



**Wisconsin Interscholastic Speech  
& Dramatic Arts Association**

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September 2022

# NEWSLETTER

 @wispeechdrama

## *From the desk of* **Your Board Chair**

Sixty years ago, a ten year old girl was encouraged by a teacher to do an oral presentation of a cutting from *Angel Unaware* by Dale Evans Rogers. It was a pivotal moment in the little girl's life which was often very difficult. In that moment, on that stage, that little girl found her voice, found her passion, found her power. Life was still often a struggle but the acceptance from the audience she experienced that night gave her confidence in her own talents, and she continued in both drama and forensics developing her skills with the help of many people along the way. She learned understanding of the human condition from the characters she portrayed on stage. She experienced the power of both tears and laughter from those same characters. She learned the might of words well organized and strongly delivered. She learned to speak both for herself and to advocate for others.

That little girl now proudly serves as your WISDAA State Chair. I reflect on those years with a great deal of gratitude for the people who were responsible for the wonderful experiences I had and for the people who make

the same thing possible today.

I feel gratitude for those audience members who fill the theaters at our schools. Many of them are parents who encourage their student, drive to hundreds of practices, and see the same performance many times. When you pack the theater, stand on your feet and fill the place with your applause, you also fill the souls of every student who took a risk and overcame fears to share their gift with you.

*Continues on p. 2 (see "Board Chair")*

## Issue Highlights

- Neenah students earn national recognition
- Fall Board meeting recap
- Theatre Festival showcases announced
- Try Debate through online pilot
- Membership enrollment/renewal process

*Board Chair: continued from p. 1*

I am grateful for those students who are vulnerable and afraid but perform anyway, speak anyway, debate anyway. I recognize your courage, your skill and your passion and know that the future is in such capable hands.

My gratitude goes to every person who has taken the time to adjudicate performances, speeches, and debates through the activities provided by organizations like WISDAA. You take the time to give clear and constructive feedback to young people who will use this new knowledge to be more effective and more powerful.

I feel so very grateful to the many directors and coaches who give immense amounts of time to developing these students into adults who will forever love the magic of theater, who will be able to advocate for a better world for themselves and others, and who will be able to do so by rigorous and intelligent debate. These directors and coaches recognize the gifts their students possess and provide a safe and supportive environment where students can become their best selves. These coaches do so at a time when resources are scarce, acknowledgments are rare and appreciation is in short supply.

My heart is so full of gratitude for the leadership of WISDAA. The students

of Wisconsin are served, on a volunteer basis, by a Board of Control made up of Sectional and District Chairs and advisors from the University level for our activities. They are also served by advisory committees that meet every summer to help our board make informed decisions based on the needs of our schools. All of these people are former or current coaches and directors who bring a great deal of experience and knowledge as well as passion for their craft which makes WISDAA so successful. We are also so fortunate to have Adam Jacobi as our Executive Director and Julie Rudolph as his very skillful assistant. The State Office has taken on so many challenges the past few years and Julie has seen to it that everything has run so efficiently. Adam has brought us through two of the most difficult years WISDAA has ever experienced making sure we not only survived but thrived! We have learned so many things about being adaptive to both circumstances and students that we have incorporated much of what Adam has taught us during these times into how we now do business. We are a better and stronger organization thanks to Adam's efforts.

Students, audience members, parents, judges, coaches, directors, board of control members, committee members, our administrative assistant and Executive Director: every one of you are responsible for the students who find their voice, their passion, and their power just like that 10 year-old girl learned to do. And as we start another year, I feel not only gratitude but a great deal of excitement for amazing theater performances, compelling debates, powerful speeches and now, exciting filmmaking. I wish all of you a fulfilling and rewarding season and hope to see many of you this coming year.

Pam Belden  
WISDAA Board of Control Chair

Pam Belden with one-act adjudicators at the 2019 District 06 Theatre Festival.



**Mission:** WISDAA provides an inclusive platform that welcomes all middle and high school students to enhance and refine communication skills, to foster creativity, and to share perspectives.



## Neenah Students Earn National Speech & Debate Recognition

WISDAA District 09 Chair and Neenah Coach Andie Peterson Longmore (left) and WISDAA Executive Director and NSDA Board Member Adam Jacobi (right) flank Neenah students Isabel Hoffman (left) and Parker De Deker (right) at the 2022 National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA) National Tournament in Louisville, Kentucky this past June.

