

## A Short History of the Manchester Essex Debate Team

1971-2006

It was the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning on an overcast, drizzly night in Lexington, Kentucky. The Lexington Legends were locked in a 5-5 tie with the infamous Hickory Crawdads. The audience was spellbound; looking out over the bleachers, one could catch the typical sights of a spring ball game: people buying crackerjacks from the wandering vendors, entire families sporting their team's colors, and fans frantically diving over seats to catch renegade foul balls. As the Legends' famed cleanup hitter stepped to the plate, one could allow his gaze to settle on a man pictured on the big screen located above left field before realizing that it was none other than Timothy Averill dancing to Eminem's "Lose Yourself."

While other debate teams are busy pouring through heaps of evidence they have read and reread, Manchester Essex debaters are probably outside throwing a frisby, letting out the stress that has built up in anticipation of their next bout. And while other coaches are fervently prepping their students on the ins and outs of eminent domain's ethical dilemmas the night before a major national tournament, Aves can probably be found devilishly placing tea cups on unsuspecting debaters' ears at the local Chinese restaurant. It is not that Manchester Essex's students are not academically dedicated; they have simply always been the team to maintain the precious balance between work and play. Following Aves' boogie at the stadium, he correctly foresaw a walk-off homer that would put Lexington ahead 6-5. In the same sense, he correctly foresaw the triumph that Manchester Essex would enjoy the next day to end the 2006 debate season – a first place closeout at the Tournament of Champions in Public Forum Debate.

After 35 years of research, commitment, and perseverance led by Mr. Averill, the Manchester Essex Debate Team continues to stand true to two fundamental philosophies - that sheer work will never lead to success unless it is supplemented with enjoyment and fun, and that every student, no matter his capability or promise, deserves the chance to learn debate and acquire the skills that accompany this incredible activity. With multiple National Championships through the years, a plethora of unforgettable memories, and the program's accessibility to all who wish to take advantage of it, debate has made a lasting impression on generations of students. As the team travels to Dallas, Texas, this June to compete at the National Forensic League Grand National Tournament, it will take with it the same ideology that has already led to victories at Yale, The Glenbrooks, and TOC's this year, and one can only expect that the four debaters representing Manchester Essex will enjoy similar success.

### The Beginning: 1971-1979

Timothy Averill began his illustrious debate career as a high school student in Topeka, Kansas, debating Policy rounds on the local and national circuits. After attending the University of Kansas, Mr. Averill arrived in the small, debate-deprived town of Manchester-by-the-Sea in 1971 with a vision of creating a debate team and exposing a generation of students to the valuable skill set that he had acquired from debate. Mr. Averill told the *Boston Sunday Globe* in 1987, "Debate was the single best college preparation I had. I learned to use the library, think on my feet, read for a purpose and get organized."

In an effort to get maximum involvement and interest, the debate team originally was open to both middle and high school students. Before debate became part of the formal curriculum, the team met as a club after school, where Mr. Averill, affectionately known as “Uncle Tim” at the time, taught his debaters to share evidence and write cases. Mr. Averill remarked, “When we first got started we had four kids, and in every single tournament we got creamed. But we were in it to learn and enjoy ourselves and I think the kids really got a lot out of it...by the next year, we were up to eight kids, and the school made it a credit course.” While today’s Manchester-Essex debaters are able to pick and choose from dozens of local and national tournaments throughout the school year, the team was originally able to attend only two or three local competitions each year.

Mr. Averill, during his entire time at Manchester Essex, has always possessed an incredible ability to recruit kids to join the debate program. As Gael Donelan noted:

Mr. Averill was our 8th grade English teacher in 1972. He staged a mock debate in our 8th grade class - to identify recruits to the debate program he had set up in 1971. I remember that mock debate. I was scared to death. And I couldn't wait to do it again... A few of us 8th graders took a bus ride on one Saturday morning to a debate tournament, to watch the Debate Pioneers at a tournament at the end of the year. I remember John and Kit both won speaker trophies. I thought - that could be me.

Today, the Manchester Essex Debate Team is made up of over ninety members in a school with a total student population of just four-hundred. This is an incredible testament to both Mr. Averill’s ability to recruit interested students as well as to the values of the Manchester Essex school system, which make debate such an attractive activity to this day.

Due to the youth of the program, the team was limited primarily to local tournaments where students thrived in a competitive environment without becoming overly stressed from national travel. Having taken full advantage of local competitions for the first few years, the team felt as though it was appropriate to hold its own home tournament in 1973. Although it originally drew only dozens of debaters, the October tournament, renamed The Tim Averill Invitational in 2005, is now nationally recognized as among the most competitive tourneys on the national high school circuit. Thanks to Anastasia Brown’s suggestion to serve “real” food as opposed to fast food, the Manchester tournament served homemade lasagna made by parents of debate team members. When Manchester began to run a second, smaller tournament in January a number of years later, the famous lasagna was served at that time, and the event was named The Lasagna Luncheon. The secret recipe still lies within the depths of the debate files.

Knowing that more travel opportunities hinged on expanding their shoestring budget and that more success would require a bolstered arsenal of evidence, the team decided to begin holding weekend “researchathons” in 1973. Manchester debaters and Uncle Tim would lock themselves in the high school for 24 hours at a time with nothing but food, research materials, and caffeine. While today’s generation of debaters have the luxury of doing research online and printing out cases on laptop computers and micro printers, debaters of the early 1970’s could not rely on modern day technology to do their research. Researchathons required newspapers, books, and other publications, and students would cut evidence with scissors and paste it on small “cards.” Rather than sending out a bulk of letters asking for donations, as the debate team does today, debaters went door-to-door asking for pledges for each hour that they spent researching. Tournaments were also run without the aid of the personal computer. Each team’s name was

kept on a card, sorted into a pile by its record, and pairings were printed on the schematic (schedule) using a mimeograph machine.

Now having raised funds, the team was able to begin overnight travel in the 1973-1974 season when Manchester competed in its first overnight tournament in Barrington, Rhode Island. This began more than just a tradition of overnight travel; it marked the first of the infamous “Awful Awful” contests. The team would stop at the Newport Creamery en route to the tournament each year in order to grab a hearty meal before the debate competition. However, on the way back home, the real competition began. The restaurant served a milkshake known to patrons as the Awful Awful - awful big and awful good! It also offered a once-in-a-lifetime chance to save big bucks; for every three Awful Awfuls one consumed, he or she was eligible to receive a free milkshake. As if the weekend’s debating had not already drained their competitive juices, the students and Uncle Tim started an annual contest to see who could drink the most milkshakes. Soon thereafter, it was decided that quantity alone was no longer enough to determine a champion. Speed also became an integral part of the event and, as the records indicate, Hugh Bethell holds the undisputed record at 4.9 seconds.

