

## **History of The Indiana Percussion Association**

*Written by Daniel Fyffe,*

*With assistance from Mark Harasim, Jimmy Haskell, Mickey Ratliff, Michael Scheiber, Nate Noble, Jeff Huffman, Rusty Bottomley, Jay Webb, Barbara Doll, Matt Bonfield, Jim Bailey, Jason Trigg, David Robbins, Ward Durrett, Steve Yoder, Sheryl Fyffe and Piper Harriman.*

### **Pre-IPA Years**

Before the Indiana Percussion Association existed in reality, it existed in necessity and in the dreams of a few active marching percussion instructors and band directors. The marching percussion instructors, myself included, felt the frustration of beginning each fall marching band season with percussionists whose chops and skills were quite rusty. The annual process of “beginning all over again at square one” was an educational dead-end for the drumline. The percussive and musical skills of the members of the drumline would at best, move forward slowly and would max out upon the graduation of a large class. Only if the educational process for the percussionist could continue in the winter at the same rate that was established in the fall, would the percussion student reach their full musical potential. For percussion instructors in the pre-IPA era, the dream of leading their students into an indoor arena in the dead months of winter to compete and sharpen skills was realized only through a few intermittent performance and competition opportunities. For band directors with the vision to see that other opportunities could be provided for their percussion students, the idea of indoor percussion and an Indiana indoor percussion circuit was a necessity. Transporting their students to various out of state contests and looking for opportunities at home was a beginning, but an Indiana indoor percussion circuit was needed.

In the pre-IPA days of Indiana indoor percussion, creative directors found home grown indoor performance opportunities for their marching drumlines including half-time shows at basketball games and exhibition performances at winter guard competitions. The world of indoor marching competition was heating up by the late 1970's. DCI was entertaining the notion of a winter color guard circuit and in 1978, Winter Guard International, today's top pageantry circuit in the nation, was formed. WGI began as a color guard (winter guard) only club. It would not be until 1993 that its founders fulfilled their vision and added percussion units.

While the indoor activity was stirring in the color guard world, innovative percussion instructors and band directors were creating independent indoor contests for their drumlines. The granddaddy of this event was the Glenbrook Spartan Marching Percussion Festival organized by future WGI Hall of Fame member Ward Durrett. Drumlines from Indiana including Goshen High School (1992 champion) found the drive to the Chicago suburban school of Glenbrook acceptable. The nineteen-year reign of this contest began in 1980 and ended in 1998.

In the late 1980's independent indoor contests were popping up throughout Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky. Perhaps the most famous was the Morehead State University "A Day of Marching Percussion". The Morehead State University Contest, hosted by Frank Oddis, ran from 1983 through 1998. The Morehead State University "A Day of Marching Percussion" became the model for many other independent indoor drumline contests and would have a great influence on the Indiana Percussion Association. The Center Grove High School Indoor Drumline was very successful at this contest.

Drumlines from Indiana were successfully competing in a number of Midwest indoor percussion contests. The indoor drumlines of Indiana quickly proved themselves on the national stage. Indiana, with a rich history of marching percussion, connections with the birth (and future home) of the Percussive Arts Society and an innovative percussion education program, established itself as a center of the indoor percussion activity.

The Percussive Arts Society was the first national organization to sponsor an indoor drumline percussion competition. The Percussive Arts Society began hosting competitions in 1982 as part of PASIC (Percussive Arts Society International Convention). The Center Grove High School Indoor Drumline of Greenwood won this competition in Nashville. At the same time that Center Grove was blazing a trail for Indiana indoor drumlines, Warsaw High School in Northern Indiana was gaining notoriety on the national indoor drumline competition scene. In 1993, Warsaw won the Bands of America Indoor Drumline Competition that was part of the Bands of America National Marching Band Competition held in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Many Indiana high school drumlines were seeking out and finding a variety of indoor performances opportunities. Records of these events are scarce and most of the early indoor drumline performances are now recorded only in the memories of those who had the opportunity to participate in such events. Besides Goshen High School, Warsaw High School and Center Grove High School, other Indiana schools were participating in indoor drumline competitions including Blue River Valley High School, Sheridan High School, Clay City High School, Martinsville High School, Franklin Central High School, Northview High School, etc.....

