

**CATEGORY COMMITTEE REPORT**  
**JULY 14, 2008**  
**Ramada Inn, Fond du Lac**

**Members Attending:** David Loos, Gail Burkel, Deb Weiher-Traas, Lynda Luce, Paul Seymour, Mary Wacker, WFCFA President Jodi Becker, WHSFA Executive Secretary Chuck Malone.

**Members Not Attending:** Gary Wegner, Bev Kingma, Sue Luterbach, Doris Sexton, John Rademacher

**Business Conducted:**

A. Report on the WHSFA Speech Advisory Committee meeting held on June 12, 2008 at U.W. Oshkosh attended by David Loos, Jodi Becker and Mary Wacker.

1. Date of the WHSFA State Festival April 17 and 18, 2009

2. Concerns and statements expressed by Chuck Malone and WHSFA members to the WHSFA Speech Advisory Committee:

1. There was some concern on the part of the Advisory that the number of students in Extemporaneous Speaking keeps dropping.

2. A task force has been appointed to create a computer program for scheduling sub-districts and districts in 2009. There was discussion about the best method to identify unaffiliated judges.

3. Concerns were discussed on the following topics:

- Judging Standards – recommendation for hosts to continue to stress judging standards
- Quality material. Recommendation to include the statement concerning “quality material” on page 15 of the WHSFA Speech Handbook on the Guideline For Speech Festival Judges. It will be taken to the September Board of Control Meeting.
- Movement in prose, poetry and farrago (no changes recommended)
- Possible use of visual aids in Oratory (no changes recommended)
- Increasing numbers at subdistrict (no changes recommended)
- Reinstatement of the category of **Significant Speech**. After discussing it, Ayer moved and Berg seconded a recommendation to take the request to the Board of Control for the September meeting. The vote of the Advisory was unanimous.
- Change in point value needed to advance in WHSFA (no changes recommended)
- Request was made that a blank be added to all ballots so that schools hosting an invitational could have a place for ranking. The Advisory felt that this would not be within keeping of the organizations goals.
- Request for an explanation of the numbers at the top of the ballots be changed. 5 would remain *Excellent*, 4 would read *Above Average* and 3 would read *Average*. Sent to the Board of Control for a recommendation.

4. New topics were accepted for the 2008-2009 forensic season.

- A. Moments in History – Jim Kocovsky and Fr. Gary Wegner**  
1450-1650 – Reformation, Age of Discovery and High Renaissance

**B. Public Address – Mark Kohl and Doris Sexton**

1. **Internet Regulation:** To what extent, if any, should content on the World Wide Web be regulated?
2. **Human Trafficking:** What, if anything, should be done to address the worldwide problem of human trafficking?
3. **China:** What effects did the 2008 Olympics have on the Chinese culturally, economically and/or politically?
4. **Origin of Human Life:** What should public schools be required to teach with regard to the origin of human life?

**C. Special Occasion – Jeff Ayer and David Loos**

1. **Speech to Gain Good Will**
2. **A “Roast” Speech**
3. **A Nomination Speech**
4. **A Wedding or Anniversary Speech**

**D. Storytelling – Dorothy Berg and Mary Wacker**

1. **Hans Christian Anderson Story**
2. **A Story with Numbers**
3. **A Story with Poverty or Hardship**
4. **A Music Story**
5. **A Chinese Folktale**

**B. Action taken by the WFLA Category Committee for the speech categories**

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|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. Demonstration Speech:    | No changes   |
| 2. Extemporaneous Speaking: | Questions were raised about the possibility of using laptops and electronic files. National organizations are deliberating on this issue now. Discussion included possible cost for schools, inconvenience for hosts, and inequity to school of varying economic means. The Committee asks if we should join in the discussions on this subject with NCFL, NFL, WDCA and/or WHSFA on this subject. |
| 3. Four Minute Speech:      | No changes   |
| 4. Group Discussion:        | Move down Dewey sequence item #3 from problems to solutions. We believe this was previously approved and was typed incorrectly in the 2008 handbook.   |

Last year an attempt was made to write the questions during

the season to keep them fresh. Logistically, this idea proved unworkable. Questions with a “potpourri” concept were submitted in advance to the Committee from Paul Seymour, and after discussion are submitted for membership approval. There was discussion regarding a future return to a thematic approach to the season. The Committee will revisit this discussion next year.

One committee member recommended that we use laptops to ease data access for better progression of discussion. No change was recommended.

Committee approved questions are attached to this report.

