

ROUTE TO
 Debate Coach _____
 Drama Coach _____
 Speech Coach _____

Wisconsin High School Forensic Association News Letter

"Not to defeat each other, but to pace one another on the road to excellence."

AFFILIATED WITH
 BUREAU OF INFORMATION AND PROGRAM SERVICES
 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EXTENSION DIVISION
 Room 20, Memorial Library

Coming Dates

Lakeshore High School Debate Tournament
 Milwaukee Extension Division Dec 3

State One-Act-Play Contest
 University of Wisconsin Dec 10

Speech Association of America Convention
 Los Angeles, California Dec 27-29

Debate Tournament for High Schools
 Wisconsin State College, Eau Claire . . . Jan 7

State Debate Contest
 University of Wisconsin Feb 24-25

Delta Sigma Rho and Wisconsin Forensic . . Mar 9-10
 Union Conference, University of Wisconsin

Spring Meeting of Board of Control of WHSFA
 Memorial Union, Madison . . . , . . . Mar 15

Choral Speaking Festival
 Mount Mary College Mar 24

Central States Speech Ass'n Convention
 Chicago, Illinois April 6-7

State Speech Contest
 University of Wisconsin April 14

VOL XXVII

MADISON, WISCONSIN, NOVEMBER 1955

NO. 2

Phone: Alpine 5-3311, Ext. 4233

Latest Dates for Contests

	Drama	Debate	Speech
League Contests -----	Nov. 9 --	-----	March 13
District Contests -----	Nov. 19 --	Feb. 4 --	March 24
Sectional Contests -----	Dec. 3 --	Feb. 11 --	-----
State Contests -----	Dec. 10 --	Feb. 24-25	April 14

Please try to avoid scheduling school activities which conflict with the above dates.

Debate Proposition: Resolved: that governmental subsidies should be granted according to need to high school graduates who qualify for additional training.

The annual dues should be paid by December 15.

BOARD OF CONTROL

Northern Section	Central Section	Southern Section
Mabel Nelson	E. C. Marquardt	Neil D. Greene
Chippewa Falls	Wausau	Muscoda
Eau Claire District	La Crosse District	Milwaukee District
Villard Swanson	K. A. Curran	George W. Carlson
Rice Lake	Cashton	West Allis
River Falls District	Oshkosh District	Platteville District
F. M. Robey	A. F. Christ	Kenneth Holt
Clayton	New London	Cassville
Superior District	Stevens Point District	Whitewater District
H. F. Connors	A. D. Wicklund	J. A. Bjorge
Hurley	Nekoosa	Whitewater

J. A. Bjorge, Chairman
 Whitewater

Professor A. T. Weaver
 Advisor in Speech
 University of Wis.

Robert H. Schacht, Sec'y-Treas.
 University Extension Division

Professor Robert E. Gard
 Advisor in Dramatics
 University of Wis.

Roderick McPhee, Ass't Sec'y-Treas.
 University Extension Division

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Minutes of Annual Meeting of WHSFA	3
Results of Election of Board Members	5
Board of Control Officers	5
New Wisconsin Speech Ass'n Officers	6
Additional Copies of News Letters	6
Speech Institutes	6
Rule Changes	6
Sixteen Schools Enter Discussion Contest . . .	7
The State Drama Contest	8
The Official Wisconsin Debate Proposition . .	9
Certificates of Merit	9
Next Year's Debate Problem Areas	10
The High School Dramatic Program	11
Coming Dates	15

The new address on the cover is still in the future. We expect to move during January or February. Please continue to use our University Avenue address until notified of our move.

Wisconsin High School Forensic Association

Minutes of the 29th Annual Meeting of WHSFA
University of Wisconsin Extension Center
Milwaukee, November 4, 1955

1. The meeting was called to order by John A. Bjorge, Chairman of the Board, at 4:30 P. M. with 37 persons present.
2. The reading of the minutes of the last annual meeting was dispensed with and the minutes were approved as printed in the November, 1954, News Letter.
3. The Chairman reported on the results of the election and introduced the board members present.
4. The Chairman announced the registration of sixteen schools in the discussion contest on the subject: How can extra curricular activities best contribute to the educational program?
5. The Chairman announced that the official debate proposition for Wisconsin this year is

Resolved: that governmental subsidies should be granted according to need to high school graduates who qualify for additional training.
6. The Chairman announced that five speech institutes have already been held, two more are definitely scheduled, and an additional three may yet be announced.
7. The Chairman called attention to the new service of the state office in offering carefully selected paper-bound collections of poetry for resale.

