

## NEWS ITEMS

**News Letter.** Because of stringency of funds on account of the temporary suspension of the Capital City Bank, this News Letter has been shortened.

**Registration.** The registration to date seems to indicate that the membership may reach 400 this year. Will your district be the first to make 100%? The News Letters, thirty-one selections, and two copies of the Debate Handbook (so those debating) and the list of plays and directions for curtaining a stage (to those interested in dramatics) are supplied free to members. Participation in contests is encouraged but not required of members. The development of speech activities, with all their educational advantages, is the aim of the Association.

**Dramatics.** Have you registered with your district chairman for the dramatic contest? Latest date for registration is December 15, but choice of play is not required by this date. Read carefully the November, 1929; September, 1930; and September, 1931, News Letters for information on dramatics. The following special committee was appointed to study further dramatics in our high schools and report at the next annual meeting: Messrs. Mason, River Falls; Fischer, Dodgeville; and Bassford, Ashland, with Miss Rockwell in an advisory capacity.

**Debate.** The constitution requires that each debate team must consist of three debaters and an alternate. Schools reported as participating in regular schedule have been listed. Latest date for registration is December 15. The question is so timely that many schools are arranging inter-school and community debates. The Association supplies two copies of the Debate Handbook to all member schools debating. An abundance of reference material pro and con is available from the Department of Debating and Public Discussion. The April News Letter furnishes splendid material for publicity.

**Judges for Debates.** Motion carried at the annual meeting suggesting that members of faculties of the universities and colleges and also principals, superintendents, and teachers qualified be asked to act as judges, without compensation, except expenses, for at least the first two rounds of the debates. The district chairmen will suggest judges upon request.

**Coaches as Judges.** It is also suggested that schools try the experiment of having coaches of schools participating act as judges. By agreement of participating schools, if number exceeds three or five or less than three, judges can be selected by lot, or additional judge or judges secured. No coach shall judge his own contestant. The Board will appreciate a report on any contests so judged.

**Debate Question for Next Year.** You are urged to send to the secretary any suggestions for next year's debate question.

**Proposed Amendment to the Constitution.** You are urged to vote on the enclosed proposed amendment to the constitution, limiting participation in contests. Return vote promptly. If carried the proposed amendment comes before the next annual meeting for further action.

**Choice of District.** By motion of the Board, any member may choose the district for contests if on the borderline, but it must remain in the same district for all contests for that year. No change can be made without the consent of the chairmen involved.

**Ballots and Blanks.** These may be secured from your district chairman if you are not supplied.

**Limitation of Selections.** Limitation to a single type, similar to reading plan, for declamatory contests is suggested. The Board would appreciate any expression of opinion. Such a plan will require an amendment to the constitution.

**Co-operation.** Co-operation with the National Bi-Centennial Washington Commission in the development of programs is urged by the Board. Orations and plays have been suggested. The Wisconsin Dramatic Guild is conducting a play-writing contest with Washington as the theme, to which members of the Association are eligible.

Co-operation with the Future Farmers of America, a high school organization, in the development of its activities, is also urged by the Board.

**Railroad Rates.** A special fare for secondary school groups, under which ten or more are given a single fare for the round trip, is granted for the coming year. Debate and dramatic luncheon conferences are scheduled at the time of the state contests, and it is hoped that many coaches as well as students will plan to attend.

**Suggestions for Improvement of the Work.** All questions and recommendations submitted to the Board by members were very carefully considered by the Board. Suggestions for the News Letter, as well as any other suggestions and criticisms, will be appreciated.

**Speech Meeting.** Many teachers found the meeting of the National Association of Speech Teachers at Chicago last winter especially worth while. This year's meeting at Detroit at Hotel Statler, December 28, 29, 30, and 31. Detailed information may be secured from the secretary of the Forensic Association.

# WISCONSIN HIGH SCHOOL FORENSIC ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER

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No. 2

Additional copies available to member schools at five cents each.  
Copies available to other than member schools at ten cents each.

## SCHEDULE FOR CONTESTS, 1932:

- Dec. 15—latest date for registration for debate and dramatic contests.
- Feb. 6—latest date for first round of debate and dramatics.
- Feb. 13—latest date for second round of debate and dramatics.
- Feb. 27—latest date for semi-final sectional debate and dramatics.
- Mar. 12—latest date for sectional debate and dramatic contests.
- Mar. 31—state debate.
- Apr. 1—state dramatic contest.
- Mar. 1—latest date for registration.
- Apr. 16—latest date for league contests.
- Apr. 30—latest date for district contests.
- ..... state contests.

## STANDARDS USED BY CRITIC-JUDGES

by

Martin J. Holcomb, Lindsborg, Kansas.