Neenah is one of several WISDAA schools who also participate in the National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA) National Tournament, the world's largest academic contest, with participants spanning countries across the globe. Two Neenah HS students, who both participated in WISDAA Extemporaneous Speech this past spring, represented the NSDA Northern Wisconsin District in Louisville, KY, this past June -- senior Isabel Hoffman in Lincoln-Douglas Debate and junior Parker De Deker in Congressional Debate - House of Representatives. Hoffman advanced to the first set of elimination rounds. De Deker achieved a rarity, a "triple crown," if you will: he won the championship in his category, was elected presiding officer (think Speaker of the House), and was voted the Student Leadership Award winner. Collectively, Hoffman's and De Deker's achievements earned Neenah a Debate School of Honor award for placing in the top 40 in debate categories.

Additionally, 8th grader Nina Bhattacharjee of Neenah's Shattuck MS, placed as runner-up in Congressional Debate at the Middle School National Tournament, held entirely online. De Deker, as a mentor coach to Bhattacharjee, enjoyed his own "proud teacher moment" when she earned her award.

De Deker's advocacy for students who are marginalized likely played a strong role in his earning the Leadership Award. During the tournament, he posted on Instagram to urge equitable access to the Internet for debaters, given expensive costs at the venue in which he was competing. De Deker is no stranger to leadership and activism, though. He is the student representative to the Neenah Joint School District's Board of Education and has been active in leadership for a variety of community organizations.

WISDAA Executive Director Adam Jacobi is the second Wisconsinite to serve on the Board of Directors for the NSDA, which was founded in Ripon in 1925, assisted in large part by WISDAA leaders at the time. It is primarily an honorary society and organization that provides resources and advocacy for speech and debate activities, in addition to holding its signature national tournament. Wisconsin students have periodically earned national titles. The last two champions -- in 2005 and 2006 -- were coached by Jacobi at Rufus King HS in Milwaukee. They also participated in WISDAA contests. Prior to that, the last NSDA champions from Wisconsin were Eau Claire students in 1985.

## One-Act Changes

- Schools may continue to enter more than one performance, but up to one in-person, with actors limited to participating in one cast.
- Directors are required to document any weaponry (not just firearms) as part of the registration process.
- Directors also may enter character descriptions when registering.

## Plan to Attend the State Theatre Festival

Open to all schools, irrespective of one-act status!

UW-Whitewater • November 17-19, 2022

- One-Act Play contest
- Thespian Excellence Awards contest
- Tech Challenge (formerly "Olympics") contest
- Full-length showcase productions (see right)
- Workshops
- Auditions
- Exhibits

See [wisconsintheatrefest.org](http://wisconsintheatrefest.org) for details.

## Professional Development

9.23.2022

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THEATRE  
EDUCATION  
ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE**

**REGISTER NOW!**



[awte.net](http://awte.net)

## Showcases Announced

### UW-Whitewater Young Auditorium

Thursday, Nov. 17 • 8pm

*Almost, Maine*

Kenosha Indian Trail HS & Academy

Following the pandemic, an apt reminder for audiences is that everyone struggles. Yet, through that struggle we can find love and happiness but also disappointment.

Friday, Nov. 18 • 4pm + 8pm

*Mean Girls - School Edition*

Kenosha Bradford HS

*Music Theatre International pilot performance!*

Being mean, like being kind, is a choice. Whether we choose one over the other is often motivated by our unique set of circumstances, such as the social situation, setting, and our emotions.

## Production Reminder

One-act directors: review tech spaces for UW-Whitewater ([bit.ly/witf-uwu](http://bit.ly/witf-uwu)) to work within parameters (e.g., one of the venues does not really have a practical upstage crossover, and entrance to the stage tends to be from stage left, rather than both sides). Many district and sectional venues are larger and more sophisticated, but for logistical purposes, directors should plan for restrictive specifications of the State venue.

Any individual directing theatre, including contest one-act directors, are welcome at the AWTE fall conference. Just a sampling of workshop topics:

- Costume design & construction
- Intimacy direction
- Teaching and guiding acting
- Equity & inclusion in rehearsal
- Projections on a budget
- Stagecraft
- Rigging and stage safety
- Preparing students for auditions
- Assessment in the arts

The conference is a chance to network and share ideas with others like you, including other contest one-act directors. Visit [awte.net](http://awte.net) to learn more and register/join this dynamic organization.

