

CIRCUIT TALK

FEBRUARY 2026

WWW.MCCGA.ORG

Announcements

1. ANY UNIT NEEDING TO MAKE A CHANGE TO THEIR SCHEDULE MUST EMAIL FESTIVALCHANGES@MCCGA.ORG.
2. THE DEADLINE TO ADD A FESTIVAL IS 4 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE FESTIVAL DATE.
3. TO AVOID A CANCELTION FEE, ANY UNIT NEEDING TO CANCEL AN APPEARANCE MUST ALSO DO SO NO LATER THAN 4 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE DATE OF THE FESTIVAL BY EMAILING FESTIVALCHANGES@MCCGA.ORG. CANCELATIONS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER ARE EXCLUDED FROM THIS RULE, BUT THE DIRECTOR MUST NOTIFY US BY EMAILING FESTIVALCHANGES@MCCGA.ORG AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
4. ANY QUESTIONS SHOULD BE EMAILED TO MCCGA@MCCGA.ORG AND A BOARD MEMBER WILL RESPOND WITHIN 24 HOURS.
5. UNITS WANTING TO PARTICIPATE IN CRITIQUE MUST SIGN UP NO LATER THAN 4 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE FESTIVAL DATES. SIGN-UP LINKS FOR EACH FESTIVAL WHERE CRITIQUE IS OFFERED ON THE WEBSITE
6. MCCGA SCHOLARSHIP IS POSTED TO THE WEBSITE. DUE 3/2/26
REMINDER EVERY GROUP PERFORMING AT THE CHAMPIONSHIPS CAN SUBMIT 1 APPLICATION
7. HALL OF HONOR NOMINATIONS FORM ON THE WEBSITE. DUE 2/16/26 THIS IS SUCH A SPECIAL WAY TO HONOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE MADE SUCH A DIFFERENCE IN MCCGA. PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO NOMINATE SOMEONE YOU FEEL IS DESERVING OF THIS AWARD
8. VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR- DEADLINE FEBRUARY 28TH
9. DIRECTOR/ FESTIVAL INFORMATION IS NOW FOUND UNDER THE DIRECTORS TAB ON THE MCCGA WEBSITE.
10. ALL PENALTIES WILL BE APPLIED STARTING 2/21. PLEASE DOUBLE-CHECK YOUR BOUNDARIES!



EDUCATION CORNER

With Luke Christisen

REMAINING CREATIVE WITHIN CRITIQUE

NAVIGATING JUDGES' RESPONSES OR THE CRITIQUE PROCESS CAN PROVE TO BE ONE OF THE MOST DYNAMIC ASPECTS OF A COMPETITIVE SEASON. OFTENTIMES IT CAN LEAD DESIGNERS/DIRECTORS INTO A STATE OF WANTING TO FIX EVERY AND ANY PROPOSED OR PERCEIVED PROBLEM BEFORE EACH INDIVIDUAL SHOW.

WHILE THIS MAY FEEL LIKE A NATURAL RESPONSE, THIS CAN LEAD PERFORMERS TO HAVE TO CONSTANTLY ADAPT TO AN EVER CHANGING ENVIRONMENT WHERE SOMETIMES ACHIEVEMENT MAY BE THE ACTUAL INGREDIENT THAT IS MISSING. BELOW YOU WILL FIND THREE TIPS TO POSSIBLY HELP YOUR PROGRAM NAVIGATE THE ASPECT OF OUR ARTISTIC ACTIVITY THAT IS PART AND PARCEL OF THE PROCESS; CRITIQUE AND JUDGING.

1. ASSESS THE CURRENT STATE OF DESIGN/TRAINING AND ACHIEVEMENT

DESIGNERS AND DIRECTORS SPEND COUNTLESS HOURS CRAFTING STAGING AND EFFECT MOMENTS WITH THE HOPE THAT THEY LAND AND RESONATE WITH THE AUDIENCE/JUDGES. SOMETIMES THESE MOMENTS DON'T LAND IN THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THEY ARE INTENDED. THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT THE CREATIVITY BEHIND IT IS "INCORRECT."

