



Representing Grover Cleveland Middle School, Caldwell, at the Lancer Invitational Tournament are, from left, seventh grader Brendan Padover, eighth graders Lydia Wielgus and Megan West, seventh graders Allie Wertz and Ashvin Nagarajan and sixth graders Julia Tuck, Jessica Rizzo and DeeAnna Meluso.

# Middle school forensic team finishes first in tournament

**CALDWELL** - Eight students from Grover Cleveland Middle School (GCMS), participated in the Lancer Invitational Tournament at Livingston High School, on Saturday, April 20, returning with 14 individual trophies and earning first place over-all in both Declamation and Interpretive Reading.

Designed to get students interested in public speaking and to award those who show excellence in speech, the competition, which is run and judged by experienced "forensicators" who

compete in both speech and debate at either a state or national level, also enhances students' public speaking knowledge and skill.

"Practicing to compete in both declamation and interpretive reading during a single competition takes a lot of dedication and hard work," said Claudia Douris, teacher and forensic team coach. "The students work very hard to perfect their performances, memorizing and practicing for months at a time. This was a tough competition against very

talented opponents from a variety of other school districts, and all of our students rose to the challenge."

Representing GCMS in the varsity competition were eighth graders Megan West and Lydia Wielgus; and seventh graders Ashvin Nagarajan, Brendan Padover and Alexandra Wertz.

In the varsity competition, Wertz earned first place in the Declamation competition, with Wielgus taking second and Nagarajan earning fourth. For the Interpretive Reading competi-

tion, Wielgus earned second place, Padover took third, Wertz took fourth and West earned fifth. Junior varsity participants included sixth graders Julia Tuck, Jessica Rizzo and DeeAnna Meluso. The junior varsity team swept the top three spots in the Declamation competition, with Meluso taking first, Tuck earning second and Rizzo taking third. The team also swept the Interpretive Reading competition, with Rizzo placing first, Tuck earning second and Meluso earning third.