



October 2023

MSCI YEAR IN REVIEW



The MSCI Board of Directors

(Front row: Charlie Rinehart, Ruth Kay, Amy Janz, Heather McKaig)

Back row: Tyler Baas-Peterson, John Rutherford, Doug Bevier, Jeff Butts)

THIS YEAR'S
TOP STORIES

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

by **Amy Janz**

Dear MSCI Members,

I hope the summer months have allowed you all to rest and rejuvenate as you prepare for the fall and the remainder of 2023. Before we know it, 2024 will be upon us, so I would like to take a moment to reflect back on this past year.

I am happy to say that the State Novice and Spring festival hosted 27 teams and more than 300 students while the Mackinac Conference saw approximately 30 schools and 230 students. Seeing so many students talk to walls and each other in person is such a welcome sight after a few difficult years. I, for one, never want to take for granted again the ability to gather, socialize and work with my fellow speech coaches face to face.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, the membership, for the honor of serving you as president this past year. I have gained much from this community throughout my years of coaching, and it was my pleasure to give back and serve that community in this capacity. Beyond that, I have learned so much and have grown as an individual because of this experience.

I wish you all the best that this fall and school year has to offer. Remember that MSCI is an organization committed to supporting our members and the advancement of speech activities throughout Michigan. The board and I thank you for your continued support and the dedication and time you devote each year to promoting the importance of speech and communication in the next generation.

Amy Janz

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 \$30.00
- Three year membership \$80.00
- College and retiree membership \$15.00
- First year membership in MSCI is free!

SAVE THE DATE:

Saturday, March 9, 2024: Novice State Tournament

Friday-Sunday, May 17-19, 2024: Spring Conference and Tournament

MSCI State Novice Tournament:

Annual MSCI Spring Tournament was a Success

By **Charlie Rinehart**

On March 11, 2023, Michigan Speech Coaches Inc welcomed 24 schools and hundreds of students to the 2023 MSCI Novice State Championships and Open Invitational held at Novi High School. The tournament did not disappoint, as both the Novice State Championships and the Open Invitational held strong, competitive events that allowed all the students involved the opportunity to grow and strengthen their speaking skills. Judges routinely commented on the strong competition, the wondrous presentations and the shining hospitality.

Novi High School, which has become a regular host of this tournament, was bustling with students, judges and coaching taking in the events of the day. This two-tournament event could not be run with the dedication of not only the MSCI Executive Board, but also the community at large. For all those who were involved in this event, whether coaches, judges, competitors or volunteers, we say “thank you”. We look forward to March of 2024 when once again MSCI will provide host to this community!

A list of the 14 MSCI 2023 Novice State Champions is below and all other competition results can be found on tabroom.com.

Congratulations to all of the Novice State Champions and their coaches!

2023 Novice State Champions

Broadcasting	Adelaide Kauchak	Portage Central
Dramatic Interpretation	Blair Jacobs	Wylie E. Groves
Duo Interpretation	Harper Cash & Mira Jayaraman	Greenhills
Duo Commentary	Helena Zweig & Reese Culbertson	Wylie E. Groves
Extemporaneous	Ajay Purohit	Greenhills
Impromptu	Erika Rice	Wylie E. Groves
Informative	Zoe Lusk	Wylie E. Groves
Multiple	Puffs: Sage Benford, Franco Suarez, George Gavulic, & Jay McIntosh	Avondale
Oratory	Addie Sherman	Bloomfield Hills
Program Oral Interpretation	Katie Tadesse	Bloomfield Hills
Poetry	Marayla Cross	UAIS
Prose	Giselle Haddad	Bloomfield Hills
Sales	Deeksha Sriram	Greenhills
Storytelling	Payton Renusch	Bloomfield Hills

MIFA Curates Innovation While Transitioning Back to “Normal”

By **Sarah Scurti** MSCI Member-At-Large; MIFA Forensic Council

The 2022-2023 school year brought MIFA events the best of the last few years, along with the beginning of a return to normal through its Debate, Theatre, Individual Events and Middle Level activities.

The ingenuity and creativity that MIFA tirelessly worked toward as we navigated through the uncertainty of the pandemic gave the MIFA Debate State tournament the ability to run virtually for the third year in a row. The use of NSDA Campus and tabroom has allowed members the continued opportunity of expanded access to debate across the state.