## Renew/Enroll Membership/Dues

Schools who initiate the dues renewal/enrollment process by **October 1** enjoy a **\$50 early enrollment discount**. Follow this process:

1. Go to [wisdaa.org/account](https://wisdaa.org/account). If you have an account created since fall 2020, you can log in or click the "Lost your password?" link to reset. Otherwise, go to step 2.
2. Click the link for "Membership" (next to school icon) in the upper right-hand corner.
3. Click "Active Schools" to check if your school has enrolled (this helps us avoid duplicate enrollments/payments).
4. Click "Manage/Enroll." If logged in, and you were the person who previously enrolled, you will see your entry. Otherwise, go to step 5.
5. Click the "Join/Renew" button and complete the form on the next screen.
6. Be sure to complete all required fields (with a **red asterisk \***), *including adding at least one advisor*. If advisor(s) have not been determined yet, add an activities director or school administrator, who will receive important updates. You may optionally enroll any number of advisors in the NFHS Speech, Debate, Theatre, and Academics Association for an additional \$20/ea. (see below to learn more). Be sure to agree to the Permission/Eligibility statement. Click the "Join" button to check out.
7. You must complete the checkout screen, including payment method on the right-hand side (you can select "Check by Mail," pay online with credit card or e-check, or select "Purchase Order" to enter a PO number, which will automatically generate an invoice with that PO number upon check out).
8. After completing the checkout process, you will see a confirmation screen, and will receive an email confirmation as well (since the email is automatically generated, you may need to check your spam/junk folder, or "Updates" folder in Gmail).



Early enrollment discount of \$50/school applies if this process is initiated per the steps to the left by October 1.



Please continue to make checks payable to "WHSFA." We are in the process of changing our legal status, but will remain "Wisconsin High School Forensic Association d/b/a (doing business as) Wisconsin Interscholastic Speech & Dramatic Arts Association."



← You **must** complete the **entire** checkout process, or your school will **not** be considered enrolled.

## NFHS Advisor Membership Add-On

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) offers membership to directors/coaches in their Speech, Debate, Theatre, and Academics Association, which provides additional membership benefits; consistent with what athletic coaches get:

- Personal liability insurance (up to \$2 million; ideal for traveling with students)
- NFHS online publications
- Subscription to *High School Today*
- Rental car discounts through National/Enterprise
- Signature champion ring discount

Schools can add-on membership (@\$20/advisor) to NFHS when listing individual coaches/directors as part of annual membership enrollment. WISDAA will collect dues and communicate enrollment to NFHS.



## Finances

Consistent with recommendations from the IRS for nonprofit associations, WISDAA has been working with several district/section chairs to consolidate accounting to the state office. This makes it easier for school bookkeepers when issuing a check for WISDAA-related activities to have one vendor record and payable address in their accounting system. This also allows schools who conduct electronic payments via ACH or credit card to pay WISDAA directly.

**Please continue to make checks payable to "WHSFA."** Following are the regions for which this applies:

- District 2
- District 3
- District 4
- District 5
- District 8
- District 9
- District 10
- District 11
- District 12
- Section 1
- Section 4
- Section 5



For the following districts/sections, you must send payments directly to your district/section chair, payable to their district/section (contacts noted):



- District 1 (Amy Davies-Wiebusch)
- District 6 (Pam Belden)
- District 7 (Kam-Lin Roswall)
- Section 2 (Gayle Gander)
- Section 3 (Rick Braun)

## Invest in Accessible Online Debate

Building from videoconference tools implemented during the height of the pandemic, WISDAA is implementing a pilot virtual debate series this year, to give schools across the state a way of trying Debate with low investment/risk (no commitment/cost for travel + low entry fees). The series will culminate with in-person debate offerings during the State Speech Festival at UW-Madison, April 21-22, 2023.

Here are key dates (workshops are for students and coaches alike):

### Workshops will run 5-6:30pm:

9/27: Open House #1  
10/4: Open House #2

### Festivals will run 4:30-8:30pm:

Tu. 10/11	Th. 10/27
Th. 11/10	Tu. 11/15
Tu. 12/06	Th. 12/15
Th. 1/19	Tu. 1/24
Tu. 2/07	Th. 2/23
Tu. 3/07	Th. 3/09

Explore the "Debate" menu on the WISDAA website to learn more, and for resources (including videos of sample debates). and plan to attend one of the webinar orientations above (or watch the playback video afterwards).



## Adjudicator Training + Free PD

We are reopening these adjudicator training courses for by 9/15/2022:

- One-Act Theatre
- High School Speech (initial + renewal)
- Middle Level Speech

Visit [wisdaa.org](http://wisdaa.org) and click the "Adjudicator Certification" link in respective activity navigation menu sections.

We also are developing a Debate adjudicator training course to be launched by the end of September, and a Film adjudicator training course to be launched by early 2023.

