



August 2022

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MSCI YEAR IN REVIEW



The MSCI Board of Directors

(Front row: Heather McKaig, Ruth Kay, Kirstin Carolin, (Guest of Honor, Dave Bassett)

Back row: Amy Janz, Doug Bevier, John Rutherford, Charlie Rinehart) Adam Blaylock (not pictured)

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

by **Doug Bevier**



Dear MSCI Members,

As many of us are preparing to return to the classroom, it is important to take a moment and reflect on the previous year. Let's be honest, the 2021-2022 school year was rough. It was full of so many unknowns. It was the year of unmasking and trying to recapture a normal that always seemed just outside our reach. But with all the unknowns came resilience and strength. MSCI members once again proved we have grit.

That grit and resolve was demonstrated time and again as we navigated the challenges of hosting speech competitions all across the state. If it was in-person or virtual, masked or unmasked, we did it all. And we did it pretty well. With each event, and each individual success, we have brought ourselves closer to a new normal and a brighter future.

This year's conference presented the MSCI board with plenty of unknowns. While not the conference we all wanted, it was one more shining example of this community's grit and determination to find that new normal. The weekend was filled with outstanding competition, professional development, and much needed comradery. I would like to personally thank the entire community for the patience and grace shown to us as we worked through the challenges of working with the new Grand Hotel ownership.

MSCI continues to be a professional organization dedicated to supporting speech activities in the state of Michigan. As we reflect on last year's many successes, I thank you all for the trust you have placed in us and the time you have and continue to give to the importance of these activities.

Doug Bevier

MSCI President



BENEFITS FOR MSCI MEMBERS

by **Ruth Kay**

Our mission is to develop, elevate, and encourage speech education in the State of Michigan in the areas of speech, debate, individual events, and theatre for coaches, teachers, educational institutions, and the students that benefit from their instruction and guidance.

MSCI is proud to:

PROVIDE

- A community and network of qualified coaches that are available for support, direction, encouragement and suggestions every step of the way
- An opportunity for members to bring students they are currently coaching to participate in speech competitions
- Professional recognition of coaches and educators who dedicate themselves to speech education

HOST

- An annual conference at the historic Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island with opportunities to interact and network with speech coaches from across the state
- The MSCI Spring IE tournament
- Professional development opportunities with workshops for coaches and directors to build and improve speech and theatre programs

MEMBERSHIP

Our membership year runs from March 1 to March 1 each year. We offer several levels of membership:

- Regular single year membership \$25.00
- Three year membership \$65.00
- College and retiree membership \$10.00
- First year membership in MSCI is free!

SAVE THE DATE:

Saturday, March 11, 2023: Novice State Tournament, Novi High School

Friday-Sunday, May 19-21, 2023: Mackinac Spring Conference and Tournament

MSCI State Novice Tournament: In-person Tournaments Triumphantly Return

By **Amy Janz**

After a two year hiatus, the halls were once again alive with the sounds of students talking to walls, rushing to rounds, and screaming with excitement for breaking to finals. The 2022 MSCI Novice State and Open Tournament was one of the first in-person tournaments since the start of the 2020 pandemic. It was held once again at Novi High School with a complete slate of events. A possible sign that the past two years under Covid issues definitely made an indelible mark on speech activities was the influx of novice competitors. The Novice State tournament hosted approximately 160 students with the open tournament hosting approximately 130 from 25 schools. Throughout the entire event, it was evident that everyone - students, judges, and coaches alike - were excited to once again experience the pomp and circumstance that makes forensic events unique. The results are below. Congratulations to all of the Novice State Champions and their coaches!

Novice State Champions

Broadcasting	Sofia Audet-Abdulnour	Wylie E. Groves
Dramatic Interpretation	Ishwari Bhatt	Portage Central
Duo Interpretation	Haley Sherman & Lauren Mattison	Wylie E, Groves
Extemporaneous	Aidan Drain	Greenhills
Impromptu	Joseph Kilmurray	Walled Lake Western
Informative	Ismael Metwally	Greenhills
Multiple	Lucy Fisher, Ainsley Gill & Mya Robertson	St Johns
Oratory	Jolie Oleshansky	Bloomfield Hills
Poetry	Justice Southward	Bloomfield Hills
Prose	Jamie Zousmer	Bloomfield Hills
Sales	Zach Rodger	Detroit Country Day
Storytelling	Serena Doshi	Intl. Academy Central

MACKINAC TOURNAMENT RESULTS

By **Amy Janz**

May of 2022 saw the grand return of the Mackinac Spring Conference and Tournament held at the historic Grand Hotel. This year saw approximately 190 students compete in one of eight events -- Impromptu Marvel Quotes, Duo Original Sales, Oratory-Eulogy, Storytelling, Mini-Multiple, and Duo Improvisation, John S. Knight Debate, and Poetry Slam -- from eighteen schools. The vast majority of these students had never experienced a tournament at The Grand Hotel before and the energy was palpable as they explored the hotel and the island, competed, and in general had the time of their lives. Many students stopped by the tab room to express how much fun they were having with the entire experience.



