

Come Let Us Adore Him



December 2015 News-at-a-glance:

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Letter from the Stoa Board of Directors

Adeste fideles laeti triumphantes! (It's good to have a little Latin in a StoaByte.)



We've all seen the bumper stickers that remind the world that "Jesus is the reason for the season." It's easy even for us believers to get caught up in the glitzy side of Christmas. In the same way, we need to remember that Jesus is the reason for *our* season of speech and debate. As we practice, rehearse, coach, and plan tournaments, let's keep our Lord at the forefront. It's true that you won't necessarily find Jesus in an IAC, an Expository speech, or a tournament schedule - so how do we keep Him first and foremost?

By not losing sight of what we in Stoa are ultimately aiming for:

Speaking boldly. Changing the world for Christ. In our attitudes, actions, and relationships with Stoa brothers and sisters, let Christ be preeminent always. *For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.* Romans 11: 36 (NASB®)

Enjoy Christmas traditions with your family. The speeches, debates, and tournaments will still be there afterward.

O come, let us adore Him!

Your Stoa Board of Directors - Mark Russell, Angela Childress, Craig Smith, MelRae Ambs, Robert Kwong, John Eyth, Dave McKinley, ([email board](#)) Debbie Snyder, Speech Chair ([email](#)), Mary Winther, Debate Chair ([email](#))



Spreading the word



"Merry Christmas, Uncle Doug! Have I ever told you about my speech and debate club?"

During this season of family gatherings, church Christmas parties, and office holiday celebrations, take the opportunity to let folks know that your family is involved in a national Christian homeschool speech and debate league. Why? To let them know about Stoa *and* to recruit them to be a community judge at one of your tournaments. It's easy to bring up in conversation when they ask about your plans for the coming year. And if you haven't had the thrill of someone saying to you, "Thank you *so much* for inviting me to come and judge - will you let me know when I can do it again?", then it's time to discover that blessing.



Board Member Prayer: Stop and Hear the Quiet

December can roll in like a storm, both literally and figuratively. Those of us in California are praying for the literal storms that will bring snow to our mountains and refresh our parched land. (Not to mention a smile to this skier's face.)

The figurative storms can be less welcome. The pace of the tournament season is upon many of you. The research of the resolution is well under way. The scripts are being memorized in anticipation of those spring tournaments. The homeschooling is probably already behind for the year. Mom is worn out trying to juggle it all, not to mention the additional responsibilities that come with the Christmas season. Dad is trying to figure out how to pay for it all..... I can probably stop there.

It is easy to be so busy that we let Christmas just become one more "thing". However as Christians, we need to step aside from the "busy" and hear the quiet.

Go out to the dark quiet field with the shepherds.

Look up at the calm night sky.

See the bright star.

Listen to the quiet and you will hear the good news!

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.—Luke 2:10-11

I pray that God would stop you in your busyness to allow you to hear the good news of the great joy that we celebrate this season.

To you and yours, a very Merry Christmas on behalf of the Stoa Board.

Mary Winther, Debate Committee Chair



Quick Speech Tip from Your Speech Committee



We encourage all coaches, parents and students to be sure to read the Description, Rules and Ballot for 2016 all events. Please do not assume you know the information already. It is likely you will notice something you hadn't noticed before, even though the rules may not have changed.

On the same track, we encourage coaches, parents and competitors to view the Judge Orientation Slides at <http://www.stoausa.org/speech-events> so you are familiar with judging expectations.



Monthly Message from Your NITOC 2016 Tournament Director

One of the things speech and debate teaches us is the importance of working behind-the-scenes. Sure, people see your speech presentations and debate rounds, but they usually don't see the work that goes into the preparations that are necessary to achieve excellence.

Club leaders and coaches are working behind the scenes, putting together agendas, coming up with creative activities, and helping students build strong communication skills.

Parents are working behind the scenes, making sure there's gas in the car, registering for different tournaments, and chauffeuring children to and from club meetings.

Tournament directors and teams are working behind the scenes, securing facilities, gathering tournament supplies, and recruiting judges.

Students are working behind the scenes, practicing their speeches in front of mirrors, searching for hours to find one piece of evidence, and making sure they're ready for club meetings or tournaments.

Stoa's Board of Directors is working behind the scenes, evaluating the surveys from NITOC 2015, discussing ways to make this year a great one for every Stoa family, updating processes, and investing time and talent to run the organization with efficiency and God focus.

The NITOC 2016 tournament team is working behind the scenes, discussing schedules, awards, t-shirt designs, and numerous other details that will make NITOC 2016 a special celebration for all our families.

Most importantly, God our Heavenly Father is working behind the scenes. In fact, He's working behind the scenes of each and every area of our lives...including speech and debate.

Hebrews 11:1 says: "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." It's not by chance that you're in the world of speech and debate. It's not by chance that you are impacting people's lives for God through your speech and debate skills. It's not by chance that you are being equipped to go out and to speak boldly for Christ. God is orchestrating it all. He is working behind the scenes and He is with us...always!!



In His Service,
Joanne Quan
NITOC 2016 TD

Stoa Academy 2016 Breaking News!

We are thrilled to announce that the 2016 Stoa Academy is scheduled for July 28-30 in the Gateway city of St. Louis, Missouri! Stoa Academy is designed for every Stoa adult member and we hope you will be there! We are lining up some excellent workshops with both a novice & experienced track, as well as some great St. Louis delicacies like gooey butter cake & toasted ravioli. Whether you are a coach, club leader, new parent, or seasoned veteran in speech & debate, we hope to offer you opportunities to learn & grow in your knowledge & friendships.



Mark your calendars & watch for upcoming details. We plan to open registration on our Stoa Academy website in January 2016. This is a great opportunity to bless your coach/leaders and to say thank you for all the work they put into speech and debate. Consider having a fund raiser in order to help finance this trip for your club leaders. Not only will they come home with great

ideas for coaching and training students but they will be refreshed and renewed for the upcoming season. So make plans now to send one or more participants from your club to be a part of this exciting time!

<https://stoacademy2016.homeschooldebate.net>

Your 2016 Stoa Academy Directors,
Angela Childress & Mary Winther

We want to partner with you. Join us to continue on your gateway to success!



Important StoaByte subscription news

The StoaByte is sent to our current members. If there are folks in your club or team that haven't registered yet for the 2015-2016 season, they didn't get this newsletter. Please remind them to register soon!

<https://stoa2015-2016.homeschooldebate.net>

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen. Romans 11:36 (NASB®)

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