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AMATEUR BASEBALL

Schoenberg receives Mike Downes Award

Randy Schoenberg has helped Spring Hill baseball since 1983

By Nick Gerhardt, Minnesota Baseball Association

The Schoenbergs are synonymous with Spring Hill, but their footprint extends beyond. Since Spring Hill revitalized amateur baseball back in 1983, Randy Schoenberg's been part of it.

His four decades of involvement has seen him wear many hats, and he's become a well-respected member of the townball community in the state. As such he received the Mike Downes Award from the Minnesota Baseball Association for outstanding service to amateur baseball this year.

The Mike Downes Award is given out annually to a person for their outstanding service to amateur baseball in Minnesota. Schoenberg certainly fits the bill and embodies the spirit of townball.

Schoenberg started playing for Spring Hill with a group dedicated to reviving baseball in the community of 85 people in Stearns County. The effort involved purchasing land and building a ballpark.

In that time, the Chargers have advanced to seven state



Photo Courtesy of Minnesota Baseball Association

Randy Schoenberg, who joined the Spring Hill Chargers in 1983 and has helped in various capacities ever since, including as Region 15C commissioner, received the Mike Downes Award.

tournaments and melded into the Stearns County League.

Schoenberg played for the club for 21 years and managed the team for 13 years. In 33 years of playing or managing,

he never missed a game. Schoenberg entered the Minnesota Amateur Baseball Hall of Fame in 2023 after Don Andersen and Al Leutner led an effort to nominate him.

In his time with Spring Hill, he's taken on leadership roles for Region 15 as the region's commissioner for the past 25 years. The region is known as one of the best attended and competitive in the state. Region 15C either leads the state in region tournament attendance or ranks second.

"Randy has had a big part of keeping the region going," said Minnesota Baseball Association director Ken Vogt, a former Elrosa manager. "I have to give him a lot of credit. He works hard, getting the umpires, scheduling the games. I think that's a major reason why our region has been at the top or near the top in attendance because he's run it."

Schoenberg points to the familiarity among the teams, especially the Stearns County League, which employs a six-mile radius, a far cry from the MBA's 30-mile radius limit.

"I just think it's the radius," Schoenberg said. "Everyone on the team is fairly local. Everyone wants to watch local. They're going to know everyone on the team probably. It's like a big family reunion kind of. You know every fan from every team. You can BS around from one side of park to another. We start at 11 o'clock with games, and people stay around until it's after dark talking."

SCHOENBERG – Page 3

LEGISLATURE 2025

Divided House is completing its '25-'27 budget work on time

Tied House means tied committees, which have been working together

By Matthew Blake, MinnPost

When Nolan West rose to co-chair this year of the Minnesota House Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee, his first edict was a seating chart.

Typically, West explained in his capitol office adorned by statuettes of Abraham Lincoln, Ronald Reagan, and an elephant, Republicans sit by Republicans and DFLers perch by DFLers.

But on a committee with seven DFLers and seven Republicans, the Blaine Republican decided that each DFLer would sit between two Republicans and vice versa. "Normally when someone says something stupid that you disagree with you lean over to your colleague and say, 'Isn't that stupid?'" West said. "Now, if you're going to say anything you can actually have a side conversation and say 'Well, what about this?' instead of digs and snarky comments."

The House is two months into a power-sharing truce between Republicans and DFLers, a deal that was brokered because there are exactly 67 members of each party in the legislative chamber; the first House tie since 1979.

It took not one, not two, but three trips to the Minnesota Supreme Court to confirm the House was, indeed, tied. Even when the power-sharing agreement was implemented, House leaders were skeptical the deal would take hold.

"They are very suspicious of us. We are very suspicious of them," Melissa Hortman (DFL-Brooklyn Park), the House DFL leader, said then.

Fast forward to today (Wednesday, April 23) and Hortman and her GOP colleagues see a split House as a secondary concern to hammering out a two-year budget to fund Minnesota's government. "For the most part, it is working really well," Hortman told reporters before lawmakers took off for spring recess (legislators came back to the capitol on Monday, April 21). "I was pleasantly surprised that we had budget targets on

time. I've also been pleasantly surprised by the number of bills that are complete."

The bipartisanship is remarkable in an era of national politics where members of Congress fall in line with party leaders, and public opinion polls suggest voters see the parties as representing different value systems.

It also comes as the state stares down a long-term budget imbalance and braces for possible federal cuts.

Here is what has happened so far...

What the House Has Accomplished

House committees have advanced most of their spending bills.

First, to review, the power-sharing resolution made GOP leader Lisa Demuth (R-Cold Spring) House speaker and moved Hortman from speaker to speaker emerita. And each of the House committees has an equal number of DFL and GOP lawmakers, plus a chair from each party.

An early test of cooperation was budget targets, which are where legislative leaders instruct committees on how much money to put into each spending bill. For example, DFL and GOP House leaders told West's committee to spend \$25 million more for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families over the next two years, compared to the Minnesota Management and Budget's February forecast. (Gov. Tim Walz's budget recommended a \$21 million increase to agency funding.)

That brings that part of the budget to \$2.1 billion for the two-year period that begins in July 2025. West and co-chair Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn (DFL-Eden Prairie), then wrote a bill proposing where the \$2.1 billion should go across areas like child care, early learning, and food banks. The resulting legislation kept social services funding steady, while adding a critical provision for West: surveillance camera footage at childcare facilities. "That issue was very important to me, and I was willing to spend on other things that I don't necessarily like," West said.

