



MCJA SPRING NEWSLETTER

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News from the President

Think back 20 years. Can you believe it has been 20 years since Forrest Gump and the Lion King were released? The sitcom FRIENDS was launched and the Sony Play Station was a hot new item. Do you remember Nintendo Donkey Kong? It is also 20 years old. Anyone remember the Beastie Boys? 20 years...

Another thing that happened 20 years ago a group of competitive cheer officials started their cheer judging careers. Think of all the cheer experiences that have occurred and all of the cheer friends that have been made over the last 20 years. Please join me in congratulating all of our fellow officials and cheer friends who are to be honored at the MHSAA official's banquet this May for their 20 years of service.

Cheers,
Cindy

What's Up With Our Members?

Marcy Moore and hubby are going to be first time grandparents!!! Jason and Dominica are due September 1, 2014 !!!

Beth McCarty had twins last July 23rd. Brady and Brooke (first girl out of all the grand kids and hopefully future cheerleader). Big brother Jack loves them to death!!

Lynce Buhl and husband (Pete) welcomed their first child on March 13; Sloane Amelia. She was 5lbs 4 oz. Congratulations to all!

"It is literally true that you can succeed best and quickest by helping others to succeed!"

-Napoleon

Hill

Sheila Brownlee and her family were walking on Saturday, May 3, 2014, at the Heart Walk held at Ford Field in Detroit. Cindy Tyzo was a volunteer passing out pom poms to the walkers! Way to give back ladies... GREAT JOB!



What's Your Call?

- ◆ In round 2 a team performs switch splits that begin from a standing position. Is this legal?

This is not legal since any split in round two must begin in the squat position with hands placed on the cheering surface.

- ◆ A bracer in an extension position is bracing a flyer in an extension liberty position. Is this legal?

This is not legal since a bracer in an extension position can only brace a flyer in an extension position when all have both feet in both hands of their bases.

- ◆ A Junior High team performs a twist cradle from the extension position. Is this a legal dismount?

This is not legal since any skill from the extension position other than a straight cradle catch is illegal at the Junior High level.



HONOR YOUR CONTRACT

It is December 3, 2014 and you just received a call or an email from a school to officiate for December 13, 2014 what do you do? First look at your signed contracts, date book / planner or how you keep track of your scheduled events. If you already have a contract for December 13th you need to honor the contract and let the school know you are already contracted. Thank the school for contacting you and keep you in mind for other available dates. Do not break contracts for a larger meet, more money or closer to home. If you are ill notify the school and ask if they would like you to find a replacement.

This year I was contacted weekly and sometimes daily to find replacements for officials who had signed contracts with schools. MCJA is a respected officials association throughout Michigan. As you are aware some schools contract officials at least a year in advance so make sure you know when you are contracted. Emergencies occur and MCJA is willing to help you find replacements in an emergency.

Honoring your contract means arriving at least an hour prior to the start of the meet and staying for the 10 minutes after scores are announced. Make sure you are prepared to officiate – proper clothing, MHSAA badge, paper, pencils, manual etc. The school is not responsible for providing your supplies, copies or food. Some schools provide food and beverages, but they are not required.

Remember we are a respected and professional group so Honor Your Contract.

Respectfully submitted by Candy Cox

2014 MCJA Fall Conference

Save the Date!

Saturday
November 1st, 2014

This year's Fall Conference will again be held at Mason High School. We will be busy this summer planning and completing training sessions based on feedback from all of YOU! Watch for more information to be posted!!



Professional Attire

Officiating is a profession. What constitutes professionalism? Do you look professional when you are ready to officiate an MHSAA event. I have asked officials what their expectation is when you see a cheer official. Some of the responses have been: crisp, neat, clothes pressed, business-type attire, etc. Negative comments have been, see-through blouses, plunging necklines, excess jewelry, scarves.

The guidelines for judges under Uniform and Emblem in our Manual are: "Judges of Competitive Cheer are required to wear a solid white blouse/shirt or top and solid black skirt or dress slacks. Any additional garment such as a blazer shall be black. Judges must wear their MHSAA Officials Emblem on the left chest pocket area of the blouse or jacket/blazer or suspended by a black lanyard."

This should be adhered to completely. Many of us question why some officials deviate from these guidelines. Have any of us seen an official at a basketball or football game in anything other than an official striped shirt and black pants? This is the expectation of the fans, the team members, the coaches, and the MHSAA. It is the professional attire of these officials. The expectations listed for cheer officials should also be adhered to. Why would we see attire that is not consistent with these guidelines? We have seen sweaters with designs, skirts and jackets that have designs in the fabric, striped blouses/shirts, cream-colored blouses, denim fabric pants, leggings, a white sweater used as a jacket, and decorative jackets.

