CTAM Issue

The annual Communication and Theatre Arts Association of Minnesota (CTAM) Conference is coming up soon in St. Cloud on September 15-17. With a wide variety of educational coaching opportunities, it is much like this newsletter, in that it is produced to present viewpoints from around the state. For a full program listing of sessions available at CTAM, go to http://www.mnsu.edu/cmst/ctam/conference/CTAM_2016_Conference.pdf

As with the first issue, we have coaches sharing some of their secrets. For example, look for some of our most successful coaches detailing how they go about building a team cultures vs. just having a set of individuals.
MSCA Chat and Chew

The MSCA Chat and Chew began several years ago as a medium for providing fellowship and recognition. It is held on Friday night from 5:40-6:50.

The main component of the Chat and Chew is the annual presentation of the Coach of the Year Award for Class A and AA. The individual section winners will also be recognized.

Additionally, we will present service longevity awards. These are awarded every five years. This list is generated by the responses of our members, so if you are not on the list, please contact Scott Sieling at Bloomington Jefferson.

Please come and join us!

MSCA Business Meeting

The annual MSCA business meeting will take place on the last day of CTAM from 10:20-11:45. As with last year, we will do our level best to stick to that time frame. Among the items to be considered on the agenda this year are:

1. Three rule changes submitted to the MSHSL board. These are detailed later in this issue. If they do not receive majority support, they will be pulled.

2. Further consideration of policies or rule changes to be submitted to the Advisory Committee.

3. Election of members to various leadership positions.

4. Establishment of committees to study particular issues in depth. One such issue is consideration of section autonomy.

CTAM President-Elect and MSCA member Rebecca Meyer-Larson of Moorhead wrote as her forward to this year conference that, “This year’s conference theme is ‘Walking the Walk by Talking the Talk.’ Each school year, we are faced with the daunting and decisive task of encouraging learners to speak out, embrace critical thinking skills, analyze rhetoric, collaborate as citizens, demonstrate respect, actively listen, and apply artistry in action. This fall, as we approach our clean classrooms and eager students, I encourage us to do the same. In short, I am begging us to “walk the walk” and the best way to begin is by “talking the talk.”

CTAM is a brilliant place to begin this vital journey and to start these vital conversations. My hope is your time at the CTAM 2016 conference will help provide the relationships and knowledge to best reach every learner we encounter in the upcoming academic year. I look forward to walking and talking with you!
Category Spotlight: Storytelling

The Perfect Storytelling Student

Lucy Lloyd, Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa

Storytellers must put in A LOT of work on their own. They need to read their stories, learn the plots, develop characters, and cut the stories before getting to the coaching session. And as a coach, don't be afraid to give them a little creative freedom on how they prepare. They would just need a little bit of direction at the beginning and the confidence, dedication, and work ethic to continue it. Know that your coaching sessions could vary, but be there for whatever they need help with. Boost their confidence, but also give them pointers to improve on. Talk about goal setting. They have one of the most difficult categories and need your guidance and support. Look at daily goals, weekly goals, preseason and season goals. Have them keep note of these somewhere they can look back on. Once they get to meets, encourage them to watch the other storytellers, especially the final round. What can they learn from them? Practice by practice, meet by meet, season by season, they will become successful. Then have them look to the younger students to find someone like them that they can mentor.

Storytelling Tips: More Than Just A Story

Max Wojtanowicz, Lakeville North

Storytelling involves the extemporaneous retelling of classic folktales and fables. When I coach this category, I work with students first on understanding the moral fabric of the story and integrating that thesis statement into their narrative. Forget the pops, the funny voices, the jokes for a second and consider: Is the story about being brave? Being generous? Learning not to judge a book by its cover? Sometimes the moral is clear as day in the text, and sometimes it takes some digging to uncover what the story is really about, but this is the most important part of the student's delivery for me. Why should I, the judge, listen? What about this story from hundreds of years ago is worthy of my attention? Why has it survived through oral tradition and why do we still tell the story today? When this is the focus of your coaching for this category, the benefits are enormous, both for the audience's comprehension and for the student's personal growth. These stories have the power to change our understanding of each other, to promote compassion, empathy, and peace — things our world desperately needs right now — and I have seen firsthand the power of the light bulb going on over my students' heads. Every element of the student's telling — the transitions, the characterizations, the sense of humor and playfulness inherent in many tales — should be in service to the audience's understanding of the moral!
Talent Shared From Around the State

We asked six outstanding coaches to share their secrets to building a team culture or a feeling of family from a set of individuals.

