

# ROOTS RUM

NOVEMBER 2007

VOLUME 82

ISSUE 3



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# COACHING SPEECH

## CHAPTERS & SECTIONS in "Coaching Speech"

1. Introduction	
2. A First Look	7
3. Building Relationships with Administration	10
4. Decoding Forensic Slang	13
5. Coaching Oral Interpretation	18
6. An Introduction To Oratory	24
7. Coaching Extemp	29
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13. Identifying and Evaluating the "Unwritten Rules" of Competition	56

## PART TWO: COACH AS A TEACHER and MENTOR

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16. Some Advice to New Coaches	73
17. Burned Out	77

## PART THREE : I HAVE TO COACH HOW MANY EVENTS!? HELP.

18. Peer Coaching	85
19. Finding Coaching Help	88
20. Building an Endowment	91

## PART FOUR: SPECIAL INSIGHT ON SPECIAL PROBLEMS

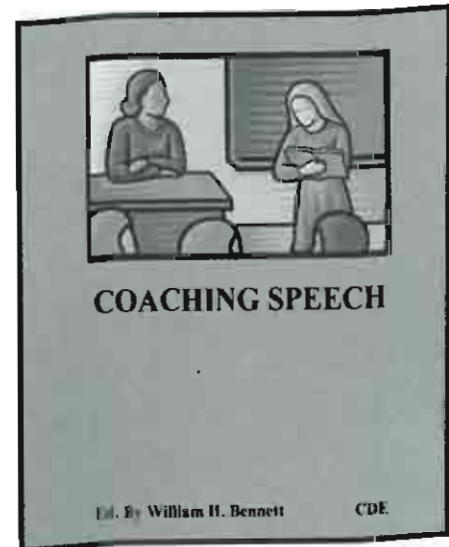
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22. Family...Women in the Trenches	105
23. Starting a Team	110
24. Forensics....and the SAT	117
25. In Defense of Competitive Speech	120
26. Facing A Retirement Bubble	124

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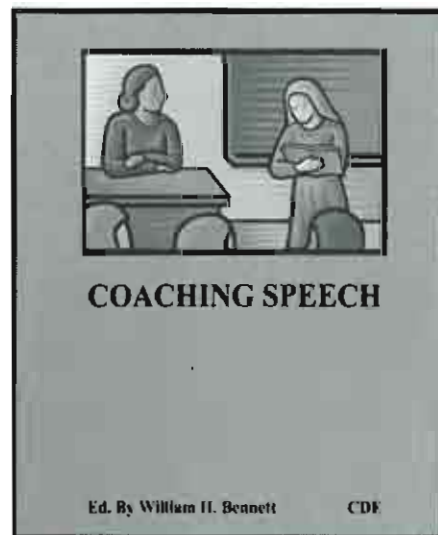
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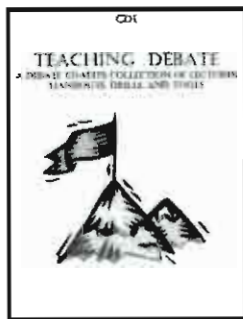
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September 27, 2007



Dear National Forensic League Coach:

The impact that you are making on the personal development of your students is something to be proud of. As another speech and debate season begins, you are imparting lessons of leadership, teamwork, and the importance of communication. You are making a difference in the lives of those who represent our future.

As you prepare your team for the 2008 NFL National Tournament in Las Vegas, know that Lincoln Financial Group proudly supports the National Forensic League and recognizes the efforts of its coaches to continue the tradition of speech and debate. Lincoln Financial's involvement is a highlight of our company's long-time commitment to quality education. I commend you for the countless hours you spend and the dedication you put forth to teach students.

Best of luck to you and your students this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Dennis Glass'.

Dennis Glass  
Chief Executive Officer



# **The People Spoke...**

**Now, it is time to tell  
us about your People  
Speak event.**

**Please send in pictures,  
articles, and notes from  
your People Speak Event  
to [tyler@nflonline.org](mailto:tyler@nflonline.org) or:**



**Tyler Billman  
Coordinator of NFL Programs  
National Forensic League  
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## From the Editor

J. Scott Wunn



Dear NFL,

In this month's issue of *Rostrum*, we have included the minutes from the Fall Executive Council meeting. Members will notice that the Executive Council has determined that it is time for the National Forensic League to establish an endowment fund.

An endowment is, in many ways, an organization's security for its future. Endowment revenue can provide continual funding for either general operations, decisions by the Council, or specified programs established in accordance with the Council goals and gift restrictions. Monies generated from the interest income of an endowment are often used as a safety net for unexpected expenses, as an additional revenue stream to avoid heightened costs to individual schools and members, or to fund educational programs that further the organization's mission. A well established endowment that is constantly accruing additional funds ensures that NFL remains an active force in speech and debate education for years to come.

There are three primary ways in which the NFL endowment will grow and prosper. The original endowment itself is being established through a memorial contribution of Hall of Fame member A.C. Eley. Additional endowment gifts will serve as the primary revenue source to increase the principal on the endowment. However, reinvestment of a portion of the interest return and annual contributions from the NFL's general operating budget can assist in strengthening the principal on the endowment as well. Once the Executive Council has determined that the principal on the endowment is generating an appropriate amount of return, the endowment will disburse an "income stream" for current use in accordance with the stated purpose of the endowment.

Today's students, coaches, and teachers will benefit from the endowment gifts of previous generations. Tomorrow's NFL can be created by today's endowment gifts. The reality is that any money given to the NFL endowment will further enhance the value of NFL membership past and present. It is crucial that the NFL take the steps necessary to insure the resources necessary to fulfill its mission today, tomorrow, and for years to come.

Sincerely,

J. Scott Wunn, Executive Director

## Rostrum

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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.

## **T**opics

### November Public Forum Debate Topic:

Resolved: That eliminating United States government budget deficits should be prioritized over increasing domestic spending.

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

Resolved: In the United States, plea bargaining in exchange for testimony is unjust.

### 2007-2008 Policy Debate Topic

Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its public health assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa.

## Watch for!

### 2007-2008 NFL Policy Debate Resolutions

#### Final Vote Ballot

- December, 2007 *Rostrum*
- Online at [www.nflonline.org](http://www.nflonline.org)

Ballot must be postmarked no later than Friday, January 4, 2008

### **Your Vote is Important!!.**

#### *Rostrum* Articles

Articles can be submitted to:

Sandy Krueger at [nflrostrum@nflonline.org](mailto:nflrostrum@nflonline.org)

#### The Cover Photo

Getting Involved

#### December 2007 *Rostrum*

2007 Champion Coaches

### Topic Release Information

L/D Debate Topics available by calling NFL Topic Hotline (920) 748-LD4U  
or

Check the NFL Website News page at [www.nflonline.org](http://www.nflonline.org)

#### L/D Topic Release Dates:

August 15	...	September-October Topic
October 1	...	November-December Topic
December 1	...	January-February Topic
February 1	...	March-April Topic
May 1	...	National Tournament Topic

#### Public Forum Topic Release Dates:

August 15	...	September Topic
1 <sup>st</sup> of prior month	...	October - April Topic

#### Policy Debate Topic for New Year

- Topic Ballot & Synopsis Printed in October *Rostrum*
- Final Ballot for Policy Debate Topic in December *Rostrum*
- Topic for following year released in February *Rostrum*

# ROSTRUM



Volume 82, Issue 3

November 2007



Cover Story



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Justin Rodriguez

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Mikendra McCoy

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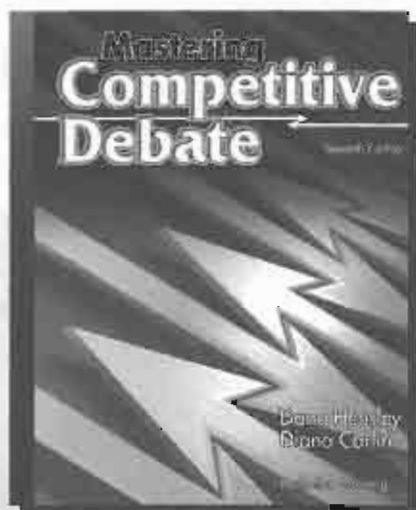
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# Introduce and Practice Debate Skills!



## Mastering Competitive Debate

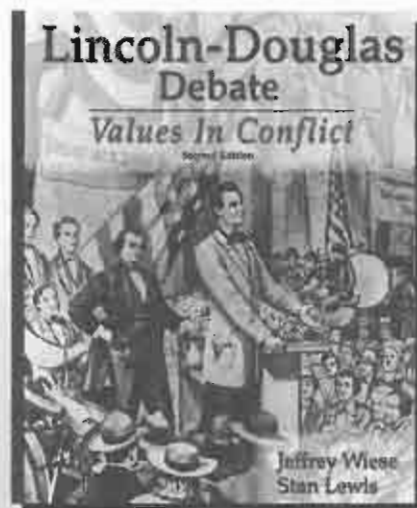
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A fresh new design and the most current information about all competitive debate formats make this text a must for your students. The content focuses on policy debate, with additional chapters covering Lincoln-Douglas debate, student congress, mock trial, parliamentary debate, and public forum debate.

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- argumentation
- rebuttals
- defense
- flowing
- briefing
- traditional and electronic research

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## Lincoln-Douglas Debate Values in Conflict

**The basics of Lincoln-Douglas debate for novice and intermediate debaters**

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Students will learn about

- L-D theory
- the difference between L-D debate and policy debate
- values and how to choose and research value topics
- preparing cases
- developing rebuttal strategies
- improving delivery skills

A Teacher Guide features activities, additional Lincoln-Douglas topics, ballots, quizzes and answer keys, and much more!

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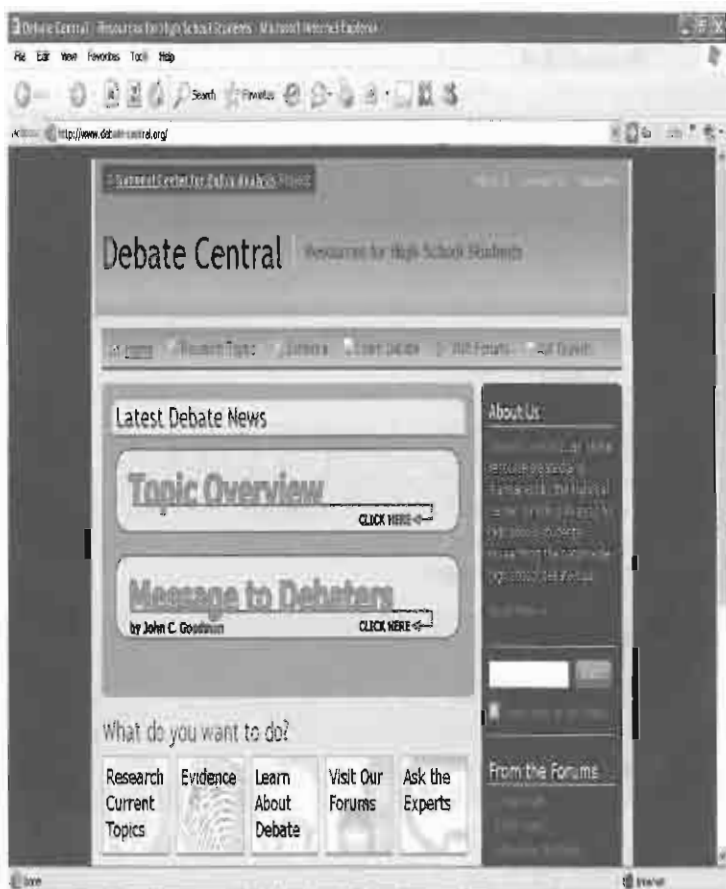
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**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL  
FALL MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 20-23, 2007  
HENDERSON, NV**

The NFL Executive Council held its Fall Meeting in Henderson, NV, on September 20-23, 2007. Members present were: President Billy Tate, Vice President Don Crabtree, Brother Rene Sterner, Harold Keller, Glenda Ferguson, Kandi King, Pam Cady Wycoff, Tommie Lindsey, Jr., and Pam McComas. Alternate, Timothy Sheaff, was also present. President Billy Tate called the meeting to order at 8:10 am.

#### **Strategic Planning Session**

The Executive Council worked with Linda Lysakowski of Capital Venture, Inc. in a series of comprehensive strategic planning sessions to create action steps to achieve the short and long term goals and objectives that have been established by the Council. A list of the goals will appear in the December issue of *Rostrum*.

#### **National Tournament**

The host committee for the 2008 National Tournament met with the Executive Council and provided an overview of the upcoming summer event. The members of the Executive Council were given an extensive tour of the tournament venues.

The Executive Council thanked the local hosts for their outstanding work in preparing for the 2008 Desert Lights Nationals.

NOTE: During the remaining portion of the meeting, Timothy Sheaff voted in the absence of Kandi King. Tommie Lindsey, Jr was also absent.

#### **Motion-Rule Adherence**

Moved by Sheaff, seconded by Ferguson

"Charge the Executive Director to facilitate a review of the rule adherence of contestant performances in the main event finals of the 2007 and 2008 Nationals."

**Passed: 6-2**

**Aye: Ferguson, Wycoff, Sterner, Sheaff, McComas, Tate**  
**Nay: Crabtree, Keller**

The National Office will be reviewing final round performances from the 2007 and 2008 National Tournaments in order to prepare a report on rule adherence for the Executive Council.

#### **Motion-Judge Bonds**

Moved by Keller, seconded by Sheaff

"Increase the judge bond to \$200 at the NFL National Tournament."

**Passed: 8-0**

To assure that the National Tournament maintains the appropriate number of required judges, the bond (which serves as a deposit) has been raised. However, all schools that meet their judge requirements will be refunded the \$200 bond at the conclusion of the tournament.

#### **NFL Budget**

The Executive Council thanked the National Office staff for their incredible work during the 2006-2007 fiscal year. The Council welcomed new staff members, Tyler and Jenny Billman and especially thanked them for their immediate positive impact on the League.

#### **Motion-Budget**

Moved by Crabtree, seconded by McComas

"Accept the National Tournament budget as presented by the Executive Director."

**Passed: 8-0**

#### **Motion-Budget**

Moved by Sterner, seconded by Keller

"Accept the Honor Society budget as presented by the Executive Eirector."

**Passed: 8-0**

#### **Motion-Budget**

Moved by Sterner, seconded by Keller

"Accept the personnel budget as presented by the Executive Director."

**Passed: 8-0**

#### **Summer Committee Recommendations**

The Executive Council reviewed the recommendations of the summer committees that were established in Original Oratory, Extemporaneous Speaking, and Lincoln Douglas Debate. The Executive Council thanks the members of the committees for their effort on the summer recommenda-

tions. After reviewing the materials, the Council took action on certain items. The committee recommendations can be found under "Resources" on the NFL website.

#### Motion-Extemporaneous Speaking

Moved by Wycoff, seconded by Ferguson  
"Move that we accept the committee's recommendation to include cross-examination in the semi-final rounds in Extemporaneous Speaking at the National Tournament. The time limit shall be two minutes in finals and semi-finals."

**Passed: 7-0**

**Absent: Ferguson**

#### Motion-Extemporaneous Speaking

Moved by McComas, seconded by Wycoff  
"Announcements of topic areas shall be made 30 minutes prior to each round of Extemporaneous events at the National Tournament."

**Passed: 8-0**

#### Motion-Extemporaneous Speaking

Moved Wycoff, seconded by Crabtree  
"Accept the committee recommendations on topic writing as listed in A, B, and D, and that topics in Extemporaneous Speaking should reflect the intellectual rigor of themes in U.S. Foreign and Domestic Policy."

**Passed: 8-0**

The time period in which the topics are written will be made public. questions for the national tournament will be written no sooner than may 1st. also, at least two individuals will be commissioned to write the national extemp topics.

