it is cotton candy sweet! Winning their first championship at home, the Strath Haven students speared every one of their questions the first time, captured two questions from opposing teams, and scored 58 points for the championship.

The sixth category, Mathematics, was the turning point as Penncrest and Garnet Valley failed to score. Strath Haven pounced on the opportunity, correctly answering Penncrest’s question and coming within a “sign” of also answering Garnet Valley’s Math (SH answered minus 78 when the answer was 78 or plus 78). At the end of the first period, Strath Haven led with 34 to GV’s 27 and Penncrest’s 24.

Second half, the Panthers continued leaping into Hi-Q history by acing every one of their questions for the game-winning total of 58. In the first series of Hi-Q that ended just two weeks ago, Strath Haven narrowly beat Garnet Valley by four points to become the top scorer among the 21 schools, bypass the semifinals, and host the championship. No one answered Garnet Valley’s Chemistry question but the Jaguars recovered when they captured the Geography Team Choice (*The Erzegebirge Range or Ore Mountains stretch along the border of two countries. Name one of them. ANSWER: Germany or Czech Republic*). Penncrest’s hard-working “Lions” fought against the Jags throughout the contest, with each stalking ahead of the other several times. Penncrest’s Lions showed their claws in the last category by snatching the last question and the final four points in the contest from both opponents, giving Penncrest a narrow victory over Garnet Valley, 51 to 48. Both Garnet Valley and Penncrest were competing against each other for the fifth consecutive year: each won the championship twice: Garnet Valley in 2001 and 2002 and Penncrest in 2000 and 2003.

The three finalist teams earned cash awards for their schools of \$1,000, \$750 and \$500 respectively. Strath Haven will keep the Delco Hi-Q trophy for display at school throughout the 2006 season.

Jack Holefelder, representing the Foundation of the Delaware County Chamber, gave the congratulatory and closing remarks. John Unangst, president and chief executive officer of the Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union, represented one of Hi-Q's 2005 season two primary corporate sponsors. Unangst presented the trophy to Strath Haven's elated team members: George Beatty, Alena Bortkiewicz, Ellen Donnelly, Josh Durgin, Daniel Isaacs, Sneha Narasimhan, Krupa Patel, Thomas Powers, Max Ruby, Andrea Telenko and coaches Mark Linkins in his fourth year and Nino DeProphetis with 12 years.

Speaking of the difficulty of the questions, Hi-Q team member Powers said: "We worked hard for this and we're really proud, but we know some of the questions that went to the other teams were also very hard." Speaking of the questions, Coach Linkins added: "It's the luck of the draw, but it's certainly nice when luck favors your team."

Strath Haven Principal Albert Bichner said his school began to take the Hi-Q academic competition more seriously several years ago, and students started preparing more intensely for the competition. Bichner said he's impressed with how Hi-Q has been elevated and gained status and recognition at his school and credited the team's coaches and the dedication of its members for their winning performance.

Among the many guests were Wallingford-Swarthmore Superintendent Sharon Parker, Garnet Valley Superintendent Anthony Costello, Kathie Estock, Barbara Giorgio and Susan Iocco, and Penncrest Principal Thomas Sebastian. Helping to make the audience standing-room only were educators, community supporters, families, students and former Hi-Q contestants from all three finalist schools.

Also on hand from FMFCU sponsor was Rick Durante, assistant vice president. The Chester Operations of Kimberly-Clark is the other primary Hi-Q sponsor for 2005. Supporters and contributors for this season are Elko & Associates, Ltd.; Giant Food Stores, Hilbush Foundation; Sign Concepts, Inc.; Southco, Inc.; and Sun East Federal Credit Union.

An innovation for the 2005 season is the “Partners in Education” dinner honoring all of the more than 200 Hi-Q student/scholar contestants from the 21 participating schools. This major event to honor Delaware County academic achievers will be held on May 19 at the Corporate Events Center at Drexelbrook. Alex Trebek, host of ABC-TV’s “Jeopardy!” will be the guest speaker and will take questions from the audience. Potential sponsors for this event and for individual school teams should contact the Foundation of the Delaware County Chamber at 484-468-1083. The community is invited to visit Hi-Q’s website for general information on the program and the dinner: www.delcohiq.org.

Delco Hi-Q is a joint endeavor of the Foundation of the Delaware County Chamber and the Delaware County Intermediate Unit. David Bramble of the I.U. provided technical assistance for the contest staging in each of the 21 Delaware County high schools.

Hi-Q Program Director Donna Zerby noted that all of the contestants on stage began preparing for the 2005 season early last summer and had worked hard to earn entry into the championship competition. Zerby has been an enthusiastic champion of Hi-Q since 1962, when she first became associated with this unique Delaware County tradition. Tom McCarthy, Hi-Q veteran and professional actor who controls the on-stage questioning was introduced as Hi-Q’s “Legendary” quizmaster.

Penncrest teams have been finalists for 10 consecutive years, winning an overall total of seven championships, six of them under Coach Michael Ludwig, who is celebrating his 25th anniversary with Hi-Q. Team members are: Rob Clain, Aimee Davis, Mary Flannery, Robby Graham, Tim Graham, Sarah Lu, Emily Moberg, Erik Virbitsky, Jeffrey Walker, Joe Walker.

Garnet Valley has appeared in eight consecutive championships since 1998, all under the guidance of Coaches Carol Law and Carol Rockefeller, 10 years of service. Team members: Jeff Conway, Neal Gupta, Ravi Gupta, Paul Kim, Brendan McGeehan, Zein Nakhoda, Chris Sukhu, Sohun Trivedi, Corky Wharton.

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