

**An update for January:**

January has been a busy month for the Illinois Trial Team. All three of our teams came back from Christmas break and got right back into the swing of things. Our first weekend back, January 19-20, was our Annual Illini Invitational. The tournament went smoothly and was very successful. All of our teams did exceptionally well; Blue came out with the first place win with a record of 8-0! There were also a few individual witness awards including Blue's Claire Mellish for Frankie Fernandez and Brandon Black for Carey Connor.

We were not done with the January tournaments after ours though and the traveling began the next weekend, January 26-27. Our Blue team traveled to Las Vegas, and no it was not just fun and games. Blue went there on a mission and came home with some hardware winning 2nd place with a record of 6-2. Claire Mellish also won an individual award at this tournament. Orange and Bears headed to Iowa that same weekend to compete at the Loras tournament. The first day of the tournament was very successful for both teams but the weather had different plans for the second day of the tournament.

The Sunday of the tournament was canceled due to bad weather and Bears and Orange had to head home without being able to finish out the tournament.

Everyone made it home safe and has been preparing for our upcoming Regionals!



Blue with 2nd place at Vegas!

A Note from our President:

Greetings,

With Regionals upon us, the Illinois Trial Team has entered our most competitive part of the mock trial season. Blue and Orange are set to compete at the Joliet Regional the weekend of February 16-17 and Bears will compete in the South Bend Regional on February 23-24. Based on the success of the entire organization so far this year I am confident that all three teams will do exceptionally well at their respective Regionals and make Illinois proud.

In other news, the Fifth Annual Illini Invitational was a tremendous success! Thank you again to Amyna Visram, our tournament chair, Matt Stuart, our tournament co-chair, all of our coaches, and the entire organization for all of your hard work. Additional thanks go out to anyone who judged as well—without you the tournament would be impossible to run.

Stay tuned for more information on the High School State Mock Trial Tournament, set to take place the first weekend in March (March 1-2)!

Until next time,

Alison

Mocker of the Month:

I would like to introduce to you, January's Mocker of the Month, Alex Berk.

Alex "Buckwild" Berk is a first-year mocker who has quickly proven his drive and dedication to our organization. As Plaintiff's closer on Bears, he's become a vital part of the team who is always willing to work outside of practice to improve - not just for his own closing, but for the entire Plaintiff bench. After running a few tournaments with an unorthodox case theory for the Plaintiff, Alex took it upon himself to craft a brand-new case theory and pitch it to the team, realizing that the old theory was not cohesive enough. Alex took the initiative to work with the rest of his bench to modify all three directs to fit the new theory, as well as suggesting a new witness and re-writing his entire closing. Alex's reserved and calculated speaking style belie an unrivaled passion for mock trial and dedication to Bears and his bench. You can expect great things from him in the future!

Hi, my name is Alex and I am a sophomore history major. Mock trial is really quite an experience, and I feel privileged to be a part of such a great organization. Unlike a class, I feel that mock trial has really helped me gain the tools that I need to be a successful person in my post-undergraduate life. Like one of my literary heroes Jay Gatsby, I constantly resolve to improve my mind. While I used to think that this was best achieved through the acquisition of as many facts as I could cram into my head, mock trial has shown me otherwise. While mocking does involve a great deal of factual knowledge, getting a feel for how to argue and present yourself in the best possible light is what it truly teaches you. Each day, Gatsby reserved an hour for practicing elocution, poise and how to attain it. Because of mock trial, I feel like I get closer to attaining that elusive poise and elocution each and every day. As a first year mocker, I can't thank the team enough for taking a risk and allowing me on the team. I am also thankful for each and every one of my coaches and teammates, you have all contributed to my growth as a mocker and person this year, and I thank you for it.