These few years were a turning point for the team. Milestones had been reached with the first speaker awards, the first home tournament, and the beginning of fun traditions, including Uncle Tim’s downing of three and a half Awful Awfuls. At this time, Gail Donelan, founder of the Tim Averill Debate Fund, became the first Manchester debater to attend a summer debate institute. The notion at the time was that success at the national level, a logical next step for the team, would require a bit of extra work from external sources. Gail remembers:

Mr. Averill asked me if I'd be interested in going to a summer debate institute at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. I was the first Manchester debater to venture into the summer debate institute world - my family and friends thought I was nuts...My partner (I think from Wisconsin) and I won the tournament at the debate institute that summer. I met debaters from all over the country. That summer debate institute experience changed my life. I realized I could compete and win against anyone in the country. I went back again the summer of 1975 to UMass; my partner and I again won the tournament.

Debaters have continued to follow the example set by Gael, as many students give up weeks of their summer vacation both to learn new skills and bring back evidence and knowledge to share with the rest of the team.

In 1979 when the team was substantially larger than the four original students and when the skills gained by past debaters, such as Gael Donelan, were passed on to younger students, Manchester Debate finally translated its hard work into tangible results when Martha Cutter and Charlie Brown advanced to finals in the UMass tournament. Martha Cutter recalled this significant event when she wrote:

My debate partner, Charlie Brown, and I made the finals at a huge national tournament at the University of Massachusetts in 1979 - something no team from Manchester had ever done. We debated in front of an audience of 600 people, and when we lost the final round by a hair due to a piece of fake evidence, Mr. Averill only said: “Kids, I’m so proud. You got further than anyone else. You guys are the start of something big.”

Mr. Averill’s ability to encourage and support his students is one of his numerous characteristics that have led students to admire him for so many years. As 2005-2006 Manchester Essex Debate Team President Chris Comenos notes, “Aves is always there to support his team, whether it is to console a novice on the verge of a nervous

breakdown before his first round ever or to congratulate a pair of seniors who have just won a major national championship. And what is more remarkable, is that his encouragement will be equally enthusiastic in both situations. That is what makes him so special and what keeps so many kids involved in the program.”

As Martha explained immediately before noting her achievement at UMass, “I remember the [morning before a local tournament] when my debate partner’s mother dropped off banana bread instead of my debate partner and said, ‘Billy’s sick. Have fun. Enjoy the cake.’ And when I realized that after all my hard word and preparation, I would be debating alone, and would probably lose every round, my heart sank. But Mr. Averill said, ‘It’s good practice. You can get through this.’ And when I did lose every round, he only said, ‘But look how well they scored your speaking!’”

While Martha unsurprisingly noted that the extent of Uncle Tim’s support was the same as when she succeeded at the UMass tournament, she also jokingly stated that students were no longer allowed to miss a tournament under any circumstances. Mr. Averill decreed that one must either come in person...or in a body bag.

While the team trophy case was still relatively bare at the close of the 1970’s, the pioneers of Manchester Debate - both Mr. Averill and the first students - had established a firm foundation for future members. The team had gained confidence, started what was to become a famed national tournament, established a reputation for good sportsmanship, and had initiated a number of fun traditions that kept students interested and enthusiastic about spending their precious weekends on debate trips. It was only a matter of time before the team would establish itself as a true force on the local and national circuits.

### **The Road to a National Championship: 1980-1987**

Knowing that debate at Manchester had out grown its status as an afternoon club activity, Mr. Averill took a year off to work as an assistant debate coach at UMass Amherst in order to take his team to the next level - success on the national circuit. During his sabbatical, Mary Jane Brown served as a substitute teacher and traveled on weekends, keeping the team on track in the classroom and on the road.

Simultaneously, around 1979 The Phillips Petroleum Company sponsored a new National Forensic League event - Lincoln-Douglas Debate. Policy debate had grown more technical, rule-oriented, and fast paced over the years, making it less accessible for public consumption. Lincoln-Douglas (L-D) was modeled after the historic rhetorical confrontation between Stephen Douglas and Abraham Lincoln in the 1858 Illinois Senate race. In an interview with the debate website VictoryBriefs.com, Mr. Averill commented:

I think the best arguments for L-D...are arguments that arise out of informed reading and the ability to create an anecdote, example or analogy which makes the argument convincing. L-D was created because when the sponsor of NFL came to see a national [Policy] debate final round, and it was so incomprehensible that the NFL had to come up with something which would communicate to an intelligent lay judge.

Manchester was one of the early adopters of the new event, much as it is today with Public Forum Debate. Lincoln-Douglas was intended to focus on morals, philosophies, and the ideal while Policy Debate was based on specific plans and policies designed by competitors. Manchester had early success stories in this new type of rhetoric: Hugh Bethell and Kristine McCoy performed exceptionally well at tournaments offering Lincoln-Douglas, and Bethel

attended Manchester's first NFL national tournament in June 1984 in San Antonio, Texas, arguing the topic, "Resolved: That uniformity in education leads to mediocrity."

Uncle Tim's return the following year marked the final time that junior high students were involved with debate; from then on, they would have to wait because high school students now occupied all the available spots on the team. With the program firmly established, the new decade brought unprecedented success and a new generation of debaters, led by Hugh "Mr. Debate" Bethell, Marc Romano, and Curtis "Buddha" Buddenhagen. The team enjoyed continued victories from 1981-1983 at the Bates College Tournament, the Suffolk University competition, Foxboro, Lexington, Melrose, New Bedford, Silver Lake, and UMass. The team's growth and recent successes also brought Mr. Averill recognition from his colleagues. He enjoyed his share of awards during that time period as he was honored by Suffolk University as the Champion Novice Coach and by UMass as the NFL Coach of the Year.

The 1980's also brought the infamous Bocce craze. While it didn't hit the rest of the nation, it certainly had an impact on the Manchester Debate Team. Though the set was heavy, the team was dedicated to the game and brought it to every major tournament. When the elimination rounds began, those who had not advanced gathered to face off in intense matches. While debaters battled tooth and nail in break rounds with other schools, the rest of the team fought equally hard versus other generations. The Manchester Bocce team had the chance to challenge the reigning champions in both Kansas City and the North End of Boston. "Bocce is to debate what sausage is to an Italian meal," Aves points out. "Essential to adding the spice to life." The team continues to get strange looks from competitors and additional airport security checks due to their maintained devotion to the "Sport of Champions."

