



November 2003

# ROSTRUM

Volume 78 Number 3

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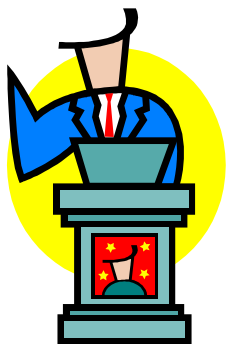
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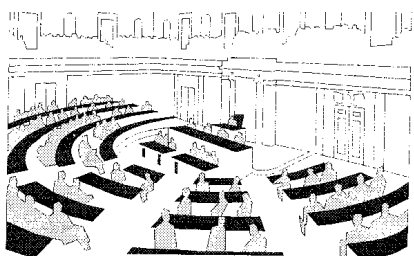
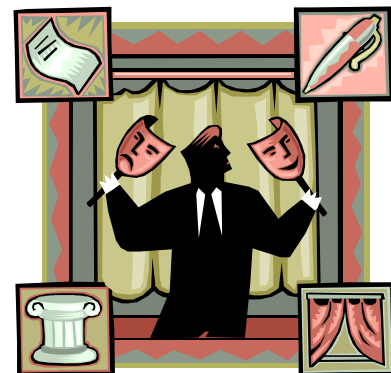
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### Contest

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- The first-place winner will receive a \$2,000 scholarship
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- Both winners will qualify for expository speaking at the 2004 NFL National Tournament in Salt Lake City, UT.
- Video excerpts from the winning speeches will be online at LFG.com.
- Coaches of each winner will be awarded a \$500 honorarium.

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*Taming the Bull and the Bear... the importance of a sound financial strategy*

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You are – if you are a high school speech student and a member of the National Forensic League.

### How does the contest work?

- You must prepare an original expository speech no more than five minutes in length. No props permitted.
- The speech must be videotaped – production quality will not be part of the judging. Lincoln will retape the winning speeches, if necessary, for the excerpts on LFG.com.
- Only one videotaped speech per school may be submitted. If several students in your school wish to participate, a local school elimination should be held.

### When's the deadline?

All entries are due to Lincoln Financial Group on or before **March 26, 2004**.

Entries should be mailed to:

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NFL Video Speech Contest  
1300 S. Clinton St. – 6H05  
Fort Wayne, IN 46802

Include with your videotape a typed transcript of your speech and include the name, address and phone number of the student, coach and school.

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A panel of judges from Lincoln Financial Group will select the winners. Judges' decisions are final. Winners will be contacted by April 30, 2004 and will receive their awards at the 2004 NFL National Tournament in Salt Lake City.

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NFL Website: [debate.uvm.edu/nfl.html](http://debate.uvm.edu/nfl.html)

## THE ROSTRUM

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### THE COVER: City Hall, Salt Lake City, Utah.

(Photo provided by the Salt Lake City Visitors & Convention Bureau)

### DECEMBER: Diamond Key Coach Recognition.

## HELLO FROM J. SCOTT WUNN

In his acceptance speech as the Presidential nominee for the Democratic Party in 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson stated "So, let us here tonight, each of us, all of us, rededicate ourselves to keeping burning the golden torch of promise which John Fitzgerald Kennedy set a flame."

I am humbled by the thought of taking on a responsibility that has been championed by such great individuals as Bruno E. Jacob, Lester Tucker, and James M. Copeland. Their efforts have certainly led to the development of a strong national honor society for high school speech and debate students that is devoted to "Training Youth for Leadership."

In Mr. Copeland's "Thank You" in the September *Rostrum*, he highlighted some of the wonderful accomplishments that have occurred in the past seventeen years. Our organization has gone through fantastic changes and improvements in its 78 year history.



As the new Executive Secretary, I hope to serve the organization with a spirit that promotes strong membership and the education of youth. Mr. Copeland was correct. We have made great strides in the use of computer technology, the publication of the *Rostrum*, the inclusion of sponsors, the creation of teacher outreach programs and the promotion of scholarship opportunities. These are all areas that I hope to continue to promote in the future.

In addition, I hope that the National Office can serve as a support system for all NFL Districts and individual chapters and affiliates. I would encourage all coaches and students to utilize the resources available in our office. We have an incredible staff whose purpose is to serve your needs.

I look forward to working with the students and coaches of the NFL.

### November Public Forum Debate Topic (Ted Turner Topic)

**Resolved:** That Federal judges should be elected in their district for a limited term rather than appointed by the President for a life term.

### November/December Lincoln Financial Group L/D Debate Topic

**Resolved:** The United States has a moral obligation to mitigate international conflicts.

### 2004 Policy Debate Topic

**Resolved:** That the United States federal government should establish an ocean policy substantially increasing protection of marine natural resources.

The Rostrum provides a forum for the forensic community. The opinions expressed by contributors are their own and not necessarily the opinions of the National Forensic League, its officers or members. The NFL does not guarantee advertised products and services unless sold directly by the NFL.

# Add your voice to history:



## Lincoln Financial Group is the proud corporate sponsor of the NFL

November 19, 1863 was overcast and solemn in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. President Abraham Lincoln, his re-election prospects dimming as the Civil War dragged on, was invited to help dedicate a battlefield cemetery. The toll of dead and wounded in that valley had been staggering: 51,000 Union and Confederate soldiers.

A crowd of 15,000 was on hand. Lincoln rose to speak as the ceremony concluded, donning spectacles and unfolding a single sheet of paper. His words in the next few minutes changed the world.

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address stands as the single greatest American speech, rededicating the nation to its founding principals. We return again and again to the 10 sentences – 268 well-chosen words – that offer a moral compass for democracy.

In the most profound sense, Lincoln added his voice to history. Indeed, he shaped history.

National Forensic League speech and debate activities provide a workshop for coming generations to do the same. And Lincoln Financial Group – founded nearly a century ago with Robert Lincoln's approval to use his famous father's name and likeness – is proud to be the corporate sponsor of the NFL.



Each year, Lincoln Financial Group:

- Underwrites the NFL's high school speech and debate tournament
- Awards college scholarships to first-place winners in each of the 11 competing categories
- Provides prizes for every student who qualifies to compete nationally
- Awards scholarships for the first- through fourth-place winners in the Lincoln-Douglas Debate category

Also, we're sponsoring our fourth annual video speech contest for NFL members:

- The top two winning students will receive college scholarships
- The coaches of these two students will receive honoraria
- The contest deadline is **March 26, 2004**.  
*See the details in this issue of Rostrum.*

We'll also sponsor Lincoln Financial Group Refreshers at several NFL District Tournaments:

- Refreshers are hospitality tables where students and coaches can grab a snack and beverage between rounds
- Each participating NFL member and coach who visits the table receives a gift (pictured at right)



- A Lincoln Financial Group representative will be at the table to wish the students and coaches good luck and to show our support for their hard work.

Our association with the NFL began in 1995 with the sponsorship of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate category. We expanded the partnership in 1998, becoming the national corporate sponsor of the NFL. We believe this is a sound investment in the lives of America's young people, and consistent with our company's strong commitment to education.

Our support for the NFL and other educational efforts extends a tradition that began with the establishment of a museum and library dedicated to Abraham Lincoln in 1928. This world-class facility in Fort Wayne, Indiana – the birthplace of our company – draws visitors from around the U.S.

A Fortune 500 financial services company, Lincoln Financial Group provides clear solutions to help our clients meet their financial goals and protect the work of a lifetime. Many of our clients are teachers and administrators in nearly 4,000 schools and universities.

These relationships – and our long-standing commitment to education – underscore our sponsorship of the NFL. If you're not already active in your local NFL chapter, find out how you can become involved. If you currently participate in the NFL, you've joined in the opportunity to add your voice to history.

# DISTRICT AND NATIONALS UPDATE

## Changes in Tournament Rules

The Executive Council recently met at its fall meeting in Salt Lake City, UT. Below is a summary of some of the key rule changes for the 2003-2004 District and National tournaments.

### Double Entry

The council would like to thank those district chairs that submitted opinions on the issue of double entry. The insight provided was quite helpful in assisting them to make an informed decision. The council has passed the following concerning double entry:

- A. Double entry is eliminated at the National Tournament. No student will be allowed to enter more than one main event beginning with the Salt Lake City Nationals.
- B. At the District Tournament, the District Committees are allowed autonomy concerning double entry with the following points of clarification:
  1. The District Committee may limit entry to one event.
  2. If they choose to do otherwise:
    - a. The District Committee is allowed autonomy in terms of double entry, however, no triple entry is allowed at the District Tournament.
    - b. Students can only enter one team event. This new autonomy means that a district committee can allow all possible double entries except Policy/Duo, Duo/Public Forum, and Policy/Public Forum.
    - c. If a student qualifies in a team event and solo event, the student must attend in the team event [Policy, Duo, Public Forum].
    - d. A student who is double entered in two solo events at the District Tournament must determine in advance, in writing, signed by the student, coach, parent/guardian, and principal the solo event that he/she will enter at the National Tournament if he/she double qualifies.
    - e. The alternate in all events will be allowed to attend the National Tournament if the original qualifier is a double qualifier and has chosen the other event on the pre-tournament form.

### Public Forum Debate (Ted Turner)

The council agreed to make Public Forum (known to many as Ted Turner) an official debate event for the 2003-2004 NFL District and National Tournaments. The event will be referred to as Public Forum Debate, however, at the National Tournament will be called Ted Turner Public Forum Debate. A complete set of official rules for the event will appear in the December *Rostrum* and will also appear in an updated version of the Chapter Manual on the NFL website as soon as possible. Below is a summary of the major changes from the experimental event rules of last year.

- A. The "Last Shot" will now be called the "Final Focus".
- B. The "Final Focus" is a persuasive final restatement of why your team has won the debate.
- C. The new official ballots will state that new arguments in the final speech are to be ignored. However, there will no longer be any specific rule on the number of arguments allowed in the "Final Focus."
- D. The use of **Community Judges** is strongly encouraged, but not mandatory.
- E. The coin toss must take place in front of the judge(s) of the round.
- F. The Public Forum topic for each month will be posted on the website ([www.nflonline.org](http://www.nflonline.org)) on the **1st of the preceding month**.

New Official Public Forum Ballots will be available from the National Office as soon as possible. We still have last year's ballots available at a discounted price.

### District Entry Quotas

Each school is allowed to enter two teams in Public Forum Debate (Ted Turner) in addition to that schools district entry quota. (as published on pg. TD-2 of the 2003 District Tournament Manual) Schools may enter more than two Public Forum Debate teams (maximum of four), however, the additional teams (over two) will count against that school's district entry quota.