Mackinac Tournament Champions

Impromptu Marvel Quotes	Elias Nagel-Bennett	Loy Norrix
Duo Original Sales	Simar Bhatia & Genevieve Kim	Portage Central
Oratory Eulogy	Crow Wisdom	UAIS
Duo Improvisation	Jason Krawczyk & Alexa Moulton	Portage Central
Storytelling	Raleigh Bautel	Anchor Bay
Mini Multiple	Alexander Sanchez-Buchanan	
	Mia Pellegrini	
	Ashley Woytal &	
	Tyler Bright	Portage Northern
John S. Knight Debate	Mark Remington	Dexter
Poetry Slam	Ife Martin	West Bloomfield



Professional Development at the Mackinac Spring Conference-2022

By **Charlie Rinehart**

Building off the success of the 2021 MSCI Professional Development weekend, the Professional Development at this year's conference was small but mighty. This year Michigan Speech Coaches offered three unique PD sessions based on member interest.

Former MSCI Executive Board member Chris Kuhlman presented an in-depth look at speech activities with his critique and constructive criticism section. Kuhlman's morning session was titled "Constructive Critiques: Providing Ballots That Make A Difference" and those in attendance shared ideas in a round-table discussion that is sure to benefit the community at large. Chris and the group talked about ways to continue to better the community with criticism that enriches the lives of the students who participate in speech activities.

The second session was titled "Beyond High School: Preparing Students for a Future in Speech" and was run by Ryan Rigda (Saginaw Valley State University) & Carole Bennett (Oakland Community College). The purpose of this session was to reintroduce what offerings are available to students who may wish to continue speech activities beyond high school. The session provided wonderful resources and contact information to all those in attendance. Additionally, this material was shared with all conference participants, but if you missed out and are interested, please contact Charlie Rinehart (MSCI Secretary) at rinehart@oakland.edu and he can provide the full list of Michigan Intercollegiate Speech League (MISL) schools and appropriate contact information.

Finally, three MSCI members (Sarah Scurti, Karah Tanski & Jen Leija) led a session titled "Cultural Responsiveness and Equitable Judging Practices (Part Two)" – part two because it was a continuation of a popular session led during the 2021 MSCI Professional Development weekend.

The workshop focused on culturally responsive and inclusive judging practices for all coaches and judges who participate in speech activities. The largely informational session was a big hit amongst those in attendance and the session leaders even stayed late to answer questions afterwards.

Professional Development is only one part of the MSCI Spring Conference experience providing members to engage and interact in speech activity discussions to learn and grow as professionals. If you were unable to attend, please consider stopping in during a session in May 2023. If you have an idea for a session topic, please contact the 2022-23 Past-President, Doug Bevier.

MSCI Grants

by **Ruth Kay**

Every year, MSCI awards grants to further our mission of supporting speech activities in the state of Michigan. In 2022, MSCI awarded \$2,000 in grants. Our grant recipients included: the Detroit Urban Debate League, Utica Academy for International Studies, and Avondale High School. Please check out the MSCI website for further information regarding grant applications.

Ludus Grant awarded to Lapham

Congratulations go out to MSCI member Bill Lapham, Portage North Middle School, as the first recipient of the \$1,000 Ludus Grant awarded in coordination with MSCI.

The grant is made possible by the generosity of Ludus. Ludus powers ticketing, marketing, and fundraising for performing arts organizations. MSCI member and Ludus President/Co-Founder, Kevin Schneider said that “Our goal is to support you and allow you to think beyond the traditional.”

The Ludus Grant is designed to support innovative projects that enhance individual understanding, appreciation, and participation in the communication arts (Speech, Debate and Theatre). This grant is not applicable for expenses for the classroom, program, or recertification. This grant is an investment in an individual. The goal is to support individuals and allow them to think beyond the traditional.

Lapham will use the grant monies for a blending of music and conversation. According to Lapham, “I have always been enamored with and motivated by two things: Music and Conversation. Some of the best moments for me have been when these two things intertwined.” The plan is to develop a Podcast to feed the need for stimulating discourse and music.

MSCI and Ludus plan to partner in upcoming years to provide an annual grant to MSCI members for their personal/professional growth. Look for the application on the MSCI website and be sure to visit Ludus.com for more information regarding this generous organization.