While Manchester Debate soared, other schools' debate programs unfortunately dwindled. Schools such as Melrose and St. John's Preparatory School, which once had large, competitive debate programs, lost their teams, resulting in a drop in local debate opportunities. Running a fully functional debate team requires massive amounts of funding, time, and dedication from coaches and staff who are willing to spend endless afternoons and weekends with the students. Equally important is the existence of an administration that both values the activity and is willing to set aside funds to promote its existence and success. While Manchester High School was undoubtedly blessed with all of these assets, other institutions could not find the resources and the commitment to continue promoting debate. Knowing that the aforementioned schools and others, including Salem and Beverly were once active members of the local debate community, the newly created Tim Averill Debate Education Fund will work to reenergize and reestablish local competitions. Keeping the interest of Manchester Essex's team in mind, Mr. Averill will dedicate time in his retirement to establishing and reviving failing programs, promoting more debate opportunities and competitions for our students.

Realizing that competition at the local level was becoming less rigorous, Mr. Averill began to push his students even harder in order for the team to achieve the same level of success, but at the national level. Several initial, eye-opening victories in 1986, including Sarah Gannett and Zach Leber's victory at the University of Massachusetts and Bates College were hints of a promising future. The team worked incredibly hard in 1986, yet even Mr. Averill was not aware of how important that year's preparation would mean for both the team and several specific individuals. When looking back, many young debaters and coaches still wonder what took place during the year 1986 that made Manchester so prepared for the coming years. For every argument dropped, did Uncle Tim make his debaters run laps? For every round lost, was there an extra essay due the following day? Or perhaps, did Mr. Averill

make a very strategic decision, which at the time seemed incredibly amateurish but which proved ingenious a year later.

At the 1986 NFL New England District Qualifier, two of his teams faced each other on the schematic and Mr. Averill had to decide which team to advance and bring to the 1986 NFL Nationals in Oklahoma. His “A” team of Sarah Gannett and Zach Leber had competed extraordinarily well that year and seemed primed to become the next national champions in policy debate. However, his “B” team of Kristen Bolten and Andrea Marston was equally qualified, and Sarah Gannett had already qualified to travel to NFL nationals in Humorous Interpretation that year. Going against the advice of most people, Mr. Averill considered the fact that by choosing the “B” team, Sarah and Zach would work even harder in 1987 and one more student would be able to make the trip since Sarah had already qualified in an additional event. Mr. Averill chose to take Kristen and Andrea, and while they didn’t win the tournament, they did a very solid job and brought back the strategies and skills that it would take for the team to win a national championship in the future. As was the case with Gael Donelan, when she brought back the knowledge she had gained from her time at summer institute, Kristen and Andrea brought back experiences from Nationals that were in large part responsible for the success of future debaters.

The early victories of 1987 were much like those of 1986 with first place finishes coming at Lexington (MA), Bates (ME), and a host of other local and national tournaments. The team found itself at the 1987 Kentucky National Tournament of Champions in May, and after many close rounds, beeping timers, and feelings of frustration, the Manchester Debate Team combination of Zach Leber and Sarah Gannett moved onto elimination rounds with a 5-1 record. To get that far was a tremendous victory in and of itself as the team was competing against the top 100 teams in the nation.

During eliminations, the team won five straight victories, leaving New Trier High school (Chicago), Lexington High School (Massachusetts), Centerville High School (Ohio), and Dowling High School (Iowa) in a cloud of dust, tears, cards, and flows. The big moment came when, for the second time in one year, Manchester beat out New York City’s most exclusive high school Stuyvesant High on a 4-3 decision, making Leber and Gannett the best policy debaters in the nation. A few weeks later, Leber and Gannett continued their amazing run by winning the National Forensic League National Championship as well. At the time, Coach Averill explained the victory as, “the most important victory in Manchester Debate history. Zach and Sarah honored their school and community by winning the nation’s debate tournament. All year long we talked about this victory as a possibility, and the kids did the necessary work.” Team member Andrea Marston Daly remembers the recognition they received as a team: “Sarah and Zach were very important and are so well respected for their success, but most if not all of the members of Manchester Debate were taken pretty seriously by that point - we were on the map. Students from other schools would find out that they were up against someone from Manchester and would panic.”

As if the unstoppable Leber-Gannett win wasn’t enough to rock the team for years to come, Gretchen Crosby also had a career winning performance at TOC’s - placing 5<sup>th</sup> overall and beating out the top two debaters in preliminary rounds. These wins were so tremendous for Manchester that they were praised by Congressman Nicholas Mavroules and Senators Kennedy and Kerry. In a letter to Mr. Paul Lengieza, the former superintendent of Manchester High School, they noted: “The success of the Manchester Debate Team is the result of an unyielding

commitment to excellence. This most recent accomplishment, in particular, represents years of dedication, effort and intellectual growth.” On the floor of the House of Representatives, Congressman Mavroules said:

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Manchester High School Debate Team for its impressive performance at the National High School Tournament of Champions...Mr. Speaker, there has been a great deal of discussion in this Chamber recently about America and our quest for excellence. Whether in the context of debate over international trade policy or our national defense budget, we continually emphasize our desire to reach America’s potential to be the very best. The Manchester Debate Team has reached this potential.

The multitude of victories in 1986 and 1987, the culminating National Championship, and a Congressional recognition truly put Manchester Debate on the map. The morale of the team was high and younger debaters were aware that “winning big” was attainable with the right combination of skill, desire, and work ethic. Former student Andrea Daly, as well as many of her teammates, looks back fondly on the “golden era” of the late 1980’s. She writes, “Mr. Averill was probably the most important teacher during my time at Manchester High School - what he gave to us during that time was invaluable - self worth, confidence, and the ability to believe in oneself. He believed in all of us so much and he always did it with a smile on his face.”

