SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

\$50

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\$100

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The above is in addition to the

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16 NATIONAL 21 INTER-STATE 200+ STATE

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The Rostrum

3

Official Publication of the National Forensic League

VOL. XII

DECEMBER, 1937

NO. 4



HE ROSTRUM wishes one and all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



THE ROSTRUM

Official Publication of the National Forensic League

KARL E. MUNDT, President and Editor

BRUNO E. JACOB, Secretary

Published monthly from September to May in the interests of the National Forensic League and for the promotion of extended and improved speech activities in the high schools of America.

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If You Don't Know It-You Can't Say It!

National Forensic Leaguers agree pretty generally to the axiomatic quality of the statement one time appearing on the outside cover of THE ROSTRUM, "If you can't say it, you don't know it." NFL-9ers are rightfully impatient with the fellow who hedges and stalls and finally tries to alibi out of a tight spot by saying something to the effect, "I know the answer all right, but I can't say it; it's right on the tip of my tongue but I just can't speak it." But speech students should also remember the correlary to this axiom; they should realize that it is equally significant and fully as authentic to juggle the words around a bit and thus produce, "If you don't know it, you can't say it."

The first step in the preparation of any good speech is a mastery of the available information on the topic to be discussed. Bacon it was, I believe, who said, "Speech maketh a ready man," but he certainly didn't mean that it "maketh him ready to speak." Practice in speaking may make a man ready to speak fluently but thinking and research makes him able to speak effectively. Both readiness and resourcefulness are needed to produce an A-1 speech; speaking practice develops the one, speech preparation by way of serious study produces the other.

Mere glibness never wins an argument or clinches a sale. Ready words can never camouflage the void of unready thoughts. Saying nothing freely is as serious a crime as being inarticulate with something real to say.

Serious minded speech students who would make effective public speaking a factor in their success should start early to develop habits of silence until and unless they have mastered the subjects they are prone to discuss. Inaccuracies, inanities, and inadequacies are all indications of an ineptitude which seriously handicaps the development of anyone's speaking prowess. The speaker should always be the best informed person in the audience on the specific phase of the subject which he is discussing; when it is otherwise, the speaker might better be among the auditors and somebody else should receive the

spotlight. Better by far to remain silent than to have your eloquence reveal your emptiness of thought.

Decision debating and competitive extemporaneous speaking contests have done much in American education to teach young speakers the importance of knowing the facts. Many a debate has been lost by fluent fellows with too fluid facts; the stern realities of contest speaking cause speech students to appreciate the necessities of factual speaking and to form habits of accuracy and completeness in presenting arguments. Speech teachers should be aware of educational devices and speech situations which do not provide their own penalties for mouths moving faster than minds. Verily, "If you don't know it, you can't say it"—and by all means you should not try to do so!—Karl E. Mundt.

Culls, Clippings and Comments

In a recent issue of interesting and informative Platform News. Christobel Cordell makes these interesting observations, "In a story concerning the life of Lowell Thomas, radio commentator, we find this quotation, "Lowell Thomas' father had always cherished a large helief in the importance of correct and sonorous speech. He detested an ugly voice and believed that everyone should cultivate purity and distinctness in the tone of speech. And so he trained his son's speaking voice, making the lad practice proper diction and clear enunciation . . . Twenty years later along comes the radio and that demands the art and gifts of speech. Because of that hobby of his father's Lowell Thomas inevitably found his place at the microphone as the country's favorite commentator. . . . A popular weekly reveals that Spencer Tracy, now of Hollywood, probably owes his career to the fact that an enterprising debate coach recognized in him the makings of a speaker. When Spencer Tracy went to Ripon College he had no intentions of being an actor, but after he had been persuaded to try out for debate and dramatics he became aware of his speaking ability. Before he was through college he had definitely decided on acting as a career."

-NFL-

Debating is an ancient art; Schopenhauer, when he wasn't criticizing women, even mentioned it. In his rule of debating he shows how to win a weak case by insidiously transferring an argument from its right field, and discussing it instead from some irrelevant but impregnable angle. I suppose that represents reducto ad absurdum or something like that but student debaters should stop and re-read that word impregnable. "Impregnability is that quality devoutly to be sought in a debate case. Search for material and deliberative logic should not rest until that quality is obtained; even then there should be no rest lest by neglect the impregnability be ruined and the ugly quality of vulnerability come to replace it.—K.E.M.