Congratulations to our Member Coaches Who Achieved Success This Season

By **John Rutherford**

Debate

Middle Level Public Forum: Birmingham Convington Schools coached by Courtney Basset

Novice Public Forum: Cranbrook coached by Chris Bryant

Varsity Public Forum: Skyline coached by Laura Sparrow

Novice Policy: HH Dow coached by Amy Bushy

Varsity Policy: Wylie E. Groves coached by John Lawson

Novice Congressional: Saline coached by Shelly Venema

Varsity Congressional: UAIS coached by Chris Kuhlman

Individual Events

Class A-Portage Central-Tyler Baas

Class B-Grand Rapids Christian-Brian Karsten

Class C/D-Greenhills-Ben Bellamy

Theatre

Division 1-Novi (Main Stage)-Heather McKaig

Division 1-W.E. Groves (Studio)-John W. Rutherford

Division 2-St. Johns (Studio)-Jackie and Nat Charneski

Thank You from DUDL

by **John Lawson**

Thanks to the Executive Board and Membership of the Michigan Speech Coaches, Inc. (MSCI), MSCI has generously contributed at least \$500 per year to the Detroit Urban Debate League to sponsor awards and trophies for our many tournaments. The DUDL sponsors a minimum of six tournaments per year for which awards are needed. This academic year (2019-2020), we sponsored eight events, including a kickoff event at the downtown Detroit law firm of Dykema Gossett, and the Junior Varsity State tournament at Al Furqan Academy in West Detroit. The DUDL sponsors competition in Varsity or Open, Junior Varsity and Novice Policy Debate. It also holds monthly tournaments for middle school public forum debate

The League also administers a weeklong summer institute in August, which culminates in a mini-tournament for policy and public forum debaters.

All of these events are facilitated by the motivational impact of trophies subsidized by the MSCI.

John Lawson

Executive Director, Detroit Urban Debate League

2022 Hall of Fame Inductees

by **Heather McKaig**

MSCI is tremendously excited to honor the newest inductees to the Hall of Fame. These two coaches are important not only to this organization, but to all students in the State of Michigan who take part in speech activities.



Beth Campbell is a teacher, advisor, director, and coach at Alma High School in Alma, Michigan. Beth was the theater director/advisor for 21 years, and has coached Individual Events for 19 years. The IE team has won over 50 team trophies - earned when a team finishes in the top three at a tournament - 3 Tri-Valley Conference championships, and has had over 20 state semifinalists and six state finalists. She has also served her community as Forensic/Drama, Spanish, and Humanities teacher, the Alma Education Association President, the Pine River Arts Council President, and the Lucky MacDuck Day Coordinator.

When talking about her induction Mrs. Campbell stated, "this recognition was a complete shock to me. When he (President Doug Bevier) told me I had been nominated and selected for the Hall of Fame, I couldn't even speak for a minute. I said, 'But Doug, I run such a tiny program!' His response was that sometimes it is tougher to keep a smaller program running, particularly for so long. Bigger teams in more urban areas have alumni to help with funding, siblings who compete and will encourage others to do so, even private performance classes and more advanced speech programs. Another coach said to me last weekend that it's the coaches who show up every day and just keep doing the job who are the

heroes. I don't necessarily feel that way about myself, but I can accept that I have worked hard and had some success in my tenure as a coach."

She went on to say that "speech activities offer students a unique opportunity that builds critical skills for their present and future. Students learn how to see multiple points of view, how to determine the credibility of information, and how to speak their opinions with integrity, confidence, and kindness. These skills have become more and more rare, and for students who have spent countless hours interacting with a screen, it is vital that they learn to look at other human beings and converse effectively. Sports and other academic clubs provide some, but not all, of these merits. I am so proud to be part of a professional community of teachers and other speech coaches who care so deeply about helping young adults find their authentic voice and a forum for expression. The affirmation and acceptance they find in forensics changes--and saves--lives."



Dan Jacobs is a teacher and coach at The Roeper School in Birmingham, MI. This year marks Mr. Jacobs' 30th year of coaching. He began as an assistant coach in Plymouth for two years. Jacobs then worked at Seaholm High School for three years before moving to The Roeper School, where he has held his position for the last 25 years.

When talking about his induction Mr. Jacobs stated that "my friends and peers in forensics have always felt like a home to me. Having some time to reflect with them on the time and mutual experiences leading up to this recognition has given me a solid touchstone for everything we've created together in over 30 years of providing spaces where kids' voices can be heard. It's rewarding to watch some of these folks grow from 11-year-olds into coaches in their own right -- and to feel the growth inside myself from being immersed in a seemingly endless process of creativity and discovery." He went on to say, "forensics and debate give students the ideal low-stakes spaces for trying on a variety of viewpoints and exploring different ways to articulate what they're most passionate

about. I have yet to find a better venue for inspiring self-motivated learning where students feel the intrinsic value of critical thinking and self-expression."