At the beginning of the season, the team participates in an all night lock in at the local YMCA; the captains are responsible for planning an evening filled with ice breaking and bonding activities. This event helps our new members get to know the varsity members through an evening of fun. Through our Adopt a Novice program, novice members are paired with varsity members who “take care” of them throughout the season. In addition, after tournaments the captains select a restaurant for a team dinner, and almost every week a team member will host a speech party on Saturday evening. Creative captains have also had some great ideas for team building. One year they divided the team into Harry Potter houses and designed activities for houses to earn points and compete against each other. It is challenging to get the team to come together for fun but it is well worth the effort!

-Joni Anker, Eagan

Team-building in Speech can be challenging, with speakers directly competing against some teammates and never associating with others. I’ve taken several steps to bridge this gap, including weekly TEAM night practices. Although these have been posted as optional these have quickly become a favorite. Speakers work with both coaches and captains, but also participate in peer coaching, learning more about other categories and improving in the process. The addition of pizza made this practice more appealing to those who were initially reluctant. My team has also created a newsletter for speakers, celebrating victories (big and small) from the team and recognizing a “speaker of the week”. It’s crucial to regularly meet and engage the team. Through our weekly team meeting, speakers can voice concerns, hear reminders, critique teammates, and most importantly, bond. Finally, with proper training, motivation, and creative freedom, captains can be the key to building a team culture. Something as simple as the captains’ weekly locker Speech meme can make everyone feel like a part of the team.

Mikayla Critz - Melrose

To help create our speech family, one of the very first things I ask our juniors and seniors to personally invite a new person to our informational meeting. Younger students especially like an older student reaching out to them. After we have established our team, I ask my veterans to help out the new speakers in their category at our Search Nights and also have the veterans mentor the new team members. I hope these interactions will help the newcomers get comfortable with speech and help establish an early bond. Throughout the season, we have team meals together and play games at these

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Talent Shared From Around the State

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get togethers to just have fun and get to know each other better. My veteran speakers are in charge of running warm ups at tournaments and helping new team members become accustomed to how a tournament works. Beyond the season, we coaches make a point to keep in touch with all of our students and talk to them about their lives (not just speech!). Our hope is that no matter how many medals or ribbons someone has brought home during the season, they feel they are an important part of our speech family in Windom.

Lisa Letcher - Windom

The 2016 Speech season brought many successes to our team. Our team spent more time together last year than any other year before. The key to this transformation was that we spent time together in more ways than riding a bus to a meet. Our team leaders took new, younger students under their wings, teaching them warm-ups, conducting special practice sessions, and talking about goals and hopes. Before a competition, we would huddle-up, share messages of encouragement, and then send each person off to rounds with a feeling of acceptance and motivation. They became more than friends: they became each other's motivators and mentors. As coaches, all we had to do was provide opportunities for bonding to happen. We scheduled practices with student schedules in mind, attended more junior high meets with senior high judges, and asked our members to simply spend time together outside of speech obligations. The results of the team bonding were numerous. Not only were students who care about the team's successes created, but we formed a group of young adults who genuinely care about the wellbeing of their teammates. By the end of the season, we were a more centered and compassionate team, ready to help each other advance to the next level.

Kasey Wacker, New York Mills

One thing we do that I believe helps a lot is a mentor program for novice members. Veterans apply to be a mentor and are matched to one or two novices. They make sure they know about and have transportation to team events, attend team meetings with them, and write them good luck notes to make them feel welcomed. This give them one more person to go to besides their coach or their captains.

We also do a Mock Tournament with just our team—with plenty of time for vets to help novices warm up and time for Q and A after the rounds. Then we do a team dinner and a “Half Night” at the school. It’s a night of activities like a whole team scavenger hunt, fear factor challenges, and dodgeball (teams have to comprised of at least one boy, one girl, one PA, one Interp, one novice, and one veteran).