—NFL—

An essay on concluding a speech: Any place in a speech is a goo time to end it—provided you have said all you know on the subject.

Educational Values in Speech Contests

University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma

So again a "new trend" is sweeping the country! As is often the case when new educational methods are introduced or new fields of thought "develop" we find that wholesome and constructive debate follows in the wake of new ideas.

Somewhere, someone said in this country that we no longer need the formal type of speech contests—competitive, if you please—leading to so-called champoinships via the "winner route." Then as soon as that remark began to spread out over the country, those who for the past twenty-five years, and more especially for the past ten years, have been instrumental in developing speech contest activity nation-wide, began to wonder. The first question naturally presented was: "Do you mean that you are of the opinion that there are no educational values in speech contests as conducted for the past several years?" As yet I have to find any man or woman among American educators who will frankly answer that question by stating that he can see no educational value in the speech contests as conducted. However, this gives rise to a discussion of the premise: "Are educational values to be found in competitive speech contests?" As one who has worked in this field for years and watched the development of the speech contest work, my answer is given readily in the affirma-

From the evidence of the speech contest itself we have proven time and time again that the speech contests give a student a motive for doing his most effective work, and the beautiful part of this educational procedure is the proven value of the carry-over into his life work as an adult citizen. Many of us could give hundreds of examples wherein a young man or young woman never realized his own possibilities until put to a real test in competitive speech work as an extra-curricular activity. Any public speaking teacher or official will readily agree that a speech contest demands of the speaker the best that he or she can produce. This demand, together with the necessity for realizing that there are two sides to all questions and the necessity for developing one's power to the point of being able to sell one's own particular point of view, makes such contests real character builders. More self-confidence among students of the American high schools has been developed by speech competition than by any other educational method we have pursued up to the present time. The feeling of inferiority is eliminated through participation in the contests, and we often find students who have learned faith in themselves through facing and dealing with the difficult situations often afford by the competitive contest.

Then, of course, there is the field of leadership. Merely check back through the past ten years and in each of the states pick out your junior leaders in adult life today and you will find that they are young men or women who were quite active in speech contest work. This has been brought about, of course, by the intense training given

them by the speech interests in America through the emphasis on an "all-development program."

As one who has been closely associated with this work I can appreciate many of the "proposed offsets" for the competitive speech work. And an admission must be made readily that in some instances speech contest work has been overemphasized, but the method of correcting educational procedure is not to throw overboard all that is good along with all that is bad in any situation. It behooves the two schools of thought interested in the field of speech education to take the best from each of these fields of thought in the development of speech as an extra-curriclar activity for the molding of the lives of young citizens for future years. And many of us predict that in the course of the next few years this process will be carried out, because so long as there is an element of extra-curricular work in the schools of this country in any form, just that long there will be some form of competitive championship selection in providing a well-rounded education for the youth of the country.

He Gets the Customers

(From the October Forensic, Official Magazine of Pi Kappa Delta)

"A preacher's tongue is his stock in trade," said the Rev. J. Whitcomb Brougher, Jr., pastor of the First Baptist Church of Glendale, Calif. "If he cannot deliver the goods, there is no use having an opportunity. If you cannot get customers, and when you get them, if you cannot sell them, there is no use having the goods on your shelves. My forensic experience in college gave me my first platform training, including delivery, expression, poise, naturalness, and confidence."

His church seats about nine hundred, but by using a side room and extra seats, he frequently packs in fourteen and fifteen hundred Sunday nights as well as Sunday mornings. Evidently he gets the customers.

"I graduated from the University of Redlands in 1924. For four years I debated under the direction of Prof. Egbert Ray Nichols, winning the degree of Special Distinction. It was this training in debate which taught me to gather material and to arrange it for delivery in a logical, convincing, and persuasive order. Prof. Nickie is the greatest coach in the country in training students in the art of gathering material and building it into a case which will win decisions. It may be all right to have non-decision debates, but the church today hasn't any place for non-decision sermons."

The fact that Jimmie—as he was known to his debate colleagues—has baptised over a thousand people, the majority of them over 18 years of age, indicates that he has been putting into use his training in winning decisions.

