

Speech and debate team teaches valued life skills

By Sean McNamara
Freelance writer

ROCHESTER — While many high school students dread having to speak in front of a crowd, members of McQuaid Jesuit High School's speech and debate team thrive on the challenge.

"I love to act, and speech and debate brings me into a new arena," said senior co-captain Christopher Parks.

Parks performs in several categories of speech. He prefers dramatic performance, where he memorizes a 10-minute segment from a particular play and acts it out himself, altering his voice to indicate character changes.

"It's restrictive as far as you can use nothing, but it is more fun (than stage acting) because you have to be more creative in the way you convey the piece to the audience," said Parks, who also participates in school plays.

"It also makes me enjoy it (performing) more because I'm not depending on anything but myself," Parks said, explaining that when he acts by himself he can't blame anyone else if things go wrong. "You just have to improvise (improvise) if you forget."

In all, 14 students participate on McQuaid's team, according to Mark Hallinan, a Jesuit scholastic who coaches the team

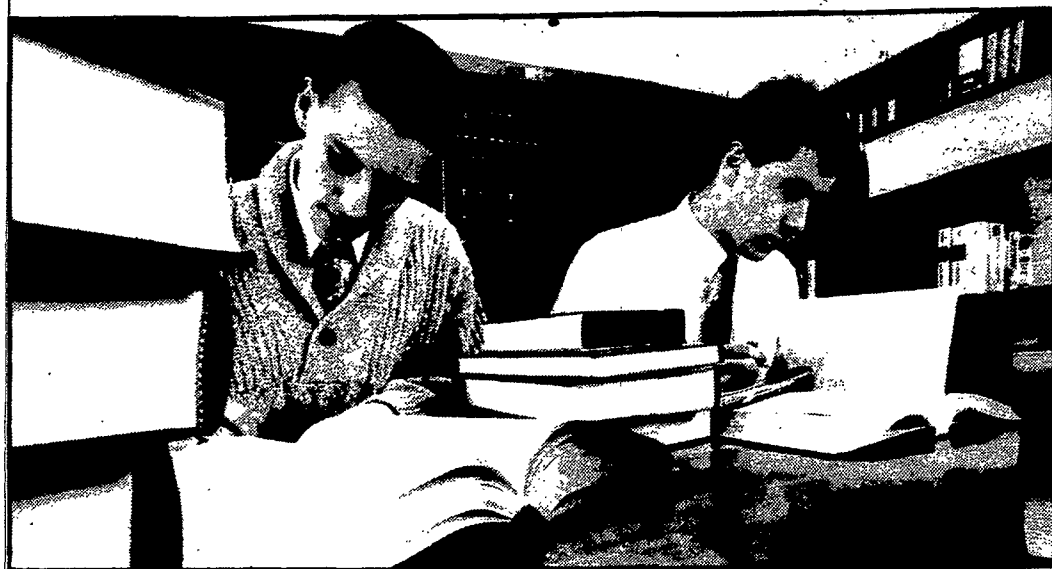
with another scholastic, Robert O'Hare.

The speech and debate team had been dormant until three years ago, when Philip Judge, who was a scholastic at the time, arrived at the school from New York City. He worked with the group for two years before he left to continue his studies. Hallinan and O'Hare then took over as coaches.

This year's speech and debate team has been very successful, finishing in first or second place in each of its eight tournaments. Team members now have their sights set on the New York State Forensic League Championship April 27-28 in Albany, and the National Catholic Forensic League Championship in Chicago May 25-28.

Michael Schlacter, the team's other co-captain, plans to compete in both championship tournaments. Last year, he finished fifth in the nationals.

Schlacter participates in both Lincoln-Douglas debate and extemporaneous speaking, but is best in debate. In a Lincoln-Douglas debate, which is modeled after the philosophical debates between Abraham Lincoln and Steven Douglas during the 1860 election campaign, the two participants debate morally wrenching issues such as "nuclear deterrence is immoral," Schlacter said.



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
Christopher Parks (left) and Michael Schlacter, co-captains of the speech and debate team at McQuaid Jesuit High School, often spend hours preparing for a subject. They are also called upon to speak extemporaneously.

"I've always enjoyed debating one person to another. It allows you to argue back and forth," Schlacter said. "The part I enjoy most of all is the speaking and the thinking, not the writing beforehand."

Developing clear speech and thought skills are some of the greatest benefits of being on the team, Hallinan said.