MIFA Theatre brought students back to a college campus for state finals for the first time in several years. Central Michigan University graciously hosted our student actors, technicians, and directors, giving them the opportunity to work and perform in college theatre spaces.

It was an exciting year for MIFA Individual Events. After polling its members, MIFA officially added two new competition events- the interpretation event Program Oral Interpretation, or POI and the limited preparation event Duo Commentary. These two categories shook up the IE season, giving students, coaches, and judges the ability to create new opportunities for success. IE also returned to both a two-day state tournament and a college campus, sharing Wayne State University's campus with their spring final exams and commencement.

MIFA Middle Level hosted its first in-person fall workshop, giving its youngest members the ability to learn more about speech activities. Students from fifth to eighth grade made the most of what they learned, competing in Spring State Finals at Birmingham Covington School.

If pandemic competition taught us anything, it is that we have the ability to adapt and innovate. This spirit of innovation carried MIFA through this year of competition as we continue to provide quality competitive speech activities for its members.

MACKINAC TOURNAMENT RESULTS

By **Tyler Baas-Peterson**

There is nothing quite like a beautiful weekend on Mackinac Island, and we were fortunate enough to have just that, both inside the historic Grand Hotel and outside around the island! We are excited that this year the tournament grew to nearly 210 students, representing 22 different schools from around the state, competing in one of the 8 events: 90's Song Lyric Impromptu, Newsroom, Holiday Mini Multiple, Progressive Debate, Poetry Slam, Program Oral Interpretation, Humorous Interpretation, and Film Analysis.

The tournament this year tabulated predominantly through online ballots on Tabroom.com, offering paper ballots only for those who requested them specifically, and our TAB staff found this shift to work effectively and efficiently. The tournament ran on time throughout the day and had no major hiccups! Many students commented on how much fun they were having, and judges and coaches throughout the day were smiling and enjoying the different events that this year's tournament offered. A great time was had by all! We look forward to seeing the Mackinac Tournament continue to grow in future years as we continue to build a strong and vibrant speech community state-wide.

2023 Mackinac Tournament Champions

90's Song Lyric Impromptu	Farah Kavarana	Walled Lake Western
Newsroom	Daniel Sturdy & Avi Stotz-Ghosh	Portage Central
Holiday Mini Multiple	Carter Barnes, Brynnica Thrash, Riley VanDeVelde, Lauren Fulton, & Seth Taylor	Portage Central
Progressive Debate	Adyn Skowronski	Dexter
Poetry Slam	Sam Kerby	Portage Central
Program Oral Interpretation	Madison Sturgeon	Portage Northern
Humorous Interpretation	Avery Beeman	Grass Lake
Film Analysis	Crow Wisdom	UAIS



IE Forensic: A Welcomed Return to Normal

By **Doug Bevier**

The 2023 IE Forensics season was, for most of us, a return to normal. In-person competition at invitationals, regionals, and states were welcomed reunions of old friends, and more importantly opportunities for students to experience speech activities as a community.

We saw the addition of two new events with Program Oral Interpretation (POI) and Duo Commentary. Both events were well received by the community. Program Oral Interpretation brings elements of NFL and collegiate forensics to our community. While Duo Commentary affords public address students an opportunity to collaborate and present with a partner.

Paige Caldwell was this year's recipient of the prestigious Diana Rose Award for her contributions to the IE community. Paige continuously volunteers her time at several IE invitationals, as well as regional and state tournaments. She is a jack of all trades working administratively, in limited prep, tab collection, and much more.

The IE season culminated in a two-day tournament at Wayne State University April 28 - 29. State championships went to Portage Central, Class A, coached by Tyler Baas, Grand Rapids Christian, Class B, coached by Brian Karsten, & Greenhills School, Class C/D, coached by Ben Bellamy. A huge thank you to Ron Stevenson, Director of Forensics @ Wayne State University, for hosting. Congratulations to everyone who made the tournament and the season a success.

Ludus Grant awarded to Creutz

by **Ruth Kay**

MSCI offers congratulations to member Evelyn Creutz of Trillium Academy, as the 2023 recipient of the \$1,000 Ludus Grant.

The Ludus Grant is funded by the generosity of Ludus, a powerful ticketing, marketing, and fundraising platform for performing arts organizations. Kevin Schneider- MSCI member & Ludus President/Co-Founder- said, "Our goal is to support you and allow you to think beyond the traditional."

