

# MCJA WINTER NEWSLETTER

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## News from the President

Here's hoping your Competitive Cheer Season has gotten off to a great start! Please join MCJA for a Breakout Session Webinar on January 18 @ 7:00 pm. Instructions will be sent via email when the date is at hand!

## Truths or Lie

1) *A sub varsity team can have different numbers in all three rounds of competition?*

Lie Page 10

Sub Varsity teams may compete with a maximum of 16 and a minimum of 4 team members in round 1 and 3, however the number of participants in round 1 and 3 must be identical but may be different from round 2.

Sub Varsity teams are not allowed to supersede the maximum allowed by division in round 2 but may have less than the mandated amount without penalty.

2) *Safety officials can utilize a cell phone to time the rounds of competition?*

Lie Page 12

Cell phones are not to be used as a timing device or as calculators.

*“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success!”*

*-Henry Ford*



2014 MCJA Official of the Year Carol Peters

### Official of the Year!

Each year Michigan Cheer Judge's Association is delighted to have the opportunity to honor one of its own as we select our Official of the Year. MCJA looks for just one who exemplifies the best in cheer officiating; this years' choice was Carol Peters. Carol has been a sideline coach, a competitive cheer coach, and a judge. Part of her enjoyment of the sport comes from traveling with the good friends she has made in the cheer community. She is a model of kindness and professionalism, a willing mentor, and a lady who is quick to laugh. Her distinctive accent and her ready sense of humor make her hard to forget, and who would want to? Carol is a credit to our organization and we are proud to honor her as MCJA Official of the Year for 2014.

## Cast Your Vote!

2015 is the year for MCJA Summer Training. All are welcome to attend summer training, however the event is geared towards the novice official. Cast your vote now for a location most appealing to you!

Eastside - Bloomfield Hills area

Mid-Michigan - Mt. Pleasant area

Mid-Michigan - Lansing area

Westside - Kalamazoo area

Westside - Grand Rapids area

To cast your vote:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SC767VJ>

## Candy Cox made a difference in my life! By Heather Hartley

Us as athletes typically choose one sport to make their own. Working really hard and always pushing towards that goal. My sport was competitive cheer. I was the only freshman on the Varsity Competitive Cheer Team and needless to say very intimidated by that. I knew I had the skills to be on the team, I was in every round front and center. It wasn't cheering that was hard for me. It was selling the cheer to the crowd and the judges. I had worked very hard to reach my goal and gave every round all I had. It wasn't until a panel judge wrote a little note on the score sheet to my coach stating, "tell your little one in the front with all the skills to smile". At that point I knew what I was missing and I knew how to fix it. From that time forward I would always ask my coach, "will she be here at this competition"? When she wasn't, it was never the same for me, but when she was I felt like I was competing at my fullest. I was in all three rounds all four years of my high school career and the competitions I remember the most were the ones that Candy Cox was a panel judge at. It was my mission for four years to get her attention and make her proud. Those were the best four years of my life.

After High School I took over the program at Edwardsburg as the Varsity sideline and Varsity Competitive Cheer Coach. Every competition that Candy was at I made sure to tell my girls. "You see that lady? You make sure you make eye contact and smile at her. She is who you have to win over". In 2003 I took a break from coaching got married and have a beautiful family. In 2010 my alma mater called me back to coaching. When I came back they only had sideline cheer. The last time Edwardsburg competed was the last time I coached in 2003. After three years of fighting to get competitive cheer back, our school allowed us to have a trial year to see if they would bring it back for good. Last year was that trial year. Ten years of Edwardsburg not taking the mat and to think I brought it back.

During that time I had reached out to find Candy Cox to let her know what the sport of cheer did for me as an athlete and now as a coach and what her role in that was. I let her know, because of her I wanted so much more out of the sport. I tried even harder than I thought that I ever could. Most people want to impress their coach, which I did too. However, for me it was more of an impact if the one that doesn't know me at all can recognize the hard work and dedication and let that be seen through the scores. A couple days went by and still nothing from Candy, no response. Nothing! It was one day after a really rough practice I came home got online and there it was. She wrote back and the best part was that she remembered me. She was so grateful that I reached out to her and so kind in her words to me. I stayed in contact with her all last season. Asking tons of questions and praying to God that I still had it in me to be a good competitive cheer coach. She truly helped me through last years competitive season.

It wasn't until this years Summit that Candy Cox and I reunited in person. She gave me a big hug, told me I looked the same, and asked questions about my team. I can not stress how much of an impact Candy Cox has made in my life. Sometimes it is the little things that make us who we are. For me it was just to smile and love what I'm doing. Candy Cox was the one who helped me become who I am today. A better cheerleader, mom, and coach. I owe it all to her and that little note. Thank you Candy!