**The Executive Director was asked by the Executive Council to make the recommended wording revisions to the District Manual concerning Extemporaneous Speaking. all wording changes are for clarification only and do not represent a rule change.**

#### Motion-Original Oratory

Moved by Ferguson, seconded by McComas  
"In Original Oratory at the NFL District and National Tournaments, all supporting material should be documented on an attached Works Cited page."

**Passed: 8-0**

#### Motion-Lincoln Douglas Debate

Moved by Wycoff, seconded by Sheaff  
"That the NFL National Office begin the process of implementing the approved 2007 recommendations of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate review and recommendations committee in the following areas:

- A. Ballot, judge paradigm, and event description
- B. Curriculum and media/resources [This encompasses the recommendations of the Curriculum and Growth Initiative Proposal as amended.]

**Passed: 8-0**

In addition, the Executive Director has been asked to pursue similar solicitation of educational efforts in all other nfl events. the Executive Council commended the LD committee for providing essential materials that will serve as a model for curriculum building and educational resource building in all areas.

#### Motion-All Main Speech Events

Moved by McComas, seconded by Ferguson  
"For all public speaking main events, the grace period shall be 15 seconds."

**Failed: 1-7**

**Aye: Ferguson**

**Nay: Crabtree, Keller, Wycoff, Sterner, Sheaff, McComas, Tate**

#### Motion-All Main Speech Events

Moved by Keller, seconded by Crabtree  
"Extend the pilot program for the 30 second grace period for one additional year. All individual District Committees will have the option to allow the grace period at District Tournaments during this one year trial."

**Passed: 8-0**

#### General Business

##### Motion-Coach Programming

Moved by Keller, seconded by Sterner  
"Direct the Executive Director to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a professional coach membership program in the NFL and present a prototype of a potential program for consideration at the Spring Executive Council meeting."

**Passed: 8-0**

The NFL National Office will be creating a prototype of a coach membership program that provides advanced services, training, certification, and support to member coaches.

##### Motion-School Recognition

Moved by Wycoff, seconded by McComas  
"The NFL will design honor society banners that will be made available to chapter schools."

**Passed: 7-1**

**Aye: Crabtree, Wycoff, Sterner, Sheaff, Ferguson, McComas, Tate**

**Nay: Keller**

## Motion-Regional Offices

Moved by Keller, Seconded by Sheaff

"The Executive Council grants the Executive Director permission to establish an additional regional office based on demographic and geographical need as the Director deems best."

**Passed: 7-0-1**

**Aye: Crabtree, Wycoff, Sterner, Sheaff, Keller, McComas, Tate**

**Abstain: Ferguson**

The NFL Executive Council is extremely pleased with the success of the NFL Regional Office. In addition, the District Chairs have expressed overwhelming support for more regional office outgrowth. At a time that is appropriate and financially feasible, the NFL Executive Director (through support of the Council) will look to open a second regional office in a location that best enhances the ability of the NFL to fulfill its long and short term goals.

## Motion-Endowment Fund

Moved by McComas, seconded by Sterner

"Earmark the impending A.C. Eley Memorial donation for the establishment of an NFL Endowment Fund."

**Passed: 8-0**

The NFL will be establishing the NFL Endowment Fund. The bequest from the A.C. Eley Memorial will mark the inaugural contribution for this fund.

## Motion-Use of Laptops in Policy Debate

Move by McComas, seconded by Ferguson

"For an additional trial period of one year (the 2007-2008 school year) allow the use of laptop computers in Policy Debate at the NFL National Tournament using the University Interscholastic League guidelines. The use of laptop computers at 2007-2008 NFL District competitions will be the autonomous decision of each individual District Committee."

**Passed: 8-0**

## Motion-Student Congress

Moved by McComas, seconded by Keller

"Give the Districts the autonomy to allow adults to serve as the Presiding Officer in Super Session."

**Failed: 2-5-1**

**Aye: Keller, McComas**

**Nay: Wycoff, Sheaff, Ferguson, Sterner, McComas, Tate**

**Abstain: Crabtree**

The Executive Council asked the Executive Director to investigate additional alternatives/changes to the current California Plan and Up/Down System in the District Tournament Speech Events through feedback from the District Chairs.

The Executive Council asked the Executive Director to solicit feedback from the District Chairs concerning prep time in Policy Debate at the District and National Tournaments. It has been suggested that the NFL increase Policy Debate prep time to 8 minutes per team.

## Motion-League Development

Moved by McComas, seconded by Sterner

"Establish a development board of the National Forensic League to achieve the established strategic goals of the Executive Council."

**Passed: 8-0**

## Motion-League Development

Moved by Sterner, seconded by McComas

"Establish an honorary board of the National Forensic League to achieve the established goals of the Executive Council."

**Passed: 8-0**

The Executive Council charged the Executive Director to develop criteria and job descriptions for the newly established boards for Council approval.

## Motion-League Mission

Moved by Keller, seconded by Crabtree

"Accept the adoption of an NFL Honor Code."

**Passed: 8-0**

Over the next few months, the NFL will be developing an honor code that can be utilized by NFL member schools to emphasize the importance of certain tenets of the honor society.

## Motion-Spring Council Meeting

Moved by McComas, seconded by Crabtree

"Hold the 2008 Spring Meeting in Minneapolis, MN, on April 26-29, 2008."

**Passed: 8-0**

The meeting adjourned on Sunday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> at 11:20 am.





## **2007 Private Reprimand Summaries**

The National Forensic League publishes a summary of facts and conduct rule violations in matters which the NFL Office of the Executive Director imposed private reprimands. The summaries do not disclose information identifying the reprimanded students, coaches, or schools.

The following summaries of selected private reprimands, imposed by the NFL Office of the Executive Director, are printed to help students, coaches, and schools avoid similar misconduct problems.

### **NFL Point Entry Falsification**

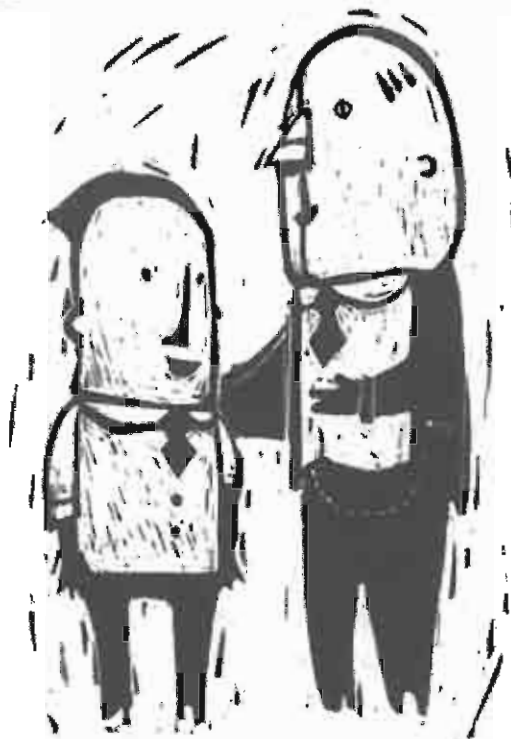
A school's NFL advisor inaccurately entered NFL service points by recording onstage acting performances. In addition, the advisor recorded student service points for classroom speeches given without the required adult audience. Also, the advisor inaccurately entered NFL competition points. The school was made inactive by the NFL National Office and was not allowed to participate in any further NFL competition until all point inaccuracies were corrected. All coaching points for these point recordings were stripped and the school's strength was adjusted. For a period of one year, the school is required to submit all recorded points with appropriate documentation as proof of participation and results delivered directly to the NFL Office of the Executive Director. A letter was sent to the administration of the school outlining the infractions and penalties.

### **NFL Point Entry Falsification**

A school's NFL advisor inaccurately entered NFL competition points. The school was made inactive by the NFL National Office and was not allowed to participate in any further NFL competition until all point inaccuracies were corrected. All coaching points for these point recordings were stripped and the school's strength was adjusted. A letter was sent to the administration of the school outlining the infractions and penalties.

### **Inappropriate Re-entry of Supplemental Events**

Two students from the same school falsified identification in order to enter supplemental and consolation events at the 2007 NFL National Speech Tournament. The students were stripped of all NFL points earned at the tournament. In addition, all coaching points earned at the tournament were stripped and all of the school's Bruno E. Jacob Award points were stripped. A letter was sent to the administration of the school outlining the infractions and penalties.



*"the secrets of my success are..."*

# Mentoring

The NFL recently launched its National Mentoring initiative for all districts. This effort is to increase retention and build recruitment within each district and throughout the League. Each district chair has provided three names of chapter school advisors that can mentor new affiliates. If you would like a mentor, please contact Tyler Billman, Coordinator of NFL Programs, at [tyler@nflonline.org](mailto:tyler@nflonline.org).

# Nobody Does It As Well As Everybody

by Don Crabtree

One morning while getting ready for school, I was watching "Good Morning America." A prominent business executive from Forbes magazine was addressing the issue of what turns a "good" business into a "great" business. During the course of the interview, he made the statement, "Nobody does it as well as everybody." I immediately recalled the National Forensic League National Summer Conference held in Ripon, Wisconsin two summers ago and the outstanding work of the NFL Committees that have met over the last two national tournaments: Public Forum Debate in 2005; Lincoln Douglas, Policy Debate, Student Congress and Oral Interpretation during the summer of 2006; and the further work of Lincoln Douglas, Original Oratory, Extemporaneous Speaking, and the review of the Student Congress Manual that occurred this summer. It is clearly evident that this is what occurred during all of these fantastic NFL endeavors...innovation, creativity, ownership and teamwork!

Prior to the 2006 National Tournament, the National Forensic League Executive Council established several committees which were charged with the task of reviewing each assigned competitive activity area and making recommendations back to the NFL Executive Council. They were asked to review all current rules and tournament manual language and then make recommendations back to the council. All of these committees worked tirelessly during the National Tournament!

Many of the 2006 committee recommendations were then presented to the group of 70 plus District Chairs and district leadership members at the Ripon National Forensic League Leadership Conference. As Executive Director, Scott Wunn stated, "It was an incredible opportunity for the regional leadership to discuss key issues and give valuable input." However, the work continued. Other committees met after the conference and continued to refine their work!

The initial committees, Public Forum, Lincoln Douglas, Policy Debate, Student Congress and Oral Interpretation, were presented at the Leadership Conference. After each report, the conference attendees met with each Executive Council member in attendance to give further input and analysis. During this period each council member took/made round table summaries. The council met immediately after the conference adjourned and reviewed the individual table summaries and synthesized

the attendees' comments and ideas. These final summaries were then sent back to each chair of the "original" committee for further review.

In September 2006, the "Final" reports were then presented to the council at its fall meeting. Some of the recommendations were passed; some were not and some were recommended for further study.

Because of the success of this "collective" work, Lincoln Douglas, Original Oratory, Extemporaneous Speaking and a review of the Student Congress Manual committees continued their great work during the 2007 National Tournament!

The incredible benefit of all of this "community work" is crucial and inherent for our League. The National Forensic League Executive Council has a tremendous desire to be more informed by its members and the National Leadership Conference and the work of these outstanding committee members were stellar examples of being given well thought member-based information.

Scott Wunn, NFL Executive Director, recently asked us to "join" the NFL Community! Mr. Wunn stated, "Instilling a sense of community can empower any speech and debate program as well as the National Forensic League as a whole. Communities allow individuals to enhance their personal identity, perfect essential skills and exchange important resources for the benefit of themselves and others."

I can think of no better answer to Mr. Wunn's charge than the community effort given by these committees and the NFL Leadership Conference!

Innovation, creativity, ownership and community were evidenced by the hard work of these committees and the Leadership Conference. It is extremely obvious to me that, "Nobody does it as well as everybody!"

(Don Crabtree is the Vice President of the NFL Executive Council. For thirty-five years he was head coach of Park Hill High School in Missouri, and he now serves as the Assistant Coach. Don has hosted two national tournaments, earned his 7<sup>th</sup> diamond, and received ten Distinguished Service Awards.)

# Election Year for Executive Council



2008-2009

## National Officers

- Election of National officers shall be conducted in even numbered years as follows:
- Any member coach with 5 years of NFL coaching experience may become a candidate for Executive Council by so advising the Executive Director in writing before February 1, **certified mail**.
- Present national officers whose terms expire on July 31 shall become candidates for re-election by filing a written statement with the Executive Director by February 1, 2008, **certified mail**.
- The District Chairs shall by virtue of their office, be candidates for members of the Executive Council upon filing nomination papers as may be prescribed. Past District Chairs may be candidates for members of the Executive Council upon filing nomination papers. Any coach who has served for at least 5 years may also run.
- No person may serve as a member of the Executive Council after his/her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday [Council Meeting, April 11, 1992, unanimous]. This rule does not apply to the Administrative Representative who is appointed by the Executive Council every two years.
- Each candidate shall be allotted one column (unedited by the NFL National Office) in the *Rostrum* to support his/her candidacy, due February 1, 2008, **certified mail**. Each candidate may include a photo to accompany the column. PLEASE limit column to 400 words.
- Each chapter shall be mailed a ballot on which the candidates' names appear in an order drawn by lot and on which the chapter shall vote for four directors. Each ballot shall be worth as many votes as the chapter has active members and degrees on record in the National Office on May 1, 2008.
- All seats are not up for election. Councilors William Woods Tate, Jr., Kandi King, Pam Cady Wycoff and Tommie Lindsey, Jr. were elected in 2004 to four year terms and their seats are up for re-election in 2008.

**BALLOTS WILL BE MAILED TO CHAPTERS ON APRIL**

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## National Forensic League Mission Statement

The National Forensic League Honor Society promotes secondary school speech and debate activities and interscholastic competition as a means to develop a student's lifelong skills and values, as well as the public's awareness of the value of speech, debate, and communication education.

As an organization, the National Forensic League embraces diversity, interconnection, and visionary leadership. We empower students to become effective communicators, ethical individuals, critical thinkers, and leaders in a democratic society.

*Est. on Sept. 24, 2006*



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## Student Challenge

In recent weeks, Miss Teen South Carolina has come under harsh scrutiny for her answer to the following question: "Recent polls have shown a fifth of Americans can't locate the U.S. on a world map. Why do you think this is?" Drawing on your knowledge of American culture and your public speaking skills, how would you have answered this question?

### HENRY FROM NEVADA

Under funded. This seemingly insignificant term represents the current state of our educational system. Unfortunately, our schools today lack many of the essential items needed for basic education. Every year schools struggle to keep some of its most basic curriculum thanks to its consistently low budget. To make matters worse, we often focus on passing the SATS, the ACTs, and college admission essays that forces us to suppress our own learning experience in the classroom. It's a combination of both that blinds us from what may seem to be the most fundamental knowledge anyone should have, that of an American locating the United States on a map.

### HEATHER FROM IDAHO

I think that this is because Americans have been taught to read, then spit an answer back out. The American culture studies either itself or other nations, not generally together. This day and age, all the students are learning is what is required on standardized tests. This doesn't usually involve where the U.S. is. I think that the school systems have failed us as a whole.

### NICOLAS FROM NEVADA

This is most likely due to the fact that we simply don't stress patriotism in our country. Yes, we do have flaws as a country, but that should have no bearing on whether or not we still are proud of it.

### JEFFREY FROM FLORIDA

Although a very straightforward question, this is not a simple one to answer. The aforementioned statistic indicates that we, as a country, have a problem. This problem clearly lies within our education system. We are producing citizens who cannot locate their own country on a world map. This problem exists due to an obviously faulty component of this country's education system. Therefore, the curriculums of both United States Public and Private schools must be looked into and regulated to some minor degree by the Federal Government in order to ensure that minimum education criteria are met that all American students are receiving a fair, equal, and decent education.