I admired a fellow judge who purchased an attractive suit and a white blouse. I guess you might classify it as a professional business suit. She kept it pressed and wore it as her "official suit." She listed it as a deduction on her income tax because she bought it for officiating. One might think of this as extreme, but she always looked professional. It is fun to have cute clothes with glitzy tops, scarves, jewelry, hair decorations, etc. However, we are not there to cause attention to us—it is all about the athletes we are judging and should look professional.

When you select your attire, evaluate yourself as to whether you pass the test of looking professional.

Submitted by Marilyn Bowker



MCJA SPRING NEWSLETTER

New Local Regional Association

A new association is getting underway for the Capital Area (middle of the state). Anybody and everybody are welcome to join this association.

Interested? Contact:
Dee Hammond
517-290-5227
hammondd57@yahoo.com

Safety In Numbers

Do you remember this past cheer season? Snow, snow and more snow. You'd arrive at a competition with no inclement weather, and then you'd leave the competition in a snow storm. Even more treacherous than the weather were the fans or coaches who were not happy with the results of the competition. No matter what the circumstances are, cheer officials should leave both the gym and the school building together. There is safety in numbers.

When dealing with coaches or fans, use verbal judo techniques – remain calm and objective. Move the conversation away from the crowd and never leave an official alone to fend for herself or himself. There is safety in numbers.

Make sure to walk out to your cars together. Help clean the snow off of each other's cars. Make sure everyone's car starts and they are able to get home safely. There is safety in numbers.



Know the other officials' phone numbers, so if you have a problem on the way to or from the competition you can call them. You are an officiating TEAM from arrival to departure, and remember there is safety in numbers.

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Tyzo

Being Adaptable

As a safety official, you may need to step in to officiate as a panel official. A little guide that a veteran panel official provided that I found useful when this happened to me!

- 10 Perfect
- 9 Excellent
- 8 Very Good
- 7 Good
- 6 Satisfactory
- 5 Average
- 4 Below Average
- 3 Very below average



-submitted by Cindy Tyzo



2014 MCJA Board Elections

As the 2014 MCJA Board elections come to a close, we say hello to some really great additions to the Board, four returning members and farewell to two fantastic individuals.

Both Judy Holland and Marty Shean, longtime MCJA Board members, decided not to run for their coveted positions on the MCJA Board this time around. With many family and personal events drawing their time, commitment and energy—they say farewell. We will still see them officiating at meets, enjoying their camaraderie as an officiating crew and wish them well as their journey continues.

With these goodbyes, come some new hellos. Joining the MCJA Board beginning June 2014 will be Laurel Kobe and Bonnie Koenig. Both come to the MCJA Board from different parts of the state and also from different pathways. They will bring both a youthful insight and veteran wisdom to the board while sharing a new perspective for the MCJA membership. Also returning are Karla Koviak, Sheila Brownlee, Susan Wood and President Elect, Cindy Tyzo.

Change can be bittersweet. Goodbyes are sad while welcomes can lend fresh energy, drive and direction.

Join us in saying heartfelt farewells and just as heartfelt, Welcome!



CONGRATULATIONS

JANE PLAISTED

20 Years!!

Official Award



**Pictured left to right:
Cindy Tyzo, Jane Plaisted, Karla
Koviak and Stacy Smith**

Mixing one's wines may be a mistake,
but old and new wisdom mix admirably.



Judging Safety – A Blessing and a Curse

Once upon a time I was a panel judge...and I loved it! This is where the best gets separated from the very best. This is where knowledge and appreciation of the fine points is key. This is where energy, creativity, and all that's best in cheer is rewarded. It's a happy job. Then there's the dark side – safety. We don't give points, but rather take them away, yet now that I judge safety, I have to tell you – I love it!

So let's talk about the blessing part. While all judges, safety included, should arrive at the competition site at least an hour before the competition begins, that's usually enough time for safety people to check the mat/gym, do paperwork, respond to coaches' concerns, and maybe help panel judges with their preparation if there's enough time left over. Panel judges, on the other hand, are often pressed for time as they use every second of their pre-meet time to review Round 3 sheets, make changes as the continual revisions pour in, and consult with one another as they complete their extensive paperwork. As a safety judge, this lack of pressure is clearly a blessing.

And then the meet begins...

Panel judges have multiple categories to evaluate, a myriad of moves and skills in tenths of points while safety judges are looking for compliance with the manual in terms of numbers, formations, directions and other areas; our decisions cost a team between two and twenty-two points each. The first two rounds each present their own judging challenges, but safety judges come as a team; we have to agree. Clearly it can be a blessing to have a partner to talk things over with, but with that comes a heavy responsibility to be knowledgeable and well-trained. When you agree to give a penalty for something your partner appears to be sure of but you didn't see, both reputations are on the line as you trust your partner.