Watch your email for announcements pertaining to other new courses and webinar opportunities that will be launched throughout the year!

**New advisors for activities are encouraged to complete the adjudicator course for their respective activities to gain familiarity with rules and evaluation criteria.**

## Board Meeting Recap

The WISDAA Board of Control met August 25, 2022; here is a recap of advisory committee reports and decisions made:

### Theatre Advisory (One-Act)

- Rule change to indefinitely allow school to submit more than one one-act entry, but only one in-person one-act at a time, and limiting actors to one cast; not limiting crew participation.
- The committee reviewed the new score-averaging system, and recommends keeping the threshold as is for now, until more data can help determine a reasonable score threshold for advancement and awards.
- Minor change to simplify the One-Act Evaluation sheet.
- Observation that virtual evaluation often had lower scores than in-person, so adjudicator guidance will be revised to encourage thoughtful consideration of video versus live experience.
- Theatre adjudicator training and certification will continue to be offered on a voluntary basis for now.

### High School Speech Advisory

- Participation rates were down: 312 schools instead of 340+; 50% of students from pre-COVID years.
- The adjudicator complaint process was presented. The Referee Committee examines adjudicator application of rules/criteria as basis for complaints; most adjudicators' decisions were upheld.
- Rule change passed for Demonstration Speech to clarify that actors may touch (there wasn't previously a prohibition, but often confusion with Group Interpretive Reading, so this will clear that up).
- The Board passed the committee's proposal to allow Extemporaneous Speech contestants to access internet during their preparation time. The State Office will prepare guidance for subdistrict and district hosts, who should try to arrange guest/public access during their festivals or communicate to coaches if that cannot be made available. Guest access also can be used for Radio contestants who wish to prepare their newscasts digitally, as well as adjudicators who wish to complete evaluations/ballots electronically.
- In collaboration with WFCA, the Speech Advisory Committee presented proposed category topic areas; those passed unanimously and can be found on the *Categories & Topics* webpage.

- WFCA President Jon Balcerak described a pending proposal to combine Demonstration and Informative into a single 10-minute category, and create a new 5-minute category of Expository Speech (an informative-type category with no visual aids) to align better with other states and national trends of these categories.
- The Board discussed a potential future concept of having a panel of two adjudicators for State, since evaluation is subjective. The State Office will analyze feasibility and impact to schools.
- The Board also discussed a potential future concept of allowing students to cross-enter multiple categories, which could be easily done by allowing a student to participate in person in one category, but for other entry to be virtual. This has been referred back to committee and for membership survey.

### Middle Level Speech Advisory

- This was the first year participation data was accurate as all registrations were funneled through SpeechWire. Ribbons replacing certificates at Level 1 were well-received.
- Participation was down, proportionate to HS.
- 30 individuals completed free online course for ML adjudicator certification.
- Category topic areas, including ML Extemp., were accepted.

### Partner Organizations

- Dr. Chris Gleason, DPI's new Arts & Creativity Curriculum Consultant, presented on his vision for the position and work with data on arts activities like ours.
- Jon Balcerak gave a WFCA update.

### Other Business

- Legal update on name change: we will be WHSFA, d/b/a (doing business as) WISDAA.
- Debate and film will continue pilot rollouts.



# YOU ARE SPEECH & DEBATE

You have already experienced firsthand the power of participating in speech and debate, now stay connected by claiming your alumni membership at [speechanddebate.org/alumni/](https://speechanddebate.org/alumni/).



Hey Coaches! Did you participate in speech & debate in high school, middle school, or college? Stay connected to the speech and debate community and be the first to hear about upcoming webinars, career resources, and more! Claim your free NSDA alumni membership today → [bit.ly/NSDAAlumni](https://bit.ly/NSDAAlumni).

Connect With Community | Volunteer Opportunities | Attend Webinars | Share Your Experience

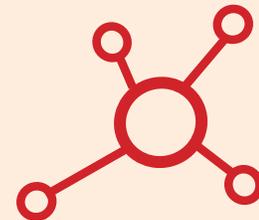
## PEG GRAFWALLNER & "THE WORD NERD" AMANDA ZIEBA

# CURATING CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2022  
9 AM-2 PM  
MADISON, WISCONSIN

WCTE.ORG

WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH



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### Middle/High Speech Coaches:

**Recruit adjudicators now!** Schools generally must supply **one adjudicator for every five entries or fraction thereof** (i.e., for 7 entries, you will need 2 adjudicators). Coaches often serve as adjudicators; teaching colleagues and other personnel from your school are great for supplementing your team of adjudicators.