**THE MINUTES FOR THE ENTIRE FALL COUNCIL MEETING WILL APPEAR  
IN THE DECEMBER *ROSTRUM*.**



# UTAH SITES

(Home of the 2004 National Tournament)



In 1846 the ill-fated Donner party came down Emigration Canyon into the valley of the Great Salt Lake on their way to California. A year later the Mormon pioneers travelled the same canyon to found Salt Lake City, home of the 2004 NFL National Tournament.



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the finalists and winners.*

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING  
EVERYONE AT THE 2004 NATIONALS!**

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by

Jason Baldwin and Scott Robinson

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## Introduction

The use of supporting evidence has become widely accepted in the LD community. Such acceptance is a good thing, for as has been argued in these pages before ("Evidence in LD: A Rationale," March, 1999), many value arguments include empirical premises which require expert support. A second reason to welcome the use of evidence in LD is that it provides an occasion to teach LD students how to research. This benefit is, unfortu-

nately, less widely realized than the first. Some teams purchase most of their evidence through the mail, depriving students of the chance to learn to research for themselves. And even on teams which do gather their own research, the research process may be haphazard, consisting of hurried assignments followed eventually by a pooling of whatever the cats drag in.

First, student-transmitted research knowledge (like many other forms of student-transmitted knowledge) decays very quickly. A skillful and mature varsity student who has had excellent research instruction may be able to transmit a good grasp of research basics to the next generation of novices, but there will be some losses, and that next generation will transmit imperfectly whatever it has received. In a few short years, a team which began with an excellent research program may deteriorate into a team where the majority of students cannot effectively use a library. Unless coaches take the responsibility to teach each new generation of students, the skills will decline.

A second reason for coaches to teach research themselves is that many summer LD workshops have now cut research out of their curricula. Research is a time-consuming activity, and two-week workshops vying to outdo each other in the number of tournament rounds and field trips they offer (also time consuming activities) may find research a natural place to cut. Library access may be a problem for some workshops, and some may even have financial incentives to discourage student research, since LD students who learn to do their own research are less likely to buy evidence through the mail. (Of course, some LD workshops do teach research seriously; coaches for whom this is an important consideration should investigate before making recommendations to students.) The upshot is that LD coaches who want their students to research well are probably going to have to teach the skill themselves.

**"Teaching research is about creating investigators. Equipped with strong research skills, your students will be able to teach themselves more than any one teacher ever could."**

This article and its forthcoming companion are offered in the hopes of deepening students' research skills. The present essay addresses coaches on (I) reasons for teaching research, (II-IV) important stages of research instruction, and (V) the coordination of team research. We will not hear detail mechanics of the research process itself, saving that task for the next essay, which is addressed to students and may be used by coaches implementing the kind of team research program we suggest below.

## I. Why Teach Research?

Even coaches who recognize the importance of evidence in LD and the value of research competence as a skill for LD students to acquire may not spend much time teaching students *how* to research. General research instruction (like general philosophy instruction) often takes a back seat to case building and practice rounds on the current resolution. It may be assumed that older

## II. Reading Instruction

It might seem that the most natural place to begin teaching research is a good library, but this is not the case. Before students confront the task of searching catalogs and browsing stacks, they need to learn how to read the kind of sources they are ultimately going to find for themselves. Learning how to read good topic-relevant literature makes students better able to recognize such literature when they encounter it in a library. Pre-library reading instruction gives everyone a common sensibil-

ity about what does and doesn't count as useful material. Moreover, the ability to decipher complex argumentative prose is one of the most valuable skills students can take away from debate, and it certainly merits its own attention in any course of debate instruction.

The most common problem we have encountered with student readers is an inability to distinguish an author's statement of *other* people's views from the author's statement of his *own* view. Most argumentative writing (like most debate speeches) not only presents the author's own conclusions but also reviews (sometimes at great length) alternative positions which the author rejects. If an author supports affirmative action but the author summarizes for several pages common criticisms of affirmative action, many students will lift evidence from the summary pages and cite the author as an opponent of affirmative action. This is a serious error which coach-directed reading instruction can help students to avoid.

One way to approach reading instruction is for the coach to find a few useful chapters or essays on a new resolution and distribute copies to the entire team. It is important that coaches find these readings, or at least review them carefully in advance, to ensure that they do, in fact, contain enough quotable material to be useful models of good sources. When everyone has the same reading in hand, the article should be read aloud, a few paragraphs per student. As each student reads, all students are looking for useful evidence. When a student finds what she believes to be a useful, self-contained piece of evidence, she stops the reader and explains to the group where she thinks the evidence begins and ends and why she identifies it as useful. At this stage, the coach may ask the other students if anyone disagrees, either with the precise boundaries of the student's selection or with its suitability as evidence on the topic.

When everyone has had his or her say, the coach should tell the students who is right—i.e., whether the proposed evidence really is useful or not and where it should begin and end. It is important that coaches be blunt and authoritative about these matters. The point of teaching students to read for evidence is for someone who knows how to read carefully and accurately (the coach) to pass that ability on to people who don't yet have it (the students). We have also found this exercise a good occasion to teach topic interpretation: student explanations for choosing this or that bit of evidence sometimes reveal misreadings of a resolution which can then be discussed with everyone present.

In addition to identifying usable quotations, coaches can teach students to break down dense academic prose into a thesis and supporting premises. Coaches can make students sensitive to nuances and qualifications of language which they might otherwise miss. Coaches can also show students how to follow up on footnotes, bibliographic citations, and other useful elements of scholarly apparatus. To address the confusion over advocacy versus summary discussed above, coaches can help students identify passages where the author is raising objections to his own position and then answering those objections. Students can be taught to recognize the sometimes subtle cues scholars use to signal their endorsement or rejection of an argument. And the peculiarities of every new source will present their own teaching opportunities.

Although we have so far been treating the various aspects of reading instruction as part of a single exercise of reading a text together, coaches who have the time may want to use different

readings to emphasize different skills. Short editorial columns, for example, are often a good place to practice reading for implied premises. Editorial writers rarely have the space to make their arguments fully explicit; instead, they begin by assuming premises (about the proper goal of foreign policy, say) which they trust their audiences to share. By contrast, contemporary moral and political philosophy will be more explicit in its premises but will require readers to be more sensitive to the finest distinctions in meaning—philosophical conclusions are often much more qualified (i.e., limited) than debaters expect or wish them to be. A reference article or review of contemporary research will provide opportunities to generate further research ideas based on the notes, source citations, and terminology explained by the author. And there are many other specific skills of critical academic reading which can best be acquired through particular kinds of sources; the foregoing are only examples.

Once the team has together reviewed enough text to give students a feel for what they will be doing when they read on their own, it is wise to check students' learning by giving them copies of another short reading or two to take home and bracket by themselves. Simply ask them to read the piece carefully, place pencil brackets around those bits they might use as evidence, and come prepared to justify their decisions. At the next team meeting, the coach can either review each student's work on the spot and reveal the "right answers" or collect the bracketed readings to scrutinize more carefully later. In any case, it's important that students receive enough feedback to know how their instincts are developing and what problems their selections may still exhibit. Ideally, by the end of this cycle, each student will understand how to read an argumentative essay accurately and how to select those parts of it most suitable for use as LD evidence.

A further benefit of starting each new resolution this way is that the entire team begins with a core of common knowledge before they go their separate ways developing arguments. And although it requires some footwork on the part of the coach to find suitable readings, working through them gives the coach a basic understanding of the topic literature, something hard to acquire if all the research is left to students alone.

### III. Evidence Formatting Instruction

After students have practiced bracketing evidence to the coach's satisfaction, the next stage before hitting the library is to practice cutting and formatting the evidence on briefs which can then be photocopied for the team. This skill will probably not need to be reviewed with varsity students on each new resolution (as reading skills should be), but it does merit supervised practice for novice debaters on every topic. If students are taught to identify useful evidence without being trained in how to cut and format it, the end result is likely to be a pile of messy and inconsistent pages with incomplete or inaccurate bibliographic information which do not photocopy well.

To practice cutting evidence, use the articles students have already bracketed as a group so that you can confidently assess the bibliographic information. We recommend distributing a list of evidence-cutting guidelines to your team which they should follow for all evidence briefs they submit. A sample of such instructions is included as an Appendix to this article. Formulate your own standards carefully—include only those rules which are important enough to you to enforce. When a student turns in evidence which deviates in *any* way from your instructions, return it



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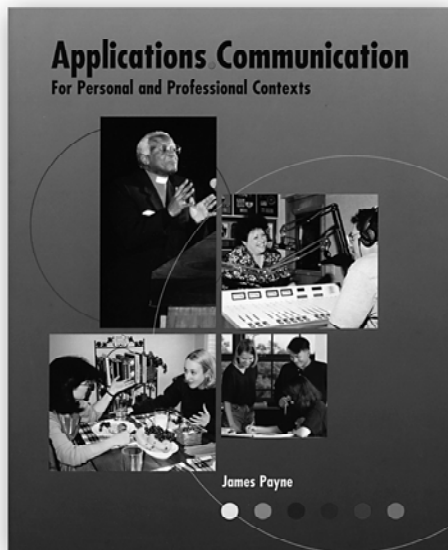
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to the student at once and do not photocopy it for the team. Learning to follow a research and citation format correctly is a valuable but rare academic skill which will serve students well in college and beyond.

After distributing the list, go over each rule carefully, explaining its rationale and answering any questions. Two elements of the brief deserve special explanation with examples. The first is the heading or “tag” that summarizes the content of each quotation. This tag is crucial because it allows students to review a large quantity of evidence quickly and locate a specific quotation during a round. It is very tempting for students to exaggerate the claim of a quotation when they label it, and an exaggerated tag often makes its way into a debate speech, with students claiming much more support from their evidence than the evidence actually provides. One way to avoid such “power-tagging” is to take all words in the tag from the quotation itself. You can work with your students as a group to generate accurate, concise tags for the quotations they have bracketed in your practice readings.

The second element to emphasize in briefing is complete and accurate bibliographic information. Students can be very careless about locating and reporting bibliographic details, and they also may have trouble distinguishing the author of an essay from the editor of the book in which that essay appears. High schools which assign research papers often require students to learn the efficient MLA style of citation, and it makes sense to reinforce this skill by requiring debate citations to follow the same form. If you do not know MLA style yourself, it is well worth learning, and it will become second nature to you and your students after a short period of practice. Train students to reflexively record complete bibliographic information on each source at the moment they photocopy in the library so that they have all the details they need when it is time to cut and format evidence at home.