### KENDRA FROM GEORGIA

First off, let's break down the percentages of Americans: Many are children to young to read, many are elderly and not educated on the information, and many are mentally incapable of finding the U.S. on a map. Thus when these categories are added together, you have approximately a fifth of Americans. The percentage within the question is misleading; it tends to make the reader believe that a fifth of Americans are "stupid."

### BRITTANY FROM NORTH CAROLINA

I believe that a fifth of Americans cannot locate America on a U.S. map because in many areas of our country education is not provided to lower income areas. Therefore, many people were and are being raised without proper or any education at all.

### ZACH FROM ARIZONA

Well, in recent light of things, I actually think Miss Teen South Carolina is my hero. She basically sums up our entire country in 30 seconds.

### NEW STUDENT CHALLENGE OF THE MONTH

*IBM chairman Thomas Watson remarked in 1943, "I think there is a world market for maybe five computers." Despite his misgivings, computers now affect nearly every aspect of our daily lives. Which technology are we currently underrating that will become a cornerstone of future life?*

# Student Challenge

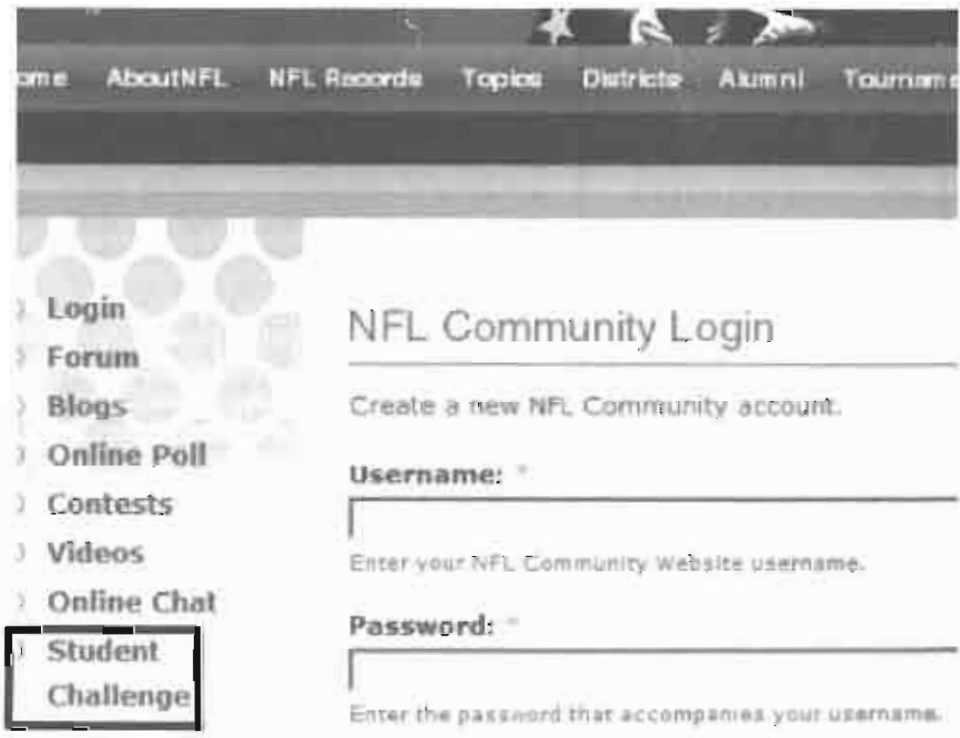
WHERE IS THE STUDENT CHALLENGE QUESTION OF THE MONTH POSTED?



1) Choose  
“Community”  
found on the  
Home Page  
↩

2) Within the  
Community  
screen, left hand  
side of screen,

3) Choose...  
Student Challenge  
↑  
↑  
↑  
↓  
REGISTER NOW!





## Coach Profile

# MEET SUZANNE W. TERRY

by  
Tyler Billman  
NFL Staff

### What was your first NFL experience?

My first NFL experience came at the end of my first year coaching. In college I dreamed of teaching theatre and doing plays all day. When I was given a forensics class, I was not sure what to do. My forensics students explained that we would attend the national qualifying tournament (they always had in the past) in hopes of qualifying for nationals in June. My thoughts were, "Great! I might have to give up a week of my summer." We did qualify Morristown West's first student to nationals in Nashville and instead of being thrilled, I was disappointed. I encouraged my student that as soon as he was eliminated from competition, we would go to Opryland. He made it all the way to finals, and we never made it to Opryland. Boy, did I have lots to learn!

### What is your team philosophy?

Our team philosophy is quite simple. If you walk through our door, we have a place for you on our team. I believe so passionately in this activity, that I allow any child that has work ethic and respect the opportunity to compete. We, at Morristown West, are about the journey and not the shiny trophies (but let's be real . . . we do like the shiny trophies). The relationships, life lessons, and skills learned matter the most!

### How many hours do you spend with this activity a week?

My husband of seventeen years, Steve Terry, would answer, "Too many!" I am very fortunate to have a class period each day devoted to forensics. In addition to our class time, I spend roughly two hours after school every day. I have a nine-year-old daughter and a twelve-year-old son, and getting them to soccer and cheerleading are priorities. My father has had some health issues lately that have also required much of my time. Learning to juggle family first and work second is a never-ending conflict.

### What do you consider your coaching strengths?

My strength is my connection with my students. During my high school career, drama class was the first time I truly felt connected to a group of students in the building with a common goal greater than our teen-age angst. It was so exciting to be involved with what I thought were the best people in the building. That is what I try to create for my students. We become very close knit in room 476 and on those yellow school buses. I have found that if you treat your students with respect and kindness that is exactly what you get back.



**Suzanne W. Terry**  
coaches at Morristown West HS, TN.  
She is a triple diamond coach.

### Do you have any fundraising secrets that you use with your team at Morristown West?

I know no fundraising secrets. Fortunately, we live in a small community, and several area businesses provide some funding through donations to our team. Also, our school board and director of schools maintain a transportation budget. So long as we travel via school bus, our transportation is paid. You have not lived until you drive to Philly or Dallas from Tennessee in a yellow school bus in June without air conditioning. The bottom line is, my students pay for their competitions.

### What qualities do you look for when recruiting students for your program?

When recruiting students, I look for anyone who has a desire to compete. I do not hold auditions, have no grade requirements, or only work with upperclassmen. I will take any student that wants to be a part of the team.

*Tennessee*



## Coach Profile

### Do/Did you have a forensics mentor? If so, who and how have they changed the way you coach?

Betsy Mashburn was the queen of forensics in my eyes. My favorite professor at the University of Tennessee, Dr. Ryan, would constantly refer to her as an example in my classes. I asked him if he would, please, allow me to do my student teaching with her. And, he did! I was in awe of her the moment I met her. She was a spitfire that could write an Extemp question, block a DI, and rehearse a play all at the same time. She had tremendous work ethic and expected greatness from her students. I loved her and learned so very much from her.

### What is exciting about being an NFL coach in the state of Tennessee?

Tennessee is a great state to coach forensics. We have genuine friendships and respect for one another. I know without a doubt that if I need anything Kathy Ligon (Cookeville High School), Mickey Hutson (Collierville High School), and countless others are only a phone call away. It is gratifying to know they not only care about me, but they care about my students as well. When students see their coaches lead by example, they follow suit. This was evident this past summer at Wichita. Not only did the Tennessee competitors support each other during competition; afterwards, we all went to dinner together following the final rounds. It was a big time!

### What's unique about Morristown West High School as a NFL chapter?

Without a doubt, what makes me most proud of my unique team is how accepting and sincerely concerned they are for each other. I see them working hard together and am thrilled to see how my seniors have "stepped up" this year. They are working with our new freshmen, finding cuttings, writing debates, and leading by example. They make me proud every day.

### What is your favorite memory from a National Tournament?

Witnessing my brother final at Nationals in St. Louis was amazing; however, I loved the Salt Lake City National Tournament. The city is beautiful, and we only did so-so in competition. The last day after finals, my students, Miss Grooms, and I piled into our rental car and drove towards the snow. We had no idea where we were going, but we just drove. On our adventure, we saw a couple of moose, some snow in June, had a wonderful meal, and had our car struck by lightning. We laughed and cried and had an unforgettable time.

### What do you find to be your greatest challenge as a coach?

My greatest challenges are: juggling my time, paying for all the expenses of competition, keeping some of my students motivated and the never ending mound of paper work.

### What is your vision for the future of NFL?

My vision for the future of NFL is one of greater diversity. I think this activity provides the greatest opportunities for students and I would love to see more students involved. And not only more students, I would love to see *all* types of students involved. Students that buy their suits and students that borrow their suits alike should feel accepted in our organization.

### Do you have any advice for new NFL coaches?

My advice for any coach is never give up! There will be tough times, unkind people, long hours, and skipped meals, but the students are so very worth it. The relationships made on the way are the shiniest trophies of all.

**Good coaches teach respect for the opposition, love of competition, the value of trying your best, and how to win and lose graciously.**

**Brooks Clark**

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# DON'T JUST SIT THERE!! MAKE TIME FOR SERVICE

by  
Jenny Billman  
NFL National Office

When Amber Russell was informed that she would be cleaning school buses as part of her speech team's mandatory service requirement, she was less than enthused. In fact, as Amber recounts in the March 2007 *Rostrum*, she and fellow forensics newcomers were a bit "disgruntled" (p. 10). Despite her initial discontent, this NFL alumna goes on to explain that requiring team activities such as spending time with Alzheimer's patients, Princeton High School coach Jimmy Smith taught his team members to care about their community – and each other. In the end, Amber concludes that service opportunities present "the only way...for people to put themselves out in the real world, get involved, and grow with each other."

Amber's story demonstrates an important aspect of NFL membership: service. While NFL membership undoubtedly involves speech and debate competition, it must also include participation in the "real world." Service and activism facilitate this real-world engagement. Understandably, some forensic coaches may wonder whether they have the time to devote to service opportunities. However, as the following discussion illustrates, service is undeniably worth the sacrifice.

Service is a natural extension of forensics; in many cases, forensic students are uniquely empowered to serve as advocates and educators for the community at large. Forensics teaches students to examine material critically, affording them extensive knowledge and insight (Colbert & Biggers, 1985). In fact, debaters are more informed about current events than their peers, and often more than adults (Fine, 2001). Additionally, forensics teaches speakers to package this knowledge in a way that makes it accessible to the general public. Decades of research confirms that forensic participation increases communication competence in its members (Bellon, 2000; Hinck, 2003, Colbert & Biggers, 1985). Equally importantly, forensics improves the social skills of members, enabling them to connect with community members in a meaningful way

(Bellon, 2000). Clearly, forensic students are some of the most qualified members of society to take on service projects and promote positive community change.

While altruistic service has intrinsic value, teams also reap tangible rewards from making contributions to their communities. For starters, service opportunities are learning opportunities, as Hinck explained: "service-learning activities... are ways to maximize the return on our educational investment in forensics" (2003, p. 66). More specifically, students involved in service-learning activities often demonstrate marked gains in interpersonal competence, responsibility, and knowledge of real-world issues (Billig, 2004). In other words, coordinating efforts in the community can benefit a team by increasing student learning opportunities, making the students more educated speakers and more well-rounded people.

While raising the bar for team members contributes the success of the team, service also fuels the success of the team holistically. Teams that participate in the same activities, especially service projects, typically feel a strong bond with their program and each other. As Amber Russell reported, service "brought us together as a group and strengthened our commitment level" (2007, p. 10). Amber's story indicates what many seasoned coaches and educators already know; that service can increase team cohesion and unity by inspiring the group to

work toward a common goal.

Service may not seem like a glamorous addition to a speech calendar; it may not even seem like a workable goal. However, forensic teams who labor to reach others and change their communities typically find that the benefits of their community engagement far outweigh the costs. To put it plainly, forensics uniquely equips both coaches and competitors to serve as agents of positive change in their communities. It is up to us, though, to take advantage of this tremendous gift.





## WAYS TO GET INVOLVED:

1. Provide entertainment at a retirement home. Residents would enjoy seeing your team members perform their events.
2. Adopt a child during the holidays. If your team is large, consider adopting multiple children or even a family.
3. Hold a work day at school. Pick up garbage and rake leaves (or shovel snow, depending on where you live).
4. Coach/mentor an NJFL team. As an added bonus engaging your team in this type of project will improve their performance skills and ensure that your team will be strong in the coming years.
5. Offer to walk dogs for the local animal shelter.
6. Run or walk in a charity race with team members.
7. Offer to perform for an elementary school (make sure the pieces are appropriate for a young audience).
8. Collect books for a local library or charity.
9. Become a team of advocates. Have members write their representatives on issues that matter to them.
10. Participate in community speaking activities such as the People Speak, Words that Shook the World, or the National Public Policy Forum. Cogent communication is still one of the best ways a speech team can serve the surrounding community.

The important thing is to take the first step – even seemingly small projects are valuable! Remember, if team efforts don't always come to fruition, you can still encourage and reward your students for their efforts in the community.

(Jenny Billman was the 2005 top speaker in Lincoln-Douglas debate at the National Forensic Association Tournament and a most preferred critic at the 2006 National Parliamentary Tournament of Excellence. A former NFL member and debate coach, she now works in the NFL National Office as the Coordinator of Public Relations and Marketing.)

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## Featured Cartoon of the Month

Each month the *Rostrum* features Yilu Zhang's cartoon of the month. Yilu is from North Allegheny High School, PA. Her NFL coach is Sharon Volpe.

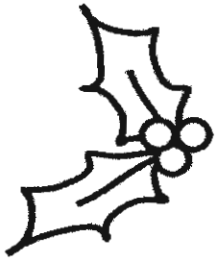


- The design must be related to the National Forensic League speech and debate program
- All artwork must be original and students own creation, free of copyright, and may not include any copyrighted materials
- Do not include anything which might possibly cause offense
- One design per student
- Please do not use more than 3 colors in the design
- Entries must be submitted by December 14th, 2007

Submit your entries by mail to:  
National Forensic League  
Attn: Andrea Neitzel  
125 Watson St.  
Ripon, WI 54902

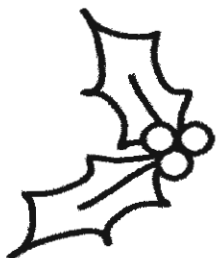
or send a low resolution file to [andrea@nflonline.org](mailto:andrea@nflonline.org)

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# FOCUS ON THE JUDGE

by Emma Bentley

I went to a bunch of debate tournaments in high school, and debated in a variety of situations. I debated in classrooms and in trailers and in front of empty desks and crowds of people. I argued for universal health care and mandatory national service, and minutes later, argued in opposition to them. I debated with different partners, at different times, against students from across the country. Throughout my debate career, few aspects of debate remained constant.

Few aspects, that is, except for the judge. No matter where I debated, or against whom, there was always a judge (or judges) to determine the outcome of the round. In terms of both prevalence and responsibility, the judge is arguably the most fundamental part of any debate.

And yet, surprisingly, the judge is often somewhat easy to ignore. Seated near the back of the room, head down, the judge projects little air of authority. I've watched (and, to be honest) participated in rounds where the judge is all but completely ignored as the two teams argue back and forth. Through my own experience and reflection; however, I've come to realize that focusing on the judge is the fastest and most reliable ticket to success for any debater.

Perhaps the most common mistake in debate is thinking that the object of the round is to beat the other team. In actuality, the object is much simpler and more concrete: win over the judge. The only thing that matters, the most basic and fundamental part of the debate, is whether, after thirty minutes, the judge votes for your team or your opponent. The judge's final decision is not just one important part of the debate; it is the **only important part**.