West proposed such monitoring after he revealed that his own child came home with bruises from a daycare center. The language that passed the House committee makes daycare centers already hit with a maltreatment report take video footage and retain that footage for 60 days.

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SPEECH

Taylor Bierwerth places sixth at state meet

Senior caps her speech career by making finals and placing sixth

By Michael Jacobson

Senior Taylor Bierwerth competed in the Class A state speech meet for the third time in her PHS career on Friday, April 25, at Shakopee High School, and this time she's coming home with a state medal. She placed sixth in Class A in serious interpretation of drama.

Bierwerth, the daughter of Susie Bierwerth (stepdad Chad Bjorklund) of Paynesville and Travis Bierwerth of Atwater, won the Section 5A title in dramatic interpretation on Saturday, April 12, with her piece "Crafty" by Paul Rudnick to qualify for state again, tying the school record with her third state trip. She's the first PHS student to qualify for state three times in two different categories: prose as a sophomore and drama as a junior and senior.

At state, Bierwerth tied for seventh in the preliminary rounds, going third, second, and third in her rooms. It was a five-way tie for seventh, with Bierwerth getting eighth and the last finals spot based on the strength of her prelim rounds.

In the finals, she got a first-place vote from one of the five judges and finished sixth in drama. She finished just one point further from second than from seventh in finals.

"I am incredibly happy to have made it to the final round of the MSHSL state speech tournament. This has been my goal for so long, and I am so glad to have finally achieved it," she said. "The people I competed against are some of

Class A State Speech

PHS has earned 13 state medals in speech, the latest by senior Taylor Bierwerth (sixth in drama) on Friday, April 25, at Shakopee High School. She also tied the school record by competing at state for the third time.

State Placers

Andy Shuch, first, prose, 1983
Doug Jensen, fourth, prose, 1983
Hannah Felling, seventh, discussion, 2002
Caitlin Lien, fourth, informative, 2006
Kaitlin Burlingame, second, humorous, 2009
Kellen Andersen, seventh, humorous, 2011
Rachel McCloud, eighth, drama, 2011
Rachel McCloud, fourth, drama, 2013
Sophie Strand, fourth, humorous, 2019

Damian Christian, first, creative expression, 2021
Delaney Ignace, first, original oratory, 2021
Ben Bugbee, seventh, extemporaneous speaking, 2023
Taylor Bierwerth, sixth, drama, 2025

Three-Time State Qualifiers

Caitlin Lien, informative, 2004-06
Kaitlin Burlingame, humorous, 2007-09
Rachel McCloud, drama, 2011-13
Ben Bugbee, extemporaneous speaking, 2021-23
Taylor Bierwerth, prose/drama/drama, 2023-25

the most talented speakers I have met, so it is an honor to have spoke alongside them."

"Taylor has been an exceptional member of the Paynesville speech team. From her initial curiosity to join during the online year to becoming the team captain and competing at this year's state competition, I have witnessed Taylor's remarkable growth in confidence and skill," said PHS speech coach David Symalla. "It has been both an honor and a privilege to be part of her journey. She is a dedicated teammate, a supportive leader, and someone who consistently strives for excellence. I couldn't have asked for more from her, and I wish nothing but the best for Taylor in her future endeavors."

In her speech, Bierwerth portrays a midwestern mom, Barbara, who "makes crafts and tells people about them." Crafts, it turns out, are so important to her because her

son is dying of AIDs, "and she uses crafts to cope and deal with that."

This year, the script was shorter (maybe 20 minutes), which was much easier to edit down to 10 minutes, she said. Last year, her source material was 70-minutes long, which involved a lot of editing. (Material can only be removed; no words can be changed in editing.)

She actually started the year with a completely different speech, but "I realized I didn't like it at all. It didn't fit my acting."

"I was looking on YouTube for different speeches. I found this," she continued. "I could do a slightly different interpretation."

"This one looks really fun. I think I can do well with it. I think it has all the criteria that the judges like – a wide range of emotion," she added.

Usually she'd be preparing two or three months before speech season, but the late

change gave her only one week before the season started to prepare and memorize.

While she went to state as a sophomore in prose, which uses books as source material, she thinks drama (scripts from TV shows, plays, etc.) is better for her. "I think my style of acting is more dramatic than prose," she said. "You can go way more, all out. That's what I always liked, to be very dramatic."

During her sophomore year, she had to cut 30 pages of a book into a 10-minute story. "That's more difficult than cutting an actual script," she said.

This year, that first meet was a little rough, since she was still memorizing the speech and working on her acting. But she finaled, finishing third.

"I just practiced a lot more. It started to pick up at the second meet. I got first," she said.

She ended the season taking first six times, including in the Central Minnesota Conference (for the third time), at subsections (for the first time), and at sections (for the second time). "This has been my best season so far," she said of six firsts. "Compared to my other seasons, the most I've gotten was two firsts."

She was worried about this script, especially after the rocky first meet. "I remember asking my coach if I could do well with this script," she said. At the second meet at Maple Lake, she got two perfect firsts and scores of 100 from two judges. (She had one in her entire career, as a sophomore, before that. "To get two in one meet was a surprise," she said.

Over the season, she made small changes to the speech, based on judges' feedback and suggestions from Symalla. "I think that was the biggest change: adding emotional depth," she said.

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