### **Expanding the Horizons: 1988-1999**

The period directly following Leber and Gannett’s National Championship was characterized by an invasion of technology, more success at local and national debates, a slew of recognitions for Mr. Averill, now referred to as “Aves,” and international debate travel. In 1988 newly hired assistant coach and mathematically inclined Thomas Atwater helped to revolutionize significantly the way that local tournaments were run by ushering the team into the latest technology of “power-pairing.” With his help, the team pioneered the latest Macintosh technology in the tournament tab room, allowing schematics to be produced far faster than the traditional method. As Averill remarks:

Before the computerized schematic, tab rooms were complex and busy, requiring many students and lots of calculations. We kept team names and records on cards and we sorted the cards on the table for power pairing... and of course, we also had a different set of cards for judges. All in all, we usually needed about 12-15 feet of table space to lay everything out.

Ever since 1988, the computer has taken over the duty of strenuous number crunching and painful organization, and it does everything far more quickly. Running a tournament has subsequently become much easier and less stressful, but the occasional lost ballot or computer glitch can still cause Mr. Averill to snap, stab a basketball with a pair of scissors, and leave it shriveled and deflated on the gym floor as a warning to all who dare to mess up again.

As students from Manchester began traveling to tournaments in the coming months and years, the team had grown to its largest size, and more rounds could be completed on a quicker schedule thanks to the new, computerized power-pairing system. The team opened its 1989-1990 season as Hurricane Hugo struck Virginia’s West Potomac High School in October where the fearless Manchester Debate Team, led by Karin Anderson, Seth Verry, and Ashley Short, gave a strong effort and came away with many trophies and a bit of drenched clothing. Later that month, the

team set a new weekend attendance record by sending an incredible 39 debaters to two tournaments and emerging with ten trophies.

While the previous years had, of course, brought incredible success on the national level, this new era was clearly characterized by huge participation and maximum opportunity. One could look at many other national circuit programs and not see any varsity athletes, class Presidents, or members of the National Art Honor Society. Yet at Manchester, the debaters were, and continue to be, well rounded and involved in a multitude of activities. Most students not only balanced debate but also a plethora of other activities. Amanda (Orlando) Kesterson, former Debate Team President and star field hockey player, noted one experience that was all too common for Manchester debaters:

When [the varsity field hockey team] won our district and were going to play for the state championship, I absolutely did not want to miss it. However, the state championship game was taking place on a Friday night, and I was scheduled to leave with the debate team for the Villager debate tournament in Philadelphia on Friday morning. After much consternation and discussions with my parents, my father called Mr. Averill and assured him that he would get me to the tournament in time to compete on Saturday morning...Our plans were set: the tournament game would end at approximately 6 p.m., and my father and I would shoot to Boston to catch an 8 p.m. flight to Philadelphia.

All was going swimmingly until the field hockey game went into overtime...and we missed our flight. I was in tears at both the loss in the game and the fear that all was lost and that I was going to disappoint Mr. Averill, who had been promised a debater on Saturday morning. We quickly regrouped and headed to South Station, where we caught a 9 p.m. overnight train to Philadelphia. My father and I woke up at about 4:00 a.m. on Saturday morning in Philadelphia and hopped in a cab for the hotel. I snuck into my hotel room, showered and changed, and was sitting in the lobby of the hotel preparing myself for the day of debating when Mr. Averill came downstairs for breakfast at 6 a.m. Needless to say, his shock at seeing me sitting there was priceless. In the end, I competed well enough at the tournament to break into octofinals, and I certainly made a believer out of Mr. Averill.

Mr. Averill noted in 1990, "This year's team is our largest ever, and they all want to be active. Recent weekend travel is demonstrating that we have more depth than I had ever imagined." The year brought victories at the Georgetown Invitational Debate Tournament and the Hendrick Hudson Invitational by Karin Anderson and Jeff Gagne, who defeated debaters from the most prestigious schools including: the Bronx School of Science, Lexington High School, and Scarsdale High School. Gagne also switched partners that year and brought home a quarterfinal trophy from Harvard with teammate Seth Verry. Although the team was especially large, the debaters were extremely close knit; they enjoyed watching Mil Lawler win the Awful Awful contest in both speed and endurance, watching the Bobsey Triplets' enthusiasm for the "sport of debate," and staying in the same San Diego hotel as they had for the DECA National Conference a week earlier.

While Aves' team continued the Manchester tradition of achieving the equal balance between immense success and quality enjoyment, his colleagues realized his gift of maintaining such a dynamic, large, active, and achievement-oriented team. At the incredibly prestigious 1990 Barkley Forum National Tournament at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, Mr. Tim Averill was honored with the most distinctive recognition that a debate coach could hope to receive - The Key Coach Award - an honor which represents "character, ethics, and success," and which enables him to serve as a judge on the tournament's final round panels.

Led by their newly named Barkley Forum Key Coach, the Manchester debaters of the early 1990's represented their team, school district, and National Forensic League District quite well. Matt Elliot, Gina and Matt DeFelice, Josh Gates, Colleen Melia, Tim Morgan, Bonnie Nix, and Forrester Liddle led the teams to wins at the Bedford High School Tournament (1991), the Massachusetts State Tournament (1991, 1992) and Brown University (1992), while having great success at the Newburgh Free Academy Invitational (1991), Emory (1991), and the Montgomery Bell Invitational (1992).

As if that were not enough, in February of 1992 the Manchester Debate Team traveled to new lands in search of new adventures. Mr. Averill rallied to bring 13 students to the World School Debating Championship in London, England, where his goals were to both "allow his students to participate in competitive debate against national champions of other countries and to get to know the city of London." The thirteen students faced competition from twelve countries: Australia, Bangladesh, Bermuda, Canada, England, Israel, Kenya, Southern Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Scotland, and Wales. Mr. Averill and the team considered their results to be quite an achievement, considering that they were debating a foreign style of debate against the national champions of each country. The team was also given the opportunity to perform an exhibition debate at the King's College School with a group of British boys on the topic: "This House Would Abolish all Monarchies." The Brits claimed that the resolution at hand was a wasteful anachronism, and Manchester emerged as the victors.

Although the team only won one round, took single ballots in three rounds, and lost four debates, the trip was nonetheless incredible due to the cultural experiences that it had to offer. While the airline served what Ana O'Beirne described as "cat food" (Aves ate both his and hers) and Matt Elliot gave Mr. Averill a scare by braving customs without the team, Mr. Averill seemed to love the trip for the breakfast alone. Ana O'Beirne remembers:

I know that we were all really excited when we could sneak off to have a hamburger at Burger King. Mr. Averill was really into us having different ethnic foods for dinners and we never had lunches because he was so proud and impressed with the breakfasts they offered us at the hotel we stayed in - the St. Giles Hotel. He went on and on about how wonderful that breakfast was.