"My forensic experience also taught me to think on my feet, to analyze my opponent's case rapidly, and to be ready with rebuttal. And don't think a preacher doesn't have to think fast. When you

are in an executive conference with a hundred opinions being advanced, and there is a hundred thousand dollar mortgage on the building, or an entire year's program is in the balance, a preacher has to keep a couple of jumps ahead of any other thinker in the room."

As Chaplain for the Los Angeles Breakfast Club, an internationally famous organization, he faces every Wednesday the most experienced and most merciless hecklers in the country. In one of the meetings where Jimmie was presiding, George Jessel told the nine hundred people at the brakfast tables that he had at last found a partner with whom he felt he could tackle his life-long friends, the combination of Eddie Cantor and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise of New York. "Repartee," said Jimmie. "Nickie certainly trained us in rebuttal."

Jimmie is not only Chaplain of the Breakfast Club, but also Grand Chaplain of the Grand Council of the Select Master Masons of the State of California; the Grand Chaplain of the Policeman's League of America; and is in constant demand as an after dinner speaker before youth groups all over the country. He has averaged over a speech a day for the ten years of his ministry in Glendale.

Jimmie represented Redlands at the National Pi Kappa Delta conventions at Indianola Iowa, in 1922, and Peoria, Ill., in 1924. Although the debate schedules of his day did not contain as many contests, the year's work was just as hard, and every debate was before the well known three "honorable judges."

After graduation he took a three year seminary course. In October, 1927, he became pastor of the First Baptist Church of Glendale. His church has the reputation of being the fastest growing church on the Pacific coast and of the seven thousand churches of the Northern Baptist Convention. Under his leadership approximately three thousand members have been received.

"I attribute much of whatever success has been mine as a speaker to my college training in forensics and my association with Pi Kappa Delta" is his statement in regard to the value of forensic training to a minister.

"But . . . "

(Reprinted from an article by Karl E. Mundt in The Platform World)

I have just been talking with an intelligent auditor. This man with whom I have been conversing is not a public speaker or an actor; he has never stood on a platform in his life to address an audience, but he is a cosmopolitan individual and has heard some of America's premier platform men. His judgment is good and his opinion is sound. Last week he had had the opportunity of hearing one of this country's leading citizens expounding on the recent election; this speaker was addressing an audience of more than 10,000 voters and he was earnestly soliciting support for his cause. I was interested in getting my friend's experienced reaction to his speech and so I asked him what he thought of this eminent citizen as a speaker.

Without a moment's hesitation, my friend replied, "So-and-So (I shall avoid political bias by concealing names) had a splendid message and would be a vigorous speaker, but he read his speech." From further questioning, I learned that the audience had grown restless while this brilliant man had read his important message and that some who had traveled many miles to hear him left the auditorium before the speaker had finished his speech (reading). To the young speaker, the moral of this illustration should be self-evident. Men who read their speeches, today, cannot hope to command the attention of their auditors. Failing to command the attention, they obviously fail to convince them. And when a speaker fails to convince his hearers, he fails entirely.

America needs a generation of intelligent orators of whom it may be said, "They are forceful, vigorous speakers with a real message for their auditors, and they speak directly to their audiences. We need to eliminate the tragic criticism, "But he read his speech," from the evaluating of a public address. Speeches are intended to be heard; not read. Speakers should talk to the audience, not read from a manuscript. Present-day audiences are too busy and too restless to sit attentively and listen to a man whose mastery of his subject is so deficient that he must read it from a typewritten page. Campaign orators in the present campaign cannot sway many votes until they discard their manuscripts and start talking directly to the people about facts with which they are so familiar that they can speak of them freely and frankly without having to resort to the subterfuge of reading words (which are many times not even their own) from printed pages.