One element not included in MLA entries but important for debate purposes is an author’s qualifications. If students do not include author qualifications when they present evidence in speeches, they might as well be quoting their friends or relatives; the main reason to appeal to outside authorities in debate is that those authorities have credentials which make them more credible sources than the speakers. Therefore, students should insert author credentials immediately after the author’s name but before the title of the book or article.

Although most reputable research sources contain some hints about an author’s background, these hints can appear in any of several places and may prove difficult for students to locate. Try to find several sources with differently placed author qualifications to illustrate where your students might have to look. These places include: the title page, under the author’s name; the back or inside flap of the dustjacket; an “About the Author” page in the back of a book; the bottom of the first page or the very end of a magazine or journal article; the end of a preface or acknowledgments section, where an author identifies his home institution; a “Notes on Contributors” page at the front or back of an anthology. And, of course, qualifications may be buried elsewhere. In cases where a source truly contains no author qualifications, students can often find such information on the internet. The main point is to make students aware that author qualifications are necessary to establish the credibility of their evidence, and that they should look long and hard before concluding that a source contains no such information.

Once the rules have been explained and illustrated, students

should spend some time under the coach’s supervision actually cutting, taping, and labeling the evidence they have bracketed from the preliminary readings. This will obviously require several sets of tape and scissors, even if students are split up into small groups. The coach can circulate among the students, reviewing their work and correcting errors as they emerge. As with reading practice, some formatting should be left for students to do at home on their own and checked later by the coach. The goal is to train students to do this work neatly, accurately, and thoroughly.

#### IV. Library Instruction

Now that students have been equipped to transform the research sources they find into pages of usable debate evidence, they are ready to learn how to find those sources. You can help your students learn to use the library in three main ways: first, by directing student development of research “key words”; second, by familiarizing them with library resources they are likely to overlook; and third, by accompanying them on their early research forays, to model intelligent library use.

The advice in this section assumes first that your team has access to a decent library and second that you think it is worthwhile for students to research in traditional paper-and-ink libraries. A few words on each assumption: Most readers (statistically) are within reasonable (say, one hour or less) driving distance of a college, university, or large public library. Except for the smallest towns, the average city or county library contains adequate resources for researching most LD topics, and college and university libraries are even better. Many LDers pooh-pooh their local libraries without fully appreciating what they have to offer.

As to the second assumption, that research in an old-fashioned library is worthwhile, we can’t think of a serious scholar who would disagree. Many of the most credible and important sources are simply not available on the internet, and students who rely exclusively on web research rarely know what it is they’re reading—hypertext makes the jump from a reputable, mainstream news source to a sleazy conspiracy crackpot just a mouseclick or few away. The costs of paper publishing erect an editorial quality barrier which Dr. Schmoie’s Homepage can easily evade. Students who have learned traditional library research will find it easy to adapt their skills to electronic media, but the reverse is (in our experience) not true. Another strike against the web is that it caters to students’ laziest tendencies. Regardless of your own personal enthusiasm for the internet, your students will need to know how to use a real library when they get to college, and you are in as good a position as anyone to teach them. I (Baldwin) forbid my students to turn in any evidence toward research assignments that has been printed off of a computer. Only quotations mechanically photocopied from paper or microfilm sources are acceptable. Of course the students whine, but they learn to research.

The first way that coaches can facilitate library research is to help students develop lists of “key words.” Students are often intimidated by a library. They may stare slack-jawed at the stacks of books in the library until they either give up or retreat to the relative safety of a Google search. A primary task of research instruction is overcoming this intimidation. Key words are terms which students use to search library catalogs, periodical databases, and book indexes to look for topic-relevant information. These words reduce library research to a manageable task by guiding students to the most fruitful resources.

The most effective method of developing key words is a

team brainstorming exercise facilitated by the coach. Begin by asking students to say what comes to mind when they think of the topic. This may include words, phrases, authors, titles, events, or anything else of possible relevance to researching the resolution. You should record these thoughts in a public place like a chalkboard so that students may “piggyback” on each other’s ideas. You should not substitute your ideas for the students’ (say, by distributing your own list of key words) but should instead gently direct students to think of appropriate concepts, to consider relationships between concepts, and to evaluate whether a proposed concept is germane to the resolution. In brainstorming exercises like this, the coach must strike a delicate balance between guidance and autonomy. Your goal is to help students discover their “inner researcher” rather than to create research drones who mechanically fetch material. It is appropriate at this point to direct the students’ attention to important *categories* of concepts, such as the values at stake in the resolution or historical examples of the conflict.

As an example, key words generated on the possible 2004 resolution that “In the U.S., the use of race as a deciding factor in college admissions is just” might include: Michigan case, affirmative action, Supreme Court, justice, racism, diversity, preferential treatment, Shelby Steele, Bakke, Civil Rights Act, reverse discrimination, equal opportunity, compensation, test bias, NAACP, academic merit. This list is not presented as an ideal, just as a representative of the kinds of ideas students might generate on a first encounter with a resolution. Researchers will refine their lists of key words as they discover the terms in which published experts frame the debate; preliminary brainstorming simply helps students to tap into the vein of relevant literature which might otherwise elude them.

This brainstorming exercise allows you to influence the perspectives that your students have on the topic. Without substantial, well-directed brainstorming work, students often become attached to narrow (and sometimes bizarre) interpretations of a resolution. It is easier to guide students to reject skewed interpretations of a resolution before the students become invested in such interpretations through research and case writing.

The second way that coaches can facilitate library research is with instruction on the specific resources available to students. You should ideally scope out the library you want your students to use before you meet them there. If you can’t make a separate trip, just arrive an hour before you plan to meet your students so that you have time for a head start. But before anyone goes to the library, you should remind students of library etiquette (no talking, only whispering; no food or drink; no marking in or cutting library materials; no hiding resources from other students; no monopolizing study areas or computer terminals) and also of the items they should bring with them—key word lists, notepaper, pens, copy money, and (if they have them) library cards.

If the library you are visiting is attached to a college or university, you should call ahead to check their policies on outside users. Most academic libraries will accommodate debate students if they are forewarned, and some will even issue borrowers’ cards to debaters or their coaches if arrangements are made in advance. A good relationship with a circulating or reference librarian can be invaluable to a debate team.

When you scope out the library in advance of your students, you are trying to locate and test the major functions you want to show them. You might also want to visit a reference librarian

to explain the nature of your group’s work and ask any questions you cannot answer for yourself; most reference librarians will be eager to help you prepare to teach your students research skills.

Here are some of the questions you might try to answer: How do I procure and add money to a copy card? Where is the first place students should go for help? How do I perform keyword, author, and title searches of the library’s book catalog? To what useful periodical databases does the library subscribe (e.g., Article First, Academic Universe, JSTOR)? Where are the standard reference sources useful for LD in general (e.g., *Encyclopedia of Ethics*) and for the current resolution (e.g., *Encyclopedia of Crime and Justice*)? Where are the general moral and political philosophy books? What catalog system does the library use (Library of Congress or Dewey Decimal)? Does the reference department group resources on current controversies together (e.g., *Opposing Viewpoints* books or the old SIRS article binders)? Where are the paper periodical indices (e.g., *Reader’s Guide*, *Humanities Index*, *Philosopher’s Index*), and how do I use them? Where are microfiche or microfilm resources located, and how should they be retrieved and copied? Where are current periodicals? Where are bound periodicals? What about newspapers? Where are Supreme Court decisions, and how can I locate a particular case? What are the least disruptive places for students to work together?

Every library will have its own organizational quirks and its own mix of resources. Just use your best snooping instincts to find out everything about a library you think a debater might want to know. When you meet your students, you can take them on a tour of the library to show them the locations of important resources and the basics of using the available catalogs and indices.

Once you and your students are oriented to the library, you can buckle down and begin to hunt with them for topic research. We will not go into detail here, because this article’s forthcoming companion will walk LD students through the mechanics of library research. In general, you should try to work with one or very few students at a time (since only two or three people can really huddle around the same book), and you should do your best to keep *all* students busy, in the most superficial, physical sense of busy. The worst vice students exhibit in libraries is inactivity—they find one source and assume that it is enough, or they can’t find anything, so they sit down and mope, or they fritter away hours at computer terminals. The library is one place where movement pays. Some of the best discoveries amount simply to stumbling across a hidden gem because the researcher kept moving. The motion involved here should be more than typing; students waste enormous amounts of time ostensibly doing computer searches and surfing the web. A student not flipping through a book can be photocopying work another has found or exploring a periodical index or browsing through the reference shelves for a relevant dictionary or encyclopedia. This prodding is incidental to a coach’s main work in the library, but it is very important.

The main work is to follow students from the catalogs to the stacks until they find what you approve as a useful article or chapter to photocopy. If you will spend 20 or 30 minutes doing this with each student, you will have the opportunity to teach and observe quite a lot. You can find out exactly where a student needs to pay more attention, and you can demonstrate the needed skill—whether it’s combining and refining search terms, or identifying call number patterns, or picking the juiciest sounding titles from the shelf, or using the table of contents and preface to quickly scope out a book, or eliminating outdated statistical reports, or locating an



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author's qualifications, or using a book's index to narrow a search, or . . . you get the picture.

The goal is for each student to leave the library with at least one solid chapter or article photocopied for him to bracket and cut on his own. (With young students, you may want to have them turn in the text bracketed for you to review before they go to the trouble to cut it.) Try to pursue different types of sources with different students. If you ask each student to record the "research path" you followed together to yield that source, you can productively ask students to recount those research paths at your next meeting to illustrate the different ways people went about finding different source types.

The library instruction we have described is focused on general libraries, but you can adapt the procedure to introduce more advanced students to the important LD resources housed in law libraries. This kind of one-on-one-or-two library work is demanding, and it need not be repeated with every new resolution; it's just a way to help novices get their research bearings.

## V. Team Research Coordination

As policy debate teams well know, debaters can vastly increase their supply of evidence by pooling individual research results. However, cooperative research strategies involve trade-offs of which coaches should be aware.

The easiest way for a team to share research is for the coach to photocopy the briefs each student produces for every other student. Because several students may have cut evidence from the same source, and because much student-selected evidence is of poor quality, this process will waste lots of paper unless coaches weed through the briefs before copying. (I [Baldwin] typically copy between one fifth and one third of the briefs that varsity students submit.) Furthermore, the process may reward lazy students who receive the full benefit of their more industrious colleagues' efforts without themselves contributing much of value. Productive students, meanwhile, may resent the indiscriminate distribution of their work. On the other hand, informal evidence trades by students may avoid the fairness problems of coach-initiated exchanges, but at the cost of cliques and a loss of team unity. There is no sure way to eliminate all such problems; as in so many other areas, coaches must make wise decisions about how to strike the balance best for their students as individuals and as a team.