Wisconsin High School Forensic Association

8. The Chairman announced that the Board had again requested the Wisconsin Idea Theatre to prepare the Official 1956 One-Act-Play List and urged coaches to send their ideas to Mr. Gard, Director of WIT, by April 1.
9. There was some discussion of the selection of the topic for the tape-recorded panel discussion contest in relation to the debate propositions. The motion was made, seconded, and carried that the annual meeting go on record as favoring the choice of that discussion topic most closely related to the debate propositions as the topic for the tape-recorded panel-discussion contest.
10. After some discussion of the use of narrative poetry in our extemporaneous reading contest, the group expressed itself in favor of requesting those persons selecting materials for the school, league, district, and state contests to select poems which do not present an unreasonable problem of cutting for the student, and to remind the judges that if a contestant has to be stopped, it shall in no way affect the ranking.
11. After some discussion as to the appropriateness of using the words interpretative reading contest and extemporaneous reading contest when they are really both interpretative, it was suggested that a better name, such as prepared reading, be used for the former in the future.
12. The meeting adjourned at 5:07 P. M. with the Chairman expressing the appreciation of the Board and of the Association to Mr. Connors, who served as Chairman for the past three years, to Professor Weaver and Professor Gard, and to the State Colleges and the University for their support and assistance.

Respectfully submitted
Robert H. Schacht
Secretary-Treasurer

Wisconsin High School Forensic Association

Results of Election of Board Members--1955

We are happy to announce the re-election of Mr. H. F. Connors as chairman of the Superior District and Mr. A. D. Wicklund as chairman of the Stevens Point District.

Mr. George W. Carlson, principal of the Nathan Hale High School in West Allis, was elected chairman of the Milwaukee District for a three-year term, succeeding Mr. N. E. Colby who served three full terms.

Mr. Kenneth Holt, principal of the Cassville High School, was elected chairman of the Platteville District for a two-year term, succeeding Mr. M. V. Campbell who moved from the state after one year of service. Mr. Holt had been a member of the board from 1953-54.

Mrs. Doris Fuka, coach at River Falls high school, was elected chairman of the Northern Section but resigned upon notification. Miss Mabel Nelson, who had served in that capacity from 1949-52, has been appointed by Chairman Bjorge to serve until the election next fall. Mr. Barry Robinson has served as chairman of the Northern Section since 1952.

Board of Control Officers

Mr. John A. Bjorge, chairman of the Whitewater District, was elected chairman of the Board to succeed Mr. H. F. Connors, who had served as chairman since 1952. Mr. Kenneth A. Curran, chairman of the La Crosse District, was elected vice-chairman of the Board, succeeding Mr. N. E. Colby, who had served in that capacity since 1952.

Wisconsin High School Forensic Association

New Wisconsin Speech Ass'n Officers

Bruce Bertram of the West Bend High School was elected president of the Wisconsin Speech Association at the annual meeting held Friday, November 4, in Milwaukee. Hugo Hellman of Marquette University was elected vice-president. Harris N. Lubenow of Washington High School, Milwaukee, and Mrs. Victor M. Hamm of Mount Mary College were elected to the Executive Council.

Additional Copies of News Letters

If the one Coaches' copy of the various News Letters is not enough to ensure each coach having an opportunity to follow the news of the Association, additional copies will be supplied on request.

Speech Institutes

Successful institutes have already been held at Eau Claire, Stevens Point, Oshkosh, Superior, La Crosse, and River Falls. One more is definitely scheduled for Whitewater on November 17, and there is a possibility of one at Platteville, Milwaukee, and a second one at La Crosse.

These institutes are sponsored jointly by the Association and the state colleges. Watch for announcements of others in your area.

Rule Changes

Please familiarize yourself with the rule changes effective this year which are indicated in italics on pp. 10-17 of the September News Letter.

Wisconsin High School Forensic Association

Sixteen Schools Enter Discussion Contest

This year the winning teams in the now fully established tape-recorded panel discussion contest can look forward to receiving individual medals, and--for the first place school--a plaque similar to that given in debate and drama.

The sixteen schools will be divided by lot into four sub-groups, each sub-group to be judged by one judge. The highest ranking school in each sub-group shall be given certificates of merit and entered in the final contest, which shall be judged by three judges.

The topic for discussion is:

How can extra-curricular activities best contribute to the educational program?