Overall, the trip proved to be a fantastic learning experience for the entire team, as they were exposed to many different cultures, ways of life, and viewpoints that week.

Disappointed that they had to return from an exciting international trip, the team took out their anger on their opponents at the upcoming national tournaments. Over the next several years, Mr. Averill witnessed his team achieve widespread success on the national level; instead of just a core group of students winning all the trophies and qualifying for nationals, larger numbers of students were achieving success. More teams were sent to the 1995 and 1996 National Catholic Forensic League Tournament than ever before, and the team returned home with many notable trophies and speaker awards. Matt Elliot and James Hemmings won the 1994 Lexington Invitational in Policy Debate, while Matt Elliot later placed third out of 340 debaters at the Harvard University Tournament in Lincoln-Douglas Debate. The hard work of Nathan Calhoun, Bre Quinn, and Andrea Raudzens certainly paid off when they emerged victorious at the UMass tournament.

Yet, what would arguably mean the most for Manchester Debate in the mid 1990's was success in an area of forensics that Mr. Averill had never witnessed - Congress and Speech. The Sprague Grayden Era of 1993-1997 began when the spunky freshman showed promise during her freshman year of Policy Debate, but it really took off

when she qualified for NCFL and NFL Nationals as a sophomore in Congress - an event that Mr. Averill did not know much about. After placing third at Northeastern in Congress her junior year, she made the transition to Interpretation Events (Speech), where she brought home many championships including the 1996 Holyoke High School tournament in Dramatic Interpretation. Sprague, who later became a TV actress and household name, surely honed and developed her talent for speaking and acting while a member on Manchester's Debate Team. She showed younger students a model of combining commitment and natural talent in order to achieve optimal results.

While Manchester Essex Debate and Mr. Averill have always, and will continue to be proud of trophies, cheers, and press releases, equal attention and support has always been given to those individuals giving heart and soul to the program without necessarily meeting national success. Oftentimes, those members are just as valuable as those who spark congratulations by Congressmen or appear in the Boston Globe. Though never winning any national tournaments, Kaitlin McCafferty was actively involved in debate for two years in the mid 1990's, and she remembers her experiences fondly:

Most of my favorite memories include the bus rides, stops along the highway, and class antics of Aves... [Our team] had an amazing team dynamic. Everyone supported each other. Between rounds you would trade notes with people so they knew what to expect from other teams and opponents, hang out with the Boston Latin Crew ... and attempt to get your homework done... We were always trying to talk him into letting us play bocce rather than having class.

Not only does Kaitlin remember the fun of debate, as many past debaters do, but the education and team feeling that came along with being a part of the program. Sure, her skills helped her to win individual rounds, but they also proved to be invaluable for situations she would encounter later in life. Whether it is at the office, at home, or in a friendly conversation with a stranger, the ability to articulate oneself, to stay calm, and to respect the opinions of others proved essential. And what sets Manchester Essex Debate apart from most of the other debate programs scattered across the nation, is that all students can be a part of the team, no matter their level of dedication, family income, or natural intelligence. While the most successful teammates fill the trophy case and bolster the team's reputation, people like Kaitlin McCafferty also add to the fun of the team and have a lasting impression of the activity. Kaitlin and others are true testaments to the inclusion of the Manchester Essex Debate team. As Mr. Averill notes, "In our program, we do not make cuts, the kids pay only for food on trips and we pick up all flights, judging, hotels, and registration. I am truly proud of that degree of inclusion."

### **Averill Makes His Mark: 2000-2005**

It is important to note that at this point in time, the school systems of Manchester and Essex merged, and the team formally became known as the Manchester Essex Debate Team. The merge pushed the team over 80 members, which remains consistent. Mr. Averill had been working at the school for nearly thirty years, and he had achieved everything that a debate coach could ever ask for: a National Championship, a team numbering roughly one quarter of the school's student body, widespread support from the administration and surrounding community, an annual budget of roughly thirty thousand dollars, and a group of students who were both fun and willing to dedicate themselves to the activity of debate. Knowing that retirement was on the horizon, Mr. Averill spent his final five

years as the head coach at Manchester Essex by continuing to lead the team he built and by making substantial contributions on the national debate circuit. By the time he retired as a full time teacher and employee at MERHS in 2005, Mr. Averill was a NFL five diamond coach and held two of the most prominent and prestigious honors available to members of the debate community.

However, before Aves could think about packing up his belongings for good, he had to deal with a group of scrawny and eager eighth graders about to enter high school. Although the team participated in many debate events by this time, Mr. Averill felt that Policy debate was the best introduction for freshmen since the event gives students a broad base in research, case writing, rhetoric, and argument structure, the essential skills for all debate and speech events. Not only did Geoff Derrick, Matthias Whitson-Singer, Matt Everett, Steven Dozier, and Mike Peart revive the drought of policy success in the new age of Lincoln-Douglas, but they pumped new life into the team with an array of unfamiliar antics. Derrick and Whitson-Singer emerged victorious from multiple national tournaments with a “dissad” based on the popular cartoon show “Pokemon,” in part because they were notorious for giving their closest competition three o’clock in the morning wakeup calls.

Perhaps someone was sending the team, or more specifically Geoff and Matthias, a message when their plane suffered a minor crash when returning home from the 2000 Glenbrooks Tournament in Chicago. After dodging that bullet, the team stayed focused, resulting in Jake Elder, Chris Gang, Steven Dozier, Maida Soehl, Mike King, Whit Graham, and others sweeping multiple events at an array of tournaments over the next few months. Mr. Averill was impressed when he told the Manchester Cricket, “It is like old times, with kids winning in every division, and also having a great time. I am privileged to work with such capable and cooperative students.”

Yet, what made Aves remember the old times more than anything, is when a young man shuffled into the debate classroom on the first day of school in 2002, much like Mr. Averill had done thirty years before. The man’s name was Daniel Jewett, and he would become far more influential and important to the team than anybody knew at the time. Faced with the daunting task of taking over the novice policy class and assuming Brian Murray’s position as assistant coach, Mr. Jewett learned everything that Aves could teach him, but he also had to put up with “the old man’s” not-so-funny puns, antics, and nick-names, which included “J-Dogg,” “Dr. J,” and “J-Dizzle.” Laughing, Mr. Jewett looks back on his first tournament with some humor, “Never in my life had I seen one high school student in a suit on a Saturday morning, not to mention 150 students.”