By 1993, Winter Guard International was sponsoring a national indoor percussion competition and in 1994, Indiana had its first entry in the national competition. In 1994, the Wheaters independent indoor drumline placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the competition. In 1995, Indiana returned to the Winter Guard International Championships with the Wheaters and two high school units, Laporte High School and Avon High School. Avon High School would become one of the most successful high school drumlines in the history of the WGI circuit and the model for the innovative three-tier system of classification. In 1996, the Wheaters independent indoor drumline and Avon High School once again returned to

WGI. In 1996 Sheridan High School replaced Laporte to complete the trio of Indiana units competing. Avon High School won its first of five Winter Guard International World Titles in 1996! Avon High School's first WGI World Title was in Percussion Scholastic A class (WGI had adopted the three-tier system by 1996).

### **Formation of the Indiana Percussion Association**

Throughout the late eighties and nineties, many Indiana band directors and percussion instructors kept a continuous dialog about creating an Indiana circuit. In the fall of 1996, Avon High School Band Director Jay Webb sent a letter to Indiana band directors about the formation of an Indiana Indoor Percussion Circuit. On November 23, 1996, an organizational meeting was held at Avon High School. There was an impressive turnout at this meeting. Many precedents and wise decisions were made including the adopting of WGI rules and procedures (with some minor alterations for Indiana). Officers were chosen (see appendix for officer listing) and possible judging panels were discussed.

#### **The first officers of the Indiana Percussion Association:**

1. Jay Webb – President
2. Michael Scheiber – Vice President
3. Jimmy Haskell was Treasurer and Judge Coordinator
4. Daniel Fyffe – Secretary

#### **The Indiana Percussion Association began with sixteen charter members:** (PD = Percussion Director, BD = Band Director)

- I. Avon High School, BD Jay Webb, PD Adam White – Marching A
- II. Blue River Valley High School, BD Jeff Carnall, PD Nate Noble – Marching AA
- III. Center Grove High School, BD Tom Dirks, PD Rodney Smith – Concert
- IV. Chesterton High School, BD George Hattendorf, PD Michael Scheiber
- V. Columbia City High School, BD Brian Taubert, PD Nate Noble – Marching A
- VI. Columbus North High School, BD Bill Stultz, PD Tim Brookshire – Marching A
- VII. Franklin Central High School, BD Ray Hauser, PD Daniel Fyffe – Concert
- VIII. Frankton High School, BD Mark Harting, PD Ralph Johnson – Concert
- IX. Logansport High School, BD David Cole, PD Murray Weaver – Concert
- X. Mooresville High School, BD Jerry Weber, PD Stacy Duggan – Concert
- XI. Owen Valley High School, BD Jimmy Haskell - Inactive
- XII. Penn High School, BD Keith Rudolph, PD Murray Weaver – Marching AA
- XIII. Plymouth High School, BD Cindy Wagoner, PD Kent Arnsbarger – Marching AA
- XIV. South Bend Adams High School, BD Dean Swihart, PD Charlie Lawrence – Concert
- XV. Warsaw High School, BD Martin Becker, PD Mickey Ratliff
- XVI. Yorktown High School, BD Vincent Early, PD Jim Jones – Marching A

The first years of any organization are precarious. Not only were the students who participated in the early years of IPA new to the indoor percussion activity, but also the band directors, percussion directors, some judges and the band booster organizations.

IPA essentially began with little funding. It was only through the generosity of a few band booster organizations and officers that the organization was able to move forward.

### **The First Competition Season (1997)**

In 1997, the first Indiana Percussion Association State Finals took place at Avon High School on March 22, 1997. The State Finals occurred after two IPA sanctioned invitationals took place. The first was held at Frankton High School on February 15, 1997 and the second occurred at Blue River Valley High School on March 1, 1997. *You may find scores for the early IPA shows at the Scores Archive section of the IPA website – <http://www.indianapercussion.org>.*

Units participating in the first IPA state Finals were:

1. Frankton High School
2. Franklin Central High School
3. Mooresville High School
4. Warsaw High School (State Champions Concert Class)
5. Columbia City High School
6. Yorktown High School
7. Columbus North High School
8. Avon High School (State Champions AA Marching Class)
9. Penn High School
10. Blue River Valley High School (State Champions A Marching Class)

As a footnote to the 1997 season, Avon High School returned to the Winter Guard International World Finals and won its second world title in Percussion Scholastic Open Class!

