

NEWS ITEMS

Registration. Will your district be the first to be 100%? It is most encouraging to note that the registration in the Association as well as debate registration exceeds that of last year.

Board. The following members were re-elected:

Eau Claire District—Sup't. C. W. Dodge, Stanley—to 1936;

Oshkosh District—Sup't. J. E. Kitowski, Menasha—to 1936;

Whitewater District—Sup't. F. C. Bray, Ft. Atkinson—to 1936;

Principal George J. Balzer, Washington High School, Milwaukee, was unanimously re-elected chairman of the Board.

Constitution. The following sections of the Constitution, as amended, are in force this year:

Coaches as Judges.—Article VII, Rule 3—Oratorical, declamatory, extemporaneous speaking, and extemporaneous reading contests shall be judged by one or more judges. By agreement of the majority of the participating schools, the coaches shall act as judges at these contests; no coach shall judge his own contestants. (The remainder of this paragraph is unchanged. See Constitution, September News Letter, 1932, p. 14.)

Extemporaneous Speaking.—Article VII, Rule 6—Topics for extemporaneous speaking shall be taken from the February, March, and April issues of the American Review of Reviews (and World's Work), Literary Digest, and Current History. (The remainder of this paragraph is unchanged. See Constitution, September News Letter, 1932, p. 14.)

Debate Question Announcement.—Article VIII, Rule 4—The question for debate shall be chosen by the Board of Control and shall be announced by August 15.

Judges' Conference. The Board suggests that a conference of the judges be called before the contest for the purpose of explanation and discussion of the "judging system."

Time Keepers. Time keepers shall be used at all contests, and contestants stopped according to the rules of the Association. (Art. VII, Rule 8.)

Prompting. Prompting in all League, District, and State declamatory and oratorical contests is prohibited.

Debate. This year's timely question of peculiar interest to Wisconsin affords an unusual opportunity for high school students to contribute to the education of a public opinion on a problem of real significance. Many schools will institute debating this year, and schedule community debates. Even though your school is not in the regular contest schedule, as a member you are entitled to the Debate Handbooks and other material if you debate the question. Schools not in regular contest schedule are urged to advise the secretary of the latest date that reference material can be used to advantage if desired for any time other than the regular three week loan period.

The latest date for registration for debate is December 16.

Printed copies of the Radio Debate broadcast over the national hookup on November 1 may be secured directly from the University of Chicago Press, 5750 Ellis Ave., Chicago, at 15c per copy or 12½c each for two or more copies, postpaid.

Send to the secretary your suggestion for debate question for 1934-35.

Declamatory Contest. By action at the annual meeting and by approval of the Board, there will be two types of declamatory contests this year—a humorous and a non-humorous. This rule, although in force this year, will be submitted to referendum vote as an amendment to the constitution, since all member schools were not represented at the annual meeting. Return enclosed proposed amendment promptly, indicating your choice.

Dramatics. A new Play List will be sent to member schools by the secretary, upon request.

Selection and Registration. For this information, see Dramatic Contest Rules—Selection of Plays—September News Letter, 1932, p. 17.

The latest date for registration for dramatics is December 16.

Scoring. The following scoring schedule in dramatics has been adopted: Acting—85%; Choice of Play—5%; Stage Craft (including Stage Setting, Costuming, Properties, Lighting)—10%.

Criticisms. All suggestions and criticisms submitted were given careful consideration at the annual Board meeting. You are urged to send suggestions to your district chairman, the secretary, or the chairman of the Association.

Speech Institute. The second successful Institute, held at Eau Claire, was attended by over three hundred students and coaches.

Several schools have expressed an interest in such an Institute if held at Clintonville. The Board authorized a Clintonville Institute if students and coaches from at least thirty schools would attend. Speech classes for students, round tables for coaches, and a public debate on Radio Control by a University team, with a critic judge, will be included in the program. The following have already expressed their interest in a Clintonville Speech Institute: Algoma, Clintonville, Freedom, Kewaunee, Marion, Mayville, Nekoosa, New London, North Fond du Lac, Oconomowoc, Oconto Falls, Pulaski, Shawano, and Wabeno. If your school is not included and you are interested, write immediately to John W. Davidson Debate Coach at Clintonville, or to the secretary.

