

MFL Annual Meeting 2009
Saturday, May 30, 2009
Montrose School

The meeting was called to order at 1:22 pm by the president, Chris Palmer.

Present: Chris Palmer (Newton South HS), Joyce Albert (Natick), Lisa Honeyman (NSHS), Rob Croteau (Catholic Memorial), Nancy Gahagan (Montrose), Greg Cunningham (CM), Br. Cavet (CM), Jim Honeyman (NSHS), Sarah Donnelly (Natick), Dan Sapir (Sacred Heart), Susan Marianelli (Milton Academy), Chris Sheldon (Bancroft), Holly Loell (Dighton-Rehoboth), PJ Wexler (Needham).

(Total: 9 schools in attendance.)

1. Consent Agenda: The minutes from the 2008 Annual Meeting were accepted without objection.
2. The President and Treasurer gave their reports.
 - President: 5 new programs this year, a number from the Worcester area. It was a good year.
 - Treasurer: Our current balance is \$10,638.99. We have enough money to consider using some for professional development for coaches and/or a possible scholarship for students. States approximately broke even, but the Hall of Fame tournament took in money. Rob Croteau will create a committee to look into scholarship possibilities. Sarah Donnelly & Susan Marianelli will also be on the committee.
 - We will also consider purchasing another computer and printer for the MFL. The current printer is on its last legs – and we need an additional designated laptop to run tournaments.

Chris Palmer announced that the MHL (Mid-Hudson League of NY) is offering a 1-day workshop on September 12th at the Bronx High School of Science in NYC that will be free for both students and coaches if anyone would like to attend. Maybe we can coordinate travel among MFL coaches who would like to go. Chris & Sarah are planning to attend.

PROPOSALS on AGENDA

3. Membership Eligibility

Proposal to Amend Section 1.2. (See Agenda for details). Schools in CT, RI and NH are interested in being part of the MFL since they do not have their own state leagues.

Call for a vote by: CM

Seconded by: DR

Vote: Passed without objection.

4. Re-add Radio Broadcasting (proposed by Cunningham)

Greg (Sponsor)

This event provides for students who may not be excellent at memorization or reading and who are looking for a way to participate. Don't want to turn away programs that may not be established and highly competitive. This is an event that "any" student can do. Advocates for providing the most opportunity for students to participate. Impromptu is an excellent event, but does not attract the same students and therefore is not a good substitute.

After considerable discussion, CM called for a vote:

Call the question: CM

Seconded: Sacred Heart

For: 7

Oppose: 2

Motion Carries. **Radio Broadcasting will be re-introduced as a required MFL event using the rules that existed when it was eliminated at the end of the 2007-2008 season.**

A suggestion was made to write some formal guidelines for tournament hosts about what types of material should be given to the students in their packets to put in the coaches handbook. The board will have to deal with any rules changes/guidelines in the fall.

5. Novice events post-December – Withdrawn by Cunningham.

6. State Tournament Judging

Greg (Sponsor)

Attempt to address issues with quality of judges at States. General sense that judging at States must be at a high quality. Too many hands go up in the judges' meeting at states when asked "how many of you are here for the first time". There were fewer than at other tournaments this year, but still, too many hands went up.

Discussion about enforceability and burden to programs followed, after which the motion was modified:

This motion was changed from an amendment to a resolution.

Resolution: The MFL State Finals invitation will more strongly state the requirement that schools bring qualified judges. Chris will modify the registration program so that it asks for judge qualification or otherwise requests information about the judges when they are registered.

Call for vote by: DR

Seconded by: CM

Passed without objection.

7. Amend Impromptu Rules.

Call for vote by: DR
Seconded by: Bancroft

Passed unanimously.

Students who want to use one blank 3x5" index card must bring their own. The tournaments will no longer be required to provide them.