### **The Second Competition Season (1998)**

It seemed that no sooner than the 1997 season ended that the 1998 season was beginning. Instead of repeating the first year and settling for steady growth, IPA undertook a bold initiative. President Jay Webb envisioned a statewide percussion clinic day which would put IPA at the forefront of percussion education in the state of Indiana. IPA Secretary Daniel Fyffe undertook the task of organizing and hosting the first Indiana Percussion Association Clinic Day at Franklin Central High School. Over the years, many national leaders in percussion education would present clinics and concerts at the IPA Clinic Day.

IPA grew greatly in its early years. In 1998, IPA sanctioned five indoor percussion competitions including the state championship which was held at Owen Valley High School. The second state finals consisted of fifteen units.

State Champions for the 1998 state finals include:

Carmel High School (Class A Marching)

Avon High School (Class AA Marching)  
Franklin Central High School (Concert Class)

As a footnote for the 1998 season, Franklin Central High School won the Winter Guard International World Title in Concert Class (the first of six). Only after some serious encouragement from IPA judges Kevin Miles and George Hattendorf, did Franklin Central High School decide to participate in WGI competitions.

### **The Third Competition Season (1999)**

In 1999, IPA once again took a bold initiative in which they would continue to demonstrate a commitment to education. IPA adopted the innovative three-tier classification system already used by WGI. In the three-tier system, classes (or divisions) were determined by curriculum, not unit or school size. A unit's placement in a particular class was determined by the difficulty of the music and skill sets demonstrated.

IPA sanctioned seven competitions including state finals. With three sites being added in the southern part of the state, IPA was spreading out across the state of Indiana. Groups from as far south as Castle High School and as far North as Lake Central High School were participating in IPA events.

The third IPA state finals grew to 24 participating units.

#### **State Champions for the 1999 state finals include:**

Columbia City High School (Class A Marching)  
Carmel High School (Open Class Marching)  
Avon High School (World Class Marching)  
Franklin Central High School (Concert Class)

As a footnote for the 1999 season, Franklin Central High School won its second Winter Guard International World Title in Concert Class.

### **The Fourth Competition Season (2000)**

In its fourth season, IPA continued its growth, both numerically and educationally. Thanks to the work of Treasurer Jimmy Haskell, IPA was able to begin offering college scholarships to seniors (scholarship winners are listed in the appendix).

The first IPA scholarship recipients were Jake Hayden of Franklin Central High School and Sarah Whybrew of Mt. Vernon High School (Fortville).

In 2000, IPA also demonstrated its continued commitment to percussion education through the launch of its impressive website, [www.indianapercussion.org](http://www.indianapercussion.org). The website would not only serve as an outlet for practical information concerning the circuit, it would also include an Education Zone.

The 2000 IPA state finals featured 39 units including an amazing 15 units in concert class.

State Champions for the 2000 state finals include:

Chesterton High School (Class A Marching)  
Lake Central High School (Open Class Marching)  
Avon High School (World Class Marching)  
Franklin Central High School (Concert Class)

As a footnote for the 2000 season, Franklin Central High School won its third Winter Guard International World Title in Concert Class.

**The Fifth Competition Season (2001)**

With the growth of IPA, it became apparent that a state prelims competition would soon be needed. IPA decided to be proactive in this matter and in 2001; Avon High School hosted IPA's first state prelim competition. Fifty-one units participated in this event including a few out of state units. Out of state drumlines were drawn to the Indiana circuit by IPA's reputation for excellent adjudication and enthusiastic audiences.

In keeping a consistent educational philosophy, IPA and WGI added open concert class in 2001. IPA also added an Individual and Ensemble competition to the annual Clinic Day. Winners of the Individual and Ensemble competition would perform at the end of the clinic day for their peers.

Mickey Ratliff of Warsaw High School became scholarship committee chairman (see appendix for scholarship winners).

