

NFL



Alumni **Connection**



Stepping

Stones

to

Success

Photo provided by StoneOak Landscapes, WI

Volume 1

Issue 2

September 2007



The Schwan Food Company has grown from a one-man, one-truck operation to a global leader in the frozen-food industry. With our commitment to you and your families, we look forward to being part of the success and growth of the NFL for years to come.

The SCHWAN FOOD COMPANY™

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Proud to support

Alumni Connection

Letter from the Executive President



Dear NFL Alumni,

As many of you know the National Forensic League has initiated an exciting and challenging new alumni program to facilitate "keeping in touch" with NFL members who competed in speech and debate throughout the country. This program seeks to involve both recent graduates and those who were members many years ago. Have you ever wondered what ever happened to those people you competed against weekend after weekend? The NFL alumni program will enable you to relive high school tournaments and perhaps even memorable experiences stemming from NFL National Tournaments.

Heidi Christensen, Alumni Relations Coordinator of the NFL office staff in Ripon, has done a truly exemplary job of getting the alumni program off the ground through her dedication and hard work in developing the first alumni publication and bringing to fruition the alumni reception at the Hyatt Hotel last summer in Wichita. In addition to the NFL Alumni program, during the next school year, the NFL will hire a development director to coordinate fundraising for our league.

Sources of alumni information are available through utilization of the following: a) *Alumni Connection* publications b) the *Rostrum*, and c) nflonline.org. Our website has recently been updated, and this method will be the most direct way to learn about the NFL alumni program. Additionally, a myriad of NFL information relating to current initiatives and league activities may be found on the website.

The NFL is a dynamic organization guided by our energetic and creative Executive Director, Scott Wunn, who is particularly interested in our alumni "staying connected." Certainly, I believe that alumni and development should be an ongoing project to secure the future of our organization. Each year we try even harder to meet the NFL goal of "Training Youth for Leadership." Please help us promote and provide opportunities for developing America's future leaders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William W. Tate, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive style.