Jenn Baese, Lakeville North

We typically have 30-40 members and we recruit early, recruit often, and recruit everyone. Our State speakers perform for the school in April and we visit 7th and 8th grade classrooms in January. We never assume someone won’t like speech and we reach out to everyone. Our team is diverse, and nothing gels a team like tradition. A mascot can be a great unifying tool. (It can be anything… even a cow). We also try to divide up responsibilities, especially when it comes to hosting tournaments. We encourage supporting each other in practice and at finals and awards. Before sub sections we have “A Pizza My Heart Belongs to Speech” night and speakers give each other written and verbal critiques. Some parents and judges help and our discussionists invite nearby teams. We eat pizza and give out awards based on team votes.

April Kummrow, New London-Spicer
The Real Down Low

MSCA President’s Corner

Jason Olson
Hutchinson

When you are MSCA President, you are elected to a two year term, and I find it hard to believe over half of my term has been completed. I have been fortunate to work with so many fine coaches in performing this job, and I wish I had more time to fulfill this office! It has been such a pleasure to be able to serve this organization, which has the power to do so much good for the coaching community in Minnesota.

With that said, we are looking for new people and new ideas to come forward and be part of the next group to lead this organization. At CTAM, we will be soliciting nominations for a new President-Elect from Class A. This person will be President from June 2019-June 2021. If you are interested, please let me know. The only requirement truly is that you wish to serve and that you are from Class A. There is no requirement for how long you have been coaching.

In the nine months I have left, MSCA will continue to focus on outreach and attempt to grow the organization. There is so much talent out there and although we don’t always agree on policies, we are united in the belief that this activity can and does transform lives.

MSHSL Board Representative Report

Bonnie Spohn Schmaltz
Eden Valley-Watkins

I have a new black blazer with a stately emblem now hanging in my closet, and it’s starting to sink in. The first training session for new board members of the MSHSL was held in July, and I’m looking forward to working with this diverse group of people. It’s exciting that even though we come from such different backgrounds, we have a common goal: creating opportunities for teenagers. The evening after the meeting, one of the communities I teach in was struck by a tornado. The following morning I was contacted by the Executive Director of the League who was concerned about the welfare of my family and my students. I feel the warm reception I received at the League office, combined with the concerned phone call, set the tone for the next four years. I’m looking forward to working with a dedicated group of people on issues from baseball pitch counts to catastrophic insurance costs. Working for decades in tab rooms with many different coaches has prepared me well for this position.

Leadership Opportunities Available

Besides President Elect, we will be electing the following at CTAM:

1. Member of the MSHSL State Tournament Jury which must come from Class A. This representative will serve on the Jury from 2017-2019

2. Members of the Advisory Committee. One must come from Class A and the other from Class AA. These representatives will serve from 2017-2018.

Contact Jason Olson if you are interested in putting your name forward as a candidate.
Judge Registration - This is the year!

It is Fall and that means Judge Registration!! I know, exciting news. As in the past, we will have the ability to pay for two years at a time for $15 or just for this year for $8. That is a $1 savings and gets one thing off your plate for next year if you sign up for two years.

All judges working sub-section, section or state contests need to register with the League. In addition to registration you need to take the online test and have been to a MSHSL Certification Clinic. While clinic attendance isn’t required more than one time, it may be something you want to take as a refresher. We will once again be offering both the Speech and One Act Clinics at CTAM and will have one or two around the state in the late fall. So far those aren’t scheduled, but if you can gather 10 interested bodies, we’ll travel to you.

If you have been a judge in the past, email reminders will go out once registration opens. Also, after great success we will continue to use the “Speech State Tournament Application” process. It is an opt-in to be on the ballot to work as a Judge at the State, which is April 21st (AA) and 22nd (A) at Apple Valley High School.

Possible Changes Submitted to MSHSL

The Advisory Committee supported submitting three changes to the MSHSL Board of Directors that could affect the upcoming season.

One caution is that the MSCA General Membership will vote whether to support the proposals. Should they not receive support from the membership, the proposals will be pulled for this year.

The three proposals are as follows:

**Scoring at State**: This would have judges in finals at state rank out to 8, but for tabulation purposes the 7 and 8 would be changed to 6s. The only time the 7 and 8 would be used is in tie-breaking situations.