State Champions for the 2001 state finals include:

New Palestine High School (Class A Marching)  
Owen Valley High School (Open Class Marching)  
Avon High School (World Class Marching)  
New Albany High School (Open Concert Class)  
Franklin Central High School & Warsaw High School (World Concert Class)

As a footnote for the 2001 season, Franklin Central High School won its fourth Winter Guard International World Title in World Concert Class and Avon won its third Winter Guard International World Title in Percussion Scholastic Open Class.

**The Sixth Competition Season (2002)**

Perhaps the big story of the 2002 indoor season was IPA's dominance of the Winter Guard International World Percussion Finals. Five units from Indiana won world titles in 2002. From its beginning, IPA had consistently produced world champions. By participating in numerous indoor percussion invitationals judged by WGI sanctioned adjudicators, IPA units were arriving at world finals prepared and ready to compete. National winners included the newly formed independent group Plan B of Fort Wayne, recurrent world title winners Avon High School and Franklin Central High School, the strong concert program of New Albany High School and the exciting New Palestine High School.

State Champions from 2002 were:

Mt. Vernon High School of Fortville (A Class Marching)  
Center Grove High School (Open Class Marching)  
Avon High School (World Class Marching)  
Ben Davis High School (Open Concert Class)  
Franklin Central High School (World Concert Class)

World Champion winners from 2002

Avon HS – PSW (Fourth Title)  
Franklin Central HS – PSCW (Fifth Title)  
New Albany HS - PSCO  
New Palestine HS - PSA  
Plan B - PIA

**The Seventh Competition Season (2003)**

By 2003, the IPA State Finals are amazingly large. IPA has become the circuit that national percussion adjudicators seek out. The IPA state finals have grown to the point that two alternating judging panels are working the finals.

Indiana was setting the standard in the percussion concert class. Franklin Central High School, New Albany High School and soon Goshen High School were experiencing great success on the WGI circuit, and the number of groups participating in concert class at IPA sanctioned competitions outpaced other state circuits. In 2003, IPA kept consistent with its educational philosophy and added a Concert A Class. To this day, IPA is the only circuit with three divisions for concert class.

State Champions for the 2003 state finals include:

Goshen High School (Concert A Class)  
Bishop Dwenger High School (Class A Marching)  
Anderson High School (Concert Open Class)  
New Palestine High School (Open Class Marching)

Franklin Central High School (World Concert Class)  
Avon High School (World Class Marching)

Footnote to the 2003 season. Ironically, after the amazing success of 2002 on the national circuit, 2003 was the first year since its inception that IPA did not produce a national champion.

### **The Eighth Competition Season (2004)**

In 2004, the IPA networking system became an asset for groups heading to San Diego for the WGI World Finals. Three concert units, New Albany High School, Franklin Central High School and Anderson High School teamed up to rent a semi in order to transport equipment to San Diego. Working together at world finals was not new for schools from Indiana. Thanks to the bridges built by IPA, units from Indiana were able to combine equipment onto one truck, share travel information and assist each other loading and unloading during the heavy downpours.

The 2004 State Finals also introduced a new class of units, the independent indoor drumlines. Now, students whose high schools did not sponsor an indoor drumline had an indoor percussion outlet.

#### **State Champions for the 2004 state finals include:**

Chesterton High School (Concert A Class)  
Maconaquah High School (Class A Marching)  
Greenwood High School (Concert Open Class)  
Norwell High School (Open Class Marching)  
Plan B (Independent Open Marching)  
Franklin Central High School (World Concert Class)  
Center Grove High School (World Class Marching)

As a footnote for the 2004 season, Franklin Central High School won its Sixth Winter Guard International World Title in World Concert Class.

### **The Ninth Competition Season (2005)**

With 2005 came the emergence of Indiana's first Independent World Group. In similar fashion as IPA's other accomplishments, the independent group I-2 of Indianapolis rocketed from its beginnings as an Open Class Group to the WGI Finals of Independent World Class. Amazingly, this occurred in a matter of months.

#### **State Champions for the 2005 state finals include:**

Twin Lakes High School (Concert A Class)

Decatur Central High School (Class A Marching)  
New Palestine High School (Concert Open Class)  
Franklin Central High School (Open Class Marching)  
Warsaw High School (World Concert Class)  
Center Grove High School (World Class Marching)

As a footnote for the 2005 season, Goshen High School won the WGI PSCO World Title and Center Grove High School won the WGI PSW World Title.