SOMETIMES IT CAN COME DOWN TO A FUNDAMENTAL FACTOR AS SIMPLE AS A LACK OF ACHIEVEMENT FROM A PERFORMANCE PERSPECTIVE THAT CAN LEAD TO THESE CAREFULLY CRAFTED MOMENTS TO NOT HIT THE MARK.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO OBJECTIVELY TAKE A STEP BACK AND EVALUATE WHETHER ACHIEVEMENT MAY PLAY A FACTOR INTO THE COMMENTARY THAT IS PROVIDED, BOTH CHOREOGRAPHICALLY AND STAGING WISE. CLEANING AND CLARITY CAN PROVIDE A HUGE ADVANTAGE TO THE OVERALL SUCCESS OF AN INDOOR SHOW.

2. ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

THE CRITIQUE ENVIRONMENT CAN PROVIDE INVALUABLE FEEDBACK FOR ANY SHOW. FULLY LISTENING TO ALL RECORDED FEEDBACK AND CRAFTING THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS CAN BE THE BEST METHOD OF GETTING TO THE RIGHT ANSWERS LEADING TO A MORE SUCCESSFUL SHOWING IN THE FUTURE.

IF A DESIGNER/DIRECTOR FEELS THEIR INNATE CONCERNS ABOUT THEIR PROGRAM TO BE VALIDATED BY A JUDGES COMMENT OR CRITIQUE, IT'S IMPORTANT TO TAKE NOTE AND ADJUST ACCORDINGLY. A SOLID QUESTION TO KEEP IN MIND IS WHETHER THE PROGRAM DEMONSTRATES CLEAR TRAINING AND IS CLASS APPROPRIATE.

3. ALLOW SPACE FOR A SECOND READ

IF TRAINING IS EVIDENT, PERSONALLY VIEWED WEAK SPOTS IN THE PROGRAM ARE NOT ADDRESSED AND ACHIEVEMENT LEFT ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT, SOMETIMES THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION IS TO ALLOW ROOM FOR A SECOND READ. THIS LESS REACTIONARY APPROACH CAN HELP PARSE THROUGH THE NUANCE OF JUDGING AND CRITIQUE AND GIVE INITIAL CREATIVE MOMENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO POSSIBLY SHINE IN THEIR BEST LIGHT IN THE FUTURE.

WHILE EVERY DESIGNER/DIRECTOR MAY HAVE THEIR OWN APPROACH TO THIS PROCESS, HOPEFULLY THESE THREE APPROACHES ADD MORE TOOLS TO YOUR TOOLKIT WHILE NAVIGATING CRITIQUE/JUDGING.



DIRECTOR TIPS & TRICKS

with RCC & Advisory Board

DIRECTOR TIP: GET FEEDBACK OUTSIDE OF YOUR STAFF

SEND A VIDEO

THIS IS A GREAT OPTION, ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE FARTHER AWAY FROM POTENTIAL CLINICIANS. YOU CAN SEND VIDEOS TO PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT STRENGTHS, SUCH AS MUSIC DESIGN, CHOREOGRAPHY, AND EFFECTS.

. EACH PERSPECTIVE BRINGS SOMETHING VALUABLE TO THE TABLE.

SEE IF SOMEONE CAN COME IN

THIS MAY NOT BE FEASIBLE FOR EVERY GROUP, BUT WHEN POSSIBLE, HAVING A CLINICIAN COME IN TO WORK WITH YOUR STUDENTS IS INCREDIBLY BENEFICIAL. IT CAN FEEL A LITTLE VULNERABLE, BUT MOST CLINICIANS ARE NOT THERE TO JUDGE, THEY ARE THERE TO HELP STUDENTS HAVE THE BEST EXPERIENCE POSSIBLE. THEY CAN ALSO MAKE SMALL ADJUSTMENTS ON THE SPOT, WHICH CAN BE VERY USEFUL. PLUS, STUDENTS OFTEN RESPOND DIFFERENTLY TO FEEDBACK FROM A GUEST CLINICIAN THAN FROM THEIR REGULAR INSTRUCTORS (MUCH LIKE HOW KIDS SOMETIMES LISTEN TO ANOTHER ADULT MORE THAN THEIR OWN PARENT).

IF YOU NEED HELP FINDING A CLINICIAN, CONSIDER REACHING OUT TO AN ADVISORY MEMBER TO SEE IF THEY CAN HELP CONNECT YOU.