8. Penalty for Competing in Wrong Room

JOYCE (sponsor):

Asks that we establish a consistent procedure for dealing with this issue. Let's stop "making it up as we go along". Several judges have reported that students argue with them when they are told that they are in the wrong room, saying, "It's "OK, I've done it before and the TAB room will take care of it." There is a sense that students and judges are not taking enough responsibility for making sure everyone is competing in the room they are assigned to compete in. Learning to be where you are supposed to be is an important skill that we teach in this event, too. Judges do not seem to understand the gravity of the issue.

Rob: Proposes to add a line,

"At the tournament director's discretion" to the end of the current proposal.

We voted on the proposed addition:

In favor: 2; Opposed 7.

Call for vote of original motion by: CM
Seconded by: Bancroft.

Motion carries unanimously. The rule states:

"If a student in Speech events competes in a round to which they were not assigned, that student receives last place in the room which s/he should have competed. Scores are adjusted up for the other students in the room in which s/he did compete."

9. Room Usage

JOYCE (sponsor)

Puts into place a consistent rule that may be invoked, but doesn't have to be invoked, by tournament directors if they so choose. This provides consistent language that will apply whenever the rule is applied. It allows schools to place areas of their building off limits and to say that students may not enter classrooms without a judge/adult present. If students violate this rule, they will be disqualified from the tournament. Communication must be clear and in advance (in the invitation) if this rule is to be invoked. Issues in the past have included a tank of fish being killed, mice being killed, rooms being vandalized etc. We risk losing schools (like Shrewsbury and Natick) as host sites if we do not find a way to prevent these sorts of things from happening. This rule would codify consistent practice.

Call for vote by: Bancroft
Seconded by: Montrose

In favor: 8; Opposed 1. The motion passes.

- Suggestion to tournament directors that this information is on the back of maps and posted at tournament so everyone is clear.

"At the discretion of the Tournament Director an/or Tournament Host, a rule may be put in place that calls for the immediate disqualification from competition if any student or group of students is found in a classroom or in any area of a school that has been designated as off limits, without adult supervision. The rule must be included in the invitation and announced and/or posted at the tournament."

10. Combine DI & HI into Dramatic Performance

PALMER (Sponsor)

DI and HI are small early in the year and kids see same competitors over and over again. Combining would lead to a more viable and healthy event. Many pieces don't fit neatly in either HI or DI and end up in Play Reading because they are neither Stand-Up comedy or Death and Disaster. The best drama includes both elements of humor and seriousness, but our current designations push students to one or the other. Most drama falls somewhere in the middle.

There was a long discussion about this proposal. Eventually, Dan Sapir proposed the following amendment:

Proposed Amendment by Dan Sapir – that if this rule passes, it will take affect during the 2010-2011 school year, not next year.

For: 2; Opposed: 5. Abstain: 2. Fails.

After considerably more discussion, there was a call for the vote.

Call for vote by: CM

Seconded by: Natick

For: 4 Against: 3 Abstain: 2

The motion passes.

Beginning with the 2009-2010 season, we will eliminate Dramatic and Humorous Interpretation as required MFL events. Instead, Dramatic Performance will be offered.

11. Evidence Use

With minimal discussion, we voted:

Call for vote by: Sacred Heart

Seconded by: Milton Academy

Passed unanimously.

All competitors must have copies of all sources cited in competition, with full source citations, at the tournament. Debaters should also have copies in the rounds in which the sources are cited. Debate opponents and judges may request to see sources during the round; sources must be presented if they are requested. Debate judges may evaluate evidence within the round as they chose, but severe ethical discrepancies in the use of sources, in all events, should be brought to the tournament director.

12. Elimination of Group Discussion as required MFL event (tabled motion from 2007.)

CHRIS – Other options to the resolution that has been proposed include:

- Another reform
- Going back to old rules
- Making it a novice-only event.

All of those, as well as wholesale elimination, are in bounds. It was proposed in 2003 to eliminate the event and it has never been voted upon. So, there WILL be a vote.