The curse, if it happens, takes place at the end of the meet, or sometimes the end of a round. Panel judges are often asked about their respective scores, but a questioned single score in a single category from a single judge is not, in all likelihood, enough to change the outcome of a meet. When safety judges give a penalty, however, it can move the penalized team from the top of the leaderboard to the bottom. Needless to say, the receiving coach is often very upset and often confrontational. It is up to us now to defuse the situation if possible. That penalty **must** be based on a rule in the manual (or updates) and we have to provide the page where the rule appears. Explaining to an irate coach why and how the penalty applies to her team definitely falls in the curse category; an 8-point penalty is often more than a team can hope to recover from.

Missing a penalty is just as bad, whether it's an instance of unsafe contact we didn't see or a foot off the back of the mat; often the audience observed the error and is aware the judges failed to see something they were supposed to see. Sometimes a stunt happens so quickly or when so many other things are happening that we miss something that puts girls at risk; that's certainly something a judge doesn't want to happen. Nobody wants to make mistakes – that's why we go to training!—but some mistakes are inevitable and safety mistakes are often visible to fans.

So safety or panel? It's a choice for everyone. Some are more comfortable with one or the other, and some do both. Advantages and disadvantages abound with either choice, but rewards outweigh problems; otherwise, we wouldn't remain officials. So make an informed choice, go to training every chance you get, check for updates regularly, join your association, know your manual, and do your very best. Oh, I almost forgot – have fun!!!

Submitted by Jane Plaisted

"Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: 'What! You too? I thought that no one but myself . . .'"

-CS Lewis

Explain Yourself!

One of the most common questions MCJA gets from officials at training sessions is “How do you handle coaches who want an explanation, or justification if you will, for the scores you’ve given their team?” Scoring cheer is subjective, no matter how much we try to make it completely objective it simply never will be. That having been said, how do we give the input the coaches are asking for, once we’ve scored or evaluated their teams? Let’s face it sometimes you see a skill, and because of the cheer officiating experience you have, and the numerous times you’ve seen that skill, you just know it’s a 7; end of discussion...self-explanatory! Or is it? As trained officials you’ve had training that the coach possibly has not, so as the authority on the subject you should work to provide an explanation, when asked, for the scores that you gave. Granted this can be a difficult thing to do; perhaps you’ve seen 20 other teams, before having to explain your score. Hopefully, we can provide some guidance that will help you answer the tough question from the coach when it comes.



First of all, sometimes coaches are emotionally charged after a competition. This emotional charge can be positive or negative. For a coach who is upset or angry regarding their scores, it is definitely OK and even recommended to say “I would love to continue this conversation with you tomorrow via email or telephone when we’ve both had time to reflect on what has happened today”. A 24 hour rule is sometimes a good tool to use in a situation that you feel may not be productive.

Second, stand behind your score. While ideally you would love to be able to explain to a coach that “the third girl from the left in the second row of the fourth formation has bent wrists and flexed toes and that you took a .3 deduction”, that is not always possible. However, if you are able to make yourself a little note on the skill or jump where you took the deduction, or note things such as “wrists” or “toes” it may be beneficial when speaking with a coach.

Lastly, ask your team of judges for assistance. A situation may occur where a coach approaches a newer official who may not be comfortable explaining scores. Please ask other officials for assistance. Sometimes getting another judges perspective can be helpful to both the coach asking and the official explanation.

Submitted collaboratively from Juli Brown and Jayne Sabaitis

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**2013-2014
MCJA Executive
Board**

Cindy Tyzo, President

248-539-1864
crtzyo@aol.com

Jill Lansky, Secretary

269-806-0476
jilll@KPL.gov

Donna Luczak, Treasurer

989-686-1513
DJLJRL@aol.com

Stacy Smith, President-Elect

269-806-0427
stacyrenee-smith@netzero.net

Marilyn Bowker, Trustee

517-349-9233
cheersmb@aol.com

Candy Cox, Executive Director

517-278-6317
coxc@bhsj.org

**Regional
Representatives**

Judi Holland
269-226-0962
holland.judi@yahoo.com

Karla Koviak
269-788-4443
kkoviak@yahoo.com

Jane Plaisted
616-676-0192
jplaisted@sbcglobal.net

Marty Shean
517-769-2559
mshean@att.net

Sheila Brownlee
cheeriosheila@aol.com

**At-Large
Representatives**

Susan Wood
248-656-1053
swood@rochester.k12mi.us

Juli Brown
810-623-9372
jbrowncheer@gmail.com

Jayne Sabaitis
517-404-8495
jayne@zetaone.net

Phyllis Olszewski
231-536-3142
bpolszewski@att.net

Mary Kay Gavitt
517-372-7637
lifematter-splius@comcast.net