Coaches of the Year-2022

By **Heather McKaig & John Rutherford**

Debate: Ryan Nierman



Ryan Nierman has been coaching Groves Debate since he graduated from the program in 2007. Though it has required balancing it with attending college, earning a PhD, becoming a father, and full time work outside of education, Ryan has always been committed to Groves Debate and believed in the educational value of competitive debate. Ryan commented, "I have coached huge teams and small teams, and regardless of how many students are on the team, it's always a thrill to see who rises to the challenge at the State tournament. This

(Pictured with BPS Superintendent Dr. Roberson and fellow Debate Coach John Lawson) opportunity to work as a full team, not just a two-person crew, makes successfully taking the state title a collaborative victory. This was our sixth varsity state title of my coaching career, and seeing the novices finish second bodes well for the future of this program." Ryan was flattered to receive the award and to be recognized by the district Board of Education as well, "The more attention I can bring to these students, this competitive program, this worthwhile activity, the better. I am happy to spend my time prepping, coaching, traveling and supporting debate because I believe all students are well served by competing in debate regardless of their level of success, but winning is always more fun."

IE: Chris Kuhlman



Chris Kuhlman, forensic coach at the Gene L. Klida Utica Academy for International Studies coached the team to Class C/D second place finish was a huge success for UAIS. Mr. Kuhlman has been coaching for thirteen years: this year marks nineteen years of teaching for Mr. Kuhlman. He stated, “I am honored to be recognized by a committed group of educators who help students find their voices and encourage them to use it in advocacy of their truths and their passions. We need more speech activity recognition, support, and advocacy in all levels of education. It should be every district's goal to empower student voices and actively find ways to provide educational opportunities to use them. I would also like to add that this recognition is as much about the students as it is about anything else. They are a tenacious group of open-minded individuals who are willing to accept critique, correction, and revise to make their pieces grow. From the start of the season to the end, they never stopped working and looking for avenues to improve. It is a privilege to work with such an inspiring group of individuals.”

Theatre: John W. Rutherford



John W. Rutherford has been a theatre teacher for over 30 years, spending the last 22 at Groves High School. This past year he coached his students to be Studio-Division 1 champions with their production of *Bystander 9/11*. Mr. Rutherford said, “theatre became an integral part of my life when I was in 7th grade. These past 40 years I have not gone a year without having theatre take up part of my time and energy. I simply cannot stop!” He went on to say, “I am so inspired by my fellow colleagues. The teachers, coaches, and directors I encounter at festivals and competitions amaze me. Each of us is doing what I feel is the most important thing, giving back to others. When we share our love and passion for what we do, whether it be theatre, forensic or debate, we are providing lifelong memories that can inspire the next gen to work to their fullest. In the end, theatre is all about storytelling, and I love to tell stories.”

Assistant Coach: Wendy Holt



Wendy Holt has been an assistant forensic coach of the Birch Run High School Forensic team for 17 years. Ms. Holt said, “This year, as a coaching team, we are very proud of our successful season - placing 2nd for Class B schools, and ending with three state champions. It is always nice to see the payoff at the end for those students that have worked hard all season.” After receiving the award Ms. Holt stated, “Working with a variety of coaches provides our students a lot of valuable feedback. As coaches, we all have different strengths - I love coaching speaking events like broadcasting, sales, and info - so we all offer different feedback to help our students grow.” Holt went on to say, “As a coach, I am also proud of the fact that so many of our former students want to return and help coach our current students.”

Dave Bassett named Guest of Honor

By Charlie Rinehart



On Saturday, May 21, 2022, Michigan Speech Coach members, executive board and conference participants gathered in the Grand Pavilion room at the historic Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island to honor Dave Bassett for his dedication, engagement, and service to the speech community of Michigan for over 40 years.

Dave Bassett has been involved with speech activities in some capacity since the late 1970s and those fortunate enough to be present participated in laughter and cheer in his honor. Dave has worked with multiple high schools and continued to support forensics and debate programs as they have evolved during his time with the activity. In addition to coaching, Dave served the MSCCI community as an ambassador for over 30 years. Dave Bassett has been president of MSCCI multiple times, as well as serving other positions on the governing board. He has routinely given his time, knowledge and efforts to making sure the organization fulfills its mission to its membership and the speech community at large.

During the celebration four speeches were given in Dave's honor from colleagues and friends. The evening concluded with Dave humbly addressing the audience. Dave was joined by his wife Peggy and two children, Jake and Kate, to celebrate the weekend.

Michigan Speech Coaches are in a better place because of Dave Bassett's service and we hope you were able to join in the festivities. Please mark your calendar to celebrate next year's Guest of Honor in May 2023.

Good times and some fun photos of MSCCI Board Members





[READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE](#)



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