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

Creutz will use the grant monies to bolster her physical, emotional, and mental health. According to Creutz, "I have always been a person who understands that if one system (physical, mental, or emotional) is lacking we are not whole." The grant will be used for sessions with a personal trainer and nutritional coach.

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.

In her own words Evelyn writes:

The Ludus Grant's Impact on My Mental, Physical, and Spiritual Well-Being

In the journey of life, we often encounter moments of adversity that test our resilience and push us to our limits. It was during one such challenging period that I was introduced to the Ludus Grant, a remarkable opportunity that would ultimately become the catalyst for my personal transformation. The Ludus Grant not only helped me regain my mental, physical, and spiritual self but also transformed me into a better person.

Rediscovering My Mental Strength

Life's challenges had left me feeling mentally drained and overwhelmed. The Ludus Grant came into my life like a breath of fresh air, offering me the chance to refocus and rediscover my mental strength. With the support and resources it provided, I embarked on a journey of self-discovery and self-improvement through physical training and nutritional guidance.

Rejuvenating My Physical Health

Neglecting my physical well-being had taken a toll on my health. Thanks to the Ludus Grant, I was able to prioritize my physical health once more. With access to a fitness trainer, nutrition guidance, and regular check-ins with health professionals, I began to live a healthier lifestyle once again.

Regular exercise not only helped me regain my physical strength but also boosted my energy levels and improved my overall health. This positive change spilled over into other aspects of my life, enhancing my confidence and outlook on life.

Becoming a Better Person

The Ludus Grant's impact on my life has been nothing short of transformative. By nurturing my mental, physical, and spiritual well-being, I have not only regained the person I once was but have also become a better version of myself. I am more resilient, healthier, and more in tune with my inner self.

This transformation has had a ripple effect on my relationships, career, and overall happiness. I am better equipped to handle life's challenges, more compassionate toward others, and more determined to live a fulfilling life.

In conclusion, the Ludus Grant has been a beacon of hope and transformation in my life. It has enabled me to regain and enhance my mental, physical, and spiritual well-being, ultimately shaping me into a better person. As I continue to grow and evolve, I am forever grateful for the opportunity that this grant has provided me, and I am excited to embrace the future with renewed vigor and optimism.

Congratulations to our Member Coaches Who Achieved Success This Season

By **John Rutherford**

Debate

Middle Level Public Forum: Mill Creek Middle School coached by Deb Marsh

Novice Public Forum: Dexter High School coached by Deb Marsh

Varsity Public Forum: Dexter High School coached by Deb Marsh

Novice Policy: Wylie E. Groves coached by John Lawson & Ryan Nierman

Varsity Policy: Okemos High School coached by David Zinn

Novice Congressional: UAIS coached by Chris Kuhlman

Varsity Congressional: Saline coached by Linda Badri

Individual Events

Class A-Portage Central-Tyler Baas-Peterson

Class B-Grand Rapids Christian-Brian Karsten

Class C/D-Greenhills-Ben Bellamy

Theatre

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

2023 Hall of Fame Inductees

by **Heather McKaig**



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

Ashley Bowen When talking about her induction Ms. Bowen stated that “in a time where information travels at the speed of light, a single voice can reach millions in an instant, the ability to articulate ideas with clarity and conviction is paramount. By empowering high school students to master the art of public speaking, we grant them an elevated platform from which their voices can resonate and inspire change. Theatre and Forensics provides a stepping stone for students to build their confidence, refine their beliefs, and build meaningful relationships. I am not sure there is any more valuable activity we can offer.”

Bowen added that, "This is an honor that I share with so many. I am grateful to have been mentored by great leaders and former PPS employees including: James Menchinger, Laurel Scheidt, and Brian Snell. I have been surrounded by amazing colleagues: Theresa Mills, Tyler Baas, and Elizabeth Honeysett. And I could not be more lucky than to work for a principal, Eric Alburtus, who sees the value in this event and works hard to support all activities where students shine."

Ms. Bowen has been a coach and teacher for over 15 years, and during that time, she has made a significant impact on the lives of countless students. Her leadership and guidance have helped students find their voice and gain confidence in their communication skills. She has coached students in various speech categories to both state and national championships including three team state championships at Portage Northern.