5. Impromptu Speech: No changes.
6. Moments in History: New topic recommended: 1450-1650 – Reformation, Age of Discovery and High Renaissance
7. Oratory: Discussion of whether it is time to consider requiring speeches be brought to the tournament on electronic files to be submitted to turnitin.com for verification of originality. After much discussion of potential pros and cons, the Committee determined that this should be referred to the TPP for discussion of need, cost, and means of accomplishing the task.
8. Public Address: New topics recommended:
1. **Internet Regulation:** To what extent, if any, should content on the World Wide Web be regulated?
  2. **Human Trafficking:** What, if anything, should be done to address the worldwide problem of human trafficking?
  3. **China:** What effects did the 2008 Olympics have on the Chinese culturally, economically and/or politically?
  4. **Origin of Human Life:** What should public schools be required to teach with regard to the origin of human life?
9. Radio Announcing No changes
10. Special Occasion Speech: New topics recommended:
1. **Speech to Gain Good Will**
  2. **A “Roast” Speech**
  3. **A Nomination Speech**
  4. **A Wedding or Anniversary Speech**

### **C. Action Taken by the WFCA Category Committee for the Interpretive Events**

1. Duo Interpretation: No changes

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| 2. Farrago:                           | No changes   |
| 3. Group Interpretive Reading:        | No changes   |
| 4. Interpretation of Poetry:          | Discussion to change the language of the rules to allow a thematic combination with page turns sometimes as transitions, rather than require transitions between each poem. Committee suggests that this be a topic for a round table discussion at state. |
| 5. Interpretation of Prose:           | No changes   |
| 6. Oral Interpretation of Literature: | No changes   |
| 7. Play Acting:                       | No changes   |
| 8. Solo Acting Humorous:              | No changes   |
| 9. Solo Acting Serious:               | No changes   |
| 9. Storytelling:                      | The committee after some discussion voted to accept the WHSFA story topics.  |

Discussion of recommending a change to only 4 required stories – would use them all at regular tournaments, and then at state all finalist storytellers would be able to select their best story themselves. Downside is would make the category easier, perhaps more boring for students. WHSFA would probably support a reduction of stories – they at one time wanted us to drop to 3.

**D. Student Congress:** No changes

**E. Other Considerations:**

**Critique Sheet Uniformity**

The Chair submitted a document a year ago containing rules for all categories which would be more uniform for the judges. This recommendation was revisited. After discussion on the merits of streamlining the rules, the Committee decided that the “rules” section should remain as is, and that any repetitive or cautionary language serves to instruct the judge. The Committee agreed that the “criteria for evaluation” sections should not contain such language and could be made more uniform. Committee members were assigned to review the current criteria for evaluation in the context of the rules, with the hope that we will have a report to present at the fall 2008 meeting.

## **Discussion of Significant Speech**

The Committee reaffirmed the need to provide a “reason for rank” line on all critique sheets, with the understanding that this change is already in the works for the 2008-09 forms.

There was considerable discussion of the potential return of the category of Significant Speech. While the committee recalled the same recommendation in the 1999-2000 season, there was enthusiasm from the committee about the possibility now. Reasons for new enthusiasm include:

1. The fact that one prior obstacle to the category – lack of readily available speeches – has been largely solved by the internet.

2. The analysis component of this category – the ability to make a speech from the past significant not only to it’s time in history but also to the present day – makes it a challenge to the speaker that is not readily available in our current categories.

The committee offers the following cautions:

1. Any recommendation to reinstate Significant Speech should be phrased as a “replacement” of categories, and a current category should be eliminated. Preliminary discussion in committee favored the replacement of Special Occasion.

2. A new Sig Speech should require that analysis be original to the student. Issues of online resources (such as turnitin.com) and other means of proving originality were discussed at length.

WHSFA indicates that any recommendation is probably “three seasons from reality.” WHSFA concurs that it is likely only to be considered as a replacement, not an additional category.

## **Music and Sound Effects**

Concern was raised that there is confusion as to whether or not sound effects and rap are “music” as referred to in our rules. Our understanding is that the original music limitation rule was intended to refer to vocal music (singing). Committee recommends reviewing the language of the music limit, possibly rephrasing to include, “music should enhance, not dominate the performance”.

## **State Tournament Team Awards**

Committee discussed the pros and cons of eliminating team awards at state, revising the divisions (from three to two), using a team average for winners, or changing the number that constitutes a “full team” by divisions. Discussion of lack of

prequalification for state tournament – is it the “best of the best” or an “everybody come” tournament? Suggestion for further discussion from Executive Board and membership as needed, as these are not category issues.

### **Inter-Organization Communication**

Committee believes that WFCA can do more to promote communication between itself and the MLFA, WDCA, and national organizations as it has with the WHSFA. Specific to category topics, we are often making decisions without full knowledge of the past four year topics in middle level and the various debate events. Since MLFA severed ties with WFCA, we have not maintained even annual communication. Recommendation that there be designated communication goals put in place.