The winning discussion will probably be broadcast over the network of the State Radio Council. Coaches wishing to obtain a copy of the tape should send \$1 and a tape to Mrs. Betty Hanson, Radio Hall, University of Wisconsin, requesting this service.

The following schools are participating:

Balsam Lake	Milwaukee Messmer
Chippewa Falls	Nekoosa
Janesville	Stoughton
Madison Wis. High	Two Rivers
Marinette	West Allis Central
Medford	Whitefish Bay
Merrill	Wisconsin Dells
Middleton	Mosinee

Wisconsin High School Forensic Association

State Drama Contest

The State One-Act-Play Contest will be held Saturday, December 10 (possibly Friday evening as well) at Bascom Theatre on the University Campus. Schools which receive "A" ratings in the sectional contests will automatically be scheduled for the state contest.

All interested persons are invited to attend the state contest. Even if your cast does not qualify to enter the contest, watching these fine plays and hearing the critiques of the judges can be a very interesting and educational experience for your students. Why not bring them down for the event? No admission is charged. Programs will be sent on request.

NOTE:

This is the weekend of the Wisconsin Players production of The Confidential Clerk.

Why not take in both events and make this a fitting climax to your one-act-play season?

Wisconsin Idea Theatre To Prepare 1956 One-Act-Play List

Following what has become a well-established custom, the Board again asked our advisor in drama, Professor Robert E. Gard, and the staff of the Wisconsin Idea Theatre to prepare the Official One-Act-Play List for 1956.

Send your suggestions to Mr. Gard before April 1. They will be more helpful than criticism next fall.

Wisconsin High School Forensic Association

The Official Wisconsin Debate Proposition

The official Wisconsin debate proposition, chosen by a special committee of Professors Haberman, Weaver, Brockhaus, and Brembeck on the basis of the results of a special poll, is

Resolved: that governmental subsidies should be granted according to need to high school graduates who qualify for additional training.

This question received 25 firsts as opposed to 4 firsts for the "Korean War Privileges" question and 18 firsts for the "Grants to Colleges" question. 9 schools lost their vote by casting an ineligible ballot and 11 schools did not bother to vote.

Loan packages of printed materials on the question, over and beyond the free materials provided and sale materials available, may be secured from the Bureau of Information and Program Services, 1327 University Avenue, Madison 5, Wis., under the terms of its new loan policy. (See page 5 of the September News Letter).

Certificates of Merit

A form postal card for ordering Certificates of Merit earned by students in inter-school competition will be sent you with the February News Letter. Please hold your orders for certificates until you receive the card.

Wisconsin High School Forensic Association

Next Year's Debate Problem Areas

The procedure for selecting the three problem areas which will be submitted for the selection of next year's discussion and debate topic has already begun.

Wisconsin coaches and principals have responded to our request for ideas. Those ideas mentioned most often will be pooled with the suggestions of other states and referred back to Wisconsin coaches and principals in December for their preferences. (Debate Coaches: please watch for this ballot and return it promptly). These preferences will be brought to the NUEA Committee on Discussion and Debate Materials at its meeting in Los Angeles, by Robert Schacht, who has been appointed by the Board as its official representative.

The three problem areas coming out of the December meeting will again be referred to the debating schools of Wisconsin in January for their preference, and combined with the preferences of other states to determine the national problem area for next school year.

Our thanks to the following Wisconsin schools who have sent in their ideas:

Antigo	Milwaukee	Marquette
Appleton	New London	Wausau
Arcadia	New Richmond	Wautoma
Barron	Shawano	West Allis
Grantsburg	Seymour	Central
Green Bay West	Shorewood	Lancaster
Hartford	Stevens Point	Merrill
Mayville	Superior Cathedral	
Menasha	Two Rivers	Neenah

Wisconsin High School Forensic Association

The High School Dramatic Program

Review of a talk by Dr. John E. Dietrich
Professor of Speech, Ohio State University
By

Mrs. Julia Mailer, Theatre Librarian
Bureau of Information and Program Services
University of Wisconsin Extension Division

At the annual meeting of the Wisconsin Speech Association, held in Milwaukee, November 4, at the University Extension Center, Dr. John Dietrich gave a talk with so many excellent points that we feel sure members who could not attend the luncheon that day would like to read some of the highlights.

While Dr. Dietrich had intended to talk on "The Theatre and the Emotional Needs of Man," a recent experience of viewing two one-act-plays which lacked any dramatic content or literary value made him decide to talk about the high school dramatic program instead.