The arrival of Mr. Jewett continued the long tradition of valuable and essential assistant coaches who have offered their services and dedication to the Manchester Essex Debate Team: Tom Atwater, Tim Palazzolo, Anne Jerome, Lois Grayden, Ellyn McLane, Krista Wiberg, PJ Wexler, Don Gibbons, and most recently, Michelle Baer. Though never having debated in his upstate New York high school, Mr. Jewett was part of the YMCA Youth & Government program. This model-Congress program was important to Mr. Jewett’s individual development up until he headed off to Gettysburg College, where he graduated in 2000.

Although Mr. Jewett spent only one fifth of his time teaching debate and the remaining four fifths teaching History for his first several years at Manchester Essex, he served as the assistant debate coach who knew how to get students excited, how to put things into perspective during mid-tournament freak outs, and most importantly, how to play hacky-sack with the debaters. He knew exactly what song and album Ross Cowman and Chris McDonald were quoting when they would “spit” Biggie, Jay-Z, or Tupac lyrics, but he also had original arguments and lenses through

which debate resolutions could be analyzed. He even allowed one class to convince him to teach them Lincoln Douglas Debate, with the topic of whether or not Mr. Jewett should ask his girlfriend to marry him. Needless to say, the affirmative won.

With the help and insight of Mr. Jewett, Mr. Averill was able to prepare Jake Elder, Chris Gang, Jeff Gang, Whit Graham, and the rest of his team to take home championships in the early years of the new millennium at Hendrick Hudson, Lakeland, Lexington, The Glenbrooks, and many other renowned national tournaments. However, the most notable of all, was Matt Everett's outstanding finish at the Harvard Invitational in Lincoln-Douglas Debate. Over six days of February vacation, with his family and friend Jeff Longcor by his side, Matt successfully won eleven out of 12 rounds at Harvard University, winning the first place trophy and the top speaking honors. Shortly after the championship, Mr. Averill wrote, "Some kids just don't know when to take a vacation. Matt has worked very hard this year and this was the second tournament he has won, but Harvard is the biggest and the best. It's a first for Manchester Essex to win the tournament."

Meanwhile, Geoff and Mathias, as Manchester's only remaining varsity Policy Debate team, stayed true to their rebel style and unconventional antics, which paid off when they went undefeated in preliminary debates at the 2002 Bronx School of Science Tournament. After winning their octofinal, quarterfinal, semifinal, and final debates to win the tournament for the first time in Manchester Essex Debate history, Aves was very impressed as he said, "It is a pleasure to coach kids like this who only need an occasional unorthodox motivational speech to stay psyched for competition." Their result proved to be Manchester Essex's best policy showing since Leber and Gannet won the 1987 National Tournament of Champions.

The win at Bronx Science by Geoff and Mathias proved to be the last major victory for Manchester Essex in Policy Debate. The event no longer required debaters to think of logical solutions to real life problems, but rather to spit out as much recent evidence within a certain time period as possible, and hopefully more than one's opponents. Long gone were the days of carrying small pieces of evidence in coat pockets as Mr. Averill had done decades before, and so were the days of carrying evidence in folders as Zach and Sarah had in 1987. Policy debaters were now easily recognizable at tournaments as the "nerds," carrying around ten gallon tubs of evidence that did more to build muscle than to develop everyday speaking skills. As a result, the policy contingent was down to a few dedicated, hardworking students, and the rest had reverted to Lincoln-Douglas Debate.

Over the years, however, L-D encountered many of the problems that policy faced, as philosophy began to get muddled and confused, rounds got quicker and quicker, debaters developed "counterplans" instead of debating the resolutions themselves, and judges had a difficult time understanding what was happening in rounds. Similarly to how the National Forensic League was in dire need for a new debate event in the early 1980's, change was again necessary in 2003. With Mr. Averill as a principle proponent of a new event, the National Forensic League introduced Ted Turner Debate, later renamed Public Forum Debate (PFD). In an interview for VictoryBriefs.com, Mr. Averill described the distinction between PFD and its predecessors:

Public Forum Debate is not the same as Lincoln-Douglas. While it emphasizes clear communication, its realm of discourse is the public forum - items in the news, on television - very timely, current, and ever-changing. In PFD, the judge should be a lay judge, a public voter. The event allows us to make good arguments that would be effective to a general audience, and requires a broad base of

knowledge, legitimate arguments, and a smooth speaking style because arguments must be effectively communicated within a short period of time.

In 2003, because the new event of Public Forum was so accessible to the public, Mr. Averill introduced a new way to get the community involved with debate by presenting intergenerational debates at the Brooksby Village retirement complex in Danvers, Massachusetts. With the residents of Brooksby Village serving as judges, the first debate matched the Manchester-Essex team of Lincoln Pasquina and John-Paul Kwasi with the Manchester Essex team of Samantha Ball and Geoff Derrick, with the former supporting the resolution: that medical malpractice awards for pain and suffering should be limited to \$250,000. In the following years, debates were not carried out as mere demonstrations for the elderly, but were contests between Manchester Essex debaters and representatives of the Brooksby Village Current Events Club. In 2004, the team of Jake Elder and Jeff Gang debated the Senior Citizen team of Jerry Levy and Marney Kestenbaum on the issue of United States compliance with the United Nations regarding international peacekeeping operations, and in 2005, the team of Jeff Gang and Chris Comenos debated Levy and Kestenbaum on the issue of mandatory retirement for Supreme Court Justices, with the Manchester Essex debaters advocating for the retirement age. The intergenerational debates were a fantastic way to bring debate and the issues at hand to the general community, and to forge an ongoing relationship between Manchester Essex and the residents of Brooksby Village.

When members of the Manchester Essex Debate Team were not challenging people four times their age to spirited debates, they were conquering the national Public Forum Debate circuit, just as they had shortly after Lincoln-Douglas was introduced as a NFL debate event. While under the direction of Mr. Averill as the head coach, the team captured three straight top finishes at the New England NFL District Tournament in Public Forum, with the winners being: John-Paul Kwasi and Lincoln Pasquina in 2003, Jeff Gang and Jake Elder in 2004, and Jeff Gang and Chris Comenos in 2005. Other notable championships in Public Forum Debate included The Lexington Invitational, the 2005 Newburgh Invitational, and the 2005 Sacred Heart National Public Forum Round Robin.