Some teams pursue a more formal division of research labor. Students may specialize in different areas of philosophy, so that one student studies social contract thinkers while another student studies Kant or Mill. Each student then learns a lot about a narrow range of thinkers rather than a little about a broader range of thinkers. Alternatively, teams may assign different arguments or sources on a given resolution to different students. Consider the resolution that "Capital punishment is justified." One student might research the alleged racism of the judicial system, while another student specializes in deterrence literature. After conducting their independent research, these two students could simply exchange evidence. This division-of-labor approach may allow a team to canvas a wider range of literature than uncoordinated students otherwise would; it may also ensure that important arguments do not fall through the cracks; it may give novices a focused and manageable library task; and it may motivate students who get to research areas and thinkers which particularly interest them.

However, there are also educational and strategic costs. High school education is still about training people in general critical

thinking skills. Overspecialization can cripple a student's knowledge at this stage in her academic development. Students may become experts on narrow topics (only utilitarian thinkers, only continental philosophers, or only the environmental implications of a topic) rather than developing a general knowledge of moral and political philosophy and a wide familiarity with the issues embedded in resolutions. Specialized students may try to turn every debate into an exercise in their specialties. To a social contract specialist, all LD topics become social contract conflicts. To a specialist in continental philosophy (shudder), every topic may look like an invitation to deconstruction. After a couple of years, these students may have learned very little generally about philosophy or even about the resolutions they have been debating.

There are also strategic costs of research divisions of labor. In the above capital punishment example, two students separately research racism and deterrence. Both of these topics are important parts of the capital punishment literature. If one of the students does a poor job, the team will not learn what it needs to know in order to debate the issue intelligently. Even if both students do an adequate job of researching their chosen specialties, reading the research output of other students is not as informative as reading the original material in its full complexity. Finally, if all students confine their research to assigned specialty areas, it is very likely that the team will miss out on important sources and arguments which did not make it into the assignment. Effective research is flexible and open-ended, and students exploring a variety of uncharted paths may discover more treasure than a group which tries to map and divide the territory in advance.

Most students benefit from some combination of free-ranging and assigned research. There is no recipe for optimizing the educational and competitive benefits of research for everyone, but coaches should take an active role in striking this balance.

## Conclusion

Our treatment of teaching LD research skills is far from comprehensive. In the end, it is up to each coach to develop activities (in addition to the few examples we have mentioned) to address the needs of his or her students. We hope that this short discussion is inspirational.

Research is one of the hardest aspects of debate to teach. It is time consuming, frustrating, and difficult for many students. However, this skill will serve students better in the long term than knowledge of any specific philosophy or topic. Research cuts to the core of forensic training. Teaching research is about creating investigators. Equipped with strong research skills, your students will be able to teach themselves more than any one teacher ever could.

## Appendix: Evidence Format Specifications

1. Do not cut quotations from electronic sources or internet printouts. Cut only from mechanical photocopies of paper or microfiche/film or .pdf printouts of printed originals.
2. Include any relevant context surrounding a quotation, e.g., antecedents to pronouns.
3. Tape quotations down left and right sides with clear Scotch tape in one centered column on one clean side of white 8 1/2 x 11" paper. Leave a 1" margin on all sides of the page.
4. Group quotations by source and/or by subject. Do not mix aff. and neg. quotations on the same page.
5. Use a dark/heavy blue or black pen for all writing on briefs.

6. In the top right corner of each page, within the 1" margins, write "Aff" or "Neg." In the bottom right corner, neatly print your initials.

7. Above each quotation, in largest letters, neatly write a one-line tag summarizing the content of the quotation. Do not exaggerate. Make each tag unique so that similar quotations can be distinguished at a glance.

8. Below the tag, indented and in smaller letters, neatly write an adequate citation above each quotation. An adequate LD citation includes, in this order:

- (a) author's full name
- (b) author's qualifications (look hard!)
- (c) "title of essay/article" (if applicable)
- (d) title of book/journal
- (e) editor's name (if applicable)
- (f) date of publication
- (g) page number

Use commas to separate elements of the citation. If you are putting several quotations from the same source on the same sheet, you may list the complete citation information above only the first quotation and then write "same source, p.#" under the tag of subsequent quotations.

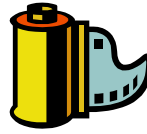
9. Do not cram quotations and writing onto a page; leave enough space to make your pages easy on the eye.

*(Jason Baldwin is a doctoral student in Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. Scott Robinson is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Texas at Dallas. They oversee the LD curriculum of the Kentucky National Debate Institute (www.kndi.org)*

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# IN DEFENSE OF COMPETITIVE SPEECH

by  
Rob Crawford

# S P E E C H

For some years, the financial woes afflicting Oregon schools have worsened. Until recently, most schools have been able to stretch their increasingly scarce resources and make do without major reductions in their offerings to students—a fact which has encouraged some

offer the opportunity to hone them in competition. Both history and a rational assessment of the world today tell us it is not just important, but vital.

**"I believe that competitive speech, far from being expendable, is central to the educational mission of our public schools preparing students to be functional participants in a democratic society."**

Rhetoric is the art of using words effectively. It has been considered an indispensable part of a well-rounded education since the dawn of recorded history. Nearly 2,500 years ago, a young Athenian named Demosthenes put a pebble in his mouth to practice speaking around it, so he could master a crippling speech impediment. He mastered his disability and went on to become one of the most famous orators of all time. The point of this story is not that public speaking was invented 2,500 years ago, rather, that public speaking was already a long-established tradition even then, complete with clear and powerful expectations of the speaker.

factions to push for still further cuts. But now, without question, the crunch has come—and with no relief in sight, districts across the state are being compelled to shorten their instructional year, cut staff and services, and eliminate programs of unquestioned value.

Rhetorical skills were central to both the direct persuasion of the public and the conduct of useful debate among leaders and, thus, were absolutely essential to the functioning of the earliest democracies.

One of the programs threatened in many districts is competitive speech. And why not? Speech is not a high-profile program, attracting excited taxpayers every weekend to sit on stadium cushions and watch their money at work. Even in the best of times, many taxpayers wouldn't see the point of spending good money so that students could travel to other schools to read poetry, orate on the benefits of legalizing marijuana, or debate issues which aren't in their power to resolve. So in a time of general sacrifice, shouldn't such a program join Water Polo and Popular Cinema on the chopping block? I believe it should not. I believe that competitive speech, far from being expendable, is central to the educational mission of our public schools—preparing students to be functional participants in a democratic society.

The importance of oral interpretation goes back much farther even than that, into the dim prehistoric past. Linguistic scholars know that humans have possessed the written word for only a tiny fraction of our total history—and that for the vast period before the written word, there was only the spoken word to define a culture and its inheritance. Accordingly, there was almost no one more valuable to a people than its bards and storytellers and actors. These were the folk who carried forward from one generation to the next a people's religion, its history, and its values—who, with their ability to bring passion and life to mere words, were simultaneously creating and perpetuating the cultures to which they belonged. Clearly, rhetoric and interpretation—and standards of excellence in each—were once essential aspects of the fabric of human life. Have they become less essential in America, somewhere along the way? They were still essential here in 1863, when Lincoln stood to rededicate a nation's courage after the shocking carnage of Gettysburg. They were still essential in the 1930's, when Franklin Roosevelt summoned an exhausted country's will against the Great

Speech instruction offers development in the skills of rhetoric, interpretation, and debate; competition hones those skills. That much is fact—what is open to question is whether it is important to develop those skills and to

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Depression. They were still essential in 1961, when John Kennedy called upon us to serve our country, and launched the programs that put humanity into space and computers in human hands. And throughout, the interpretations of entertainers from Mark Twain to John Wayne to Denzel Washington have defined America for herself and for the world, driving evolutions in behavior, language, and attitude that shape society itself. And now? Any literate observer of contemporary society will guess that in a random audience of a hundred American adults today, half or more would greet a reference to Demosthenes with blank incomprehension-though fifty years ago, anyone with an eighth-grade education would have recognized his name instantly. A substantial percentage will not understand the reference to Gettysburg, except as part of the phrase "Gettysburg Address." Few will be aware that Mark Twain was as famous for his lectures and readings as for his books. For many, such words as "rhetoric" and "carnage" in this document will be mysteries whose meaning must be gathered from context or ignored. Very few will perceive that citing famous names is a standard rhetorical device-one which may be used or misused in the pursuit of an argument.

In that context, then, is speech still important?

To say that it is not is to suggest that because fewer and fewer Americans are capable of basic calculation or lucid writing, we should abandon mathematics and composition. Competitive speech is one of the very few realms in which it really matters for students to understand classical references, basic history, manipulation of an audience, and the uses of persuasive technique-they'll get thumped by their competitors if they don't. And do these things matter very much in the society our students will join upon graduation? The society for which we are supposed to be preparing them? I believe that while literacy and its oral expressions receive less encouragement in our educational and cultural lives than they once did, they are absolutely as important as they have ever been. The power of speech-the ability to use words to dramatic effect-is nowhere more evident than in the present debate over whether or not the United States should go to war against Iraq, or in the many debates over where America is headed economically, politically, and morally. These are issues of unsurpassed importance in the daily lives of millions upon millions of people, and they are being decided to a considerable extent by the power of public speaking in all its manifestations. The ability to speak well continues-and will continue-to be an essential part of any American's ability to participate effectively in anything resembling our traditional democracy.

Perhaps even more important for the average person-who admittedly may never stand up to address large numbers of people-is the ability to recognize what is being done when other people stand up to do so. A careful education in the skills of rhetoric and interpretation prepares us to do more than exercise those skills-it prepares us to recognize when those skills are being exercised, and temper our responses accordingly. If one has no idea what the ad hominem argument is, or a statement of false cause, or slant wording-if one has never been educated in the ways of effectively assuming a character for an audience-then one's vulnerability to those techniques is the same as it was for the mobs who rioted through Roman streets two thousand years ago. Ignorant people today are as easily stampeded as ignorant people at any point in history-and like their predecessors, must eventually pay the price of that ignorance.

An ignorance of rhetorical devices, coupled with the ignorance of history and geography and science and mathematics we already dread, produces a citizen whose vote is worth less than nothing-a citizen easily controlled by calculated appeals to his emotions and his fears-a citizen identified by Thomas Jefferson as the worst possible danger to a democracy. In fact, it is entirely possible to consider Oregon's present dilemma as a failure of education in the very skills speech emphasizes-haven't we gotten here, to some extent, because Oregon's voters have listened uncritically to the clever rhetoric of people who promise we can have things, but not pay for them? Because we cannot see through misdirections as old as politics? In a very real sense, the question before us is whether we intend to further America's downward spiral into public ignorance and the vulnerabilities it creates-or to arrest that spiral as best we can. We can acquiesce in the development of greater and greater numbers of the citizens Jefferson feared-or we can dig in now, and do what we can to reverse that development by maintaining competitive speech in our state.