It's obvious then, that focusing on the judge is critical. Luckily for you (and

me) connecting with the judge isn't very hard. If you've had any debate training at all (or just have a little bit of common sense) you probably already know that eye contact and polished speech are necessities, no matter how rushed you feel. Looking up while you're reading a piece of evidence, and speaking clearly and calmly to the judge (rather than to your opponents) are small but crucial methods of winning the judge's vote and in turn, the round.

Beyond eye contact and calmness, there are other more subtle ways of connecting with your judge. Particularly in public forum, which is more relaxed and flexible than the other types of debate, you have the ability to adapt your style to win over the judge. Because many of the public forum topics focus on current issues, you will undoubtedly encounter judges who are familiar with the concepts and arguments that you and your opponents are presenting. In these cases, you have the option of presenting more advanced argumentation in a faster-paced and more in-depth manner. Conversely, you will certainly run into judges who know nothing about the topic on which you are debating. If you enter these rounds with the same mindset, chances are you'll do more to confuse your judge than win them over. It may sound complicated, but the bottom line is anything but. If your judge is a middle-aged woman who knits during prep time, your style of debate can (and should) be different than if your judge is a distinguished looking businessman who flows the round on his laptop. Of course, you won't often be confronted with such clear-cut and stereotypical judges, but you can pick up on clues that will allow you to slightly adapt your style. If the judge nods along with your points or seems to otherwise understand what you're saying,

then by all means, continue in the same vein of reasoning. If the judge seems confused or disbelieving, take some time to clearly break down your argument or try a different approach. More than anything, use your own judgment. Keep your head in the round and change your style as you see fit and chances are the judge will respond favorably.

In keeping with the theme of focusing on the judge, I have one last piece of advice: ignore the opposing team. Listen to their arguments and respond accordingly, of course, but in all honesty, don't extend your focus on them beyond that. If you and your partner are able to ignore the other team's ups and downs, you will present a better image and have a higher chance for success. If the other team is angry or flustered, your best bet is to stay calm and collected. It sounds like common sense, but often when teams forget the judge and focus on each other, emotions quickly escalate and the debate disintegrates into a yelling match. By keeping your debate centered on the judge you will remove the chance of being provoked by the other team and will (hopefully) fair better in the round.

When you enter your next debate round you will undoubtedly be confronted with a variety of surprises. Though, the one thing that you can count on ahead of time is that you will have a judge who will determine the winner and the loser of the round. By focusing your attention on that judge and doing everything in your power to win their vote, you may very well achieve debate success.

(Emma Bentley is an NFL National Champion. She is one of four of The Public Formula, which creates the Carver Files. She is also a contributing writer for DebateChamps.com)



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## VOLUME I

### **CX 101 Developing the Negative Position in Policy Debate Cross Examination**

*Instructor: Diana Prentice Carlin, University of Kansas*

Addresses several key points in The Negative Position - reasons for use, ways to construct, how to use in a round, risks involved. Length: 53:00

### **CX 102 Constructing Affirmative Positions**

*Instructor: Greg Varley, Lakeland HS, NY*

Winning suggestions for novice debaters in the basics of affirmative case construction by exploring these two issues: evaluation of the resolution and building a successful affirmative case. Length: 45:00

### **CX 103 A. Speaker Duties: The Conventions of Debate**

*Instructor: Bill Davis, Blue Valley HS, KS*

For novice debaters - outlines the responsibilities of each speaker from 1AC to 2NR and the only three rules of debate.

### **B. Stock Issues in Policy Debate**

*Instructor: Glenda Ferguson, Heritage Hall School, OK*

For novice debaters - gives background and applications of significance, inherency, solvency, and topicality. (Both topics on one tape) Length: 61:00

### **CX 104 Cross Examination - Theory and Techniques**

*Instructor: Dr. George Ziegelmüller, Wayne State University, MI*

An in-depth study of the finer points of cross examination: asking factual questions, using directed questions of clarification, using questions based on tests of evidence, reasoning and preparing stock questions. Length: 48:00

### **CX 105 Advocacy - How to Improve Your Communication in the Context of Debate**

*Instructor: Dr. George Ziegelmüller, Wayne State University, MI*

Recommendations for improving your speaking style. Length: 56:00

### **CX 106 "Unger and Company," Chapter 1**

*Moderator: Dr. James Unger, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.*

Top collegiate debate coaches "debate about debate" in a McLaughlin group format. Topics include Experts in Debate, Topicality, Judging, and Impact Evaluation. Length: 60:00

### **LD 101 Debating Affirmative in Lincoln Douglas Debate**

*Instructor: Pat Bailey, Homewood HS, AL*

*Marilee Dukes, Vestavia Hills HS, AL*

Topics include designing affirmative strategy - considering the type of resolution, introductions and conclusions, establishing a value premise, rules for justifications and duties of 1AR and 2AR. Length: 56:00

### **LD 102 Debating Negative in Lincoln Douglas Debate**

*Instructor: Pat Bailey, Homewood HS, AL*

*Marilee Dukes, Vestavia Hills HS, AL*

Topics include organizing the negative constructive, strategies and rules governing the negative rebuttal. Length: 58:00

### **LD 103 Cross Examination in Lincoln Douglas Debate**

*Instructor: Aaron Timmons, Newman-Smith HS, TX*

Tips in conducting successful cross examination with student demonstrations and critique. Length: 48:00

### **LD 104 What are Values? And Applying Value Standards to Lincoln Douglas Debate**

*Instructor: Dale McCall, Wellington HS, FL*

Detailed examination of value standards as they apply to LD Debate. Length: 52:00

### **INT 101 An Overview of Interpretation and the Qualities of an Effective Selection**

*Instructor: Ron Krikac, Bradley University, IL*

Issues explored are definitions of interpretation and discussion of the characteristics of a winning national cutting. Length: 49:00

### **INT 102 Script Analysis**

*Instructor: Ron Krikac, Bradley University, IL*

Script analysis including reading aloud, finding details, determining specific relationships and creating a sub-text. Many helpful suggestions and illustrations. Length: 35:00

### **OO 101 Coaching Original Oratory: A Roundtable Discussion 1**

*Moderator: Donovan Cummings, Edison HS, CA*

Five outstanding coaches discuss various oratory strategies: appropriate topics, use of humor, involvement of the coach, reliance on personal experience. Length: 49:45

### **OO 102 Coaching Original Oratory: A Roundtable Discussion 2**

*Moderator: Donovan Cummings, Edison HS, CA*

Five outstanding coaches discuss delivery techniques and strategies: importance of delivery, coaching delivery and gestures, improvement of diction. Length: 35:00

### **OO 103 Oratory Overview**

*Instructor: L.D. Naeglin, San Antonio, TX*

Examines elements in winning orations that listeners and judges want to hear and see. Based on empirical data, an excellent look at judge analysis. Length: 1 hour 25 min

### **OO 104 Orator Introductions and Conclusions**

*Instructor: L.D. Naeglin, San Antonio, TX*

A continuation of OO 103. By understanding judge and listener analysis, speakers can use information to create winning intros and conclusions. Length: 59:25

### **OO 105 Oratory Content**

*Instructor: L.D. Naeglin, San Antonio, TX*

From examples of national competition, tips on how to support ideas successfully in oratory with humor, personal example, analogy, etc. Length: 56:20

### **EXT 101 Issues in Extemp: A Roundtable Discussion 1**

*Moderator: Randy McCutcheon, Albuquerque Academy, NM*

Outstanding extemp coaches discuss getting students involved in extemp, organizing an extemp file, using note cards and applying successful practice techniques. Length: 43:00

### **EXT 102 Issues in Extemp: A Roundtable Discussion 2**

*Moderator: Randy McCutcheon, Albuquerque Academy, NM*

Continuation of EXT 101. Topics covered include organizing the speech body, use of sources, humor, and use of canned or generic introductions. Length: 48:00

### **EXT 103 Championship Extemp: Part 1 - US Extemp**

*Moderator: Randy McCutcheon, Albuquerque Academy, NM*

A critique of two US Extemp national finalists by a roundtable of outstanding extemp coaches. Length: 41:00

### **EXT 104 Championship Extemp: Part 2 - Foreign Extemp**

*Moderator: Randy McCutcheon, Albuquerque Academy, NM*

A critique of two foreign extemp national finalists by a roundtable of outstanding extemp coaches. Length: 41:00

## VOLUME II

### **CX 107 "Unger and Company," Chapter 2**

*Moderator: James J. Unger, The American University*

The Unger-led panel of distinguished collegiate debate coaches clash over the following areas: Inherency, Structure, Generics, Counterplans, and Real World Arguments. Length: 59:00

### **CX 108 "Unger and Company," Chapter 3**

*Moderator: James J. Unger, The American University*

This third chapter of "Unger and Company" contains several differing opinions about Presentation, Intrinsicness, Institutes, and Direction. Length: 58:00

### **CX 109 Introduction to Debate Analysis: Affirmative**

*Instructor: James Copeland, Executive Secretary, NFL*

A clear and precise introduction to affirmative case and plan writing for novice debaters. Length 1 hour 12 min.

## VOLUME II (Continued from previous page)

### CX 110 Paradigms

*Instructor: Dr. David Zarefsky, Northwestern University*

National renowned debate coach and theorist David Zarefsky presents his ideas on paradigms in argumentation. This lecture is required viewing for all serious students of debate. Length: 54:10

### CX 111 Demonstration Debate and Analysis

*Instructor: Greg Varley, Lakeland HS, NY*

Provides detailed explanation of each step of a cross examination debate, from opening arguments to closing rebuttals. Using as his model the final round debate from the 1992 National Tournament in Fargo, Coach Varley has produced a "winning" tape for both novices and experience debaters. Length: 2 hours

### CX 112 Flowing a Debate

*Instructor: Greg Varley, Lakeland HS, NY*

Students will find a number of strategies in the proper flowing of a debate in this excellent presentation by nationally prominent coach Greg Varley. Length: 35:25

### CX 113 Recruiting Roundtable

*Moderator: Greg Varley, Lakeland HS, NY*

Three outstanding coaches with very different debate programs offer insight and suggestions on recruiting new members. The discussion follows an excellent film that can be used as a recruiting tool. Length: 53:10

### LD 105 How to Prepare for your LD Rounds

*Instructor: Dale McCall, Wellington HS, FL*

A comprehensive discussion about the preparation steps students need to undertake to compete confidently in Lincoln Douglas Debate. Length 35:00

### LD 106 Value Analysis in LD Debate

*Instructor: Diana Prentice Carlin, University of Kansas*

An examination of the value analysis by an outstanding debate coach. Length: 35:00

### LD 107 LD Debate: The Moderate Style

*Instructor: Pam Cady, Apple Valley HS, MN*

Coach Cady provides invaluable advice on developing a moderate debate style. Her points are demonstrated by two outstanding student debaters. Length: 53:00

### LD 108 Rebuttal Preparation

*Instructor: Carol Biel, Chesterton HS, IN*

Coach Biel moderates a group discussion with outstanding young high school debaters in this examination of rebuttal preparation. Length: 55:00

### INT 103 Interpretation of Poetry and Prose

*Instructor: Ruby Krider, Professor Emeritus, Murray State University, KY*

Imagery, narration and believability are but a few of the areas Professor Krider covers in this colorful and insightful exploration of the role of the interpreter of poetry and prose. Her lecture is divided into three parts: Catch That Image, Chai Chat Chat, and Make Us Believe You. Length: 1 hour 25 min.

### INT 104 Critique of Interpretation

*Moderator: Ron Krider, Bradley University, IL*

What works and what doesn't work in dramatic and humorous interpretation? Three esteemed coaches analyze and critique performances in humorous and dramatic using examples drawn from national final rounds. Length: 59: 25

### INT 105 Introduction to Poetry Interpretation

*Instructor: Barbara Funke, Chesterton HS, IN*

One of the nation's best interpretation coaches teaches a detailed and honest approach to poetry. Coach Funke provides insight into how to choose a poem and how to establish commitments as a performer. A practical and enlightening tape for all participants in individual events. Length: 56:20

### INT 106 Characterization in Interpretation

*Instructors: Pam Cady, Apple Valley HS, MN*

*Joe Wycoff, Chesterton HS, IN*

Outstanding national coaches Cady and Wycoff team up to share their expertise in the area of characterization. Cady takes on vocal characterization while Wycoff engages in a discussion on physicalization. Students who competed at the 1993 National Tournament are used throughout the presentation. Length: 54:00

### INT 107 Breaking the Ice

*Instructor: Rosella Blunk, Sioux Falls, IA*

A terrific tape for beginning and advanced classes in drama and speech. How does one go about putting students at ease in a performance environment? Coach Blunk and her students provide several fun and easy activities that will make your students glad to be in class. Length: 34: 25

### GEN 101 Ethics in Competition

*Instructor: Joe Wycoff, Chesterton HS, IN*

Hall-of-Fame Coach Joe Wycoff speaks about ethics in forensic competition and other related topics in this entertaining and candid presentation. Length: 40:00

### EXT 105 First Experiences

*Moderator: L.D. Naeglin, San Antonio, TX*

Members of this panel of former high school extemp speakers discuss how they got started in extemp and share advice they found invaluable. Length: 42:00

### EXT 106 Expert Extemp: Advanced Techniques

*Moderator: L.D. Naeglin, San Antonio, TX*

On this program the panelists detail the skills and techniques they've learned on their way to becoming advanced extempers and champions. Length: 44:30

### EXT 107 Expert Extemp: Speech and Critique

*Moderator: L.D. Naeglin, San Antonio, TX*

The panelists listen to an extemp speech delivered by Jeremy Mallory of Swarthmore College and provide an in-depth critique of his presentation. Length: 42:30

### EXT 108 Advanced Extempore Speaking

*Instructor: James M. Copeland, Executive Secretary, NFL*

A practical tape for competitors which covers the basics of research, file building and outlining as well as advanced concepts: the rule of the 4 sevens, topic selection, and attention factors. Length: 1 hour 23 min.