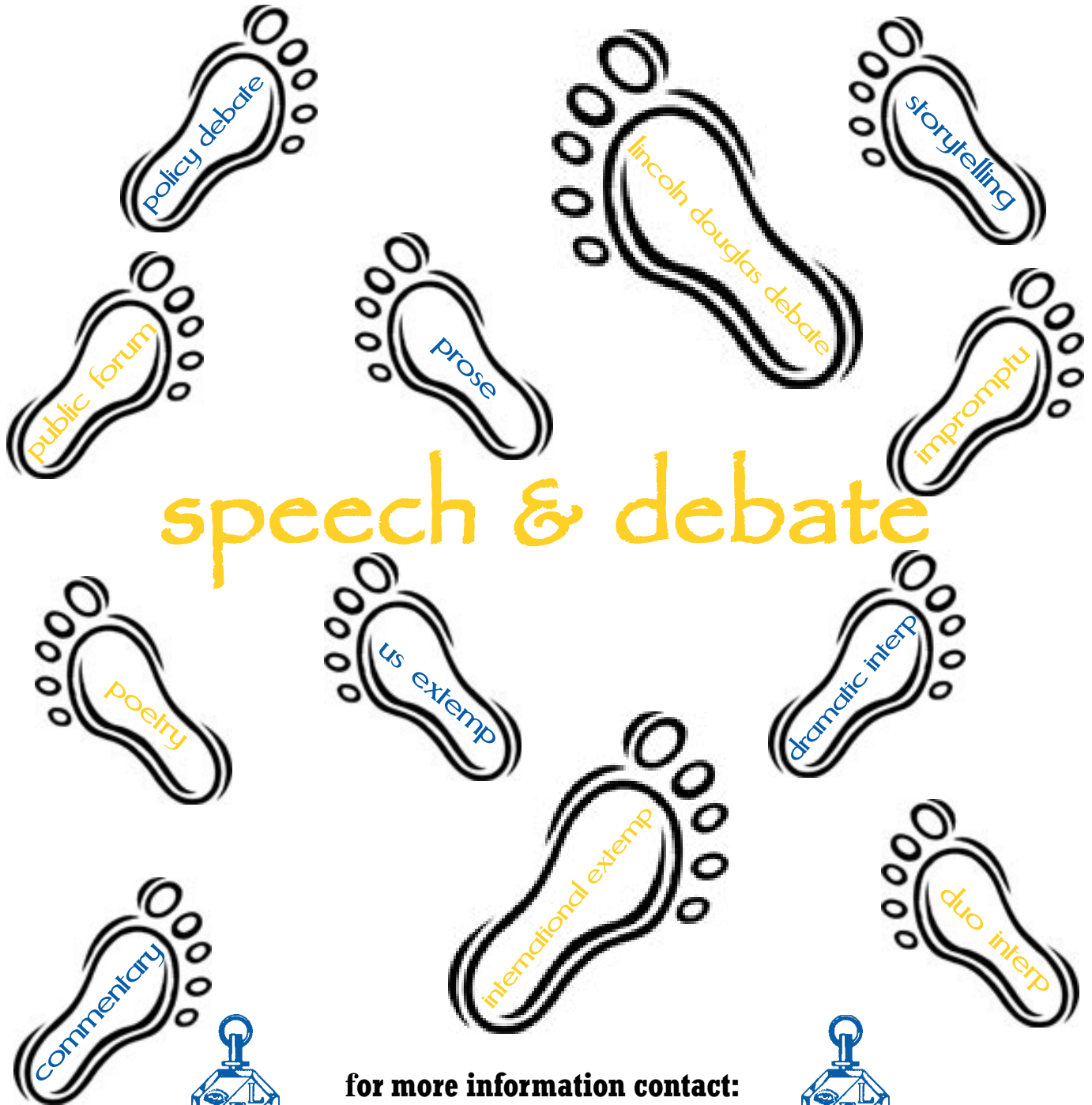
William W. Tate, Jr.
NFL President



TAKE A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Consider Coaching or Judging

Look at the Possibilities!



for more information contact:
Heidi Christensen, Alumni Relations
hschristensen@nflonline.org



Alumni Connection

So, You Want to Start a Debate Program?

By N. Andre' Cossette

The interest in debate or forensics as it is sometimes known, is not surprising! Debate is a competitive academic activity that can bring positive publicity to a school and is a wonderful learning experience for young people. Debate gives so many awards that all a program needs to do is have one student win one trophy, and that program can call itself an “award-winning” team. Usually, administrators and the general public don’t really have a clue about what all of the debate terminology means, so when you announce that one of your students won 1st Place in Novice Expos at the Rookie Rumble, it sounds impressive, even if it’s not really that notable. So, starting a debate program is worthwhile, although risky.

I get requests every year from coaches and students who are interested in beginning debate programs. I’ve often heard that 75% of businesses fail within the first few years, and the failure rate for debate programs is almost as high. Debate programs fail or never even get off the ground for a number of reasons which I will touch upon below. A beginning program needs to have the following to survive:

- Interested Students
- Supportive Parents
- A Coach willing to Learn
- Logistical Support from the Administration
- Financial Support from the Administration

The first two are the easiest. Debate comes naturally to high school students because they like to challenge authority, so they have honed their skills arguing with teachers and parents. Parents love debate because their kid is researching something academic. If you can get debaters on your team who have parents that are school board members, your chances of getting support increase greatly. Debate teams rarely fail for lack of parental or student enthusiasm.

Occasionally, a program will fail because it can’t find a coach. Coaches do not need to have experience with high school or college debate, but it sure helps. All a coach needs to have is a willingness to learn. Unfortunately, debate coaching positions often get foisted upon poor, unsuspecting first-year English teachers who, desperate for a job, agree to just about anything, not knowing that coaching debate eats up entire weekends. The inexperienced coach often feels uncomfortable that his or her students know more than the teacher and is overwhelmed with trying to learn three types of debate, eight different individual events, student congress, and whatever else in which the debaters want to compete. The best advice I have for this coach is to specialize in one forensic activity at a time and let the students fend for themselves in the other types of debate or speech until the coach can catch up to the students’ knowledge. However, the students often become experts in their particular fields, so I find myself learning from them, even after 20 years of coaching.

(continued on page 4)





Alumni Connection

(continued from page 3)

Fellow coaches also can be really helpful. It's also important to get a good textbook (I couldn't find one so I wrote my own. It's called The Art of Debate. Email me at debate@gprep.com if you want copies). A committed rookie coach who can put at least three years into the activity will become invaluable to his or her students.

Debate teams often collapse because the administration doesn't support the program logistically. A debate team needs to have a class that takes place during the school day. Also, the team needs transportation arrangements so the team can get to and from tournaments. Furthermore, debate requires reams of paper, so the administration needs to support the team with photocopy privileges.