The question may be raised: "Why 'competitive' speech? Why not just emphasize speech skills in our classrooms, and let it go at that?" It's a legitimate question, certainly-but as a society, we seem to understand the value of competition very well when it comes to basketball, or football, or volleyball. We understand very well that basketball undertaken for a P. E. grade, or for an intramural trophy, is not basketball at its best-and for the same reasons, speech undertaken for a grade, or for an intramural competition, does not produce the same motivation or the same results as competition between schools.

I would never argue that we should drop competitive athletics. As a longtime coach, I recognize their value to our young people and to our society. But I would point out that schools were competing in debate and rhetoric and interpretation, busily declaiming against one another to hone their students' skills, long before they were playing football games-and that the skills so honed remain more central than football to the mission of those schools today. I would point out that competitive speech offers the benefits of competition to large numbers of students who are never going to wear the home team's uniforms on the athletic field-but who nonetheless matter a great deal to their parents, their communities, and the future of their country.

It would be unthinkable for most public high schools to drop competitive football or basketball-but it ought to be more unthinkable still to drop competitive speech. Unlike basketball or football, competitive speech matters even to those of us who do not know it matters.

*(Rob Crawford is the Speech and Debate Coach at Pine Eagle High School, Halfway, Oregon)*



## An Invitation to Join the



# NDCA

NATIONAL DEBATE COACHES ASSOCIATION



### WHAT IS THE NDCA?

The National Debate Coaches Association provides Debate coaches with avenues for professional development, regardless of region or pedagogical style. We offer a wide array of support activities and services, designed to promote the continuing education of debate coaches, and to strengthening debate nationwide, in all its diverse forms.

### WHAT DOES THE NDCA DO?

#### *The Barton Scholars Program*

This scholarship program exists to honor the legacy of Phyllis Barton by enabling debate coaches to attend summer institute instruction.

#### *NDCA Web page*

Basic web page information is available to the public, and includes *Judge philosophies* and the monthly *calendar of tournaments* and contacts, nationwide. NDCA members have private access to on-line discussion forums and discussion list. Visit the web page now at [www.theNDCA.com](http://www.theNDCA.com)

#### *Theories and Practices Journal*

The NDCA is sponsoring a new on-line academic journal focused on current theories and practices in competitive debate.

#### *Annual National Convention*

NDCA hosts a one-day convention, which features presentations on debate theory and practices, team administration, and topics relevant to coach education and retention. The convention is open to the public, but NDCA members receive free convention registration.

#### *Involvement in the Topic Drafting Process*

The NDCA is officially represented in the National Federation topic selection process, and NDCA delegates to the topic meetings have been powerful voices at those meetings, representing the community of coaches most directly affected by decisions made there.

#### *Newsletter*

Members receive newsletters through the year containing news and information about debate events and personalities, and are invited to contribute news items and columns.

### SHARE THE WEALTH

The NDCA membership represents most of the very best and brightest debate educators across America. The collection of knowledge, innovation, and experience represented in this group is second to none. Lesson plans, essays, and useful suggestions from the members will be shared on the NDCA website.

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## NDCA Membership Application Form

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Provide the information requested here, and mail with a dues check made payable to the *National Debate Coaches Association* to:  
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This membership application form is for:

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#### *Other Information*

- I look forward to planning a presentation for the convention.
- I will send tournament information for the calendar
- I will send teaching materials for the website.
- I will send updates from my region for the Newsletter.

# YOUR VOICE CAN STOP VIOLENCE



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Forensic coaches and competitors know that communication skills are valuable in today's world. But did you know they can save lives?

Students Talking About Respect, Inc., (STAR) is a national non-profit educational initiative that

develops students' communication skills as antidotes to the root causes of hatred and violence. Students involved in STAR then apply their skills via community outreach and service learning applications.

STAR is a flexible program. Participating schools select the level of involvement, structure and activities that meet their local needs and interests. "Our staff is available to help each school develop its own unique STAR Chapter," Roy explains.

**"STAR provides a way for forensic students to enhance their competitive skills while making a real difference in the world."**

Schools with active forensics and debate teams are encouraged to integrate STAR into their team structure. "STAR provides a way for forensics students to enhance their competitive skills while making a real difference in the world," explains Deano Pape, Director of Forensics at Ripon College and STAR's Director of Educational Programming. "The

merge of a STAR Chapter with a forensics team is a win-win situation for all involved." In the near future, STAR will sponsor national competitions in various communication genres. Currently there are eleven states that have an active STAR program.

develops students' communication skills as a means to prevent hatred and violence among teens. Provided free of charge to participating high schools, STAR materials are developed by a team of professionals from fields such as communication, psychology, and law enforcement.

STAR, Inc., is an independent non-profit corporation. Headquartered on the campus of Ripon College, STAR was founded by professors in the Ripon College Speech Department.

"Murder is now the second leading cause of death among American teenagers," explains Dr. Jody Roy, STAR's Executive Director. "We formed STAR to proactively address the realities of teen violence, from school shootings and gang involvement to bullying and fist-fights. We simply cannot ignore these problems any longer."

Both the National Forensics League and Pi Kappa Delta originally were founded by Ripon Speech professors.

Participating schools sponsor STAR Chapters, co-curricular clubs that provide students with both a forum and format to discuss issues. STAR activities develop students' critical thinking and com-

To learn more about how you can bring STAR to your school, call the STAR, Inc., office at 920-748-8321 or visit the organization's web site at [www.starespect.org](http://www.starespect.org).



## INTERGENERATIONAL DEBATE: THE NEW FRONTIER

by  
Tim Averill

With the advent of Ted Turner Debate (also known as Public Forum Debate) and its appeal to all audiences, Manchester's Tim Averill decided to have his students practice for Ted Turner by appearing at a local retirement community, Brooksby Village in Peabody, MA. The audience of 40 seniors enjoyed seeing a debate between the state championship team and the NFL qualifying team. The seniors, some of whom had been debaters for the late, great Brooks Quimby at Bates College in Maine, enjoyed the debate but also issued a challenge; return in June before NFL Nationals and debate against the best team of senior citizens. The article from *The Salem News/Gloucester Daily Times* reported the outcome.

Debaters John-Paul Kwasia and Lincoln Pasquina had a 6-6 record at nationals, but their preparation against the seniors was a wonderful opportunity to speak in front of 100 people and to test their ideas against experienced opponents.

**Reprint permission granted by  
*Gloucester Daily Times / The Salem News*  
Thursday, June 12, 2003**

**MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA** - High School teams from Manchester and Essex have competed in the national high school debate tournament for 75 years. Before this year's tournament in Atlanta this weekend, coach Tim Averill wanted to give his team a new debating experience.

But when 50 Manchester Essex Regional High School students poured into the lobby of the Brooksby Village retirement community campus center in Peabody yesterday, senior citizen and village resident Bernard Schwartz couldn't resist cracking a joke. "You guys moving in?" he asked with a laugh. "I guess these are the new residents. They must have lowered the age."

Brooksby Village is a community for people over the age of 62. But yesterday it set the stage for a dress rehearsal of the new "Ted Turner" style of debating that the students will be following in this year's tournament.

Debate team members and state and district champions John Paul Kwasia and Lincoln Pasquina debated Brooksby Village residents Margaret Cassidy and Jerry Levy on "Should the United States be responsible for the rebuilding of Iraq?"

Roughly 50 of Kwasia and Pasquina's classmates accompanied the pair to Peabody yesterday to witness the debate, but Cassidy and Levy had a cheering section that was just as large, if only slightly older.

Kwasia said he felt that debating at Brooksby Village helped him prepare for the national tournament this weekend by giving him the experience of debating in front of a diverse voting body. Pasquina agreed and said that debating a team with such a depth of historical knowledge was new to him. "We may have read books about history, but they were possibly alive when these things happened," he said.

Next year, Manchester Essex Debate will continue to compete against the senior citizens, holding full intergenerational tournaments in the fall. Averill said, "We've done international debates (London 1994 and Greece 2000), but intergenerational debate also crosses borders and helps the students to appreciate the value of life experience and the knowledge that comes from having lived the history that they have only studied."



*Jerry Levy and student debater Whit Graham*

Student emcee Ross Cowman said the new style of debate is based on the popular television show "Nightline," and was designed for everyday citizens to understand. "Yes, even senior citizens," he said, chuckling.

"We're trying to get them ready to speak to a more general audience," said Averill, who is also head of the English Department at the high school.

Averill began the debate by promising the audience a "vigorous debate." He also jokingly warned his students, "just because there's snow on the roof, it doesn't mean that the attic is empty."

The two teams debated for roughly an hour. Kwasia and Pasquina, who argued in favor of the United States assuming primary responsibility for rebuilding Iraq, quoted sources such as recent issues of *The Economist* magazine and *U.S. News and World Report* to bolster their argument, but Cassidy and Levy seemed to rely more on their knowledge of U.S. and world history. At one instance during the debate, Levy quoted former President Dwight D. Eisenhower to make a point.

After both teams made their closing arguments, ballots were passed out and the audience was asked to vote for a winner. The room erupted in laughter when Averill called for a recount. "The result was too close," he said. "We're looking for dimpled chads."

Eventually, the results were announced, with the Manchester Essex Regional High School team receiving 47 votes, and the Brooksby Village team receiving 48 for their pre-determined stance on the issue.

Brooksby Village resident Eric Bauer quieted the commotion that followed the announcement by expressing his admiration for students Kwasia and Pasquina. "If these two gentlemen are a symbol of who we have growing up, then I don't think we have anything to worry about here," he said.

# STUDENT DEBATER WHIT GRAHAM GOES TO WASHINGTON

**"The People Speak"**  
Press Release Segments  
September 30, 2003

(Washington, DC) - Sixteen organizations, representing ideologies across the political spectrum, today announced *The People Speak: America Debates Its Role in the World*--more than **1,000 debates and discussions about foreign policy** held throughout October in communities across the country.

Senator Timothy E. Wirth, President of the United Nations Foundation, Thomas Donnelly, Resident Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, and Kay Maxwell, President of the League of Women Voters, launched the debate series at a press conference at the National Press Club. They underlined the historical significance of this momentous grassroots undertaking and offered details of individual events.

"Both the President and the field of Democratic candidates need to be paying attention to what is going on here in big and small cities, universities, high schools and in family living rooms across the country this month," said Senator Wirth. "The American people are providing American leaders and decision makers with their thoughts, opinions, hopes and even fears about national security and our emerging foreign policy. Our biggest mistake would be to not hear them."