**Judges’ Preference**: This would allow judges’ preference to be used as a tie-breaker in three way tie situations.

**Postseason Limits**: This would limit teams to 39 entries for postseason tournaments and up to 4 per category.
A Call For Consistency

Cliff Janke, MSHSL Speech Rules Clinician

One of the concerns I’ve heard over the past year is the consistency (or inconsistency) with which we run our sub-section and section tournaments. This year might be a good year for MSCA to form a committee to look at the way in which we run our MSHSL qualifying tournaments. At the present time there is autonomy in how each section handles its tournament. Now some sections have subsections and others use just the section to qualify students to the state tournament. There is more than one way to register students for the subsection or section tournament. Thirty-nine seems to be the common number of entries per school. Beyond this there seem to be some differences, from entering three per event to registering 39 students in individual events with no restriction on how many entries per event. There are variations on these examples. The question for MSCA members is whether there should be one method used statewide or whether that should be left to each individual section? Should decisions to have subsection or subsections be determined by a preset number, or again are sections best able to handle this.

I think it is very important for members of MSCA to discuss the items above and come to a consensus. It’s important to decide whether these decisions should be left to each region individually or should be consistent for all regions. I’m not so concerned with the decision as I am with all sections agreeing on where those decisions should be made. The area of greatest concern to me is the inconsistency in which rules committees are selected and how rules are enforced. The MSHSL Speech Rules are very clear in what the make-up of the rules committee should be.

Rules Committee: Subsection and Section
The Rules Committee shall be selected by the Contest Manager in advance of the contest. The committee must include at least three participating coaches who are knowledgeable about the contest rules. Alternate committee members must also be named. If any of the committee members cannot serve because of a conflict of interest, the alternates must serve on the Rules Committee.

The rules are also clear on what the purpose of the rules committee is.

Penalty for Rules Violation
The committee in charge of the tournament, along with members of the Rules Interpretation Committee, must penalize any student for violation of any rules. If the best credible evidence presented in a timely manner to the Rules Committee demonstrates that a student has committed a violation, the committee must disqualify the student, unless the violation is one of the six exceptions listed in the policy manual.

There is no negotiating what the consequences are. They MUST be the same at all levels of MSHSL competition.
Introducing MSCA Membership to Others

The Minnesota Speech Coaches Association could really use your help in recruiting new members. Much like the members of your team, you are the best recruiters for “our team.”

Last year we had a total of approximately 140 members. That is a large number, but when you compare it to the 303 total schools that register with the MSHSL for speech, it is clear that our tent could be made far bigger.

A brochure has been developed that we would encourage you to place out at your tournaments as a simple informational tool. This brochure can be downloaded from the MSCA website at http://mscaspeech.weebly.com.

Please consider promoting our organization at your Section tournament, meetings, and invitationals. Membership is $20 per year.

Any questions can be directed to Zachary Prax at Eastview. His email address is Zachary.Prax@district196.org

Benefits of MSCA Membership

We are continually researching how to reach more people and provide valuable benefits to our members.

Recently, the outreach and executive committees met and programs were developed for our members, while other additional benefits are in the planning stages or being studied further.

1. Support in times of sadness - MSCA is pleased to provide memorials in the unfortunate event of a death from our membership.

2. Longevity and Coaching Awards - MSCA administers a Coach of the Year program in Class A and AA. Additionally, every 5 years members are eligible for coaching longevity recognition.

3. Grow Speech Grant Program - MSCA is pleased to provide grants to teams and individuals in need of financial support. For more information check out MSCA’s website.

4. New Coach Mentorship Program - For more information contact Jody Saxton-West, Northfields.

The following programs are being studied further to see if they warrant future implementation.

1. All-State Team
2. Student Scholarships

If you would like to contribute to these ideas, please contact Jason Olson, MSCA President.
OVERTIME: Category Spotlight on POI

Coach’s Perspective

Jodene Wartman, Eagan

The strength of POI is in the powerful message that it sends to your audience. It is to go beyond interpretation, and put a story together that includes exposition, rising action, climax, and denouement. POI is very much like constructing an oratory, except that various genres of literature are used to write the story and sell an argument. POI allows your student to use the words and art of other published works, to put together a piece that moves your audience. The impact of this adventure on both you and the student is amazing. Working side by side, coach and student, you create art with a point of view. It is a process that evolves as you and the student work together to give that student a unique message and sense of ownership. Every page turn comes at you from a different perspective to give your student a voice for their theme. POI excites and invigorates the artist in me. As a coach you can’t just give your student a play, or a story and say “cut this”. You must work with them to inter-splice poetry, prose, and drama, or at least 2 of these genres, into a single cohesive theme. The student must use a manuscript, but that manuscript CAN be used in any manner you desire!!! Yes, as a prop, a tool to tell your story! I believe the process of POI is a spark that will light the interpreter’s soul.