Ashley's impact on the speech education community extends beyond her coaching abilities. She has served as Vice President of The Michigan Interscholastic Forensics Association (MIFA) for 8 years, serving on various committees and contributing to the organization's growth and development. She is an excellent mentor for new coaches and has played an integral part in advocating for continued speech education at the state level.

Charlie Rinehart When talking about his induction Mr. Rinehart stated that he is "proud to be recognized for what I've given to this community and am honored to join those who came before me as Michigan Speech Coach Hall of Famers. People's number one fear is public speaking; speech activities build confidence in students of all ages. Support from our institutions will only provide success for our students as they move beyond the classroom and apply all they've gained in their future endeavors. I think speech activities are extremely important and should be supported throughout the state. When we consider everything going on in the world, empowering people to speak is a necessary tool for positive growth as a culture and community."

When speaking about Mr. Rinehart at his induction, MSCI member Jeff Butts said that "as my high school and college forensics coach, Charlie taught me essential lessons about public speaking, empathy, and compassion. As my college professor, Charlie has taught me about critical thinking and how to be an educated and good human being. And as my friend and mentor, Charlie has been a source of advice, and a shoulder to lean on."

This year marks Mr. Rinehart's 19th year of coaching. He began at Fitzgerald High School for two years. Rinehart then worked at Henry Ford II High School, coaching both Forensics and Debate, before moving on to Oakland University where he has worked for the last 15 years. In his time coaching, his students have had tremendous success: Multiple State Finalists and Champions in both Forensics and Debate at both the high school and college level; OU team went to National tournaments in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Nebraska, and California; 4 former Oakland students are currently assisting programs in the state at Walled Lake Western, Detroit Country Day, and Birmingham, Groves; two of these former students served as Graduate Assistants to the Oakland Speech Team as well.

Joel Thursam When talking about his induction Mr. Thursam stated that "I feel very honored and much appreciative of the recognition. It is as much about the students who I have been lucky to have over the years and the many students who have come back to help both programs continue to operate and be successful over the years."

He went on to say, "more than anything else I have gotten so much feedback over the years - sometimes

over 10 years later - from ex students who state how the most beneficial activity or learning they had in high school was participating in either debate or forensics - that they learned skills that help them in all walks of life - more than even courses they took in college. Speech Activities give students and young people the opportunity to find their voice, build their confidence, and learn valuable life skills that will forever help them. I'm very grateful and hope that speech activities continue to flourish not just in my region but throughout the state."

This year marks Mr. Thursam's 21st year of coaching. In his time at West Bloomfield, his students have had tremendous success: West Bloomfield Debate has won the state championship in both Varsity and Novice levels; Debate has also been a semifinalist over a dozen times as well as a finalist 3 additional times; West Bloomfield Forensics has had numerous state finalists from 2nd place Extemporaneous Speaking in 2003 to 1st place in Poetry last year; The Forensics Team has had about 20 students make the final round in the State Tournament; West Bloomfield has hosted a debate tournament for 20 years and has hosted the Michigan Interscholastic Forensics Association's State Debate Tournament on 3 occasions as well as hosting various workshops for the same organization.

Coaches of the Year-2023

By **John Rutherford**

Debate: Chris Kuhlman



Last year Mr. Chris Kuhlman was selected as the MSCI forensic coach of the year, and this year was announced as the debate coach of the year. Chris Kuhlman has been a debate coach of the Utica Academy for International Studies High School Debate team for 14 years. Mr. Kuhlman said, "The UAIS debate team has had a multitude of success over the years. This has been individually amongst the team members and as a team as a whole." Since its creation for the Michigan Interscholastic Forensics Association, UAIS has been the only school to win the Sweepstakes Team State Champion Team trophy for congressional debate. I have also coached multiple Public Forum teams and coached the Varsity State Champion team in 2018. This year, we had the 5th place varsity PF team, 5 of the top ten competitors in the novice congressional debate including the state champion coming from UAIS as well as 3rd & 4th place, and in the Varsity Congressional Debate we went 2, 3, 4, and 7."