(Pictured from left to right)  
Jerry Levy and Whit Graham

This debate series offers an opportunity for Americans nationwide to discuss crucial aspects of foreign policy in their communities. As world events have unfolded recently, millions of Americans have witnessed U.S. involvement in reconstruction, peacekeeping, multilateralism, and pre-emption, but have not had the opportunity to discuss these issues with their fellow citizens.

"We have joined *The People Speak* initiative to lend not only our commitment to public education and open, unfettered dialogue, but also our years of community organizing experience. We are democracy's foot soldiers. Getting people together and bringing the issues out in the open for discussion," stated Ms. Maxwell, President of the League of Women Voters.

Individuals from around the country participating in the debate series also attended the press conference, including high school debater Whit Graham, and his debate coach, Tim Averill from Manchester Essex Regional High School (MA), Jerry Levy, a member of the Manchester Retirement Community, and National Secretary Scott Wunn. Students from the Manchester Essex Regional Debate Team and members of the Manchester Retirement Community, Brooksby Village in Peabody, participated in a public debate on October 27<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with "*The People Speak*" program.



(Pictured from left to right)

Senator Timothy E. Wirth, President of the United Nations Foundation, Jerry Levy of Brooksby Village in Peabody and Whit Graham, student debater from Manchester Essex Regional High School (MA).



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# "SO, YA GOT ANY GOOD IDEAS FOR A SPEECH?"

by  
John Buettler

## Finding Topics for Original Oratory

As each school year begins, many a would-be original orator will pose the above question or some variation of it to his or her coach. And, of course, we coaches, with our extensive experience and unerring eye for the most significant issues of our day will immediately reach into our vast store of ideas and grasp, like the largest and juiciest lobster in the tank, the perfect topic to serve to our intellectually famished student – or not. More likely, we will look up, with a slightly dazed expression,

**"...most students do not know the difference between a subject and a topic."**

from the maelstrom of paperwork sitting on our desks and tell the truth: "No. I haven't even had time to think about it." Of course, in our heart of hearts, we know that while that is true, the jig is up, the music must be faced. Somebody has to start writing a speech and he or she has to write it about something.

Coming up with a topic for an oratory can be the bane of the forensic coach's existence. It would be wonderful if all of us were boundless sources of fascinating ideas. Unfortunately this is not the case. So what exactly can we do? Well, there are several things we can do, not to give our students the perfect topic, but to help them develop their own topics. In this article we'll discuss first of all what a topic is, then what the qualities of a good topic are and lastly how to help our students develop good topics from their thinking and the world they – and we – live in.

One of the biggest obstacles that students and coaches face in beginning an oratory is the fact that most students do not know the difference between a subject and a topic. Many times when we ask a student what his or her speech is on, he/she will give one word answers like "fear," or "idealism," or "dreams," etc. These are not topics. They are subjects. A subject is a single word or a phrase; a topic is a sentence **about** that single word or phrase. Therefore, "dreams" is a subject not a

topic and it is possible to say many different things about "dreams." A few examples might be: "People must acknowledge their dreams and follow them"; or "We cannot allow ourselves to be so immersed in our dreams that we ignore reality." In these examples we can see that not only may there be more than one sentence, i.e. topic, based on a single subject, but that these sentences can even be contradictory. It is important, then, that a student express the topic in a clear sentence that he/she can use to keep him/herself "honest," namely, to be sure that he/she speaks about one thing and the same thing throughout the speech. It is the lack of a topic phrased in a sentence that often causes a student to write a speech which rambles all over the landscape of ideas. If one thinks that he/she is writing about "dreams," then it is possible to say anything and everything about dreams while theoretically staying on "topic." Unfortunately, this is exactly what many students do.

The first thing one must do, then, is to be sure that he/she has a topic rather than a subject. To do this, I suggest that the student phrase his/her topic in a sentence which expresses an idea which is essentially persuasive. As a way of making sure that the student does this, I often suggest that they write a sentence that begins with the words, "I want to persuade my audience to . . ." or "I want to persuade my audience that . . ." When this is done well, the sentence that results not only expresses the topic but also suggests the ideas that need to be addressed within the speech. The sentence, "I want to persuade my audience to recognize and acknowledge the dreams that they have and to follow them," implies a problem: people, or at least many people, do not recognize, acknowledge or follow their dreams. Obviously they don't realize this or see it as a problem, because if they did, they would not do it. So first the speaker has to articulate exactly what the problem is, demonstrate that this problem exists and show how it applies to the audience. Then there are a variety of questions that the audience may have such as: Why does this happen? How does it happen in their lives? How is it harmful? The speaker will most likely not be able to address all of these questions thoroughly, but, depending on the topic and the audience, will answer at least two or three of them. Lastly, once the audience is convinced of the problem and they see how it involves them, then they logically want to know how they can do something about it – a solution – in this case, how can a

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\* 1997 CEDA Finalists \* 1996 CEDA Seasonal National Champs \* 1995 CEDA National Champions \* 1994 CEDA Finalists \*



person recognize, acknowledge and follow his/her dreams. We can easily see, then, how a good topic sentence, to resurrect a term from my days as an English teacher, can provide a roadmap to the entire oratory.

Once the orator has a topic for his/her speech, it is good to step back for a moment and evaluate whether or not the topic is a good one. Although other coaches have their own criteria, I believe that the following ones, while not comprehensive, are helpful in evaluating whether a topic is worth writing about. In no particular order, I would suggest the following attributes as criteria for making that judgment:

- **Life validity** – Is the topic of the world of real people? Can the audience look at the issue involved and say that yes, this does exist in the world that they know?

- **Significance** – Even if the topic does deal with something that is part of the real world, do other people agree that this topic is of some importance? If not, can they be persuaded that it is. The latter is probably the more important because the fact that a problem continues to exist likely indicates that people do not immediately recognize its significance. The orator, then, must be able to provide persuasive information and examples about consequential harms that this problem is causing to a significant number of people. Another way of putting this is that a topic is not just the speaker's pet peeve.

- **Immediacy** – Many real and significant topics may not immediately relate to the audience the orator is addressing. The more an orator is able to get the audience to see themselves in what he/she is talking about, the greater the likelihood that the audience will be willing to be persuaded. This is one reason why, in my opinion, topics which directly address issues of public policy should be avoided in oratory, since the people in the audience are not likely to be involved in setting a particular policy. For example, a student may want to address the issue of entertainment programming or the advisability of some kind of regulation thereof. While we may indeed decry what we may see as irresponsible programming on the part of media moguls, there is little the average forensic audience can do about this programming itself or regulating it in any public sense. On the other hand, if the orator can address the issue of the effects that this programming has on us, the audience, and how we, as media consumers, by our reception of and reaction to this programming can minimize or eliminate those harms, then the speaker is establishing immediacy, i.e. demonstrating how this topic directly involves the audience in front of him or her.

- **Developability** – Is this a topic on which it is possible to find information and support? Is research available? On the other hand, are there enough different aspects to the issue and its solution to sustain a speech of ten minutes?

- **Clarity** – Does the speaker know *exactly* what he/she is talking about? Can he/she explain the topic to other people in such a way that they understand it? If others have to ask a lot of question to understand what the orator is trying to say, then the topic lacks clarity.

- **Interest** – Is the topic interesting or can it be made interesting? This is, of course, the most nebulous and subjective of the criteria, but one that should be acknowledged. It is probably good to “float” the topic out to other people and check their responses. If the speaker or coach has any misgivings about whether or not the topic is interesting, these doubts should be listened to. I am convinced that very often, in those cases when a student cannot understand why a judge ranked him/her lower than another student when there seemed to be little reason to do so – in fact, the judge may have said little or nothing negative on the ballot – the reason is simply that the judge found one more interesting than the other. Subjective, yes, but real nonetheless.

So now that we have seen what a topic is and some of the qualities of a good one, it's time to set off on our quest for the orator's Holy Grail, that elusive treasure, the good topic.

We all recognize that there are subjects which can be refined into topics in the world all around us. There will always be issues, practices and attitudes that thrust themselves into our consciousness and which almost cry out to be addressed. These easily discernible topics are the favors granted by the gods of forensics – the ideas we don't have to work for. When one of our students approaches us with a topic in mind, we coaches can count our blessings and set out with the student to make sure that what he/she has brought is, in fact, a topic, i.e. expressible as a sentence, and that it meets at least some of the criteria for a good topic. If, however, the student comes with the question which introduced this article, then the coach's response might be, “No, I don't have any good topics for you, but perhaps I can help you work one out.” Now the question is, how might the coach do this. What follows are some methods that have been effective for me.

The first of these techniques is what we might call **under the microscope**. Often in the course of our reading, we may come across an article which intrigues us, evokes a reaction, but we don't quite know why. It is at this point that I would suggest studying the article rather than reading it. Often this will lead one to look behind the obvious and main point of the piece into some of the subpoints or peripheral thoughts the writer is expressing. Writers build articles from an accumulation of ideas, suppositions and assumptions. These may be the things to which we are reacting positively or negatively and it is our agreement or disagreement with these subpoints which can make good topics for speeches. For example, an opinion piece by Ted Galen Carpenter of the Cato Institute, published in one of our local newspapers, was headlined “We are not the world's policeman or its social worker.” This is, of course, a policy argument and, in that form, would not be a likely topic for original oratory. Yet the article's thesis can be said to derive from a certain mind set about the extent to which we are responsible for the well-being of others even when their situation has no direct effect on our own well-being. In other words, are we our brother's keeper? This is an idea which the orator can address because it has effects not just on the *international* level but on the *interpersonal* as well – the world of relationships in which we all function. Furthermore, in the article the writer makes the following statements:

- “. . . the existence of suffering in another country is not sufficient reason for the United States to commit its military personnel.”
- “Humanitarian intervention is, therefore, an impractical bankrupt policy.”
- “The circumstances of the founding a country more than

150 years ago have no relevance whatsoever to the question of whether the United States ought to take action in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

Now, again, I am not suggesting that the orator address the foreign policy components of those statements – no one in the audience is likely to be a policy maker – but underlying each of them is a philosophical attitude of which each of those statements is a reflection. Insofar as these attitudes are reflected in the lives and interpersonal relationships of ordinary people, they are things that can be addressed in original oratory.