### **Our Tenth Anniversary Season**

And here we are, our tenth year. Ten years, a decade, went by in the blink of an eye. The Indiana Percussion Association has seen and undergone many changes. IPA has been a national leader in the indoor activity since its inception. It is to be noted, that an organization is made up of dedicated and hard working individuals. Besides those mentioned, many percussion instructors, band directors, administrators, participants and fans have done their part to insure the continued success of the Indiana Percussion Association. Quicker than we can imagine, another ten years will pass, and another, etc. Enjoy and cherish these moments and those around you! To see what these young people can achieve on the floor is truly unbelievable! To hear and see what the design teams and directors create year after year is amazing! To witness the love and support the parents show their children who participate in this activity is uplifting and inspiring (which I say as an understatement)!

### **Appendix**

#### **The Officers of the Indiana Percussion Association**

##### **1997 - 1999**

Jay Webb – President  
Michael Scheiber – Vice President  
Jimmy Haskell – Treasurer & Judge Coordinator  
Daniel Fyffe – Secretary

##### **2000 - 2001**

Daniel Fyffe – President  
Michael Scheiber – Vice President  
Jimmy Haskell – Treasurer  
Nate Noble – Secretary

##### **2002 - 2003**

Michael Scheiber – President  
Rusty Bottomley – President-Elect

Jimmy Haskell – Treasurer  
Ron McClure – Secretary

### **2004**

Rusty Bottomley– President  
Nate Noble– President-Elect  
Jimmy Haskell – Treasurer  
Dave McCracken – Secretary

### **2005**

Rusty Bottomley – President  
Nate Noble – President-Elect  
Mark Harasim – Treasurer  
Dave McCracken – Secretary

### **2006**

Nate Noble – President  
Dave McCracken – President-Elect  
Steve Angel – Treasurer  
Jeff Huffman – Secretary

### **Sites of the IPA State Finals**

1997 – Avon High School  
1998 – Owen Valley High School  
1999 – Franklin Central High School  
2000 – Franklin Central High School  
2001 – Avon High School  
2002 – Decatur High School  
2003 – Decatur High School  
2004 – Ben Davis High School  
2005 – Ben Davis High School

### **Sites of the IPA Clinic Days**

1997 – Franklin Central High School, Daniel Fyffe, Host  
1998 – Franklin Central High School, Daniel Fyffe, Host  
1999 – Anderson High School, David Robbins, Host  
2000 – Anderson High School, David Robbins, Host  
2001 – Hamilton Southeastern High School, Michael Niemiec, Host  
2002 – Hamilton Southeastern High School, Michael Niemiec, Host  
2003 – Hamilton Southeastern High School, Michael Niemiec, Host  
2004 – Hamilton Southeastern High School, Michael Niemiec, Host  
2005 – Plainfield High School, Brad Roberts, Host

## **IPA Scholarship Winners**

### **2000**

Jake Hayden of Franklin Central High School  
Sarah Whybrew of Mt. Vernon High School (Fortville)

### **2001**

Valerie Amstutz of Warsaw High School  
Mat Snyder of Maconaquah High School  
Gretchen Rohlfing of East Noble High School  
Jason Hammond of Owen Valley High School  
Brian Omerso of New Albany High School

### **2002**

Jonathan Jasinski of Merrillville High School  
Jason Lindsey of Franklin Central High School  
Katie Meloy of Ben Davis High School  
Jeremy Votaw of Greenfield Central High School  
Paul Woods of New Palestine High School

### **2003**

Michael Cotton of Warsaw High School  
Christiana Cushing of Franklin Central High School  
jared Stephens of Avon High School  
Emily Sorg of New Albany High School  
Bradley Teach of New Palestine High School

### **2004**

Joseph Hake of Bishop Dwenger High School  
Nichole Horner of Logansport High School  
Wesley Lindauer of Heritage Hills High School  
Michael Lindsey of Franklin Central High School  
Nate Wilkerson of Avon High School

### **2005**

Mark Guiles of Warsaw High School  
Andrea Hilliker of New Palestine High School  
Kendra McFarland of Taylor High School  
Craig Rogers of Ben Davis High School  
Cliff Raschick of Decatur Central High School