ONE OF THE BEST THINGS ABOUT THE MUSIC AND GUARD COMMUNITY IS HOW WILLING WE ARE TO SUPPORT AND HELP ONE ANOTHER.



JUDGES CORNER

with Cheryl Myers

Greetings, all!

judges CORNER

This month I want to talk a little bit about class expectations.

The sheets specify that Regional A class should demonstrate BEGINNING/INTRODUCTORY skills, A class: INTERMEDIATE skills, Open class: ADVANCED skills, and World class should strive for Virtuosity.

While we don't have a list of compulsory skills for each level, the sheets and the manual give us a framework for these expectations, with the underlying message being make SURE the performers are demonstrating the training to fulfill the skill, across all performers. This becomes especially important in the RA and A class IA captions, due to the 60/140 (RA) and 70/130 (A) factor, which places significant emphasis on the Excellence portion of the sheet.

Let's talk about Regional A.

As judges, we often see RA teams attempting skills that push the envelope of what the sheet guidelines specify. If your performers are able to SUCCESSFULLY complete those skills, it can work in your favor. If, however, the muscular depth and training is not in place to support those skills, they can end up decreasing your potential score. To wit, one does NOT have to throw 5's and 6's on the RA sheet - the sheet is designed for training and growth. Your judges are seeking strong training, CLARITY, CONSISTENCY and COMPLETION. If bringing down the rotations makes for a stronger catch, thereby ensuring a stronger phrase? It may be something to consider.

On the RA sheet, Excellence is your driver. Lean into that, don't skimp on your basics program, choreograph skills your performers can fulfill, and add (if desired) as they master those skills. Encourage your kids to love this sport that we all love so very much!

Region Highlights

Western Region- Winnetonka High School

THE PRIDE OF WINNETONKA HS RUBIES BEGAN COMPETING IN MCCGA DURING THE 2021 VIRTUAL SEASON. OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, THE RUBIES HAVE CONTINUED TO PUSH MORE AND MORE TO ELECTIVE GREAT HEIGHTS AND NEW SUCCESS! LAST YEAR WE PLACED FIRST AT OUR FIRST COMPETITION OF THE YEAR AND THIS YEAR WE MADE OUR WGI DEBUT AND TOOK 2ND IN PRELIMS AND FINALS. SOMETHING FUN TO LOOK OUT FOR THIS YEAR IS THAT OUR STREET ART ON THE PODIUM IN OUR SHOW HAS EACH COMPETITION'S NAME ON IT BELOW OUR LOGO!



Eastern Region- Union High School



-UNION HIGH SCHOOL WINTER GUARD
 -SCHOLASTIC REGIONAL A
 -THE UNION WINTER GUARD IS A NEW PROGRAM THAT STARTED IN 2023. THE GROUP HAS ENJOYED LEARNING EVERYTHING ABOUT MCCGA! THE TEAM DESCRIBES THEIR FAVORITE PART AS LEARNING NEW THINGS AND COMPETITION DAYS WITH FRIENDS! THIS YEAR, THEIR SHOW IS CALLED "A DROP IN THE OCEAN" AND THEY CAN'T WAIT TO DEBUT IT!

Region Highlights

Southern Region- Glendale High School

THE GLENDALE HIGH SCHOOL WINTER GUARD IS COMPETING IN ITS TWELFTH SEASON IN 2026, AND HAS FIFTEEN STUDENTS PARTICIPATING THIS YEAR. GHS WINTER GUARD PROGRAM HAS BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL THE PAST TWO YEARS, ENDING LAST YEAR'S SEASON WITH A BRONZE MEDAL AT MCCGA SCHOLASTIC REGIONAL A CHAMPIONSHIPS,

OUR PROGRAM ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO GROW AS PERFORMERS AND INDIVIDUALS BY EMPHASIZING BOTH THE PERFORMANCE ASPECTS OF THE SPORT AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT. OUR SHOW, BEYOND OUR CHAINS, GUIDES THE AUDIENCE THROUGH LOVE, THE WEIGHT OF BEING BOUND, AND THE POWERFUL JOURNEY TOWARD FREEDOM. STUDENTS HAVE EMBRACED THIS SHOW AND EACH STUDENT STRIVES TO SHARE THEIR STORY THROUGH THEIR PERFORMANCE.