Another technique for teasing out a topic is one I call **strike while the iron is cold**. This is a phrase which I first heard in a psychology class some years ago and refers to the fact that a therapist might more effectively address a client’s “issues” when they are not “hot” in the client’s life. If someone has difficulty with a family member, it might be better to address those difficulties while the family member is on a vacation in Europe rather than right after the most recent blowup – while the iron (or the issue) is cold. This is, of course, opposite to the idea expressed in the more common axiom, “strike while the iron is hot” and illustrates the fact that there may sometimes be great value in advocating a point of view which is in opposition to the conventional wisdom that “everyone knows.” We all *know*, for example, that it is not good to be selfish. So why not write a speech in which the orator advocates selfishness? Of course, we all must realize that conventional wisdom exists because there is some virtue to it. We, therefore, need to acknowledge this and carefully qualify exactly what is being said. In this particular case, the point is not that people should become self-centered and conceited, but rather that they must realize the importance of taking care of themselves so that they can help others who need them. One need only look at the statistics and examples for burnout in the service professions and among care givers to see the importance of this. A speaker might then very fruitfully develop a topic which advocates a qualified selfishness as a prerequisite to service to others. I would suggest that there is an almost infinite supply of beliefs, some of which have been enshrined in sayings and aphorisms which express our “common knowledge,” which can be looked at with new eyes to see if there is validity to some aspect of their opposite side and how that might lead a speaker into breaking new and fertile ground for his/her oratory.

**Not-so-trivial-pursuit** is the next of the techniques I’ve sometimes found effective. This means that sometimes a topic can emerge out of something relatively small. As I mentioned above, a topic with significance is not just someone’s pet peeve. That, however, does not mean that a topic cannot arise *from* a pet peeve. We all have a whole spectrum of small things that annoy us. What we should do is take a few moments and examine why exactly these petty little annoyances affect us the way they do. Often we will find that they are really symptomatic of something much larger that is really the issue that we are reacting to. For example, we may be greatly bothered by the fact that someone we know who is perfectly able-bodied parks in spaces for handicapped individuals. In and of itself, this is probably not something that would be a good topic. After all, what is there to say about it other than don’t do it? We can, however, ask ourselves the question why does that bother us. While it might be tempting to say, “I don’t know, it just does,” we should force ourselves not just to leave it at that. If we continue to ask why, we might find ourselves following a path something like this: Why does it bother you? Well, it’s inconsiderate. Why is it inconsiderate? Well, other people may need those spots and he

doesn’t. Why do you think he does it? Well, he’s only thinking about himself. Why? He’s selfish and egotistical. So then, at its source, the problem is not just the relatively small issue of an able-bodied person parking in a spot for the handicapped, but rather a more generalized lack of consideration for other people that stems from egotism. In this case, your friend’s parking practices are just one example of something which is much broader and which we can find in all of us. From egotism, which is a subject, it is just a short leap to making a statement about it which is a topic. And now, not only do we have a good topic, but, if we go back to the original pet peeve which started this whole train of thought, we now also have a ready made example of how people manifest ego-centricity in everyday life. Then, once we focus on the broader issue, it should be fairly easy to find other examples of how we exhibit this negative trait in our daily lives. We can see, then, that by pursuing to its root cause something that seemed trivial, we can eventually arrive at something which is not so trivial – *not so trivial pursuit*.

Lastly, I believe that it is important for a speaker not to reject something just because it has been done before. **Remember Shakespeare** – he did not write the first *Hamlet*. He just wrote the best one. If a speaker has heard a topic before and wishes to react to or reinforce the idea, I see no reason why he/she should not try it. Granted, some coaches and judges will have also heard it before, but to the student it is new and perhaps something about which he/she can become passionate. Some topics are perennially present and worth talking about. If a student wishes to write a speech about something which has been done before, as coaches, I think that we should point this out to the student; but at the same time we should at least be open to the idea of our student writing about it as well. If he/she chooses to do so, our quest then should be to help the student to follow in the steps of the bard himself and not worry that he/she is not writing the first speech on that topic, but to work as hard as possible to write the *best* one.

As I have mentioned above, I hardly envision these ideas to be the last and definitive word on the subject of topics in original oratory. There is no magic here that will enable coach or student to effortlessly create the perfect speech. But when we coaches, sitting at our desks early in the year dealing with the mound of paperwork before us, look up and see a fresh, hopeful face peering around the corner into the office or classroom, we need not do so with trepidation. And when the inevitable question comes – do you have any ideas for an oratory? – we can tell the truth. *No, not yet. But if you come back this afternoon, maybe we can figure one out together.*

*(John Buettler has been teaching and coaching forensics for the past 34 years at Holy Ghost Preparatory School, (PA) . During the summer, John directs the oratory division of the Florida Forensic Institute. John has coached numerous national finalists in oratory for both NFL and NCFL including his son Stephen, who placed second at the 1999 NFL Grand National Tournament.)*

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# THE ORIGINS OF INTERSCHOLASTIC DEBATE IN A SMALL TOWN IN SOUTH-CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

by

William J. Murray

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# H i s t o r y

The history of academic debate at Mechanicsburg began in 1925 when Professor A. Glenn Mower, a member of the high school history department, announced that he was interested in starting both affirmative and negative debate teams at the senior high. Mower was a first year teacher at Mechanicsburg. The previous year he was captain and assistant coach of the Lebanon Valley College negative team and his team won every de-

*Torch* also reported allegations from the Hebrew Temple team that Mechanicsburg students were spying on the Hebrew Team the previous Sunday as they prepared for the match. The newspaper indicated that the Mechanicsburg coach investigated and found that this was not true. (*Torch*, January 15, 1926)

The national debate topic was not standard until 1928 and each local school formulated their own resolution. The topic for that first round, and for much of the first year, was Resolved: That the Government should own and operate the coal mines." Mechanicsburg traveled to Harrisburg on the 28<sup>th</sup> to oppose the Hebrew Temple team. Representing Mechanicsburg as members of the Affirmative Team were William Boffenmyer, Richard Marzolf, and Clifford Kiracofe. Harry Berkheimer was the alternate. The judges were the Dauphin County District Attorney, a member of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and a high school principal from a third school.

**"Debate in the 20's required fielding a separate affirmative and a negative team."**

bate they entered, according to the *Torch*, the Mechanicsburg High School newspaper. The goal for that year, according to the same article, would be to organize matches with other schools in the county that have established debate teams. (*Torch*, November 27, 1925)

The team held their first meeting on December 3, 1925. Mower would be head coach with Miss Aungst, chair of the English department, serving as his assistant and Mr. Barry B. Fehl, the supervising high school principal, as advisor to the team. Nine students attended the first meeting. (*Torch*, December 4, 1925)

Debate in the 20's required fielding a separate affirmative and a negative team. It was common during the period for a team to have either two or three members. It was also common for one school's team to host while the second school's team traveled to another site at the same time. The debates were normally held in the evening and the public was invited. Accounts of the debates indicate that there were many in the community who did attend the public events.

The first match in school history was scheduled for January 21, 1926 against the senior class of the Hebrew Temple, a local Harrisburg school, but the match was postponed until Thursday evening, January 28 because the Mechanicsburg team was not prepared. The

Mechanicsburg lost their first round as the judges awarded the win to the Hebrew team 3-0. (*Torch*, February 12, 1928). The *Torch* article also mentioned that the debate was broadcast live on WHBG radio and that the team traveled to Hershey the following evening but did not discuss the results of that round.

Mechanicsburg won their first round of debate on March 12, 1926. It was a victory for the negative team. Home field advantage may have helped as the team of Hugh Castles, Robert Brunhouse, and William Ritter defeated the team from Lebanon High School at the match held at Mechanicsburg while the affirmative team lost on the same evening in Lebanon. (*Torch*, March 12, 1926)

The *Torch* covered the debate very extensively in the first year of its existence. The March 19 edition recounted that "both the affirmative and negative teams of our school started the season in apparently bad form, as victories were slow in coming." The article went on to state that the team was improving and scored double victories against Biglerville on March 18. The article discussed the strategy advanced by the Mechanicsburg team. "Harry Berkheimer opened the argument for M.H.S. and surprised his opponents by giving them questions to be answered. Biglerville fell into the trap." Mechanicsburg won the round, according to the reporter "although Berkheimer was not in his best form and

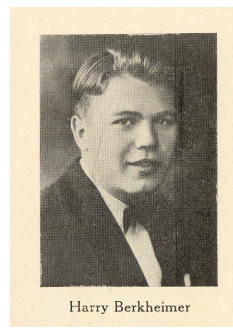


Marzolf's rebuttal was weak." (*Torch*, March 19, 1926)

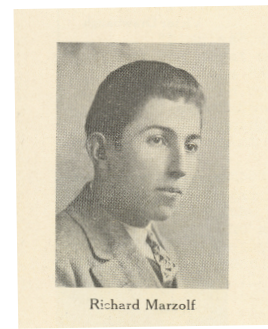
Coach Mowery must have been impressed with the team's success because, according to the March 26, 1926 issue of the *Torch*, he issued "a challenge to any and all schools in the county with debating teams for a dual debate to decide the championship title. Should there be no answer to this challenge, Mechanicsburg will claim the championship in scholastic debating." (*Torch*, March 26, 1926)

Evidently no other team answered the challenge and the team declared themselves county champions. The years record was Affirmative 2-3 and Negative 3-2. (*Torch*, April 16, 1926).

After the first year, Professor Mower must have moved to another assignment or left the school districts employment entirely because neither he nor interscholastic debate are mentioned again for the next few years. Further issues of the *Torch* cover debates in classes and between classes organized by Mr. Robb (*Torch*, December 23, 1926; March 4, 1927) but failed to mention interscholastic debate until it was revived at Mechanicsburg in 1934.



Harry Berkheimer



Richard Marzolf

Harry Berkheimer and Richard Marzolf were two of the original debaters, Class of 1926. The team debated the 1925-1926 season.



Mechanicsburg HS 1925-1926

(Bill Murray, an NFL diamond coach, is a member of the national debate topic wording committee.)



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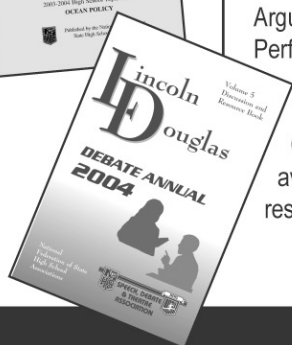
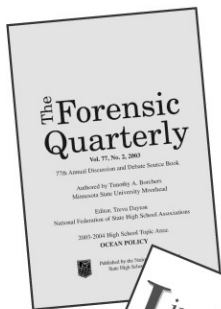


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## GOOD ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH

by  
Bruno E. Jacob

*This article was written in 1971 during a time when pronouns were in the masculine gender. NFL recognizes that this usage is not correct by today's standards, but chose to use our founders original version.*

Recently the national office received a letter critical of several NFL rules. The overtones clearly indicated that the writer considered that conducting the

will be able to speak on any of a score of subjects derived from world and national news. The ability to integrate information from a variety of sources into a unified, compact, and meaningful discourse is a skill desired by many, but attained by few. It is an attribute of leadership.