The most frequent reason a debate team fails is lack of financial support. The school needs to support the coach with a coaching stipend. Typically, debate coaches make a percentage of the base salary of a teacher. In Washington State, this stipend ranges from \$3,000 to \$12,000. Then, the team needs a budget for supplies and tournament entry fees. Unfortunately, cash-strapped high school programs have resorted to hosting tournaments as fundraisers, perpetuating a vicious money cycle as high schools need more money so they can compete in more tournaments, so they host a tournament to raise money, causing the other schools to host tournaments to raise money so they can afford all of the other tournaments, and so on. Furthermore, colleges use high schools as cash-cows, milking high school debate budgets to raise funds so they can travel. Additionally, unlike sports teams, who can find three referees to cover 100 football players, debaters need more than one judge for every four debaters. Hopefully, the debate team can find parent-volunteers to judge, but if not enough parents are available, the team must hire judges. Thus, it's tough to operate a debate team with a budget of under \$2000. No matter what the excuse a high school administration uses, often the high school just does not want to fund a debate program.

So, if you can find interested students, supportive parents, a committed but not necessarily experienced coach, and most importantly, a supportive administration and a plentiful source of funding, then the debate program will succeed.

(N. Andre' Cossette, triple diamond coach, Gonzaga Prep High School, Washington.)



Mark your calendar!!

▷ June 15-20, 2008 ◁

**2008 Lincoln Financial Group/
NFL Desert Lights Nationals
Las Vegas, Nevada**

MEET NFL DISTRICT CHAIRS

District Chairs and their committees play a vital role in the world of forensics. They wear many hats. The hat of a coach, judge, chauffeur, host of a district tournament, leader in assisting those who want to start an NFL program, designer of NFL forensic training programs and supportive guide/friend, working directly with NFL youth in becoming future leaders of the world. The District Chairs and their committees give countless hours of their personal time. These NFL leaders deserve top recognition for all they give to a program they truly believe in.

A sincere "Thank you!"

2007-2008 NFL District Chairs and the District they represent:

James (Jay) Rye III, Chr, Deep South (AL)	Darrel Harbaugh, Chr, South Kansas	Patricia Sanders, Chr, Western Ohio
Diana Krauss, Chr, Arizona	Steven Wood, Chr, Three Trails (KS)	Linda Shipley, Chr, East Oklahoma
Diane Roza, Chr, Big Valley (CA)	Glen Nelson, Chr, West Kansas	Dr. Elizabeth L. Ballard, Chr, West Oklahoma
Kim Jones, Chr, California Coast	Steve Meadows, Chr, Kentucky	Matthew Ogle, Chr, North Oregon
Rita Prichard, Chr, Capitol Valley (CA)	Cheryl Gilmore, Chr, Louisiana	Robert Moeny, Chr, South Oregon
Derek L. Yuill, Chr, East Los Angeles	Amy Patton Trunnell, Chr, Maine	Janet Robb, Chr, Pennsylvania
David Matley, Chr, San Fran Bay (CA)	Laurel Scheidt, Chr, Michigan	Sharon Volpe, Chr, Pittsburgh
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David Chamberlain, Chr, Southern California	Todd W. Hering, Chr, Central Minnesota	Gail L. Nicholas, Chr, South Carolina
Victor Jih, Chr, West Los Angeles	Kathy Martin, Chr, Northern Lights (MN)	Judy Kroll, Chr, Northern South Dakota
Martha Benham, Chr, Colorado	Christopher McDonald, Chr, Southern Minnesota	Eric Uecker, Chr, Rushmore (SD)
Jim Dornan, Chr, Rocky Mountain North (CO)	Dr. Randy Patterson, Chr, Mississippi	Charles Oakes, Chr, Tennessee
Lowell Sharp, Chr, Rocky Mountain South (CO)	Derick Blankenship, Chr, Carver Truman (MO)	Kandi King, Chr, Central Texas
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Beth Eskin, Chr, Florida Panther	Peter Stein, Chr, Ozark (MO)	Debbie Johnson, Chr, Heart of Texas
Mary A. Schick, Chr, South Florida	Matthew R. Good, Chr, Show Me (MO)	Jimmy Smith, Chr, LBJ (TX)
Bill Gibron, Chr, Florida Sunshine	Libby Brunell, Chr, Montana	Cheryl Potts, Chr, Lone Star (TX)
Mario L. Herrera, Chr, Georgia Northern Mtn	Jennifer M. Jerome, Chr, Nebraska	David Huston, Chr, North Texas Longhorns
Richard Bracknell, Chr, Georgia Southern Peach	Tommy L. Bender, Chr, Nebraska South	Jay Stubbs, Chr, South Texas
Karen Miyakado, Chr, Hawaii	Karen Vaughan, Chr, Golden Desert (NV)	John Lemaster, Chr, Space City (TX)
Michael Harvey, Chr, Idaho	Lynne Gervais, Chr, Sagebrush (NV)	Ann Shofner, Chr, Tall Cotton (TX)
Fred Vogt, Chr, Greater Illinois	Marc Rischitelli, Chr, New England (MA & NH)	Janice Caldwell, Chr, UIL (TX)
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Tara Tate, Chr, Northern Illinois	Michele Lockhart-Henry, Chr, New Mexico	Frank A. Langheinrich, Chr, Great Salt Lake (UT)
Samantha Mc Candless, Chr, Hoosier Heartland (IN)	Tom Downs, Chr, Iroquois (NY)	Alli Martin, Chr, Sundance (UT)
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		Patricia L. Smith, Chr, Wind River (WY)