Publicity. Many interesting press notices have reached the secretary. Madison High School will write weekly articles for publication in the Star News, the local newspaper. The Debate Coach furnished an introductory article, emphasizing the values that students can derive from participating in debate. The succeeding weekly articles will be supplied by the debaters on various aspects of the question. What are you doing in your community?

WISCONSIN HIGH SCHOOL FORENSIC ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER

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Additional copies available to member schools at five cents each.

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

SCHEDULE FOR CONTESTS, 1934:

- Dec. 16—Latest date for registration for debate and dramatics.
- Feb. 3—Latest date for first round of debate and dramatics.
- Feb. 10—Latest date for second round of debate and dramatics.
- Feb. 24—Latest date for semi-final sectional debate and dramatics.
- Mar. 10—Latest date for sectional debate and dramatics.
- Mar. 22—State debate at Madison.

The state dramatic contest will probably be held at one of the competing schools, to avoid travel expense, at about the same time as the debate.

- Mar. 3—Latest date for registration for speech contests.
- Apr. 14—Latest date for league contests.
- Apr. 28—Latest date for district contests.
- May 3 and 4—State contests at Madison—Tentative.

MESSAGE FROM F. O. HOLT, REGISTRAR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

I have the September number of the Forensic News Letter and I want to congratulate you upon the evidence which the news letter gives of the splendid work that is being accomplished in the field of forensics in this state. I am convinced that our high school youngsters receive more benefit to the square inch from forensic participation than from any other secondary school activity. You are doing splendid work. Good luck to you!

FROM A MESSAGE OF STATE SUPERINTENDENT CALLAHAN TO THE EAU CLAIRE INSTITUTE

I hope that the organization will go on cultivating and furthering the debate and oratorical work. I very much doubt if there is any single activity connected with the schools that has as much value through all of the years afterwards as the experience students get in the debates and in their oratorical work. This is especially true of debate work and very much true of oratorical work, especially when they dig out the material and write their own orations. It gives them a habit of continually looking for the facts on every question, which is a valuable asset to all men and women as they go through life.

WISCONSIN HIGH SCHOOL FORENSIC ASSOCIATION

G. J. BALZER, Chairman
Wash. High School, Milwaukee
ALMERE SCOTT, Secretary
Univ. Extension Div., Madison
O. H. PLENZKE, Treas.
Sec., Wis. Teachers' Ass'n,
Madison
PROF. A. T. WEAVER,
Adviser in Speech

EAU CLAIRE DISTRICT
C. W. Dodge, Stanley
LA CROSSE DISTRICT
E. J. McKean, Tomah
OSHKOSH DISTRICT
J. E. Kitowski, Menasha
PLATTEVILLE DISTRICT
M. A. Fischer, Dodgeville

RIVER FALLS DISTRICT
H. C. Mason, River Falls
STEVENS POINT DISTRICT
J. E. Rohr, Nekoosa
SUPERIOR DISTRICT
WHITEWATER DISTRICT
F. C. Bray, Fort Atkinson

MISS ETHEL THEODORA ROCKWELL,
Adviser in Dramatics.

OUR SPEECH INSTITUTE

"A most worthwhile project" seemed to be the almost unanimous verdict of those who attended the Speech Institute at Eau Claire on November 10 and 11. The privilege of hearing excellent speech work as demonstrated by the splendid group of young women from the University Speech Department and the instructors, the opportunity to discuss these demonstrations and to get new viewpoints, the association of students and teachers from the various schools combined to make the Institute instructive and inspiring. Thirty-two schools sent representatives, and it is my opinion that if all the schools had understood the purposes and aims of the meeting, the number would have been doubled. The actual registration was 310, but many did not register. A conservative estimate of attendance is 360. Northwestern Wisconsin hopes that the Institute will be an annual affair.

H. W. MATHISON, Local Chairman.

PREPARING FOR READING AND DECLAMATORY CONTESTS

by

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Few projects presented to high school students carry over so directly to after life as reading aloud—reading aloud from memory or reading aloud from a book. Opportunities to read come to all of us, in our own homes with the immediate family, in informal fireside groups with friends, and in public meetings.

The first general requirement in preparation for good oral reading is the analysis of the material in order to get its full meaning. No person can read effectively if he fails to understand what he is reading. He can feel pretty sure that his listeners will understand a little less than he himself does. It is a wise student who considers "getting the meaning" a serious part of his preparation.

The following almost self-evident steps, often neglected by high school students, are necessary in building up a clear understanding of the material at hand.

