

# MHS Graduate Finds Success At National Level In Speech Competition

**BY NANCY GAGNET**  
MIRROR REPORTER

Issa Polstein didn't make it to his high school graduation ceremony. He had a prior commitment.

Polstein was in Washington, D.C., attending the National Catholic Forensic League Grand National Speech Tournament, where he was named the national runner-up in the dramatic interpretation category.

It's the first time a student from Maumee High School has advanced to the national level in competition, said MHS speech and drama coach Josh Furrie.

"As a coach, you only get to coach or work with someone like Issa once in a coaching career, and some coaches don't even get that privilege. I'm proud of all of the students in the program," he said.

With a flair for drama and the desire to make his audience laugh, Polstein performed a 10-minute routine based on the book *I am a Genius of Unspeakable Evil and I Want to Be Your Class President* by Josh Lieb, who is a writer for *The Daily Show*.

Polstein competed against 232 students, said Furrie, who watched Polstein perform in the quarterfinal, semifinal and final rounds of competition.

"Issa's personality is conta-

gious. As a coach I had never seen what he was able to do in those rounds. He feeds off of the audience and he loves what he does. And that passion to please the audience is what makes him the type of kid that he is," Furrie said.

For Polstein — who brought home a nice-size trophy along with greater notoriety among those in speech and debate circles — it's all about the opportunity to entertain.

"I'm never in it for the trophies," he said. "It's fun to get a piece of hardware, but that's not why I do it. I do it because I just love entertaining people and making people laugh.

"I really wanted to break into the final round at the national tournament because this is when you're up in front of literally hundreds of people that I got to entertain, and that was an experience like no other."

To qualify for the tournament, a panel of judges reviewed all of Polstein's previous work throughout his four years on the speech and debate team at MHS.

Polstein, who competed at nearly every local, district and state competition, had an impressive list of accomplishments, Furrie said.

"The kid has done more than I have ever seen, both as a competitor myself when I competed and as a coach. He



**Recent MHS graduate Issa Polstein placed second in the National Catholic Forensic League Grand National Speech Tournament in Washington, D.C. It was the first time a student from MHS had ever qualified at a national competition.**

MIRROR PHOTO BY NANCY GAGNET

did so many different events it was actually scary," Furrie said.

Placing in the top three at nearly every competition, Polstein participated in competitive acting events, congressional debate and speech events.

"If dedication is what some kids have, Issa has 10 times that. I can't tell you how many times I received e-mails or phone calls from him asking how he can improve here or there, and

what he needs to do to perfect this. It wasn't just wanting to do it — he loved what he did," Furrie said.

In the eighth grade Polstein heard about the speech and debate team and decided to give it a try.

In addition to the opportunity to wear a suit every weekend — something he admits he loves to do — he also thought it would be a better alternative to sports.

"For me a lot of it has to do with the fact that I have never been athletic at all," he said. "And because of that, my social popularity and my mojo were saying, 'Yeah, look at me, I can do this. I'm cool. I've brought home trophies for the school.' I guess it's the idea that is built into you as a young kid because that's how schools work."

Once he began competing, he realized he had a knack for it.

"I realized that this is something I am really good at, and people applaud me for being good at it, and I possessed the skills that other people don't have," he said.

In high school he also participated in numerous plays, the select choir and quiz bowl.

Polstein will attend Kenyon College to pursue a double major in economics and political science with a concentration in American studies and a minor in sociology. He also hopes to start a speech and debate club at the college.

From there, he plans to pursue acting work in Chicago.

"I'd like to move to Chicago and be a starving actor for a few years and try to break into acting," he said.

As far as missing his graduation ceremony, he didn't

mind.

"I'd rather graduate by doing something that I have spent the past four years loving and working towards than sitting in a room full of people that I may or may not know, in an uncomfortable dress, watching people walk across the stage. It was worth every ounce of effort I have put into it the past four years," he said.

Following the competition in Washington, Polstein and fellow graduate Steve Jechura competed at the National Forensic League National Championship in Dallas on June 12-19.

In the congressional debate category, Polstein advanced to the quarterfinal round and placed 39th out of 240 competitors.

He also competed in the impromptu category, where he was a quarterfinalist and placed 30th out of 430 students.

Jechura advanced to the third round in the extemporaneous commentary category.

Jechura attended the event as a second alternate. He replaced Matt Ducey, who didn't attend the competition because he was attending Buckeye Boys State, a week-long program in government sponsored by the American Legion.

## Ohio EPA Sets Public Hearing

Chrysler is planning an expansion of its Toledo North Assembly Plant that will require air pollution permits from Ohio EPA.

To explain the draft air pollution permits and listen to public comments, Ohio EPA and Toledo Division of Environmental Services (TDES) will hold a public information session and hearing on Thursday, July 14.

The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the West Toledo YMCA Auditorium, 2110 Tremainsville Rd, Toledo. During the information session, officials will present information about the draft permits and answer questions. During the hearing, the public can submit comments for the record regarding the draft permits.

The Toledo North Assembly Plant body shop and paint line will be expanded to accommodate the 2013 model year platform. Facility-wide increases from these changes will add 8.02 tons of carbon

monoxide, 9.75 tons of nitrogen oxides, 2.1 tons of large particulate matter, 0.34 tons of sulfur dioxide and 31.58 tons of volatile organic compounds to the facility's allowable annual emissions.

Three permits are being considered. One is a new permit-to-install to add a foam injection process to the body shop.

The second permit action is a modification to an existing permit. Chrysler is expanding the current sealer operation and installing four natural gas-fired curing ovens on the sealer and coating operations to allow for operational flexibility.

The third permit action is a modification to allow some current robotic welding equipment to be replaced and directing existing fugitive emissions through a stack.

The federal Clean Air Act and its amendments regulate the type and quantity of materials that may be discharged into the air. The maximum

allowable emission levels are designed to protect human health and the environment. These levels are set in permits issued by Ohio EPA.

Ohio EPA and TDES will accept written comments on the draft permits through Monday, July 18. Anyone may submit comments or request to be on the mailing list for information. Ohio EPA will take all public comments into consideration before deciding whether to issue or deny the permit.

To comment or receive information on the draft air permits, write to Bob Kossow, Toledo Division of Environmental Services, 348 South Erie St., Toledo, Ohio 43602, or fax comments to Bob Kossow at (419) 936-3959. The application and other related materials are available for review at TDES by calling (419) 936-3015. The draft permits also are available online.

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