Students of speech would do well to practice from the very beginning the art of thinking on their feet so that when they become people of practical affairs they can carry their messages to the people in a convincing manner. One reason that a Borah or a Bryan of this type command attention by their ability to discard their notes and talk to the people. The inaugural address of a president or a governor can be of such moment and such interest that it can be read without losing its effectiveness, but a campaign speech or a parliamentary plea falls short of its mark when its thoughts reach the auditor only after being strained through the pages of a manuscript. By practicing speaking without aid of notes, speakers can soon gain the mastery of their abilities so that they can talk logically and forcefully to the people and this ability is of such importance taht serious students of the speaking art can well afford to devote sufficient time to its development so that they can confront the largest audiences with supreme confidence. The words "but he read his speech" can then be deleted from an estimate of their speeches and their speeches will

-NFL-

Have you heard of the college coed who when enrolling for her second semester as a Freshman answered the question, "Why did you come to college?" by saying, "I came to be went with but I ain't vet."

Poughkeepsie Paces the Pack

Believing that the intelligent speaker would be increasingly needed to determine the civic policies of the future, Lucile Stephens, teacher of Public Speaking in Poughkeepsie High School, organized



in 1927 chapter 159 of the National Forensic League. At that time there were six students participating in debates with other schools, but at the present time there are literally sixty-six competing in interscholastic debates each year. For the greater part of 1934, 1935 and 1936 the Poughkeepsie chapter with its total of 260 members and degrees had the largest membership in the country. At the beginning of the present year it leads the New York district with 62 members and degrees.

As the speech program in Poughkeepsie High School has been extended, there has developed increasing interest in phases of speaking other than debate. While the debaters were eligible for the national tourna-

ment in 1932 and 1936, state championships were won in oratorical declamation in 1934 and 1935 and dramatic declamation in 1936.

The financial situation in recent years has distressed many coaches interested in extra-curricular activities, but chapter 159 has continuously financed its own extensive enterprises. This has been done through a "pay" debate held at the beginning of each school year. This fall by charging twenty-five cents admission to a humorous debate with our neighbors of Arlington High School on Resolved, That all high school boys should take a course in cooking, our club raised \$155.

This large figure suggests the coöperation and interest that members of the faculty and the student body give to the forensic activities. One reason for this interest is the principle, underlying our organization, that speech training should be for the many rather than the few. Acting on this belief, the coach trains a large number of debaters rather than the select few and limits participation in interscholastic contests to one event for each entrant.

Another basic understanding between students and coach is that the student must prepare and win his own contests with the help that a full schedule on the part of the coach will allow. The coach at all times leaves the responsibility in the hands of the student.

Finally, a belief that although luck may be against the well prepared contestant some of the time, the better man in the long run will come into his own, helps both students and coach to carry on.

NFL Honors These Two Leaders

Virginia Allen, Du Quoin High School

Although Virginia Allen three years ago began her speech career in humorous declamation and since has participated extensively in oratorical and dramatic declamation, her favorite event is debate. She



has been a member of two state championship debate teams and one secoud place team. Last year her team was eliminated in the national semi-finals at Jacksonville. While her school work is uniformly excellent, she prefers history, the drama, and music. Obtained her fourth degree as a sophomore, has attended two national tournaments and believes the NFL is the nation's best and most active speech organization. Says her greatest thrill in speech came in the WKY studios at Oklahoma City a year ago, when DuQuoin won the national debate championship. Likes to read, to dance, to at-

tend parties. Enjoys contests and believes that anyone who tries hard enough can learn to speak well. Virginia holds 413 credit points, third highest in the NFL.

Jack Cohen, East Palestine, Ohio

Jack Cohen, captain of the debate squad and president of the NFL chapter at the East Palestine, Ohio, High School, is building a

firm foundation for his chosen future profession of law through NFL activities. A participant in three Ohio NFL contests, a finalist in extemporaneous speaking, a three year varsity deabter, a member of the district champion debate team, Jack rounds out his speech interests by placing high in the district oratorical contests and by taking part in the high school plays. He finds time not only for speech work, but time to be senior class president, president of the Hi Y, and manager of the high school annual. This year Jack is preparing for the triumphant close of his high school NFL activities.



Jack now holds 341 credit points at the beginning of the season and will add very considerably to that number through his able and versatile efforts before the year is over. He is fourth high in the national Decalet of Leaders.

Something of This-Something of That

The third annual extemporaneous speaking meet of Central Evening High School was held Saturday, November 20. Twenty schools from Chicago and districts outside of Chicago participated in the event. Each school is allowed to enter four speakers for every coach who accompanies them, eight speakers being the limit. Each student is given an equal opportunity to speak, being allowed to give two speeches against three different rivals in each of two rounds. As these meets are on a non-competitive basis no prizes are awarded and the judges' decision posted with no special announcement of the winner.