Perhaps the major problem in contest debating is to discover a reasonably common ground of agreement relative to the factors that should be given consideration in rendering decisions in debate. No doubt much of the dissatisfaction with judges' decisions can be traced directly to the failure of judges to agree upon standards whereby the debating skill of the competing teams might be evaluated. The writer, in his recent investigation of the critic-judge system, attempted to find out what standards are actually used by recognized critic-judges today. A brief summary of that investigation is herewith presented. Incidentally, this summary is based upon the replies received from one hundred and forty-nine judges who are rendering critic decisions in the various sections of our country.

The investigation revealed that only two of the critic-judges who sent replies do not take careful notes during the progress of the debate. Over one hundred judges stated that they include in their notes an outline of the constructive cases and notes on refutation and re-support of the cases. Over fifty of the critic-judges include the following items in their notes: comments on individual speakers; notes on analysis, adaptation, and movement of crucial issues; notes on evidence and reasoning; and comments on presentation. As can be inferred from the widespread practice of taking careful notes during the debate, the critic-judges attempt to follow the progress of the debate rather closely. This is further substantiated by the fact that only four of the critic-judges stated that they do not follow through the arguments pro and con on the issues involved in the debate.

The critic-judges were also asked to indicate whether they have a definite number of points upon which they base their decisions. Some ninety-five replied in the affirmative, and forty-three gave negative replies. However, only twelve follow the practice of evaluating those points on the percentage basis.

Several specific factors were listed in this questionnaire investigation, and the judges were asked to evaluate these points on the percentage basis as an

## WISCONSIN HIGH SCHOOL FORENSIC ASSOCIATION

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indication of the relative value given to each. There was great variety in the percentages given to the points listed which leads to the conclusion that critics differ much in regard to the approximate weight that should be given to the various factors that might be considered in a critic decision. The points or standards used, together with the average percentage evaluation given to each point, are as follows: organization and effectiveness of constructive argument, 18.2%; organization and effectiveness of direct refutation, 18%; effectiveness of counter-refutation or re-support of own case, 16.7%; analysis, 15.8%; delivery, 15.8%; adaptation of argument to opponents' case, 11.7%; persuasiveness (appeal to motivating forces, departure from pure argument), 9.3%; strategy, 7.2%; and sportsmanship, 6%.

The judges were also asked to list additional points, not included in the list submitted in the questionnaire, that they consider in reaching their decisions. Ninety-eight listed no additional points. Factors considered by the judges who listed additional points include the following: use and soundness of evidence, keen pursuit of vital issue and following through the case, command of language and speech structure, knowledge of the subject, extempore speaking, and team-work.

The final conclusion of the writer, based upon the information received in this investigation, is that critic-judges agree fairly well on some of the factors for evaluating skill in debating but that they differ a great deal with regard to the approximate weight that should be given to each of those factors.

### DEBATE

The latest date for registration for debate is December 15. To date the secretary has the following definite registrations for debate. If you are entering debating and are not listed, please communicate immediately with the secretary and with your district chairman. Two copies of the Debate Handbook are supplied to all member schools debating the question even though they do not enter the regular scheduled debates.

LA CROSSE DISTRICT: Arcadia, Tomah, Viroqua.

MILWAUKEE DISTRICT: Beaver Dam, Columbus, Horicon, Mayville, Menomonee Falls, Milwaukee (Lincoln), Milwaukee (Washington), Oconomowoc, Portage, Sheboygan, Sheboygan Falls, Two Rivers, Waupun, West Allis, West Bend.

OSHKOSH DISTRICT: Algoma, Argonne, Chilton, Clintonville, Crandon, Eagle River, Hiles, Kaukauna, Kewaunee, Laona, Marion, Menasha, Neenah, Oconto, Seymour, Shawano, Wabeno, West De Pere.

PLATTEVILLE DISTRICT: Benton, Prairie du Chien, Richland Center.

RIVER FALLS DISTRICT: Amery, Baldwin, Colfax, Glenwood City, Hammond, New Richmond, River Falls, Spooner.

STEVENS POINT DISTRICT: Adams-Friendship, Amherst, Athens, Edgar, Marshfield, Minocqua, Mosinee, Nekoosa, Prentice, Red Granite, Rhineland, Rosholt, Stevens Point, Wausau, Wisconsin Rapids, Wittenberg.

WHITEWATER DISTRICT: Ableman (State Graded), Arena, Baraboo, Brodhead, Deerfield, Edgerton, Evansville, Fort Atkinson, Lodi, Madison (Wisconsin High), Middleton, Monroe, North Freedom, Rio, Stoughton, Waterloo, Watertown.

The Secretary has not yet received reports from the chairmen of the Eau Claire and Superior districts.

### A FEW NEW PLAYS FOR HIGH SCHOOLS SUITABLE FOR CONTESTS

Prepared by Ethel Rockwell, Chief,

Bureau of Dramatic Activities, Extension Division,  
University of Wisconsin.

ABOUT CANDLE LIGHT TIME, Dorothy C. Allan. A modern and Colonial play. 3 m. 4 w. A very charming play with Washington appearing in a vision scene. Fitzgerald Publishing Corp.