For detailed contact information, refer to the NFL Website at
www.nflonline.org, "District Information"
<http://www.nflonline.org/DistrictInformation>
(Watch for updated information)

NFL
BRUNO E. JACOB YOUTH LEADERSHIP FUND



“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.”

Please help us provide additional opportunities for our students by donating to the NFL Bruno E. Jacob Youth Leadership Fund

NFL BRUNO E. JACOB
YOUTH LEADERSHIP FUND

One way to ensure many years of future NFL success is to join the the NFL Society of Giving. Your generous commitment to the 93,000 active students of the NFL is greatly appreciated.

SOCIETY OF GIVING

Diamond Donor	\$15,000 or more
Level of Distinction	\$10,000 - \$14,999
Level of Excellence	\$5,000 - \$9,999
Level of Honor	\$1,000 - \$4,999
NFL Founder	\$100 - \$999

NFL BRUNO E. JACOB YOUTH LEADERSHIP FUND

I/We want to support the Bruno E. Jacob NFL Youth Leadership Fund by giving \$ _____

Please direct this gift toward NFL's Greatest Need Program Development
 Student Scholarships Coaching Resources/Development Other _____

This gift is In Memory of/In Honor of _____

- Payment Options:
- Check enclosed payable to NFL Youth Leadership Fund
 - This is a pledge. Payment will be made on or before _____ (date)
 - NFL is in my will
 - My company will match my donation

Be a part of the inaugural family of giving!

Payments can also be made online at www.nflonline.org/gift with credit card or by calling the NFL office at 920-748-6206

Gifts are tax deductible as allowed by law

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What is the vision of the NFL?

The National Forensic League is a 501 (c)(3) not for profit educational honor society that 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. The organization serves as the central agent for coordination and facilitation of heightened public awareness of the value of speech communication skills, development of educational initiatives for student and teacher training, excellence in interscholastic competition and the promotion of honor society ideals.

What is the NFL Bruno E. Jacob Youth Leadership Fund?

The NFL Bruno E. Jacob Youth Leadership Fund is an opportunity for alumni, parents, and all friends of the NFL to contribute to the implementation and achievement of the NFL mission. Your contribution assists the NFL in providing essential tools for an effective speech and debate program. Student and coach scholarship programs, coach/teacher education and workshops, individual school program development, financial support through school grant programming, curriculum development, and regional office development are among the primary uses for the NFL Bruno E. Jacob Youth Leadership Fund.

Why is it so important to donate?

Each year, the NFL sponsors the speech and debate educational activities for over 93,000 students and nearly 6,500 educators at over 3,000 high schools throughout the United States and U.S. territories. Since its founding, the NFL has enrolled over 1,224,095 members. Your gift, regardless of size, is a crucial resource that assists the NFL in making a difference in the lives of all member students and teachers who are so committed to this activity.



Upon your first donation, you will receive an NFL Bruno E. Jacob Society Certificate of Recognition.

Upon your second year of consecutive giving, you will receive a commemorative Bruno E. Jacob Society pin



Questions about giving?