First, read the selection and use the dictionary for the pronunciation and meaning of unfamiliar words.

Then become informed about the life of the author. How did he happen to write that particular story or poem? Was there an incident in his life which prompted it? Clearly, Lew Sarett would have written some poem other than *The Box of God* if he had not chanced upon that White Man's Church in the Pigeon River Reservation. Usually a study of an author's life gives new and more accurate meaning to the material to be read aloud.

If, in the selection, reference is made to a date, or a period in history, the reader must become informed on the important events of that time. It is not enough to know a few facts about that one event; he must fit that event into the life of the times.

Sometimes scenes are located in a particular country and in a particular place. They are often described so clearly that it would be possible to visit the spot and see the place first hand. If that is not possible, locate these places on a map and imagine the people and the surroundings.

In reading a selection for the meaning, watch the punctuation marks. It is through punctuation marks that the relationship between words and phrases is discovered. Quotation marks show when one character starts his speech and when he ends. They help to group the words with the thought. They show when a new character picks up the dialog. This information is necessary if the meaning is to be kept clear.

Never neglect the rhythm. Be careful about over-emphasizing it, and be careful about under-emphasizing it. Often the rhythm gives the thought more clearly and definitely than do the words. Who could catch the full meaning of *Boots* by Rudyard Kipling if he failed to hear the regular beat of the soldiers marching?

Find out who is speaking and decide whether it is necessary to act the part of some character other than yourself in order to get the meaning across, or whether the thought will be given more clearly and precisely by being yourself—the reader. When there is narrative describing characters and telling what they have said, with no sign in the preface or in the lines to indicate that the speaker is a person other than yourself, you may be sure that your reading will be most effective if you make no pretense of being anyone but yourself. Don't assume the bodily action and dialect of an Irishman if nothing in the description or lines indicates that an Irishman is actually speaking.

Take time to see the word pictures clearly and vividly as you read. Think of the personal experiences that you have had that will enrich these word pictures. If you really do this, you may be sure that each listener will think with you. He will bring to the selection his own word pictures built out of his own personal experiences. This will make the lines live for him in a very real sense.

State the theme or central idea in a single sentence. You will be more likely to leave this central idea in the minds of your audience if it is clear in your own.

When you have given consideration to all of the foregoing steps, then decide how you can best give the ideas to your audience. Here you can make use of everything learned about the use of body and voice. Both must be under control as you present your material. Consider exactly what must be done in each case to show the emotion, depict the character and thus make clear the thought. Remember the audience as well as the type of material determines what bodily action will best serve your purpose. Remember that, unconsciously, observers follow with their own muscles the bodily action of the speaker. When you lean forward, they tend to lean forward; when you smile, they smile; when you jerk, they jerk. This means that you must take the bodily set you want them to feel they would take in order to get the emotion you want them to get. If you wish them to experience with you anger, you must do with your body what they feel they would do in order to feel anger. This unconscious tendency to follow the movements or bodily set of any person or thing we attempt to understand or appreciate is a helpful principle to make use of in reading.

With bodily action, voice should be given careful consideration. See how you can change your voice in order to show many characters and many moods and emotions. Vary the volume. Notice the effect of a loud tone as compared with a soft one. Vary the rate. Try making one of your characters speak rapidly and one slowly. Combine rate and volume. A loud voiced slow speaking person is different from a low voiced rapid speaking individual. Study your lines carefully. Picture your characters. Feel the mood; then use appropriate voice to express it.

With volume and rate, study the pitch. Give your loud voiced slow speaking person a low pitch and see whether he really is like the character you wish to portray. If that is not accurate, try raising the pitch, increasing or decreasing the rate and volume. Does he begin to sound like the person you have pictured? Experiment until you can make your audience see the characters and catch the mood of your story as you do.

With volume, rate, and pitch, quality must not be forgotten. What changes can you make in quality to give the meaning still more precisely? Husky, throaty tones, hollow "spooky" tones, high heady thin notes are other ways of changing the voice to give the exact meaning you wish to portray. Much nasality or little nasality may be the very change necessary.

In order to test good reading, decide whether or not the audience gets the thought clearly. If, when the material has been presented, the members of the audience remember the thought clearly and precisely, and forget all about voice and action, you may be sure that they have witnessed a good performance. The surest way to this end is a careful understanding of the material to be read, with a skillful use of voice and body as that material is given to the audience.