With the popularity of Public Forum spreading throughout the country, Mr. Averill had one final opportunity to promote international debate - something that he had been a proponent of since starting the debate program decades before. In May of 2005, the team hosted its first foreign debaters - a spirited group of German students led by a talkative, frizzy red-haired German debate coach. For one week, Mr. Averill and the debate team brought the Germans to a multitude of cultural landmarks, interesting sites, and of course...Nick's Roast Beef in Beverly. Once it came time to debate, the Americans decided it was only fair to debate the German's style of debate - Parliamentary - because the agreed upon language was English. After a number of preliminary debates, one Manchester team and one German team met in the final round in the school's music room, where the announced topic was whether or not authority should be questioned. The heated round came down to many interesting points and pieces of fabricated German evidence, but the debate was fantastic and educational nonetheless. The week proved to be a success for both the Manchester Essex and the German debaters, as well as anybody else who was involved. As Vera Reinert, head debate coach of the German team, wrote after the completion of her visit:

“For us, it was definitely something adventurous...something that does not occur everyday. To have the chance to go to America and see some American styles of debate, like two people shouting at each other in order to convince each other, was not only impressive, but also very funny. The entire

week was so enjoyable and we loved hearing about how much success your school has had. It was just amazing.”

After starting a tradition of intergenerational debate, leading his students to more victories, and hosting foreign exchange students for the first time, Mr. Averill’s final year as Manchester Essex Regional speech and debate head coach concluded at the 2005 National Forensic League “Halls of Independence” National Speech and Debate Tournament held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in June. In front of thousands of competitors, fellow coaches, citizens, and his own students, Aves was announced as an inductee into the NFL Hall of Fame and named “2005 NFL Coach of the Year.” Each year, one coach of the 30,000 nationwide is honored in the name of James M. Copeland, the winningest coach in NFL history. The recipient is chosen upon exemplification of leadership, educational values, service to the debate activity, and competitive success. The award, which Averill described as “an incredible honor,” was presented at the concluding ceremonies several days after his formal induction into the NFL Hall of Fame. He remarked, “I wasn’t expecting this at all. I was completely flabbergasted.”

To others, it didn’t come as such a surprise. Tim’s wife Lauren, who has been an ardent supporter of the program, praised her husband’s dedication. “Debate has meant the world to Tim for so long and I know that he will sorely miss the activity. Helping students to think clearly and do research has been very satisfactory for him, and I appreciate all of the effort that he has invested in our community. It is very gracious of the NFL to present him with such a remarkable tribute.” Jeff Gang, a four year debater and a two time attendant of the National tournament, said, “Mr. Averill is all anyone could ask for. He has been a major proponent of Public Forum Debate and the revival of Lincoln-Douglas Debate. It is nice to see that the debate community appreciates his work.”

Since founding the program thirty-five years before, Mr. Averill encouraged all students to seize the opportunities that debate has to offer. In the process, he coached national champions and students who simply took pleasure in the experience, all the while stressing sportsmanship, class, and enjoyment. Averill said, “What I am most proud of is that, in a school of less than four hundred students, nearly ninety are enrolled in the debate program.”

### **The Jewett Years: 2006-Future**

When the Manchester Essex Debate Team and the school’s administration were unable to find a suitable coach to replace Mr. Averill after 2005, Mr. Jewett stepped up to the plate and took over the position. It was a tough decision for Mr. Jewett because he enjoyed teaching History and recognized that anyone who attempted to fill Aves’ shoes had a difficult task ahead of them. He was also recently married, and in the process of starting a family. However, Mr. Averill vowed to remain onboard for another year to serve as an assistant coach and mentor, as well as to take a burden off Mr. Jewett’s back by helping to run the team’s two annual tournaments.

Mr. Tom Andrews, the team’s dedicated bus driver, also delayed his impending retirement in order to allow for the smoothest possible transition. Mr. Andrews has spent over ten years shuttling Manchester Essex debaters to trips across the country and dealing with students’ constant antics - ten pound bags of rice on the floor, flying pennies, and endless music blaring from boom boxes. The team appreciates Mr. Andrew’s calm demeanor, his sense of humor, and most of all, his patience. Once the final decision was made, the students and everyone involved with the team were incredibly pleased to hear that Mr. Jewett was willing to coach the team.

Mr. Dan Jewett took the helm for the 2005-2006 school year as head debate coach at Manchester Essex Regional High School, and his compassion, dedication, and leadership were instrumental in the success and enjoyment of the ninety students enrolled in the program. He helped to continue the streak of Manchester debaters winning the NFL New England District Championship in Public Forum Debate, with the joint victory of the teams of Chris Comenos and Dan Cellucci, and Ross Cowman and Chris McDonald in 2006. He also coached his team to championships at the incredibly prestigious Yale and Glenbrooks tournaments in the fall, and a semifinal finish at the Barkley Forum in January.

Yet, what was perhaps the most important moment for Manchester Essex debate this year, and which proved that the team will continue to thrive in the absence of Mr. Averill, was when the team reestablished itself as National Champions in April. At the 2006 Tournament of Champions held in Lexington, Kentucky, the teams of Dan Cellucci and James Pates and Ross Cowman and Ryan Swanzey advanced to the finals of the tournament in Public Forum after going a combined 16-2 in preliminary rounds. Mr. Averill accompanied the four debaters to Kentucky because Mr. Jewett was unable to make the trip and, at what was probably his last tournament as an affiliate of Manchester, Mr. Averill watched the four boys close out the final round en route to being crowned national co-champions.

With a national championship in his back pocket and facing life without Mr. Averill as an everyday fixture, Mr. Jewett has begun to make plans for the future. Having loved his transition to full time Debate, he has vowed to continue his tenure as head coach for the foreseeable future. With the merge of Manchester and Essex and the growing popularity of speech and debate, his goal is to continue the tradition of ensuring competitive, national travel for truly devoted debaters, while simultaneously be an inclusive program that provides challenging local competition for all. Mr. Jewett hopes that local debate is revived with the help of the Averill Debate Education Fund, which has targeted several failing programs and has hopes to start a North Shore Debate League. A recruitment of local schools will provide plenty of competitive competition for the majority of Manchester Essex debaters.

Secondly, the speech and debate classes will be divided, allowing for more productive class periods and fewer pressures, while keeping the team as one functioning unit. Former student and current Chorus and Drama teacher Laura Hargrove will take control of the speech aspect of the program; she will recruit prospective students, coach current “speechies,” and attend several tournaments. Although having limited debate experience, Ms. Hargrove has a wealth of knowledge in the arts, as she was a music major and thespian in Hartford. This summer, she will attend the Sacred Heart National Summer Institute for coaches in order to learn more about the National Forensic League and individual speech events. She anticipates that the class will involve students doing heavy research, collecting many plays and prose readings, and performing and critiquing each other. In addition, freshmen will not have to endure a year of Policy Debate in order to pursue a career in speech; they have the option of starting in speech as soon as they enter the high school. As Ms. Hargrove indicates, “I am extremely excited to get into the speech program, and I am glad that the administration is showing such faith in the program.”