He divided his talk into (a) objectives, (b) criticism, and (c) practices of the high school dramatic program.

Most of us agree, he said, that the objectives should be to give the student an opportunity to become familiar with great literature of the world, to enlarge his experiences by living with and understanding characters of depth and wisdom, and to know new locales and times by burying himself in the play at hand. Most coaches subscribe to these goals.

But what can the high school coach do, caught up as he is with problems of budget, crowded schedules, rehearsals, and competition from other high school activities?

Wisconsin High School Forensic Association

These are real difficulties, but the argument Dr. Dietrich finds most vulnerable is that of purporting to be giving the audience and the students the plays they want and can understand. Just so long as we give audiences the cheap and tawdry, just so long will they have no other standards by which to judge what they see and hear. He urged the coaches to believe in their audiences and to have faith that they will want to see fine plays when they begin to know them.

In discussing the practices in the dramatic program, Dr. Dietrich drew on a survey which he and Ronald Gee, formerly of the Wisconsin Idea Theatre, did on high school dramatic activities in Wisconsin in 1947-48. He gave us facts and figures which were startling to many of us. For instance, to show the extent of the importance of the dramatic program, 211 schools in Wisconsin produced 367 plays before a combined audience of 217,000 people in that year. 12,056 students actively participated in dramatic activity, either by acting or being part of the stage crew. That meant that one student in every ten at the high school level was in dramatics.

He then drew our attention to the figures on profits. High schools are realizing profits which are one to three times the amount expended on the production. Class A schools' profits are about equal to their expenditures. Smaller schools' profits range from 100 per cent to 200 per cent. The smaller the school, the cheaper the play, the more the profit. The survey also showed that the profits were used on class activities such as proms, picnics, athletic equipment, and tree planting. Only 10 per cent of the Wisconsin high school productions are sponsored by a drama group whose interest is the play rather than the profit. This is why so little of the profit ever goes back into lighting, scenery, or equipment.

Wisconsin High School Forensic Association

The figures on the type of play were equally discouraging.

78% were comedy
12% were comedy-mystery
7% were musicals or operettas
3% were serious

Dr. Dietrich then gave what he believed was part of the reason for this picture. At the college level, 72 per cent of the plays available are controlled by French and Dramatic Play Service. At the secondary level 64 per cent are controlled by a small midwestern publishing company which caters to the high school trade. It seems apparent, said the speaker, that play selection at the high school level is done by thumbing through the catalogs that specialize in a cheap-to-produce, easy-to-play, slap-stick-farce and maudlin melodrama written for the high school market.

Breaking these figures down into types, Dr. Dietrich said that of 367 plays produced in Wisconsin in that year, only three were classics. Macbeth was represented once. None of Shakespeare's comedies were done. Fifty-three of the plays were Broadway successes while the other 311 appear to have been written for high school production. And if the preceding analyses were reduced to percentages, we find that

1% of high school productions
are classics
15% contemporary Broadway
4% standard operetta
80% extremely doubtful

And by giving us some of the titles of the 80% doubtful, Dr. Dietrich proved fairly conclusively that the plays written for high school trade are indeed just that. Following is a partial list:

Wisconsin High School Forensic Association

Daffy Dills
Aunt Bessie Beats the Band
Fixit, Inc.
Gangway for the Ghosts
Atomic Blonde
Big Potatoe
Cannibal Queen
Lay Down--You're Dead
Everybody's Crazy Now

And on ad nauseum

These results indicate a sharp contrast, it seemed to Professor Dietrich, between plays studied in the class room and those produced on the stage. While the state curriculum is vague as to the amount and kind of dramatic literature to be taught, almost every high school in the state teaches Shakespeare. Many of the larger schools expand their literature courses to include the best of the modern as well as the classic dramas. It is unfortunate that three-fourths of the productions (which take from four to seven weeks of the students' time) do not approach the standards which are expected of the students in class room.

Hence, Dr. Dietrich concludes, plays in Wisconsin high schools are selected because

- (a) they are easy and inexpensive to produce
- (b) they are easy to play
- (c) directors have such limited backgrounds they are unaware of the expanse of dramatic material available

Dr. Dietrich closed his talk with a plea to the teachers of speech in Wisconsin to have the courage to set their sights high and not to be limited by what seems unsurmountable obstacles. And he promised that they would not go unrewarded as they bettered their play bills.