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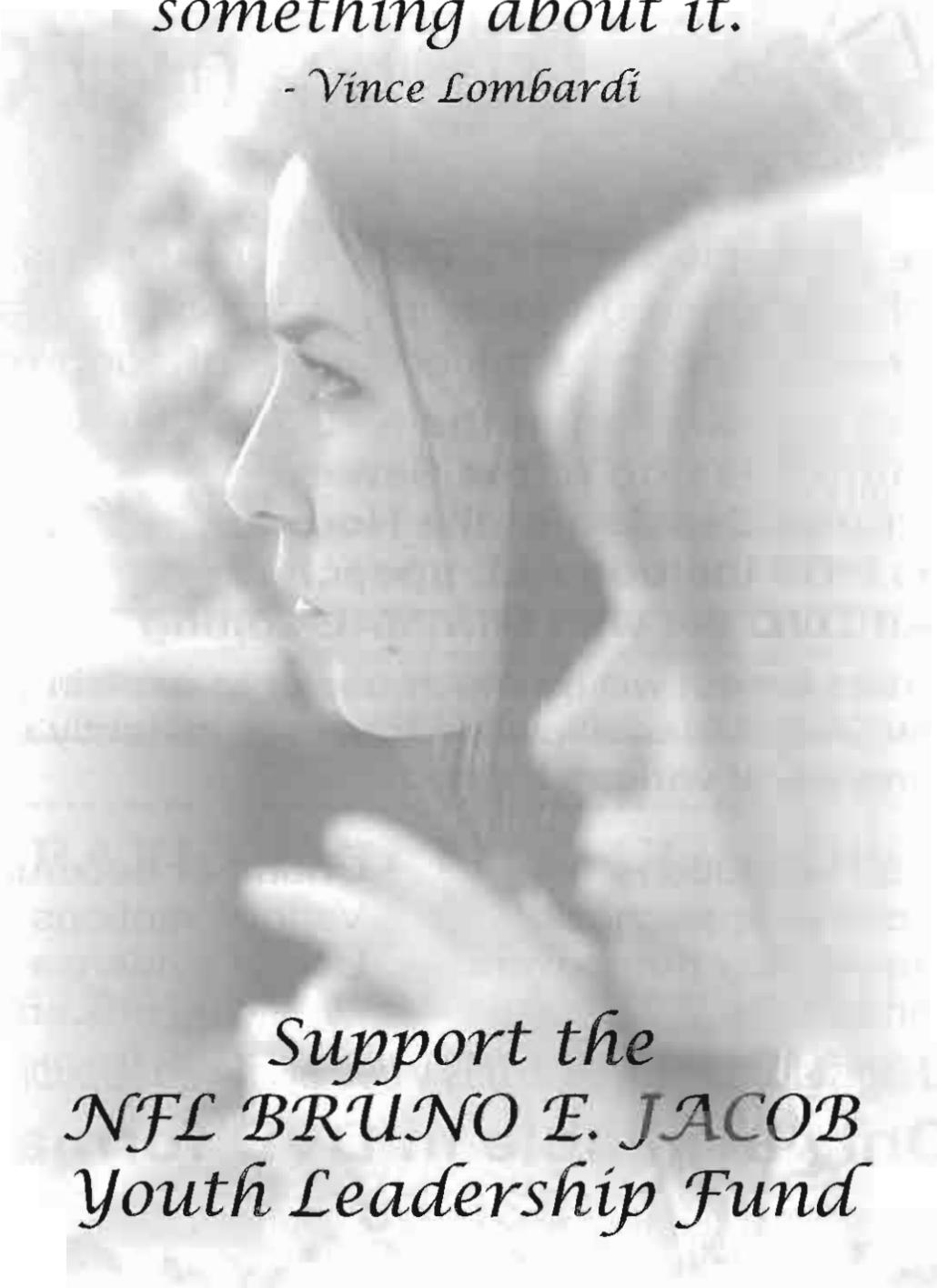
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# FORENSICS AND COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

BY  
MINH A. LUONG

The following is an article that originally appeared in the November 2000 issue of *Rostrum*. Because we feel that this article is so valuable to the forensic community, we have chosen to reprint it.

Although *NFL* first published this article in 2000, Professor Luong's observation remains true today; high-achieving students increasingly participate in a large number of extracurricular activities, only to discover that this approach is far less effective in gaining admission to top schools. By demonstrating how committed involvement in a single activity, especially forensics, can increase a student's odds of college admission, Professor Luong provides invaluable guidance for college-bound competitors and their coaches. At this time of year, as college applications are going out and early admission decisions are being rendered, such advice is uniquely timely and significant.

For nearly all high school seniors involved in forensics, this is a very busy time of the year. Between coursework, tournament preparation, and college applications, there is little precious time for much else. I began this academic year with a dozen email requests from former students for letters of recommendation and every week I receive several more. When I was a high school instructor, I wrote over twenty letters of recommendation every fall and compared to my colleagues who taught in public high schools, my commitment represented a relatively light load. Nearly every request for a recommendation that I receive is accompanied by a long list of extracurricular activities, community service projects, club memberships, and a transcript. Unfortunately, nearly all high school students make the erroneous assumption that participation in more activities is better than fewer and in an increasingly complex world that demands in-depth knowledge and expertise in a chosen field of student, colleges and universities are now preferring applications who choose to be the best at a single pursuit. "What counts," says Swarthmore College Dean of Admission Robin Mamlet, "is how committed students are to an activity."

Extracurricular activities like forensics are playing an increasingly important role in the college admission as well as the scholarship awarding processes. Why? Grade inflation is rampant in both public and private secondary schools and test preparation programs are distorting the reliability of national standardized tests like the SAT and ACT. According to the *Wall Street Journal* (Interactive Edition, April 16, 1999), college admissions directors are relying less on grade point averages and standardized test scores, and are relying more on success in academically-related extracurricular activities such as speech and debate as well as drama. Successful applicants to top schools still need to demonstrate academic success in their coursework as well as perform well on standardized tests, but the days of a 4.0 GPA and 1600 SAT score guaranteeing admission into a top school are gone. In 1998, Harvard University rejected over 50% of its applicants with perfect Scholastic Aptitude Test scores and 80% who were valedictorians. Private and public institutions of higher learning, facing the reality of needing to train graduates for a global economy, are selecting applicants who can not only perform well academically but can also set themselves to an endeavor and succeed in extracurricular activities. After all, college students must select a major that concentrates on a particular field of study; why not select the students who have demonstrated success with that type of focus and dedication?

Colleges now acknowledge, based on years of experience, that students who demonstrate success in extracurricular activities which give them real-world skills like critical thinking, oral and written communication, and the ability to organize ideas and present them effectively perform better in college and turn out to be successful alumni who give back generously to their alma mater. What does this mean? According to Lee Stetson, Dean of Admissions at the University of Pennsylvania, "We realized that one of the better predictors of success is the ability to dedicate oneself to a task and do it well." But according to the *Wall Street Journal*'s recent study of top universities and ten years of applicant, admission, and scholarship data, "not all extracurricular activities are created equal." Two of the surprising findings were that participation in some of the more common sports in high school athletics, soccer, basketball, volleyball, horseback riding, skating, and baseball, did very little for applicants. Unless these students win state or national awards, there does not appear to be any significant benefit from participation in these activities. Second, the *Wall Street Journal* study noted that "although community service has been widely touted over the past decade as crucial to college admission, our numbers suggest it matters much less than you might expect."

The *Wall Street Journal* report did specifically highlight a "consistent trend" – one that forensic coaches have known for a long time – that dedicated participation in drama and debate has significantly increased the success rate of college applicants at all schools which track such data. State and national award winners have a 22% to 30% higher acceptance rate at top tier college and being captain of the debate team "improved an applicant's chances by more than 60% compared with the rest of the pool," according to the report. This is significantly better than other extracurricular activities that tend to recruit from the same pool of students as forensic teams such as school newspaper reporter (+3%), sports team captain (+5%), class president (+5%), and band (+3). Even without winning major awards, participation in speech and debate develops valuable skills that colleges are seeking out and that is reflected in the above average acceptance rate (4%). Colleges and universities today are looking for articulate thinkers and communicators who will become active citizens and leaders for tomorrow.

The National Forensic League, with its mission of "Training Youth for Leadership," is one of handful of national high school organizations which leading colleges use as a "barometer of success."

**BY****MINH A. LUONG**

Qualification to NFL Nationals is viewed as a considerable accomplishment with late elimination round success being even more noteworthy. The fact that the NFL is also seen as the national high school debate honor society is even more significant, with the higher degrees of membership and NFL Academic All-American status carrying more weight than ever in college admissions reviews. Schools that are not NFL members are literally cheating their students of the opportunity to receive credit for their training and accomplishments, and those students are at a disadvantage when they apply for college compared to other students who have distinguished themselves as NFL members. The key here is that real-world communication skills must be developed at the league and district levels, which selects qualifiers to NFL Nationals. Superior communication and persuasive skills are essential for success in both the college classroom and professional life.

As a former policy and Lincoln-Douglas debater as well as student congress and individual events competitor, I appreciate the different skill sets that each event emphasizes, as well as the shared lessons on research methods and critical thinking skills. As a college professor, I note that my top students are most often former high school debaters who actively participate in class discussion and articulate persuasive arguments both in class and on written assignments. The Ethics, Politics, and Economics (EP & E) major at Yale College is an elite course of student which requires special application prior to the junior year to be admitted into the program. It is often known as the "debate major" because it attracts some of the brightest undergraduates at Yale and most of the students in the program are former high school debaters and/or members of the Yale debating team. It is no surprise that many of my students are entering their senior year of college with employment offers already in hand and quite a few of them already own their own companies. One of my graduating seniors, who is in the process of taking his company public, told me that his debate experience was a critical factor in persuading investors to support his business venture.

As a corporate advisor, I see the skills developed in forensics paying rich dividends as I work with talented managers at client companies and on teams with other consultants. Over the years, I have had discussions with many senior executives and managers, nearly all of whom identify effective communication, persuasion, and leadership skills as "absolutely essential" for success and advancement in their respective organizations. Many of these successful business executives, government leaders, and non-profit directors do not directly attribute their graduate degrees to their own achievements but rather they point to the life skills and work ethic learned in high school speech and debate that started them down the road to success. One vice president told me that "my Ivy-League MBA got me my first job here, but my forensics experience gave me the tools to be effective which allowed me to be promoted into my present position."

From someone who is active in both the academic and professional realms, I have some advice for high school students (and their parents) who are interested in pursuing their studies at a top college or university:

First, select an activity based on what you need to develop as a person, not necessarily what might look good on a college application or what your friends are doing. Consider the many benefits derived from participation in speech and debate that can help develop both personal and professional skills.

Second, parents should assist their children in selecting an activity as early in their high school career as possible, but they must support them for the right reasons. Living vicariously through your children or forcing your children into an activity that is intended primarily to impress friends and college admissions directors will not yield the intended results.

Third, pursue your selected activity with true passion and seek to be the very best to the outer limits of your abilities. In the case of speech and debate, it will most likely mean focusing on improving your oral and written communication skills as well as your critical thinking skills. It also means working with your coach as much as possible and even seeking additional training and practice during the summer.

Fourth, document your successes and what you have learned. Many colleges will accept portfolios of work where you can demonstrate your intellectual development and progress. Do not merely list on your college application form the forensic awards that you have won but discuss in your personal statement or essay how you have developed your intellectual curiosity and enhance your ability to pursue your academic interest through participation in forensics. How has dedication in forensics made you a better person ready to pursue more advanced intellectual and professional challenges?

Finally, keep in mind that colleges have a mission to train future active citizens and leaders. Concentrate on enhancing your passion for speech and debate by developing your communication, work ethic, time management, networking, and social as well as professional skills as your primary objectives. If you develop your abilities in these areas first, competitive success will inevitably follow.

The world is changing rapidly and there is an ever-competitive global economy in which we as Americans will have to compete. In my opinion, there is no better activity that will develop essential academic, professional, and life skills than dedicated involvement in speech and debate. Colleges and employers are actively seeking these skills and when it comes to selecting extra-curricular activities, like many other things in life, those savvy high school students who will win admission to the best schools will select quality over quantity.

**MINHA. LUONG** is a faculty member at the Yale School of Management, Assistant Director of International Security Studies, and Director of the Ivy Scholars Program, Yale University's summer academic training and outreach program for outstanding high school leaders. Professor Luong continues to be active in the high school forensic community. He can be reached at <minh.a.luong@yale.edu>.

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# MEET THE NFL

**IN APPRECIATION AND RECOGNITION OF OUR DEDICATED DISTRICT CHAIRS, THE NFL WILL BE FEATURING SOME OF THE LEAGUE'S OUTSTANDING LEADERS EACH MONTH. LOOK FOR YOUR DISTRICT CHAIR IN UPCOMING ISSUES AND TELL THEM HOW MUCH YOU APPRECIATE THEM.**



David Matley, San Fran Bay

While David Matley has spent the last 19 years coaching, this year he will begin his journey as Chair of the San Fran Bay District. This triple diamond coach has produced nine state champions and two National Champions and earned the 2002-2003 Golden Gate Speech Association Coach of the Year. Currently coaching at Monte Vista HS in Danville, CA, Mr. Matley hopes to increase District involvement above all. Matley's goals for the San Fran Bay District include to bring more schools and students on board as well as to bring more coaches in the process of preparing for the District Tournament. When he's not at a forensics tournament, Matley enjoys backpacking, book collecting, and traveling. While his team motto is "Never say die," Mr. Matley's favorite forensic tip is simple: smile.

Bro. George R. Zehnle, S.M., New York City

While Bro. George Zehnle has been coaching forensics for the past 42 years at Chaminade HS in NYC, did you know that he is also a carpenter? This past summer he worked alongside union carpenters and students constructing his school's new Athletic-Activities Center. When he's not adding impressive additions to his school's architecture, he's adding impressive new degrees and goals to the New York City District where he has served as Chair for the past 16 years. Bro. Zehnle and the New York City District reached 400 new degrees last year and earned an additional qualifier in each event (IE and Debate). Bro. Zehnle hopes to do the same this year. He has received several Gold awards for District Chairs, been inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame, and earned six diamonds as a coach. His favorite forensic tip is simply to remember the audience. "That is most important for anyone in competition. It does no good to criticize the judges for a bad score; the speaker or debater has to win over EVERY judge. No complaining, just keep working hard."



Mario Herrera, Georgia Northern Mountain

Having been an NFL member since 1982, this year marks a first for Mr. Herrera as he begins his District leadership of Georgia Northern Mountain. Currently coaching at Henry W. Grady HS in Atlanta, GA, Mr. Herrera has coached for the past 15 years. He has won New Mexico Speech Coach of the Year three times, New Mexico Debate Coach of the Year, and the UDL Coach of the Year in Atlanta. When he's not at a tournament or working with a show choir (which he's done for the past 20 years), Mr. Herrera enjoys reading, going to concerts, and being outdoors. Even though this is his first year as chair, his goals are that of a born leader. "I think the most significant goal for the district is to help create a sense of community. Schools have different strengths and needs in regards to speech and debate, but the one common thread that binds us together is the desire to help students achieve success. Additionally, motivating schools to achieve necessary chapter points to move from affiliate to chapter is equally significant; whether we philosophically agree with the rationale or not, all within the district realize our strength is judged by numbers."



# DISTRICT CHAIRS

## Lois Pierson, Sunflower

Having just finished up hosting duties at the 2007 Kansas Nationals, Ms. Pierson is still pressing onward with her goals as District Chair to increase membership within each chapter and increase awareness in the Wichita community of the benefits of debate and competitive speech activities. *"I love Ed Macauley's quotation: 'When you are not practicing, remember, someone is practicing, and when you meet him, he will win.' It's a great reminder to students that they can never rest on their laurels."* Serving in her 10th year as District Chair and her 33rd year as coach, Ms. Pierson certainly has a grasp of how to motivate her team and other teams in the District. She inspires her team so much, they actually have two mottos for motivation: "Reaching for the Stars" - giving Starbursts to each student that breaks at a tournament and (just for this year) "Dream big! Dream Vegas!" - a take-off on the District moto "Dream Big, Dream Valley." When she's not teaching, coaching, or leading a District, Ms. Pierson loves musical theatre, antiquing with friends, gardening, and playing with her two cats, Trouble and Tom.



## Lynne Gervais, Sagebrush

Leading the Fernley HS forensics team in Nevada with the motto, "Speak Free, Debate Hard," Ms. Gervais certainly is primed to do a fantastic job in her first year as Chair of the Sagebrush District. Ms. Gervais has extensive goals for 2007-2008 school year, which will focus on better retention of the current coaches in the District. She has been coaching for the past seven years and enjoys sending students into other teachers' classes to practice before tournaments. When she's not busying herself with forensics, she is spending time with her family, teaching, frequenting garage sales or having a good laugh through her love of comedy. We wish Ms. Gervais luck as she begins her leadership in the Sagebrush District!

## Steve Meadows, Kentucky

Even though Steve Meadows, Director of Forensics at Danville HS in Danville, KY, is pleased with the efforts of the NFL Regional Office at Western Kentucky University, he still has big District goals for this upcoming year. Meadows would love to see a larger field at the District Tournament, continued support of the new schools in the District, and a continued increase in NFL participation in the state of Kentucky. Mr. Meadows' accolades include 2003 Best Chair Communications for NFL; National Federation of High Schools Speech, Debate, and Theatre Teacher of the Year 2002 for Kentucky and also for Region 2, a collection of eight states surrounding and including Kentucky. A testament to his leadership skills, Mr. Meadows leads the Danville team with the motto, "There is no try." When he's not at a tournament or coaching, Mr. Meadows enjoys community theatre and reading.