Student’s Perspective

Austin Kraft, Prior Lake High School

Innocent and sufficiently awkward, I walk into an English classroom on an October afternoon to learn about the Prior Lake High School speech team. The coach discusses the two broad divisions of speech events: public address (PA) and interpretation. Living under a proverbial rock for my first fourteen years, I am shocked to discover that this activity extends beyond the stereotypical persuasive speeches required in school. Interpretation strikes me like a revelation, an enticing new world that I never before knew existed.

As my high school career progresses, I continue to see PA and interpretation as distant poles on the same planet, two regions that speak totally different languages. I remain firmly in the interpretation camp, dismissing PA as an alien species. It takes three years for me to find the common ground between PA and interpretation, when the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) introduces a pilot run of Program Oral Interpretation (POI) as a main-stage event for 2016.

As the name implies, POI is an interpretation event. Students craft arguments through programs of literature. The beauty and challenge of POI come from its breadth. A POI performance incorporates at least two of three genres: drama, prose, poetry. Nearly all successful POI programs, however, include all three. Programs can include anything: song lyrics, textbook excerpts, film scripts. If the text exists in print or on an approved website, it’s fair game. With endless literature available, the cutting and splicing of a program into ten minutes is unquestionably daunting. The construction of my 2016 POI, which focuses on the decay of American neighborhoods, began when I watched a play at a local high school. Immediately, I got my hands on a copy of the script to find the character whose narrative resonated with me. After acquiring a general direction, the process of

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building a program accelerated. I sought out literature addressing particular pillars of my argument, finding fiction and nonfiction sources that fulfill Aristotle's modes of persuasion: ethos, pathos, logos. My finished product consisted of two pieces of drama, three prose, and two poetry. This program has deeply honed my skills in argumentation and literary analysis. I am still processing the experience of performing my POI on the NSDA final stage, spilling my heart and argument before thousands of people. What I do know, though, is that POI is the missing link. POI blends elements of public address and interpretation, posing unique challenges to students and coaches.

My experience with POI has opened my eyes to the universality of argumentation in speech. Arguments need not be blatantly persuasive, but all speaking carries some form of purpose to evoke a particular response among audiences. When a student finds purpose in her words - PA or interpretation - speech becomes far more than an extracurricular activity. POI is in the vanguard of speech as a vehicle for meaningful, personal change. It is a celebration of the diversity and power of communication, which is the core of speech itself.

POI: Encouraging the Growth of the Category

Rachael Evenson, Shakopee

I have long been a believer that speech competition is one of the most important activities in which students can participate. As educators we know that the best rewards come from when we strive, not for trophies, but for those coveted top three tiers in Bloom's Taxonomy. Our programs give enrichment to students' educations in ways that other activities do not. This is the reason I am so impressed by Program Oral Interpretation and why I am so excited the NSDA has begun offering it as one of its main competition categories. Those top three tiers? POI has them covered.

The basic idea with POI is to explore a social issue using performance rather than public address. Students use several different texts and genres by combining them - using two sentences of one, an entire paragraph of another, going back and forth between pieces, etc. - into a cohesive script for performance. This type of analysis and synthesis are not things that our current interp categories offer. The creative freedom to use several genres and texts together to address current topics gives the category a relevancy that students respond to and invest in.

And also... there's the book. Competitors in POI are required to use and reference a presentation binder, but they also use it as an extension of the body to communicate visually. The page turns, ease of handling, and use of the binder as a prop are ways to teach movement based communication and provide opportunities to challenge students' creativity. I will encourage students on my team toward POI as an option for their NSDA category, and I hope you do the same. In the interest of developing this category in our state, I urge any tournament that offers NSDA in addition to MSHSL competition to offer Program Oral Interpretation.