ABU ACHMET AND THE EGGS, Frances Healey. Oriental comedy. 5 m. 1 w. and others. Delightful fooling but must be staged with grave and dignified seriousness. Striking costumes. Walter H. Baker.

BACK HOME, Wm. M. Sloane III. Serious crook drama of two bank robbers. 2 m. 1 w. Royalty, \$10. Longmans, Green.

BREAD, Fred Eastman. Serious drama. 2 m. 4 w. Royalty, \$5. A heart-stirring drama of modern farm life. French.

BUYING CULTURE, C. Antoinette Wood. Comedy in German dialect. Very amusing. Royalty, \$5. In "Boston Theatre Guild Plays." Walter H. Baker.

CLOSE THE BOOK, Susan Glaspell. Comedy, 3 m. 2 w. What happens when the modern flapper runs into family trees. Royalty, permission. In "Plays." Small, Maynard Publishing Co.

CURTAIN CALL, THE, Gordon Grant. Serious play. 6 m. 1 w. A moving play centering around a troupe of players in "As You Like It." Shakespearean Costumes. Royalty, \$5. Longmans, Green.

DECISION AT DAWN, THE, Major R. B. Lawrence. Historical drama. A dramatic scene of Washington at Valley Forge. Royalty, permission. Longmans, Green.

FIFTEENTH CANDLE, THE, Rachel Field. Serious drama. 2 m. 3 w. A most touching play of an Italian immigrant family. Royalty, permission. In "Atlantic Book of Junior Plays." Little, Brown.

HIS SAINTED GRANDMOTHER, Lord Dunsany. Fantasy. 1 m. 3 w. A charming fantastic comedy. Royalty, permission. G. P. Putnam.

HOUSE WITH THE TWISTY WINDOWS, THE, May Pakington. Tragedy. 4 m. 3 w. A beautiful tragic play about a group of English caught in Russia during the Revolution. Royalty, \$5. French.

ON A MANTEL SHELF, Tom Cushing. Comic fantasy. 4 characters. Charming. Royalty, permission. Haylofters Publishing Co.

PIERROT, HIS PLAY, T. Schwartz. 1 m. 2 w. or all girls. Beautiful little play symbolizing love that dies when mocked. Exquisite setting. Royalty, \$5. Dramatic Publishing Co.

RAPUNZEL, Alter Brody. Serious drama. A pathetic play of childhood in the Ghetto. Royalty, permission. In "Plays of American Life and Fantasy." Coward-McCann.

RIVAL PEACH TREES, THE, Alice C. D. Riley. Fantasy. An exquisite little play to be done in the Chinese manner with a musical accompaniment. In "Seven to Seventeen." French.

ROSE WINDOWS, Stark Young. Fantasy. 2 m. 2 w. An unusual and interesting play of the way different people look at the same incident. Royalty, permission. In "Plays of American Life and Fantasy." Coward-McCann.

STOCKIN' MONEY, Eloise Dean. Serious drama. 2 m. 2 w. A beautiful play of the Old South in conflict with the new. Royalty, permission. Longmans, Green.

STORE, THE, Elizabeth Kellam. Serious play. 3 m. 3 w. Good character play of work and money vs. happiness. Royalty, \$5. French.

SUSANNA SKIDS, Carolyn Barr. Farce. 12 w. A most amusing play of a woman with social aspirations and very few manners. Royalty, \$5.00. Longmans, Green.

TABLE SET FOR HIMSELF, THE, Elene Wilbur, 3 m. 5 w. 1 b. A beautiful, touching Irish folk-play. Royalty, permission. Longmans, Green.

THREE FRIENDS, George H. Faulkner. Melodrama. 3 m. Very dramatic crook play. Royalty, permission. Longmans, Green.

TOWN HALL—TONIGHT, Howard Reed. Comedy. 3 m. 3 w. Amusing play about a down-at-the-heels road company. Royalty, \$10. Longmans, Green.

TOY HEART, THE, Polly MacManus. Serious drama. 4 w. A moving little play of American and Chinese love. Dramatic Publishing Co.

WEATHERVANE ELOPES, THE, Alice C. D. Riley. Fantasy. 2 m. 2 w. or all girls. A dainty little play of a gardener, the figures of a fountain, and the weathervane. Royalty, \$5. In "One-Act Plays for Stage and Study," Series 3. French.

YOUNG LEONARDO, Ruel Crompton Tuttle. Drama. 2 m. 3 w. Time, 1470. A beautiful little play about Leonardo da Vinci. Royalty, \$10. Haylofters Publishing Co.

### ADDRESSES OF THE PUBLISHERS

Baker. Walter H. Baker, 41 Winter Street, Boston, Mass.  
Coward-McCann. Coward-McCann, Inc., 425 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y.  
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Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald Publishing Corp., 18 Vesey Street, New York, N. Y.  
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