Submitted by Heather L. Hartley

## Conflict of Interest

In the world of any organization, sport, or business the question of conflicts of interest may arise. It is important in the sport of Competitive Cheerleading for each official to remain objective. In most cases, an official can have a close relationship with a team or school and remain objective; however, it may be perceived by other coaches that it is not an objective relationship once that official shows up behind a panel table. Occasionally, a coach may suggest that a conflict arises from a safety official, however since they do not provide scores that determine an event, it is rather unlikely. We want to do our best to avoid any perceived conflicts of interest.

If you have a conflict of interest with a school, team, here are a few steps you can take to provide a conflict free event. Trust me; these are for your benefit! The easiest step is to identify which competitions the school is attending. If you know they are in a specific league that does not have a need for a double panel, I recommend avoiding that league. The easiest way to prevent a conflict or appearance of a conflict is not to be involved with judging that team throughout the season.

Receive training as a safety official! If you live in an area where events are not as prevalent, it might be in your best interest to become a safety official as well. Always be sure when the conflicting team is competing to make the host director aware at the time of the contract so that you may be assigned to safety. By having the ability to judge both safety and panel, the opportunity to judge increases greatly.

If you will be at a larger event, such as an invitational and the team will be present, please notify the competition host as soon as possible. This will allow for time to adjust the panel assignments to best avoid a conflict.

Often during the season coaches ask officials to come to practice and help teams clean up routines. Remember, once you have agreed and attended the practice, you now have a conflict! I recommend checking your schedule and theirs to verify that you will not be seeing them for the remainder of the season. This includes the tournament schedule.

Finally, if there is any doubt in your mind as to if your relationship can be seen as a conflict, err on the side of caution. Perception goes a long way. Good luck this season!

Submitted by Laurel Kobe

## Safety Sundays

Beginning in January, Cindy Tyzo will host 'Safety Sundays'. These will be webinars that officials can log into to discuss issues or concerns that arise that week. Watch your email for log in information!

## Pictures from the MCJA Fall Conference



Check out more information at:

# MCJACHEER.COM

## HOW TO SURVIVE A SCRIMMAGE!

**S**crimmages are becoming more and more popular in competitive cheer. Coaches are now becoming more familiar with how to use them as a learning tool for not only their coaching techniques and strategies but for the learning experience of their team.

I personally find them very useful as an official to hone my skills and help me prepare for the season at hand. If handled correctly scrimmages are a win/win for both the team and official.

When asked to officiate a scrimmage you may want to consider and ask the following questions before accepting the assignment:

### **How many teams will be participating?**

If you are not ready to handle a large scrimmage early in the season this might not be the assignment for you. If you have personal plans and are prepared to be there for only a short time again, this wouldn't be the assignment to take. Be prepared to ask before agreeing to the contract if time is a factor for you on that particular date.

### **How many officials will there be?**

If there is a large amount of teams with only a few officials to go around you may want to suggest to the host school that they have more officials participate to ensure a quality scrimmage for the athletes and coaches. If they are unwilling to do that you might want to reconsider whether or not you want to be a part of it. No one wins when the event doesn't start off on the right note.

**What will the format be?** Scrimmages can take on many formats. If you are willing to officiate it is your responsibility to be prepared. I have participated in many formats, everything from just evaluating their material to fully scoring a team. You will want to know how and what to bring depending on the expectation. If they expect you to meet with teams following your evaluation and you are not comfortable doing that this probably wouldn't be the type of meet you should agree to be part of.

**Compensation?** Depending on where you are traveling to, the amount of teams participating, and the expectation of your responsibilities when you arrive ALWAYS clarify ahead of time what your compensation, if any, will be if it is a factor in whether you accept the assignment. Many times scrimmages are voluntary especially if there are only a few teams and the officials are local. Know before you go if you expect compensation.

**Administrative Involvement?** In general it is the coaches of any particular sport that generally put their scrimmages together. Athletic administrators generally do not generate all of the details of a scrimmage unless it is a requirement of that particular school or if the coach involves them in it. If you are concerned that an athletic administrator will be present throughout the event ask ahead of time. There is no general "rule of thumb" when it comes to scrimmage supervision. Each school is unique in their philosophy of how they handle any home event.

**S**crimmages are a great learning tool for the athletes, coaches and officials. Anytime I am asked to be part of a scrimmage I try to make myself available if at all possible. They enable me to be a better official, better communicator and most of all it gives me better insight into the sport I love. I always come away having learned more, communicated in a more positive manner, and felt like a better official for having been a part of a positive, educational learning experience. I have not ever walked away from a scrimmage without having learned something that will improve and enhance my skills as an official. When asked to participate in a scrimmage I encourage all officials to give it full consideration if their schedule permits.

-Submitted by Phyllis Olszewski