# TOO MANY DOGS AND NOT ENOUGH BONES

## BUILDING THE BEST DISTRICT TOURNAMENT

By Rev. B. A. Gregg

### PART TWO: BUILDING A CHAMPIONSHIP THAT SPREADS THE WEALTH

In the previous article, we discussed the impediments to the District Tournament. There is not a District in the nation that can look at its final analysis of the tournament and not say that they could see more schools and more entries than actually come. As laid out previously, the District Tournament can best be described as too many dogs and not enough bones – arcane rules, limited awards, stiff competition. As District Chairs and members of District Committees, we need to examine how we can build a better District Tournament. This article does not even presume to plumb the depths of this issue. Some of the solutions are transportable, some adaptable, and some may not apply. In this article, we want to explore how to increase the excitement of the tournament, itself.

#### Tenet Two:

#### Building a Championship that Spreads the Wealth

When the wonderful ladies in Ripon send us the boxes in January for our district tournaments, we have all the necessary components to run the tournament... ballots, forms, cards, qualifier plaques, and a district sweepstakes plaque. But this box comes nowhere near the necessary components to creating a district tournament that moves beyond average and spreads the wealth.

#### What's in a name?

Unfortunately, quite a lot. When we refer to the District Tournament and try to sell it to our coaches, we underplay the importance of the national qualifier. In Virginia, there are somewhere near 40 small district tournaments in the Virginia High School League. These district tournaments usually see between 4-7 tournaments and occur in the afternoon. These district tournaments are only the first step before the regional tournaments that lead

to VHSL States. So, when we are trying to push the NFL District Tournament to coaches, competitors, and the administrators who sign off on the bill, the name works against us.

For that reason, let's examine changing the name. We have experimented with a number of names – the Virginia Tournament of Champions, the NFL Qualifier, but have finally settled on the Virginia Forensics League State Championship and National Qualifier. Because our district embraces the entire state of Virginia, this descriptor works well. For states with multiple NFL districts, an examination of repackaging is needed. Sectionals? Regionals? All are possible, depending on the situation in your state. But, no matter what, the name of the NFL District Tournament needs to emphasize the importance, the excitement, and keep the end-goal of NFL Nationals in sight, but not in forefront. When we examine repackaging the name, we start to sell the tournament toward those schools who have no intention of attending NFL Nationals due to costs, timing, or commitment level. These schools, however, are essential to building the NFL at the local level, integrating these schools into the District as a whole, and balancing out the tournament with both competitors and judges.

#### Creating a Championship Atmosphere

In order to build the excitement surrounding the District Tournament, we need to examine how we can create an atmosphere that underlines the importance of the tournament. First, we should view the District Tournament as a prelude to NFL Nationals. Competitor ribbons, coach name tags, and important giveaways in the registration packet help. But what helps create a championship atmosphere is, in short, the atmosphere. We are in high schools throughout the year and high schools do offer easy access. But when it comes to engender-

ing a Championship atmosphere, nothing says championship better than a college campus.

In the last number of years, through cooperation with Dr. Peter Pober and the George Mason University Forensics Team, we have been blessed with having GMU as our host. The hospitality, professionalism, and dedication to students found in Dr. Pober and his team has really transformed our national qualifier into a tournament that students look forward to and get an additional burst of adrenaline when they arrive on campus.

Through developing relationships with the colleges in our districts, we open our options for hosting beyond the high school. Additionally, by hosting at college campuses, we position ourselves closer to a hired judge pool. Of course, we need to be careful in placement of college students in the judge pool, as many students are only a year out of high school. Consideration for lock-outs and conflicts of interest need to be taken into account. More, in order to create a representative judge pool for our districts, having three or even two college judges on a panel will slant the results to be non-indicative of the judging found in the District. However, though college judges need to be paneled judiciously, they offer the necessary lubricant to a locked-out judge pool and can bring a breath of fresh air into the competition.

Finally, through offering the national qualifier on a college campus, we open our selves to a great deal of resources not found in a high school setting. First, admissions offices are always replete with the necessary do-dads and memorabilia high school students love. Second, there are always hotels nearby that are used to offering competitive rates for lodging. And, finally, through building cooperative bonds with college forensics programs, we strengthen the college teams.

by Rev. B. A. Gregg

## Spreading the Wealth

In the aforementioned box, we have a sufficient number of plaques for all the national qualifiers and one plaque for the school that has the best 15 entries. Here we see the essential problem of the district tournament – only one school comes away with the plaque. Only one of four competitors, or two of 12, or three of 38 competitors come away with a plaque. For the rest of the schools, they had an educational experience and came close in varying degrees. No feeling is worse than leaving a tournament with nothing. No tournament engenders less support than one that has a limited number of trophies. No administrator ever feels pumped-up when we return from a tournament with nothing more than an educational experience. In order to help create a championship atmosphere, when we configure our awards to encourage schools, we come that much closer to creating that championship atmosphere.

First, in looking at competitor awards, we need to rethink the tournament to function along the lines of every other tournament. We have happened upon the happy medium of modest trophies for finalists and medals for semifinalist. Through ordering in bulk online, we can purchase nice looking trophies for less than five dollars. Medals can also be purchased in bulk to cut costs. For our trophies, they all say one thing: Virginia Forensics League State Finalist. The medals are blank. Besides keeping the costs low, having interchangeable awards streamlines the awards ceremony process and we don't have to worry about figuring out placings onsite of 7-14.

Second, we need to look at school awards in the various events. Through sponsorships of various colleges and community organizations, we have been able to purchase three awards for each event: Congress, Public Forum Debate, Policy Debate, Lincoln Douglas Debate, and Speech. By naming awards, for example, the University of Virginia Award for Excellence in Speech, we are able to give schools recognition for their success in the various components of the national qualifier. In figuring out the various sweepstakes, we evaluate how many rounds the competitors

for each school went and then rank each individual component. For Congress, we factored in the number of speeches given and then ranked the schools.

Third, we need to look at rewarding schools, no matter the size. Though the District Plaque rewards the top 15 entries, many schools and every small school will never even come close to this award. For this reason, we have added three additional sweepstakes trophies for each division of Large, Mid-Sized, and Small schools. The first year we implemented these size-sensitive sweepstakes, we based the rubric on the number of competitors registered. However, as some schools were restricting their entries so that they could compete in a lower bracket, we changed the rubric based on the total number of degrees on record. Once registrations were complete, we divide the schools equally between the divisions. In figuring grand sweepstakes points, we take into account each round competed and each speech given in congress. Through configuring our grand sweepstakes by taking into account Congress, we have encouraged Congress entries with schools who do not usually compete in Congress and have brought Congress on parity with the other events.

Finally, we added an Emerging Schools Sweepstakes for schools who attend their first NFL qualifier. These emerging schools are essential customers for each district. Based on their success at this tournament, we determine the likelihood that they will attend the next national qualifier. The three Emerging Schools trophies are all the same size, but the top school has a traveling base with the names of all the previous Emerging Schools placed on a plaque. There is no greater excitement for a school attending its first NFL qualifier and coming back with a four-foot trophy to place on the principal's desk.

Through repackaging the District Tournament into a championship tournament that spreads the wealth, we can give our coaches and competitors a tournament that they look forward to, a tournament they enjoy, and a tournament they plan to attend the next year.

In the next article, we will examine how to build a tournament that you would want to attend.

(Rev. B. A. Gregg is the Director of Forensics at Randolph-Macon Academy in Front Royal, Virginia. In 2006, he received the Best New District Chair Award and is the holder of eight NFL Service Plaques. He is the chair of the NFL Mid-Atlantic District, the nation's largest district.)

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# DEFINING CRITICAL FORENSICS

## ENGAGED LEARNING

By Justin Rodriguez

At the 2005 World Schools Debating Championships I had a great conversation with the coach of the Scottish team. I initiated it because I had seen him debate in the final round of the Oxford IV in 1998 when he was representing Edinburgh. I had been really impressed, so I was eager to discuss our national debating styles. Much to my surprise, he approached debate almost completely as a sophist, believing that it was his job to argue whatever he was assigned rather than to take a critical position. Unfortunately, this has been the general tenor of my experience with a lot of very qualified leaders in the debate community. While they generally agree that debate teaches the skills necessary to engage social problems in another time or space, debate is largely viewed as practice or as gamesmanship. The speech community is even more geared in this direction. Oral interpretation is often seen as entertainment, and students who argue through narrative are sometimes accused of adopting the college style. More commonly, they are warned against violating the author's intent.

While some of these views may be accurate, the romantic in me believes that speech and debate empower young people to act immediately. Speaking out is an inherently critical act. As an instructor who guides students through this process and encourages criticism and action, I accept the label, critical pedagogue. So, what is critical pedagogy and how is it manifested in forensics education? There is no one static definition of critical pedagogy. To create one seems a bit contradictory to the nature of criticism. Nonetheless, for the purposes of this essay and streamlining my own pedagogical practices, I will select a few tenets that I find useful in the context of forensics education.

While critical theory can be traced back to the Frankfurt School, critical pedagogy is generally attributed to the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire and his work. Freire worked towards liberating the illiterate masses of his native country through small learning communities. He rejected what he called the traditional "banking" method of education, acknowledging that students are more than vessels who need to be filled with a specific

set of facts. Instead he sought a critical consciousness for his students, in which they began to understand their own ideas and actions as deeply embedded in social and class conditions. In this light, criticism is not only directed outward, but is also introspective.

Most contemporary educators would like to claim that they do not engage in banking, but instead help students realize their potential. Unfortunately, such affectionate intentions are insufficient when terms like potential or success are normatively defined. Many gifted educators silence students daily. Presuming heterosexuality, protecting the hero status of specific historical figures, and privileging the author over the reader are a few of the ways that schooling promotes an unfreedom. Critical pedagogy resists this unfreedom by choosing to liberate and exploring the relationship between teacher and student. Rather than inverting the teacher-student dyad, we break it apart so that all members of an educational community can self-actualize and become empowered individuals. Education is nothing if it does not promote freedom and empower the individuals being schooled as well as those doing the schooling.

Hence, as a primary tenet, critical pedagogy relies on valuing everyone's claim on knowledge. According to bell hooks in *Teaching to Transgress* (1994), Freire's work affirmed that education can only be liberatory when everyone claims knowledge as a field in which we all labor (14). Education has liberating properties, but

they only come to light when the members of an educational community all agree that none of us has more of a stake in knowledge than any other. We all work to create our education and whether we like it or not, we are all affected by one another's epistemological claims. When leaders at the core of a system stake a claim to a specific set of knowledge, they inevitably silence others at the margins. The critical pedagogue resists this silencing at every turn.

Stemming from this general tenet is the notion that the power structure in the class-

room is illusory. In order to de-center or block the potential marginalizing effect of education, teachers must realize that the student also has something to teach and the teacher has something to learn. hooks discusses resisting this binary through narrative,

Sharing experiences and confessional narratives in the classroom helps establish communal commitment to learning. These narrative moments usually are the space where the assumption that we share a common class background and perspective is disrupted. While students may be open to the idea that they do not all come from a common class background, they may still expect that the values of the materially privileged groups will be the class's norm (186).

Allowing space for narrative in the classroom breaks down barriers between all individuals in a learning community. Still, we have to do more than promoting the confession of students to individuals with more power, namely teachers. Confession or narrative sharing ought to be multidirectional. To share our stories is to share who we are and affirm ourselves. Modeling the confession puts the student in a position of power and displays our vulnerability as teachers. It is in these moments when community formation occurs.

The formation of a critical community also relies on the empowerment of the teacher. To empower others, we must first empower ourselves. hooks calls this practice engaged pedagogy. She writes,

Engaged pedagogy is more demanding than conventional critical or feminist pedagogy. For unlike those two teaching practices, it emphasizes well-being. That means that teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students (15).

Critical pedagogy is not only liberating for the students, it also frees the teacher. Rather than constantly being concerned with the individuals in the neatly arranged desks before us, we are also allowed to be concerned with self and we are better teachers for it.

Thus, critical pedagogy contains at

*Speech and debate empower young people to act immediately. Speaking out is an inherently critical act.*

By Justin Rodriguez

least three primary tenets that I find useful to forensics education: (1) we resist the banking method of education and encourage critical consciousness, (2) we affirm everyone's role in knowledge and embrace strategies that counteract the role of centrality, (3) we encourage self actualization or the ability of students and teachers alike to see the world through their own eyes and express what that means. Often, this expression is through narrative.

On face, successful forensics competition seems to contradict these tenets. Champion speakers often play it safe. They do what they are told and strategically assess the desires of an audience. They may even appeal to bias, prejudice, and privilege to win. The best kids are usually dressed in gender appropriate business attire. While daring kids may walk the line, they rarely cross it. And of course, bringing home a trophy demands external recognition of success, often meaning an appeal to the center. Developing a practice of Critical forensics then, must strike a balance between freedom seeking and succumbing to a degree of unfreedom.

Fortunately, this balance is not difficult to strike. One can be critical and successful in forensics simultaneously. First, while forensics tends to reward specific techniques and correspondingly punishes variation, it presents students with a choice. While they may play it safe and collect trophies, some students elect to put art before hardware. Heather Wong, a junior on the 2005-2006 San Marino High School team, made this choice in the 2006 CHSSA Finals in Expository Speaking. Her informative speech was on Hair. Towards the end of her speech, Heather discussed *Locks of Love*, an organization that receives donations of hair mostly from kids for someone with both financial hardship and long-term medical hair loss. In the final round (California's top seven speakers), Heather cut off about eleven inches of her hair to donate to the organization. Heather knew she would be disqualified from the tournament, but elected to publicly demonstrate her commitment to her topic. With one snip (actually it took a bit more than one) she criticized the system she was participating in and ensured that her voice was heard. CHSSA is still in the process of

revising their rules in response to Heather's speech. She sparked a statewide discussion. Heather chose to be critical.

Heather's choice is a clear demonstration of the first tenet outlined above. She researched her topic thoroughly, but did not stop with the mere acquisition of facts. She understood herself as being in a position of privilege, at least in reference to her hair and acted. While Heather may not have an in depth understanding of her social position in relation to larger systems, her actions are evidence of at least a fledgling critical consciousness. On this level, her experience has been remarkably successful.

In another vein, forensics affirms the existence of an equitable learning community that counteracts centrality. On the most basic level, the sheer number of opportunities for voicing creates a diverse environment. Every willing individual is able to find a place in the community. This reality isn't even limited to speaking individuals. A deaf and mute individual managed to advance to the national semi-final round in 2005 by signing his speech with an interpreter. While even such individuals rely on a degree of external recognition, there is also a coming to terms with self that is necessary for successful forensics. Students may choose a format that is best for them and then uniquely interpret it for the purpose of authentic expression.

In oral interpretation events speakers give new meaning to canonized literature or stray from the cannon altogether to present work that has gone unread by most audiences. In this spirit, the critical forensics student doesn't necessarily live by the mantra, "the author is dead", but provides room for a proliferation of meanings. They understand that their voice is as valid or invalid as that of the original author.

Finally, unlike any other activity that I have come across, forensics is about community. Speech and debate students become like family. Granted, the family is often dysfunctional and its members occasionally seem to have little in common other than speech,

but it is family nonetheless. Perhaps it is the teaching of listening skill that accomplishes this. Forensics students are usually trained in how to listen to a performance. They make remarkable audience members because they know what it is like to speak before a hostile group. When an individual actually pauses and listens to people she seemingly has nothing in common with, she begins to discover empathy.