Oratory provides the student an opportunity to advocate a principle or a position in which he strongly believes. He develops the ability to think creatively and to deliver his thoughts with persuasive power. Oratory provides leaders of conviction.

In the student congress the students learn to think about state and national problems in terms of solutions which they can urge their colleagues to accept as necessary and practical. They learn how to influence people favorable. They acquire not only knowledge of lawmaking, but respect for the power of the majority and the rights of the minority -- the foundations of the democratic process. This makes leaders.

In high school assemblies, on radio programs, and before adult audiences NFL speakers bring information and persuasion to bear on

school elections, community problems, and civic campaigns. The skills acquired in contest speaking are put to work. This is leadership in action.

Just where does the National Forensic League fit into this picture? It sponsors only one of the numerous tournaments in which a student will participate during the year. Most of the tournaments in which the student will acquire the skills that are needed for leadership are sponsored by other organizations or by schools and colleges inviting students to their tournaments.

Tournaments without participating students are of course futile. It is the function of the NFL to entice students to enter those contests and to strive for the highest degree of excellence they can attain. Inducing students to enter these tournaments and to continue in them until they become accomplished speakers is the basic function of NFL.

NFL holds out to the student the opportunity of attaining membership in a national organization, a recognition highly valued by the adolescent. After all 25 points are not too difficult to get, so the student tries competitive speaking. But then there is the Degree of Honor with a distinctive seal for the membership certificate and a jewel for the NFL pin. More degrees lure him on until he receives Special Distinction and listing in the *Rostrum*.

**Bruno E. Jacob**  
Founder of NFL



national speech tournament to be the main purpose of the National Forensic League. That is far from the truth. The League was a virile six year old organization with more than 300 chapters in 33 states before it ever conducted a national tournament.

The national tournament does play an important part in advancing the purpose for which NFL was founded. What is that purpose? It is to develop the leadership potential of our superior high school students, the young people who in a few short years will have the responsibility for directing the affairs of community, state, and nation.

In order to be effective, leaders must be well informed, straight thinking, and articulate. The programs which NFL encourages provide the experiences in which students develop these qualities.

In debate, a student gains a comprehensive knowledge of political, economic, and social problems together with an appreciation of their complexities. He finds that our big problems have no easy solution; he acquires a respect for facts and contempt for conclusions not based on facts' he learns to reason logically and to detect faulty reasoning in others. These are the building blocks of leadership.

The contestant in extemporaneous speaking must keep himself informed on current events so that he

All are inducements to continue work in speech so as to become more successful speakers and thereby more effective leaders.

But the greatest incentive of all is the national speech tournament. Even though only one in a hundred can qualify for entry, the fact that there is a chance drives the student to achieving the excellence needed to gain entrance. The opportunity to meet with and compete against the best student speakers from throughout the nation is a compelling incentive which cannot be overestimated. This incentive for extraordinary effort to attain excellence is the basic justification for the national tournament.

But that isn't all. Most people appreciate the ability to "think on one's feet" as it is often put, but there is more. In no subject is the need for thoroughness more apparent to the student than in preparation for competitive speaking. The 'good' debater loses the debate and the 'good' speakers place fourth. Only those who are better than their competitors will win. The student learns by experience, sometimes bitter, that good just isn't good enough.

The student who learns that lesson and learns it well has acquired one of the fundamental attributes of success in whatever business or profession he will enter. It is a lesson he cannot learn from any textbook, from any university lecture, or any parental advice. He must learn it by experience and competitive speaking in our high school speech tournaments is the best place to learn it.

And sometimes he will lose. That is good too--if it doesn't happen too often. It keeps the student in touch with reality. It reminds him that good as his work might have been, there were

others who were even better and he will have to sharpen his skills and intensify his efforts if he wants to win, and that is good too. For that is just what will happen to him when he enters the adult world. He will lose an election, a court decision, a business deal when according to all the rules of fairness he should have won, but he loses. He had better learn to take it, and the formative years in high school are the best time to learn that unpleasant lesson. The student who finishes high school and has not learned what it takes to win in a competitive endeavor or to lose when he should have been the winner is unprepared for our competitive society.

The National Forensic League induces students to enter the activity which is so important in preparing them for successful living and the national tournament provides the most powerful incentive for developing the skills needed to attain that success. Not all will be successful, but even those who do not make it to the top have acquired the basic attributes of leadership which will enrich their lives and their communities.

*The National Speech Tournament is not the reason why the NFL has served the high schools of the nation for more than fifty years, but it is the most powerful incentive, motivating students to attain the excellence which entry in that tournament represents.*

If you are a high school student and hope to succeed in competitive speaking or in any competitive enterprise in school or out, put a card on the wall above your student desk with these words - **"Good Isn't Good Enough!"**



Brother Rene Sterner FSC



(Pictured left to right) Brother Rene Sterner FSC, Willard R. Sterner, and NFL National Secretary Emeritus, Jim Copeland

This summer the NFL office was visited by Executive Councilman Brother Rene Sterner FSC and his father Willard R. Sterner. During their visit, they made a stop at the gravesite of Bruno E. Jacob, Founder of the National Forensic League. The cemetery where Mr. Jacob is buried is located near Ripon College, Ripon, WI.



# Meet the NFL Staff

## NFL OFFICE



125 Watson Street  
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Aerial View

Each month the *Rostrum* will feature a NFL staff member

## IT'S ALL ABOUT THE KIDS

Diane Rasmussen began working as a co-op student on a part-time basis for the NFL in 1981 when she was a senior in high school. At that time Diane helped with posting student points, preparing supply packets and any other areas needed.

In 1982 Diane was offered a position with responsibilities that included inventory, pins and keys, and point recording.

Junior Forensic League? Diane is also responsible for this program. Schools throughout the nation are increasingly expanding the forensic program within their junior high schools. Diane will help your school begin a program. Each year the May *Rostrum* features the Junior League and the development of programs throughout the nation. Coaches are encouraged to submit NJFL articles for the *Rostrum*.



As a co-op student, Diane enjoyed working for the National Forensic League. It was enticing to work with coaches and students. "I was impressed by the dedication of the coaches and the valuable skills the students learned and carried with them."

Along with the NFL, Diane's merchandise responsibilities have grown. Merchandise is no longer just pins. NFL now offers a variety of merchandise available through the NFL Store throughout the year and at the National Tournament.

Diane is also responsible for maintaining the credit card program. If you visit the NFL Store at [www.nflonline.org](http://www.nflonline.org) you can purchase merchandise with a credit card. Diane assures that all orders are filled correctly and shipped on a timely basis.

Have you heard about the National

When Diane is not working on merchandise, she assists Associate Secretary Carol Zanto with the bookkeeping system.

On a personal level, Diane has been married to her husband Jay for 20 years and they have two children, Dahlia age 13 (now a "teen") and Jared age 9. Diane is active in her church and plans to run for the Ripon Public School System School Board in the future.

When Diane was first interviewed she said, "I have spent most of my career working for the NFL. Not too many people can proudly say that they have been with a company/organization that amount of time. I give to all the members the best I can, and I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world."

Interview by Sandy Krueger, Publications Director

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Philip L. Eoute  
David Hwu  
Hillcrest HS  
Christine M. Byington  
Riverside HS  
Nidhi Kumar  
Irfan A. Rhemtulla  
Sonam A. Shah

## SOUTH DAKOTA

Aberdeen Central HS  
Justin Goetz  
Karthik Giridhar

## WATERTOWN HS

Aaron Geier  
Brian J. Gough  
Chris Roby  
Micalann C. Sharp  
Emily Slama

## TENNESSEE

Brentwood HS  
Zachary Craft  
Briana G. Himelrick  
Arun Mathew  
Stephanie Spong  
Daniel Taylor  
Dickson County HS  
Marissa C. Corbitt

## TEXAS

Bryan HS  
Chris Kochevar  
Houston Bellaire HS  
Amol Helekar  
Plano Sr. HS  
Daniel Aguilar  
William Lo  
Susie Perkins  
Niraj Rath  
San Antonio Churchill HS  
Elaine Ayo  
Jade Lamb  
Monica Uddin  
Alexandra Schnieders

## UTAH

Beaver HS  
Andy Adams  
Hunter HS  
Jonathan Earl  
Dennis Hood  
Jordan HS  
Brandon Lawler  
Lone Peak HS  
Trevor Wright  
Salt Lake City Skyline HS  
Josephine Sung

## WISCONSIN

Greendale HS  
Steve Andrzejewski

## WYOMING

Cheyenne East HS  
Travis Cram  
William Jensen  
Joshua Schmerge  
Jackson Hole HS  
Michaela C. Stockhouse



# 2003 JULIA BURKE AWARD

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

## NOAH CHESTNUT

Noah Chestnut of Tampa Preparatory High School, of Tampa, Florida, is the recipient of the third annual Julia Burke Award for Character and Excellence in National High School Policy Debate. He was chosen from a list of outstanding finalists including: Aimi High School; Alexandru School; and Hildie Povirk, The award was presented at ons held at the University of Mills, who was Julia’s debate



Hamraie, Colleyville Heritage Iftimie, Harker High Upper from Seaholm High School. the Tournament of Champi-Kentucky in May. Ryan coach presented the award.

The Julia Burke Award was established to recognize the policy debater who best typifies the combination of qualities that Julia embodied, including excellence in and passion for debate, love and respect for the policy debate and community, and a commitment to helping others and maintaining friendships despite the pressures of competition at the highest level. Julia debated for The College Preparatory School in Oakland, California and was lost in October 1998 as a result of a car accident.

The award is sponsored by The Julia Burke Foundation and includes a perpetual trophy in the shape of a flame inscribed, “THE JULIA BURKE FLAME FOR CHARACTER AND EXCELLENCE IN HIGH SCHOOL POLICY DEBATE.” A smaller replica of the perpetual trophy for the recipient, \$1,000 college scholarship, and a \$1,000 donation to the charity of the recipient’s choice.

Nominations for next years’ award are invited from all policy debaters, coaches and judges from now until after the Berkeley Tournament next February. They should be submitted to *Marilyn\_Burke@JuliaBurkeFoundation.com*. More information about the award criteria and The Julia Burke Foundation is available at *www.JuliaBurkeFoundation.com*.

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Submit pictures of events and activities to:  
Attn: Sandy NFL  
125 Watson St  
Ripon, WI 54971  
[nflrostrum@centurytel.net](mailto:nflrostrum@centurytel.net)

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