-NFL-

Fourteen schools were represented by 38 debate teams in the unlimited division of the annual tournament held in Modesto, Calif., Dec. 4. Seven schools entered 17 teams in the freshman-sophomore division.

-NFL-

The Wooster High School chapter of the National Forensic League has been rated the largest in Ohio and ranks third in the entire United States.

-NFL-

Twenty students have enrolled in deabte in the Tilghman High School, Paducah, Ky. Material to be used in the debates this year has arrived from the National office. The Tilghman debaters' reward is membership in the National Forensic League.

-NFL-

The annual Teachers' Convention, Speech Meet, and Press Conference was held at the Illinois university. Miss Blackburn, Granite City, Illinois, was elected president of the State Speech association. This organization includes all college and High School teachers of the state of Illinois, and Miss Blackburn is the first high school teacher to hold this position.

-NFL-

Student members of the National Forensic League at Mt. Sterling High School, Mt. Sterling, Ky., are participating in the two prize contests being sponsored by the National Forensic League in which all NFL members may take part. "Resolved, That the Several States Should Adopt a Unicameral System of Legislation," and "Whither America" have been chosen as the subjects for the contest. The first contest is to be in writing of not more than 300 words and the second contest is to be a speech of not more than 300 words to be given before the PTA of Mt. Sterling High School.

More of This-More of That

The Rostrum

Burlington, Iowa, sent its debate team to the University of Iowa Forensic Institute the first week in December. Betty Cook, Mary Towne, Sam Goldberg and Harold Mehler made the trip. Burlington is developing a formidable reputation in speech circles and is now listed as one of the foremost high schools in Iowa in point of its speech education program.

-NFL

Knowledge is knowing what to do when you need to do it! Thus is self-classified the artful old alibi artist who tries to hide his ignorance behind the old saw, "I know what it is, but I can't say it." Ergo—he doesn't have the necessary knowledge!!

-NFL-

The Northerner, North High, Fort Wayne, Indiana: this enterprising school paper features front page pictures of Kay Crofts and Robert Johnson, winners of first and second, respectively, in an all-school extemporaneous speaking contest.

-NFL-

The Granite High World of Granite City, Ill., brings word that Mary Blackburn scores again—this time, in directing a rollicking comedy, "Ladies of the Jury," which was so well done that the waves of laughter are still reverberating down the halls of GCHS.

-NFL-

Wisconsin High School Forensic Association News Letter: Milton A. Fischer, chairman of State Forensic Association is quoted in his message to high school speakers, "We, who have a special interest in speech or forensic work, do not need to plead its value for it is being demonstrated on every hand every day."

-NFL-

The Missouri Debaters Assembly was held December 3 and 4. Two debating teams from the Maplewood High School, Maplewood, Mo., attended. The national high school question of unicameral legislation was debated. An assembly was conducted on the order of a state legislature. A chairman and clerk, and committees, for the consideration of bills were appointed. A bill, presented by each school, was introduced in the House by the committee.

-NFL-

The NFL Chapter of Chaney High School Youngstown, Ohio, announces that the all-day declamation tournament will be held Saturday, Dec. 18, at which tournament this school will be host. There will be three divisions at this tournament—humorous, dramatic, and oratorical.

From the Secretary's Desk

Annual Business Meeting

The annual business meeting of the Executive Council will be held in connection with the national conventoin of the Assocaition of Teachers of Speech as customary for the past several years. The time is Thursday, Dec. 30, at 9 a. m., and the place in Pennsylvania Hotel, New York City. All NFL members in the vicinity or in New York at that time are cordially invited to meet with the Council to present their views and discuss the important matters of business to be acted upon at this meeting. National tournament rules, procedure, and location; amendments to the constitution; and general league policy will be the order of business. Come if you can and help give effect to the league's purpose to be a democraticly controlled organization.

New Chapters

With only 20 charter vacancies to be filled this year the Charter Committee has proceeded slowly and carefully to select the schools to receive these charters. It announces the granting of charters to these schools on Nov. 29th. Lewistown, Pa.