It seems consistent to highlight this with a narrative. Not long ago, I stood behind a man in an East Los Angeles grocery store line. He did not have enough money to pay his bill. I didn't offer him assistance. I doubt he would have taken it. Instead, he had to select

items to return until his bill reached an affordable amount. I thought to myself, "it has been a long time since I have been in that position." For just a moment I felt bad for my mom and her struggles as a single mother with three boys. Then I realized that most of my students have absolutely no idea what such an ordeal would feel like. These are the same kids who on occasion haven't known how to roll down my windows because my car is not equipped with power windows and they've never encountered the manual kind. And that's just it; speech is about empathy. The gifted speaker is able to take a feeling or an event that has never been encountered by their audience and make them understand it. Every speech event has this in common. Similarly, gifted speakers are primed to receive such messages as audience members and revel in it when it occurs. This is perhaps the biggest reason that speech is inherently critical. Regardless of the speaker's disability or ability; regardless of their origin, performance connects them with an audience and in doing so has the potential to mitigate stigma and the harms associated with power.

(Justin J. Rodriguez is a debate coach at San Marino High School, CA. He is a visiting Assistant Professor of Communication Studies, Loyola Marymount University.)

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## IDEA National Junior Forensic League National Tournament

Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky

June 26-29, 2008

The International Tournament of Champions for Parliamentary Debate is an international high school parliamentary debate tournament at Willamette University. Debaters will get to meet and debate students from different regions of the world.

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## IDEA INTERNATIONAL DEBATE AND CITIZEN JOURNALISM INSTITUTE:

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Participants will take college-accredited classes from Debate Coaches and Professors, learn multimedia journalism skills, and participate in educational excursions in the beautiful setting of Duino.

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# FIND IT ONLINE!

Check out the bevy of resources available at [www.nflonline.org](http://www.nflonline.org).



Chances are, you have logged on to the NFL website in the past to enter points or find a topic. Perhaps you took the opportunity to roam around the virtual realm, discovering new elements of the site to improve your NFL experience...or, perhaps you found the information you needed and logged off. Whatever the case may be, you might not know about all of the new resources NFL has incorporated into its website. If this sounds like you, then read on.

## Why Online?

The current push for online resources and programming serves a number of goals. First, it extends NFL access to a larger number of schools. Even if a school is miles from civilization or many dollars from the ability to travel, [nflonline.org](http://nflonline.org) enables that school to engage in NFL activities and stay informed concerning the trends of the community. Most importantly, the redesigned NFL website enables the League to provide a more extensive service. Some might argue that redesigning a website essentially repackages the same product; in this case, the updated NFL site marks the launch of a new, more comprehensive set of services for the forensic community. In addition to the information and resources that were previously available, we have added things like an online chat feature, job postings, warm-ups and lesson plans, all to facilitate the efforts of NFL members. To put it plainly, the NFL aspires to provide service to the forensic community.

## Informing and Engaging

Primarily, [nflonline.org](http://nflonline.org) should inform and engage members. This takes many forms; a team may need "official" information such as topics or tournament information, available under the *Resources* tab. Members may also need to access information about students, coaches, or schools, available under *Resources/Membership Reports*. League manuals, event descriptions, and the mission/vision statement are all available online (see *About the NFL*).

Members may also want to investigate information and opportunities that go beyond the routine. For example, members can research current sponsors and partner projects by clicking on the *Partners*, located on the main navigation bar. NFL encourages students and teachers to learn about the organizations that support this organization; more specifically, members should investigate opportunities for scholarships and national acclaim afforded by many Partners of the League. Beyond partnerships, administrative items such as council minutes, National Tournament reports, and even the postal report are available online under *Press/Rostrum*. If a member still has a question, the website also provides contact information for Executive Council Members (see *About the NFL/Contact*) District Chairs (see *Districts/District Contacts*) and National Office Staff (*About the NFL/Contact*).

Additionally, the NFL website is designed to engage users, most notably in the Community section. Here members will find access to community forums, a place where registered users of the NFL community can voice their opinions or concerns on matters pertaining to speech and debate. Teachers, coaches, and students can also connect with the forensic community by participating in one of a number of online chats hosted by NFL. The schedule for upcoming chats, as well as all archived chats, are available by going to *Community*, then selecting *Online Chat* from the red side bar on the left. Archived chats and the chat schedule can also be retrieved by clicking *Live Chat* on the Main Page.

## Communication is a Two-way Street

While [nflonline.org](http://nflonline.org) should be both informative and engaging, communication is a two-way street. In this vein, the website provides a way for members to communicate with NFL more effectively. The most obvious instance of this involves the *Points Application*; after all, going online to enter points is far easier than tracking them by hand and snail-mailing them. To enter points, click the *Points Application* tab on the homepage, just right of the main navigation bar. Less obviously but equally importantly, [nflonline.org](http://nflonline.org) features a feedback form, available by clicking *About the NFL*, then the *Contact* link (on the far right). Please feel free to make frequent use of this form; feedback is critical to the continuing success of our organization.

In keeping with the service theme of this issue of *Rostrum*, consider that engaging in the online community can provide a unique avenue for making a difference; by learning about features of [nflonline.org](http://nflonline.org) and offering feedback, you can further the mission of NFL to train youth for leadership. Maybe you need official information, maybe you are looking for supplemental resources, or maybe you want to exercise your voice in the forensic community. Whatever your reason for logging on to NFL's virtual realm, we hope that you will take time to investigate the new additions and improvements to [nflonline.org](http://nflonline.org).

# Still feeling like a stranger on the website?

This list of things to do on nflonline.org will have you navigating like a pro in no time:

- 1. Warm-ups and lesson plans.** Whether you are looking for warm-up drills to prepare your team for competition or materials to complement your classroom instruction, NFL has resources to help you; just go to *Resources/Teaching Resources*.
- 2. Current topics.** NFL posts all current debate topics on its website for easy access. To see the topics, simply go to *Resources/Current Topics*.
- 3. Frequently asked questions.** If you are new to NFL or in need of a quick answer, try the frequently asked questions page. Simply go *Resources*, then click *FAQ*.
- 4. The NFL store.** For the latest NFL merchandise including apparel, awards, pins, supplies, and gifts, go to the NFL store, available by clicking *Store* on the main navigation bar.
- 5. Job postings.** Schools across the country are in need of forensic coaches and educators. If you are looking to make a move professionally or geographically (or both), please investigate *Job Postings*, available under *Resources/Employment*.
- 6. Archived chats and the upcoming November chat schedule.** Thanks to the expertise of NFL coaches and staff, a wealth of resources is available by accessing online and archived chats. To access this valuable insight, go to *Live Chat* (red button on the right), or to *Community/Online Chat*.
- 7. Online forums.** If you are curious about the opinions of NFL community members or if you have something to say, let your voice be heard with the online forum feature. To access the online forum, go to *Community* and log in, then click *Forum*.
- 8. NFL records.** Many NFL records are available online. To access student, coach, or school records, go to *Resources/Membership* reports.
- 9. Blogs.** Whether you are curious about the opinions of forensic colleagues or you simply want creative space to express your own thoughts, the blog feature will appeal to you. To access blogs, log in to the *Community* section of the website, click *blogs*, then my *blog posts*.
- 10. NFL Coach Guide.** This resource explains NFL step-by-step, including information about points, district tournaments, event descriptions, degrees and ranks. To access, go to *Resources/For Coaches* and click *NFL Coach Guide*.
- 11. Featured alumnus.** Our alumni program periodically profiles an NFL alumnus to find out what he/she is doing since competing in NFL. These vignettes may be helpful in recruiting team members or persuading administrators to support a team, or they might be fun pleasure reading. To access alumni profiles, go to *Alumni/Featured Alumnus*.
- 12. National Tournament photo gallery.** Curious about past national champions? Photos of past national champions are available online; just click *Tournaments*, then *Photo Gallery*.
- 13. Scholarships.** NFL maintains a list of scholarship opportunities available at the National Tournament. To access this information, click *Tournaments/Scholarships*.
- 14. Partnership projects.** NFL trains youth for leadership thanks to the support of its online partners, many of who enable opportunities for college scholarships or national recognition. For more information, investigate online partners by following the links under *Partners* on the main page.
- 15. Streaming video.** NFL offers a variety of streaming videos, from National Tournament footage to educational video clips that can be used in your classroom. New videos are added continuously, so be sure to check back periodically for additions to the streaming video library.

# National Forensic League



*Recognition Gifts*

**FOR COACHES AND STUDENTS**

to order online go to [www.nflonline.org/OnlineStore/NFLPinsJewelry](http://www.nflonline.org/OnlineStore/NFLPinsJewelry)



# BE CREATIVE!

By  
Mikendra McCoy

Did you know that you spend 38.5 total days brushing your teeth in a lifetime ... or that America spends 775 million dollars on toothbrushes a year!? Better yet, did you know that 51 million school hours per year are lost because of dental related illnesses? Odd information? Perhaps. Unless ... you can see the connection between the cleaning of teeth and coaching of teens. What? Don't see the similarities? Well, we both have "patients," that would rather be anywhere else but in our chairs. We are always trying to make what comes out of a mouth prettier, and we often find that getting kids to talk in front of large groups is much like "pulling teeth." Okay, truth is that the only thing people fear more than public speaking is the dentist. We must find a way to remove the fears and find the fun and give the breath of life to communication.

## First:

### Always begin with the opener.

"Three Random Facts." As you are taking roll the first day (desperately trying to remember names, since the visual and mental retention of each student is so valued by them) ask them when their name is called to stand and deliver three random facts about themselves. Mind you that they **MUST** be factual. Although initially you are going to get the fact they love the color blue, you must respond with the fact that 63% of Americans claim that the color blue is their favorite color; you need originality, creativity, the secrets that no one else knows. Do they pick their nose when no one is looking? Do they fold or crumple their toilet paper? Something unique. However, for a student to take a risk, you must first demonstrate that it will **NOT** cause them to fall into a coma, and you must go first. I offer the fact that I am made of all plastic; see, I fell asleep at the wheel when I was nineteen and had to have reconstructive surgery on my face, shoulder, and legs... the catch phrase that I use, is "... due to the

fact that my face is fake, I will never be fake with [you] them." See, once someone says something not normal, not fake, not lame ... then others will follow. Promise. Once the ice has been broken, continue the trend of public communication on small levels. Despite the fact that you are actually getting them to be comfortable in front of people, they think that they are just goofing off and having fun.

## Second:

### Ice breaker.

David Letterman's "Top Ten List."

The students take fifteen minutes, or twenty, and generate a list that counts backwards in an area of their interest, from "What not to say on the first date" to "What not to say while driving an ambulance" or "What not to say in a confessional." This gets everyone thinking, gets everyone laughing, but most importantly, gets everyone talking!

## Third:

### Have students create an infomercial.

Create and design an item to be sold, and then make them give a two minute infomercial spot on the "television" known as your class. This is a fun chance for kids to learn how to both mimic what they might have seen on late night television, giving them a sense of security; as well as create something unique and interesting to them.

## Fourth:

### Have students do a history project ... on an object.

Make up a biography for an inanimate object. Despite the fact that it seems a bit odd, the truth is that they will be writing a proverbial original prose and poetry (OPP).

There are a ton of ideas out there waiting to be used in your classrooms; the best ideas however, come from your imagination,



Mikendra McCoy

which admittedly happens in the wee hours of the morning! So good luck in the creation of your perfect introduction speech projects; but, just in case you are still looking for a few more ideas, here are a few I have tried over the years:

- \* Create a children's book
- \* Write a farewell address
- \* Question game
- \* Campfire stories
- \* Create a rap song
- \* Make a music video
- \* Create a class newspaper
- \* Re-tell a fairy tale
- \* Political campaign speech

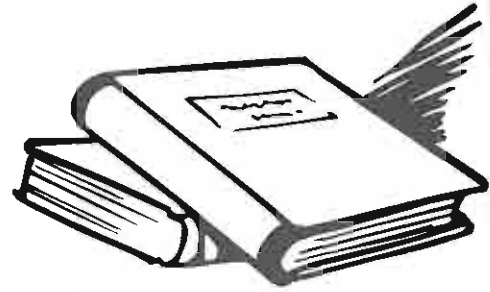
Here is the deal; it is my understanding that the tooth fairy gets paid on average only two dollars a job. That ought to be confirmation that there is at least one job out there making less than we do! So, keep your chin up, continue to shine those pearly whites as your smile makes an environment that others will want to "talk" in!

(Mikendra McCoy is a Double Diamond coach at Clovis East High School. She competed nationally and at the collegiate level in forensics before becoming a coach at Clovis East.) She is also a contributing writer for DebateChamps.com)

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# Chris's Curriculum Guide

by  
Chris Joffrion  
Regional Office Director



I hope everyone enjoyed the first installment of the Curriculum Guide published in last month's issue of the Rostrum. I am eagerly awaiting feedback on the charity support speech. It has always been one of my favorite assignments, and this month I would like to offer up two more amazing assignments. The first assignment is similar to impromptu speaking and is called a reasoned response speech. The wonderful thing about this assignment is that it can be adapted to fit into either a speech or theatre class. The second assignment I will present this month is aimed at assisting teachers in educating their students in the art of research. Research skills are a vital part of what we do as forensicators, but those skills are also highly valuable in other areas of life. Once again, if you have any questions about either of these assignments, please contact me and I will be more than happy to help.

## The Reasoned Response Speech

This speech is very similar to an impromptu speech, except in this instance you are asking the student to assume the role of a very specific speaker, at a precise location, speaking about an explicit issue. This is what makes this assignment a wonderful teaching tool in a variety of classes. Once the detailed speech scenario is disclosed to the student, he or she should be allowed no more than 3 minutes to prepare an appropriate response. The student should then deliver a speech that is between three and five minutes long.

### Rationale:

Strong verbal communication skills are key to future success regardless of an individual's career goals. However, many of the speech assignments incorporated into the speech classroom are dissimilar from the real life situations our students will encounter later in life. The reasoned response speech offers teachers a means for evaluating the ability of students to adapt and respond in situations very similar to those seen in the professional world. For theatre or acting teachers, this improv-based assignment will allow you to evaluate a student's ability to quickly develop a character. The students will then be asked to make decisions on their own with regard to how that character would respond in a particular situation. Thus, the use of the reasoned response speech in an acting class will test a student's ability to create a character and to genuinely portray that character in a certain context.

### Objective:

- To offer students in a public speaking class the opportunity to practice public address in a way that will relate to real world experiences.
- To evaluate a student's ability to think critically and quickly in a short period of time.
- To assess the student's ability to adapt to various audiences.

To evaluate a student's ability to develop and accurately portrait a character in believable manner.

### Preparation:

- Generate a list of speech scenarios. The number of scenarios on the list must at least be equal to the number of students in the class, but five or six more will allow for choice.
- Cut the list so that there is one scenario on each strip of paper and place all them in an envelope
- Generate a speaking order for the students in your class.

**Example Scenarios:**

Speaker: The Mayor of your town

Location: City Hall

Speech topic: Presenting the key to the city to a local celebrity.

Speaker: Manager of a department store

Location: Outside the store

Speech topic: The store has just run out of a very popular new tennis shoe. The crowd is angry and you must control the situation.

**The Assignment:**

1. The speaker will draw three scenarios from the envelope, and within 15 seconds select one on which to speak. The student should place the other two slips back into the envelope.
2. The speaker will have no more than 3 minutes to prepare a speech in which he or she assumes the role of the described speaker and speaks on the provided topic.
3. After 3 minutes of preparation, the student will delivery a speech that is 3 to 5 minutes long.
4. This process is repeated for each student.

## Library Research Assignment

This assignment will function superbly as a conclusion to a unit on research. Once the students have been exposed to all the different places in which they can find information for a speech or debate case, the library research assignment will test their ability to utilize each resource. Additionally, if you time the assignment of this project correctly, it can also be used to jump start the preparation of an upcoming speech assignment.