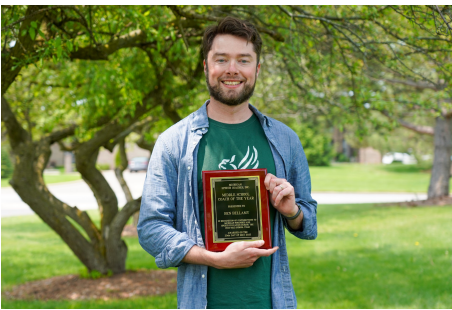
IE: Brian Karsten



Brian Karsten has been a forensic coach of the Grand Rapids Christian High School Forensic team for 18 years. Mr. Karsten said, “In my time here we’ve won 4 Class B State Championships (2008, 2021, 2022, 2023) and 1 Class A State Championship (2019) in IE. In that time, we’ve had 33 Individual State Champions, 15 National Qualifiers and a 3x National Finalist.

After receiving the award Mr. Karsten stated, “Because of our school schedule, we haven’t been attending the Mackinac tournament the past several years--so my memories of Coach of the Year winners are all of folks with far more experience and success than I had ever dreamed of. So, when they called my name, I was really surprised. I suppose this means I’ve been around a long time and done okay at things!”

Middle Level: Ben Bellamy



Mr. Bellamy has been teaching for 3 years at Greenhills School as the Integrated Public Speaking Teacher and Upper & Middle School Forensics Coach at Greenhills. This year, Greenhills had a record 109 students on the team, meeting once a week to practice. Members of the Greenhills high school team volunteer to act as coaches for the individual events. The middle school team took 59 students to the Spring Middle Level State Tournament on May 6th and finished the day with 12 semifinalists, 32 finalists, and 10 champions. As for the Greenhills High School Forensic team, during his time as coach, the school has won three back-to-back state championships.

Ben says, “More than anything else, I think the true value of speech competition is the way it fosters courage in young people. If you can stand up in front of a group of peers, coaches, and strangers to perform, knowing you are going to be judged and critiqued, then to me, you are courageous.”

Theatre: Dawn Battice



Mrs. Battice has been teaching and directing at Anchor Bay High School. During her tenure at Anchor Bay High School, she has directed at least one fall play and one spring musical in addition to the competitive one act for 15 of the last 17 years, advancing from districts to regional tournaments each time, and advancing to State finals twice, the most recent time being this past winter.

She added that, “I cannot think of a better way to enhance students’ educational experiences than to offer theatrical and performance opportunities. Through my own involvement in the theatre, as both a student and as an educator/director, I have learned so much about so many things and so many people...including myself. Helping my students to do the same through this activity empowers them and prepares them for the world in ways no class (and few other activities) can.”

Assistant Coach: Chris Pavlicko



Chris Pavlicko has been an assistant forensic coach of the Troy High School Forensic team for 6 years. Mr. Pavlicko said, "Since coaching at Troy in the 2017-2018 school year, Troy High School has placed within the top 10 of Class A schools every year. That first year we had 8 students advance to the State Finals with 3 of them placing within the Top 6 of their respective events. This year, we had 31 students advance to the state finals with 14 of them placing within the top 6 of their respective events. Additionally, since coaching at Troy High School, we have had three state champions within the events of Multiple (Shrek - 2019), Broadcasting (Aahil Abdul Nazeer - 2022) and Oratory (Varsha Penumalee -2023)."

After receiving the award Mr. Pavlicko stated, "This is such an honor and I thank all those who have mentored me throughout the years. I wouldn't be here today without them. The skills you learn and develop from participating in forensic (competitive speech) is life changing. Knowing how to stand up in front of an audience of any size and speak to them directly, concisely and able to convey the message you want/need to get across is a skill that is to be admired."

Barb Ebeling named Guest of Honor

By Amy Janz



MSCI had the distinct pleasure to welcome long-time coach, Barb Ebeling to the island as our distinguished Guest of Honor. Most notably the community will recognize her as having been the Greenhills Individual Events coach for over 25 years. As a coach she led her teams to more than a dozen state titles and has countless IE State champions, finalists and semifinalists. Throughout her more than 40 years of service to the speech community, Barb has been known for her dedication not only to the many students that have passed through her teams, but also to all the students she has judged, and the coaches she has officially and unofficially mentored. Barb's quiet demeanor, sincerity, knowledge, and strong

opinions make her a pillar of the Michigan Speech Activities community and a standard to which many strive to meet. It was an honor to be able to sing her praises for an entire weekend.

Good times and some fun photos of MSCI Board Members at their summer meeting



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