- Report about how the changes that were instituted this year went:

- Greg judged Round 1 at States. The discussion was lively – not fake – more towards what we wanted to do with it when we met as a subcommittee. That said, the format we established for the kids (2-part discussion) wasn't really followed. They thought they were doing it, but they really weren't. Was it the wording of the questions? If we keep the event, we should give more guidance to those who write the topics in the future to give the kids more direction in their discussion. If we do a better job providing guidance, they could do a better job, too. One year is too short to determine if this worked or didn't work. Suggests we revive the subcommittee and that they also write the questions – or screen them – to assist tournament directors. Greg offers to chair that committee. Feels that things are moving in the right direction and we should stick with it for a couple more years.

- Dan Sapir offered to serve on such a committee. At some tournaments the questions had not even been written at the start of the day.

Is group running better than it was before? One says, "no." After judging a few times last year and also this year, was very disappointed & disgusted by what was going on. Competition for its own sake: "I'm better than you," "I'm gonna 'nice' you out the door." Hoped that that would improve – and sad to see it didn't.

Another option: Novice only event? No one was in favor of this.

After considerable discussion, we voted:

FOR: 2

OPPOSED: 6

ABSTAIN: 1

Motion fails. Group discussion is not eliminated as a State Event.

At 4:05 pm, Chris turned his presidency over to Joyce Albert and we established a calendar for next season, given the requests for sanctioning that had come in by the deadline. (Follows).

General New Business

- An exemption granted for M-E not to offer congress if there is not enough interest. (It will be run at same time as NFL Congress Quals.)
- For PFD: A suggestion: Given the huge popularity of the event, maybe tournaments could offer a novice division? Novice final? Or something like that as it grows?
- Br. Cavet offered THANKS to the people of the MFL Board for giving up so much time to serve the league and the students in Massachusetts.
- Rob – Thanks To Chris for being president.
- Will we designate a tournament as the HoF this year? No one put in to host it. We may honor our Hall of Fame members at the Gracia.
- Joyce asks if anyone is interested in an at-Large board position that has not already let her know. She took self-nominations.
- Fall Coaches convention - Sarah & Chris P. have been working on it in the past and will continue to plan next fall's event.

Other business.

- How do we handle texting during rounds? Is there an existing rule? If not, there should be. The board will discuss this at a future meeting.

Motion to adjourn: Sacred Heart

Second: Natick

Meeting was adjourned at 4:22

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Honeyman

VP/Secretary

Preliminary MFL schedule for 2009-2010.

Note: Tournaments that did not file sanctioning requests by the deadline are not on this list.

Date	Event	Location
Oct 10	Novice Tournament & MFL Judge Training	Milton Academy
Oct 24	Dighton-Rehoboth Tournament	Dighton-Rehoboth
Nov 14	Gracia Burkill Tournament	Natick
Nov 21	Little Lex (Debate)	Lexington
Dec 5	Lincoln-Sudbury Speech Jam	Lincoln-Sudbury
Dec 19	The Holly Speech Tournament	Natick
Jan 9	Newton South Tournament	Newton South
Jan 15-17	Big Lex (also the 16 th is NSHS Snow date)	Lexington
Jan 30	Manchester Lasagna Tournament	Manchester-Essex
Jan 30	NFL Congress Quals	Manchester-Essex
Feb 6	NCFL Qualifiers – all events	Shrewsbury
Feb 27	Mardi Gras Tournament	Shrewsbury
Mar 12-13	NFL IE Quals (tentative)	TBA
Mar 20	March Merriness	Needham
Mar 27	State Debate Championships	TBA
April 10	State Speech Championships	Westford Academy

Other Tournaments of note:

Date	Event	Location
Oct 2-4	Yale	New Haven, CT
Nov 21-22	Villiger	St. John's University, PA
Dec	GMU	George Mason University, VA
Jan	Columbia	New York City
Feb 19-21	UPenn	Philadelphia
Feb 19-21	Harvard	Cambridge, MA
May 29-30	NCFLs	Omaha, Nebraska
Jun	NFLs	Kansas City, Missouri