**Rationale:**

This assignment will reinforce the information presented in a unit on proper research and serve as a practical application of that information. Moreover, this assignment gives the teacher the opportunity to assess the quality of research students are putting into a speech assignment.

**Objective:**

- To evaluate research skills
- To introduce students to the wide variety of resources available in your school library.

**Preparation:**

Preparing for this activity requires very little effort. You may opt to make arrangements with your school library to hold class in the library on the day you would like students to complete the assignment, or you may decided to assign this project as home-work. In this case, visiting the library can be done at their leisure.

**The Assignment:** (the following can be copied and handed out to the students as an assignment guide)

1. Identify a speech topic:
2. Locate an encyclopedia that contains information that may be applicable to your speech. Provide the following information on the encyclopedia article—name of encyclopedia, title of article, volume number, page numbers, name of publisher, location of publication, and date of publication.
3. Find 3 books that could be used to gather information on your speech topic. Provide the title, author, publisher, location of publication, and date of publication for each book.
4. Locate at least three periodical sources (newspaper or magazine) that could be useful in preparing your speech. For each article provide the following information: author, title of the article, source of the article, volume and issue number, and page number.
5. Create a list of at least five direct quotations from the sources found during this exercise that may be used in your speech.

# A ROOKIE'S THOUGHTS ON THE NFHS POLICY TOPIC PROCESS

# NDCA

By Tara Tate, NDCA President

Over the past year, one of the issues that I have been very vocal about as a coach, an NFL District Chair, and as the President of the National Debate Coaches Association is the importance of community input in the National Federation of High Schools policy topic process. We have seen incredible growth in the ability for debate coaches to have more voice in the process, including a vote being given to the NDCA and more state associations opening up the vote to coaches within the state. I was able to attend the summer NFHS topic meeting for the first time this past August in San Diego, CA.

I cannot overestimate how valuable I found this experience to be in my development as a debate coach. Perhaps, what I was most surprised by (and pleasantly so) was how much input and influence coaches at the meeting had on the topic decision-making process. Even as a newcomer, the meeting was an open forum that encouraged individuals to comment on the desirability of the topic and the wording of proposed resolutions. The process is designed to encourage discussion by the attendees.

The topic meeting is comprised of a variety of attendees that have various responsibilities. Each state is invited to send one delegate to serve as the voting delegate for that state. The NFL, the NCFL, and the NDCA are also allowed one voting delegate. Many states and organizations will have numerous attendees representing them that can serve as a larger delegation to advise the voting delegate. In attendance are also members of the Wording Committee, which is chosen by the NFHS to construct resolutions for the topics presented. There are also attendees that have authored topic papers.

The process starts with an opening meeting where the topic papers will be briefly introduced. Generally, the process begins with 10-12 topic papers that were based on ideas generated from the past topic meeting. This year's process began with eight papers, which were emailed to the attendees a month prior to the meeting. Each topic paper author will give a brief synopsis of their area and argue for its desirability as a debatable topic. Attendees are given a chance to ask introductory questions about the papers.

Attendees are then sectioned off into Marshall Committees. Each Marshall Committee is assigned two papers to discuss for sixty minutes. The discussion by each Marshall Committee is headed up by two Wording Committee members. Marshall Committees will have 10-12 attendees that discuss and create poten-

tial resolutions. The suggestions of the Marshall Committee are then presented to the larger group at the ends of the first day.

Day Two is primarily comprised of in-depth discussions by the Wording Committee to create one resolution for each topic area. I found this to be much more engaging and deliberative than I anticipated. The topic author will sit with the members of the Wording Committee and discuss potential wordings. Delegates and attendees that are not on the Wording Committee sit in tables surrounding the Wording Committee and can offer comments or suggestions.

I was intrigued by the number of factors that went in to formulating the wording of each resolution from each topic paper. I knew that issues of grammar and balanced ground for the Affirmative and Negative would be important. Many of the members of the Wording Committee placed a high priority on whether the constructed resolutions remained true to the intent of the author that wrote the topic paper. The timeliness of the area was discussed as well as how the topic could provide ripe areas of research that the high school students had not debated in a while.

One of the most difficult tasks that the Wording Committee must undergo is providing a balanced topic for the very diverse regions and styles of policy debate. The Wording Committee had to balance very divergent interests, such as questions of inherency to questions of Affirmative ground against critical arguments. I was very impressed with the ability of individuals on the Wording Committee to balance the interests and concerns of the different regions of the country and the style of debate they engage in.

What was also intriguing to this newcomer was the reliance on previous knowledge and questions that had been resolved at prior topic meetings. This was the only area that I felt I was behind in as a first-time attendee. I had not been privy to the prior discussions about "substantially" versus "significantly", for example. However, I found the members of the Wording Committee and the experienced delegates very helpful during breaks to fill in some of these holes that I had due to lack of prior experience.

Day Three primarily is comprised of votes being taken to limit down the topics to five resolutions that will appear on the first NFHS ballot. Each state and voting organization has their voting delegate submit their five choices for the ballot – delegates have the op-

# Coaches Corner

portunity to caucus with members of their delegation as each vote is taken. The last piece of business is to take a straw vote to determine potential topic paper areas for the next year's process.

It is hard not to be energized by participating in the NFHS topic meeting. First and foremost, I felt much more educated about the topics when I submitted my ballot for the first round of balloting this October. Being a participant in the weekend long discussions about these topics allowed me to guide more fruitful discussions with my students before we submitted our vote. Second, it was a great way to further collegiality with other coaches in the community. The non-competitive environment made it very easy to network and establish relationships with coaches from all across the country. Finally, I was energized by how much the process relies on input from the participants. I felt my input was welcomed and appreciated.

The 2008 NFHS Policy Topic Meeting will be in Austin, TX in the beginning of August. I encourage all policy debate coaches to find an avenue to participate. Any member of the National Debate Coaches Association can be an attendee as part of our delegation. Even if you can not attend the summer topic meetings, I hope you will take advantage of the multiple avenues you have for casting a ballot for future topics. Submit your ballots to the NFL and NDCA. Contact your state delegate to voice your preferences.

It was clear to me, after my three days in San Diego, CA, this past August, that attendance at the topic meeting is one of the most important ways that I can be an advocate for my program and my students.

(Tara Tate is the director of debate at Glenbrook South High School (IL). She currently serves as the President of the National Debate Coaches Association and is chair of the Northern Illinois NFL District.)

## 2007-2008 FORENSIC CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN PENNSYLVANIA

The School District of Jenkintown is seeking applicants for the following positions:

- Forensic Coach
- Assistant Forensic Coach
- Debate Assistant

Interested persons should contact:  
**Dr. Timothy Wade, Superintendent**  
325 Highland Avenue  
Jenkintown, PA 19046  
EOE

# The Billman Book Club

Encouraging Life Learning in Leadership

In accordance with the vision of coach education, the NFL is proud to present the Billman Book Club. Each issue, NFL employees Tyler & Jenny Billman will review a professional book in Rostrum. Perhaps the reviews will pique your interest and you will be motivated to check the book out in its entirety. If this isn't the case, you can still get a crash course in leadership training, simply by opening the Rostrum.

November's  
Book of the Month:

**The Tipping Point.**  
By Malcom Gladwell



Gladwell explains the  
mechanics of social  
epidemiology; speech coaches  
take note.  
By Jenny & Tyler Billman

It seems so simple; if competitive forensics generates the myriad benefits it claims to promote, then students should be begging for membership. Schools should be clamoring to host NFL chapters. But in many cases, coaches spend their entire first semester recruiting a team. Similarly, NFL devotes considerable time and attention to recruitment efforts. Why?

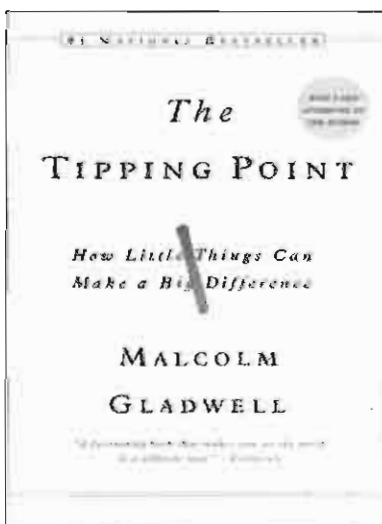
Malcom Gladwell would argue, that "human communication has its own set of very unusual and counterintuitive rules" (2000, p. 258). In this vein, Gladwell has devoted himself to the exploration of the idea that human activity may follow a pattern, but not the one that most people would imagine. In contrast, social trends spread like epidemics – quickly and without warning. His 2000 best-seller, *The Tipping Point*, tries to find the elusive point at which ideas and products tip, exploding into mainstream culture and wild popularity. Reflecting on his findings and musings may enable our community of speech educators, competitors, and aficionados to understand how we can create our own epidemic of speech activity and inclusion. Perhaps some of you have already read *The Tipping Point* (it was, after all, a bestseller). If this is the case, check the applications to forensics and please provide feedback and additional insight. If you have not found the time to read *The Tipping Point*, maybe this taste of it will inspire you to find the time to pick it up and give it a go... or at least, consider the premises he advances.

One of the basic ideas in Gladwell's book is that certain people affect the spread of an idea more than others. How true! Think of how that applies to your forensics team and the arena of high school students in general. One student makes it popular, and the rest is history! However, you, as a coach, could be that spreader that gets an idea to manifest and flourish! He groups

these "idea starting" people into three classifications: connectors, maven, and salesmen. A connector floats seamlessly between different social groups, forging "weak ties" (p. 46) with a diverse group of people. A maven serves as a storehouse of knowledge and an enthusiastic purveyor of that knowledge, the type of person who will diligently read Consumer Reports

before helping you find a new car. Finally, a salesperson is the person who, through personal charisma and charm, could persuade audiences to adapt a new idea as their own. Gladwell argues that concentrated efforts toward these people can cause an epidemic to spread. In this case, starting or growing a speech team may succeed by targeting students in a class which are unusually social (connectors), knowledgeable (mavens), or charismatic (salespeople). According to Gladwell, these students will most likely bring other students to the team. It also seems likely that these students would be more persuasive to judges.

Further, Gladwell contends that it is not enough to learn how to spread ideas, the true test is coming up with a message that will stick with an audience (students, parents, principals, and even school boards). Gladwell argues that messages must be two things: contagious and sticky. A contagious message will be interesting and novel enough to spread to large groups of people. Much like YouTube hits or catch songs, contagious messages require more effort in the construction phase, but generally yield better results upon implementation. A sticky message has staying power, meaning that people will remember it for long periods of time. The best messages are both sticky and contagious. This idea is helpful in recruiting, of course, because it directs the development of recruitment messages that are entertaining (contagious) and powerful (sticky). Equally importantly, this





principle could affect the design of speech events. Messages which generate conversations after the event (such as an especially interesting duo) or resonate with audiences long after the tournament ends (a very moving oratory) are often the most competitively successful.

Gladwell describes a number of cases to illustrate his arguments, from Sesame Street to crime waves and sales trends in the sneaker business, which are definitely worth a read. In the end, though, he concludes with a couple of observations; first, in a world with limited resources, “there are times when we need a convenient shortcut...and that is what Tipping Points, in the end, are all about” (p. 257). While practice and diligent are undeniably important, Gladwell seems to suggest that the little nuances distinguish good programs from great programs, good speeches from national champion speeches. He seems to argue that attention to detail will generate disproportionate results.

Second, he reminds the reader that the truly successful do not just follow their instincts; they also test them. Making minor changes to a program may work wonders...or it may not do anything. The key is to test new ideas. Try taking a potential fundraising idea and first pitching it to your senior members of your forensics team. Because they have been around the high school for four years and have probably done countless fundraisers for other clubs they are in, it is a good chance they will be able to tell you if your fundraising idea is going to (1) sell to the students enough to excite them about raising money for their team and (2) sell to the community. By including these senior members in your brainstorming process two things happen; first, they become more invested in the fundraising process and two, they feel that their opinions matter. According to Gladwell, innovation works best when it is tested.

Finally, he argues that everyone is powerfully affected by his or her context. Whether it is the nature of people around you, such as connectors, mavens, salesmen, or none of the above, or the nature of messages surrounding you (sticky, contagious, both, or none of the above), we are powerfully affected by our environment. Through the lens of a speech world, this implies that fostering an atmosphere of creative development and education will yield students who are committed to creative development.

True, Gladwell doesn't exactly provide a step-by-step list for creating a positive epidemic...more like a field scientist's observations of different trends. Still, by coming to a new understanding of the way that communication works, perhaps we can be better coaches, educators, speakers, even people. Perhaps more importantly, as Gladwell (p. 259) explains, “Tipping Points are a reaffirmation of the potential for changes and the power of intelligent action. Look at the world around you. It may seem like an immovable, implaceable place. It is not. With the slightest push – in just the right place – it can be tipped.”

### Lessons from Gladwell:

**Concept: Certain people can spread ideas more effectively than others.**

*Application:* Targeted emphasis on these people may increase your recruitment efforts. In recruitment, some coaches have simply let kids recruit other kids. The power of your team is best explained to another student by a dedicated member.

**Concept: Contagious and sticky messages generate the most change.**

*Application:* The best speeches (and recruitment materials, and fundraising materials) are both novel and meaningful. Keep improving a message until it meets these qualifications.

**Concept: The best innovators test their ideas.**

*Application:* When you have an idea, try it! Then test it. Talk to friends, relatives, colleagues, captains of your forensics team, even trusted and respected students. Developing discussion about ideas you have may be your best idea yet!

**Concept: Everyone is powerfully affected by his or her context.**

*Application:* Create a team where creativity is rewarded, hard work is valued, and education is preeminent. Facilitating this type of environment, rather than telling students how things should be, can generate powerful positive change—and perhaps a respected positive forensics team in the process.

### Resource:

Gladwell, M. (2000). *The Tipping Point*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.



Tyler & Jenny Billman have coached and competed on the high school and college levels for the past 11 years. Tyler is the Coordinator of NFL Programs and Jenny is the Coordinator of NFL Public Relations and Marketing. They live in Ripon, WI.

*Note: This feature is intended to discuss professional literature for the benefit of NFL members. The views expressed by the authors of books discussed in this column do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Forensic League or its employees. NFL makes no claims concerning the veracity of published material reviewed in this column.*

# *AFFILIATES - WELCOME!*

## **THE NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE NATIONAL SPEECH AND DEBATE HONOR SOCIETY WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW NFL PROGRAMS:**

Susan Moore HS	AL	Sacred Heart Catholic School	MS
Trinity Presbyterian Sch	AL		
Beaver Dam HS	AZ	Pleasant Hill HS	MO
Mohave HS	AZ	Glacier HS	MT
North Pointe Preparatory	AZ	Princeton HS	NJ
Berthoud HS	CO	The Montclair Kimberley Acad	NJ
Palmer HS	CO	Mount Saint Mary HS	NY
Westlake Prep School	FL	The Nightingale-Bamford Sch	NY
Paideia School	GA	Caldwell Academy	NC
Kaiser HS	HI	Challenger Early College HS	NC
Columbia HS	ID	Polk County High	NC
Coeur D'Alene Charter Acad	ID	West Mecklenburg HS	NC
Antioch Community HS	IL	Maumee HS	OH
Farragut Career Academy	IL	Summerville HS	SC
Pleasant Valley HS	IA	Riggs HS	SD
Haughton HS	LA	Kenwood HS	TN
Neville HS	LA	Clear Springs HS	TX
Mt Abram HS	ME	Graham HS	TX
St Anthony Village HS	MN	Longview HS	TX
		Marble Falls HS	TX
		Paradise HS	TX



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