

## A Message from the President

January 17, 2010

Hello JAOA members,

Happy New Year, I hope this message finds all our officials well and happy. As time continues to go by swiftly, another decade begins. The year 2009 was challenging for most all of us considering the downturn in the economy contributed to many moments of stress, frustration, uncertainty and unrest whether you were an official, a parent, a player, an athletic director or a spectator. Unfortunately for some, the "hard times" will yet be even harder, less jobs, more cuts in budgets, higher prices, etc. To survive in 2010, we must change, we must improve our ways, we must look at every angle to try to do things better. If we stand still and continue on without doing things differently and improving, others will blow by us and we will be left in the dusk. Our school systems as we see them today are not standing still, changes are occurring daily in order for them to continue to offer extra curricular activities, including sports.

Our association is member strong and financially stable, however as officials we cannot stand still and just watch the changes in the school systems and high school sports evolve. Our parent association, the MHSAA is going electronic with rules meetings, registration, training, etc. You must get on board with the internet. Neither the MHSAA nor the JAOA will be spending money on postage, all registration and communication will be via the internet. How is our association keeping pace with the electronic/internet era? School systems are making financial cuts in all areas of their districts, moving to "pay to play" to eliminating some sports all together. How will these budget cuts affect us as officials? Spectators are becoming more unruly, demanding and disrespectful as ever. What do we do to help officials deal with these potential hostile environments on the playing fields and courts? The athletes and the competition are becoming bigger, faster, and stronger – are we healthy and in shape to be able to keep up with the game? As it seems that life in general continues to be more challenging - how do we ensure that the members of our association always conduct themselves professionally, setting good examples, uses good, consistent judgment, takes pride in their work as an official and represents our association with integrity and pride?

These are just some of the questions I ask of you? What are your thoughts, concerns, and answers? I am all about communication and this is our association. I would like to hear from as many officials as possible this year with comments, suggestions and ways to improve "us" as an association. As President of the JAOA, I commit to you that I will respond to every response that is made to me. My plan is to post our association by-laws, all Board of Director meeting minutes and all your responses to me on our website so all members can view the thoughts of our association.

Please use my personal email address at [mpapiersky@comcast.net](mailto:mpapiersky@comcast.net) to communicate with me. As all of us know our jobs no matter what industry we work in are becoming complex and demanding and we are being asked to wear many different "hats" so I would appreciate you do not use my work email address.

I wish all JAOA members a prosperous 2010 and have a great year officiating high school athletics.

Kind Regards,

Mary Anne Papiersky

*Jackson Area Officials Association, President*