Additionally, Mr. Jewett hopes to purchase software and equipment that will allow international debates to occur over the Internet, with the support of the Tim Averill Debate Education Fund. Manchester has traveled to London and Greece in recent years and, in 2005, the team hosted debaters from Germany. Mr. Jewett is confident that these international rounds will provide both “great debate opportunities and cultural exchanges” for students at

Manchester Essex. The team also hopes to embark on international travel and, in order to do so, a heavier emphasis must be placed on Parliamentary Debate, the international style of choice. It involves three member teams, public speaking skills, and persuasion, but also encourages wit and humor. This international experience will undoubtedly improve students' abilities to debate, but will also further them as people and citizens of the world.

The future for Manchester Essex Debate certainly looks bright under the direction of head coach Dan Jewett. The team is enthusiastic to have him on board for the years to come, as he will provide stability and consistency to a program whose future was questionable just one year ago. He will hold true to the many philosophies that have led this team to success in the past, but he will also bring changes and additions that will allow Manchester Essex to preserve its tradition of victory in the changing times. All in all, what makes Mr. Jewett such a fantastic part of the team, is his ability to effortlessly foster mutual respect between himself and his students.

Mr. Jewett understands the value and significance of debate to the same extent as Mr. Averill, and that is what caused him to make personal sacrifices in order to maintain his relationship with Manchester Essex Debate. He writes, "The most essential aspect of education is critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. I cannot think of anything that teaches these skills better than debate. Besides these skills, the values that Tim has established as part of the program are equally important for young people to learn. It is a privilege to continue the great work Tim started so many years ago."

### **Conclusion:**

Thirty five years ago, Mr. Timothy Averill began his career at Manchester High School with a vision of creating a debate program and instilling a set of values and skills in generations of students. Though he began with just four students, a stack of newspapers and magazines, and a paltry budget, he ended his illustrious career as a member of the National Forensic League Hall of Fame and 2005 NFL Coach of the Year. After all, his team had become a national powerhouse that recruited one fourth of the student body at Manchester Essex, that was supported by a thirty-thousand dollar annual budget, and that had changed the lives of thousands of individuals.

In fact, it is the contention of many, that no single individual has had a greater positive impact on the towns of Manchester and Essex, as well as on the entire nation's debate community, than Mr. Averill. He will be remembered not only by the readers of record books because of his many honors, successes, and achievements, but by generations of students who were lucky enough to enjoy his enthusiasm, his guidance, and his spirit. Mr. Averill revolutionized the way debate teams functioned. Instead of limiting members to the most articulate and the brightest students, he enlisted varsity athletes, musicians, and class presidents. Instead of forcing students to memorize cases and complete arduous "prep sessions" on the nights before national tournaments, Mr. Averill took his debaters to amusement parks and professional sporting events. Instead of using four hour bus rides to New York to "pre-flow," touch up cases, and write Summary speeches, Mr. Averill calmed his students for days of competition with stories of Percy Damron, games of "GHOST," and heists of trash bags filled with "playballs" from McDonalds. As Mr. Averill will preach over and over, "Prepare hard, play hard. That is the recipe of success."

Although Mr. Averill has since retired as Manchester Essex head debate coach, the program has a clear path to the future thanks to hundreds of willing coaches, teachers, students, contributors, and most of all, Mr. Jewett. With

the support of so many devoted people, words cannot describe the influence that debate will have on students who choose to be a part of the program. From the years of past to the years of the future, debate will mean so much to countless students - from the anxious novices to the triumphant graduates.

## **Thank You:**

On behalf of the 90 current debaters at Manchester Essex Regional High School, we would like to thank all of the individuals from throughout the years who have made our debating experience possible. We apologize for those unnamed, but there are so many people who have contributed their efforts to the program. It is because of you all, that we are able to reap the benefits of this extraordinary activity.

### **Debate Team Presidents:**

1982- Chris Schowalter  
1983- Curt Buddenhagen  
1984- Elisabeth deLaforcade  
1985- Hugh Bethell  
1986- Zack Leber  
1987- Sarah Gannett  
1988- Gretchen Crosby  
1989- Kate Moylan  
1990- Tim Smith  
1991- Karen Andersson  
1992- Bret Lafredo  
1993- Colleen Melia  
1994- Jim Hemmings  
1995- Matt Eliot  
1996- Keryn Kwedor  
1997- Amanda Kesterson  
1998- Sarah Halpern-Meekin  
1999- Patrick Sommers  
2000- Alden Roberts  
2001- James Powers  
2002- Matt Everett  
2003- Lincoln Pasquina  
2004- Katie Fifer  
2005- Chris Gang  
2006- Chris Comenos  
2007- Maryellen Kwasia

### **NFL Honorary Members:**

Tom Atwater- Assistant Coach  
Tim Palazzolo- Assistant Coach  
Michelle Baer- Parent/Assistant Coach  
Shelia Parisien- Food Services  
Marysue Emhiser- Parent/Chaperone  
Mary Noonan Pert- Parent/Chaperone  
Liz Dozier- Parent  
Sandy Fisher- Parent/Chaperone  
Tom Andrews- Bus driver/Sherpa  
Anne Jerome- Assistant Coach  
Lois Grayden- Assistant Coach  
Ellyn McLane- Assistant Coach  
Ben Gannett- School Committee/Parent  
Joanne Peterson- Librarian  
Diane Hemmings- Parent/Chaperone  
Charlie Hunt- Head Custodian

### **Others:**

All of the parents who have supported our debating, Mr. Dan Jewett and his wife Sue, Mrs. Lauren Averill and the Averill daughters for sharing Mr. Averill with us, Mr. Tom Andrews, Mrs. Baer, Sheila Parisian, Donna Roy, members of the school committee, and all of the members of the Averill Debate Education Fund Steering Committee including: Cynthia and Philip Comenos, Linda and David Crosby, Gail and Steve Gang, Gail and John Graham, Michelle and David Baer, Wendy and Dennis Dixon, Jim Brown, Marianne Round, Chris "Webmaster" Gang, Donna Willwerth, and JoAnn Gillette.