"I think we can convey our feelings more accurately," Parker said.

Although he plans to go on to a career in electrical engineering, Parker said the speech and debate skills he has learned will still give him an edge over other students.

"Speech and debate is a preparation for that, especially the writing skills. But you can use it anywhere," Parker said. "It's basic communications skills. You can sway a person one way or the other if you can dazzle them with brilliance."

DeSales High School

Does public speaking scare you?

Lydia Fernandez, freshman

I've always had trouble talking to people. I used to be really shy when I was little, and I guess I still am somewhat. I'm always so afraid of saying something wrong that when I do say something it comes out all wrong because I get so nervous. I always found it easier to talk to people my own age (rather) than to adults though. I guess that's because I can relate better to people my own age than to adults. I can write whatever I intend to say, but when it comes to saying it, I just can't do it.



AS TEENS SEE IT

Danielle Boncaro, junior

No, I don't feel comfortable speaking to a large group of people. I do not feel comfortable because I get very nervous. I am also the type of person who will really worry about what I have to do. I would want everything to be so perfect I would keep worrying myself about it. I would get very paranoid and not know if anything was right.



Tony Urwin, sophomore

I'm very seldom frightened to appear or speak in front of an audience. I just concentrate on my ideas and thoughts, and most of all relate to the people. Some people are good at public speaking whereas others are not. Don't talk in a monotonous voice; change the pitches so people's attention is directed upon you, and finally smile. People like to see a nice, happy and joyous orator before them. It helps keep them interested.



Paul Annunziata, senior

The thought of public speaking does not scare me in essence. But when I am placed in the position of having to speak in front of a large group of people, I instantly get scared. I think it is important that everybody is able to overcome the fear of public speaking because it is a vital skill we all need to master.



Nazareth players to present 'Wizard of Oz'

ROCHESTER — The Nazareth Academy Lamplighter Players will present their spring musical *The Wizard of Oz* April 6 and 7 at 8 p.m. The first performances took place last weekend.

The Nazareth musical is directed by Michael Szatkowski, a pianist and writer who has directed productions at Cardinal Mooney, Our Lady of Mercy and Bishop Kearney high schools. Szatkowski has also staged musicals in New York City and the surrounding area.

Michelle Karch plays Dorothy, Nicole Bruno plays the lion, McQuaid's Brian Edd plays the scarecrow, Rick Staropoli of McQuaid plays the tinman, Kim Owens

plays the wicked witch of the West and Chris Kiepper plays Glinda the Good Witch.

Oz is choreographed by Ami Salzman and produced by Sister Mary Clouser. Musical director is Michael Klesch.

Our Lady of Mercy and McQuaid Jesuit high schools teamed up to perform *Seven Brides for Seven Bothers* March 22, 23 and 24.

The musical, which was staged at Mercy, was directed by Kathy Perconti with musical direction also by Szatkowski. For information and tickets for *The Wizard of Oz*, call Nazareth at 716/458-8583.

Tuition at St. John Fisher College to rise eight percent

ROCHESTER — Tuition for full-time undergraduate students at St. John Fisher College will increase by eight percent for the next school year, the Fisher administration recently announced. Tuition for the 1990-91 academic year beginning in September will increase from the current rate of \$7,680 to \$8,300.

The average cost of room and board will increase from \$3,925 to \$4,300, bringing the combined cost of tuition, room and board to \$12,600.

The tuition hike is necessary to cover the

college's increasing costs, according to Dr. Alan Norton, vice president for financial affairs. Norton noted that the cost of insurance for the college has risen by 17.6 percent while the cost of health benefits for faculty and staff has increased by 12.9 percent.

Fisher plans to offset the impact of the higher tuition rate on students and their families by increasing funding for scholarships and grants by 11.6 percent, Norton said.

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MUSIC TRIVIA

This week's question:
What female pop artist performed in Rochester recently, but was unable to perform in Syracuse due to being injured in a car accident?

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Rules:
Each week, the Catholic Courier, in conjunction with the House of Guitars will feature a Music Trivia contest. All you have to do to enter is answer the question, fill in your name and address and the school you attend (if applicable), cut out the coupon and send it in to the Catholic Courier. If more than one correct entry is received, a drawing will be held and one winning entry will be drawn.
If yours is the winning entry, you will be mailed a coupon for a free album or tape of your choice redeemable at the House of Guitars, 645 Titus Ave.
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