Hingham, Mass. Coleraine, Minn. Carbondale, Ill.

Thirteen petitions are pending before the committee. Strong speech schools can still present petitions, however, with the assurance that charters will be available for them.

Degrees of Distinction

Mayford Roark, Littleton, Col. Robert King, Littleton, Colo. John Hanson, Holdrege, Neb. Jack Roper, Burley, Idaho Wayne Asp, Holdrege, Neb. Julia Bowman, Casper, Wyo. Harold Healy, Casper, Wyo. Bob Kerr, Fresno-Roosevelt

Richard Peterson, Wadsworth, O. Burnya McHam, Wichita Fall Ed Hoag, Freeport, Illinois. Angela Orsini, Syracuse-Voc. Marie Jane Groh, Emporia, Ks. Ken. Hackman, Brentwood, Mo. Marion Bird, Independence, Ky. Evelyn Caldwell, Sparta, Ill. Ralph Wright, Sparta, Ill.

-NFL-

Noble and Noble, publishers of many speech helps and reference books for debaters and orators, have just published a National Forensic Handbook. This little booklet lists all of the organized speech associations in the country and devotes a full page to The National Forensic League. It gives a short history of the League, and lists all of the winners at the National Tournament held at Jacksonville. Ill., last May.

-NFL-

Why not encourage your high school editor to write a good editorial on the value of speech training. Send the editorials to The Rostrum and we'll reprint the best of them.

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Charles Dickens Fannie Hurst

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS, Minneapolis

District Standing

Up or Members Rank Down District Chapte	per	Leading Chapter	Members & Degrees
1. O Southern Illinois			
2. +1 Wisconsin	127	Maxwille	51
2. +1 Wisconsin	12.7	Poughkeepsie	39
T111	12.0	Maine Township	
			56
5. 0 Ohio	10.7	Wooster Fresno-Roosevelt	63
6. 0 California	10.7		
7. +3 Texas	10.0	Fort Calling	40
8. +1 Colorado	10.5	Colombia City	35
9. —2 Indiana	9.0	Columbia City	20
10. +1 West. Pennsylvania		Monessen	69
11. —3 Nebraska		Norfolk	35
12. +1 Iowa	9.0	Hawarden	44
13. —1 Missouri		Joplin	43
14. 0 Kentucky		Mt. Sterling	24
15. 0 Oklahoma	6.5		
16. +2 Tennessee	6.2		23
17. 0 Michigan	6.0	River Rouge	22
18. —2 South Dakota	5.8	Lennox	27
19. 0 Kansas	5.7	Wichita-East	36
20. 0 Minnesota	5.5	MplsRoosevelt	27
21. +1 New England	4.6	Portland	18
22. —1 East. Pennsylvania	4.0	Catasauqua	10
23. 0 Western	00	Logan, Útah	
20.		J	

Our Decalet of Leaders—the Second Ten

Coaches	Students
E. L. Kimball, Chgo. Eve507	Genevieve Larson, Lincoln201
	Clifford Hess, MplsRoose213
	Leon Cordle, Louisiana, Mo223
	James Rizzuto, Monessen225
F. W. English, Carrollton470	Ben Ramey, North Dallas209
	Ewing Pollock, Waynesburg. 228
Mildred V. Dunham, Hornell 458	Bill Kitchen, Fresno-Rsvlt 220
Albert L. Swank, Peekskill428	M. Kisinger, Bentleyville240
John D. Davies, Kenosha439	Bea. Vernallis, Bentleyville216
	Randall Robertson, Gran. Cy. 199

Going Up

	New	Total
Chapters	4	484
Members	36	17,570
Keys	5	9,250
Reports	113	66,081
Degrees of Honor	30	7,309
Degrees of Excellence	14	4,012
Degrees of Distinction	5	2,167

Texas Going Places

Did you notice in the District Standing for the month that Texas moved ahead three places from 10th to 7th among the NFL Districts? And that Tennessee gained two places and Wisconsin just topped New York for second place? Southern Illinois still holds a commanding lead for first place, but even its supremacy will soon be challenged. If your district is not where you want it to be, send in your membership and degree applications as quickly as the students qualify for them. A few such applications now will do a lot to move your district ahead while others are just wishing instead of acting.

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