Please contact the NFL national office at 920-748-6206, e-mail us at hschristensen@nflonline.org, or write to us at NFL Bruno E. Jacob Youth Leadership Fund, P.O. Box 38, Ripon, WI 54971

Thank you for helping us provide the best possible opportunities for our 6,500 active coaches and 93,000 speech and debate students!

I am a/an Alumni Coach Parent Friend of the NFL

Name _____ Maiden Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Primary Phone _____
 E-Mail Address _____
 High School Attended _____ State _____ Grad Year _____
 Occupation _____

Yes, I want to be a member of the NFL Alumni Program and receive future mailings

Please return this portion to the NFL office at P.O. Box 38, Ripon, WI 54971

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Footsteps to success



The future of the NFL depends on YOU!



SPECIAL ESTATE BEQUEST

HONORING THE LIFE OF A. C. ELEY



A. C. Eley, known as "Ace" to his legion of friends and former students, created an enviable record in one of the NFL's most competitive states, Kansas. Mr. Eley's passion was in forensics. He was much loved by his students, and he nurtured and relished in watching his students grow into attorneys, business leaders, doctors, politicians, debate coaches and other positions of leadership.

Mr. Eley began his student teaching at Highland Park High School in Topeka, and other teaching opportunities included Colby High School, Topeka High School and Shawnee Mission North. Mr. Eley continued teaching at North High School, Kansas until he retired in 1999. No matter where A. C. Eley taught, his students excelled and qualified for national competition.

In 1994, Mr. Eley was inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame. A. C.'s integrity made him a popular choice to pair the East Kansas NFL district debate tournament and chair the LD debate tab room at the National Tournament.

In addition to his Hall of Fame honors, A. C. was presented the Gold Award during his three years as East Kansas NFL District Chair and was named Outstanding Teacher by the Kansas Speech Communication Association.

A. C. achieved his success coaching at Shawnee Mission - North (KS) where he earned the distinction, Sixth Diamond Coach. At the time Mr. Eley earned his sixth diamond, and at that time, only seven had been awarded during the history of the NFL. Under the direction of Mr. Eley, North earned the Leading Chapter Award in 1967, 1977, and 1990. A. C.'s teams were awarded three District Sweepstakes plaques and three District Sweepstakes trophies. Eighteen North students qualified for Nationals including the 1983 champion in Boys Extemp, a runner-up in Impromptu, a third place winner in Congress, and several semifinalists. "Ace" coached two Kansas State Debate Champions, three Kansas State Extemp Champions, and three Kansas State Duet Acting Champions.

Adrin Carter Eley passed away on June 11, 2006. At the 2007 Kansas Lincoln Financial Group/NFL National tournament, scholarships were presented to winners in U.S. Extemp as bequested in the will of A. C. Eley.

Consider donating to the National Forensic League

All donations are tax deductible

Bruno E. Jacob Society

Levels of Giving

The Bruno E. Jacob levels of giving reflect financial donations and legacy bequests.

Founder
\$100 -
\$999

Honor
\$1,000 -
\$4,999

Excellence
\$5,000 -
\$9,999

Distinction
\$10,000 -
\$14,999

Diamond
\$15,000
or more

Charlie Schachter
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Phyllis Barton
& Family

Ralph E. Carey &
Students
Carmendale Fernandes

H.B. Mitchell Memorial
Sandra Silvers Memorial
L.D. Naegelin
& Students
A. C. Eley Memorial
Richard Sodikow
James M. Copeland
Harold C. Keller

Thank you!

*Your generous donations are helping us to continue
our commitment to "Training Youth for Leadership"*

**If we have accidentally excluded you or you would
like to be part of the Bruno E. Jacob Society,
please contact:**

Heidi Christensen at hschristensen@nflonline.org

or

call 920-748-6206



◆ *Influential Stepping Stones to Success*

NFL's 2007 Hall of Fame Inductees



Lydia Esslinger
New York

*These coaches play
an important role in
"Training Youth
for Leadership"*



Tony Figliola
Pennsylvania

Thank



Mel Olson
Minnesota

you!



Betty Whitlock
Georgia

*Congratulations to
these fine coaches for
their dedicated
commitment to training
our youth!*



Pam Cady Wycoff
Minnesota



Alumni Connection

David May- From On the Stage to “On the Lot”



Recently, I had a coach e-mail me about an NFL Alumnus, David May. David was a former student who was chosen to compete on a Reality TV show titled “On the Lot.” “On the Lot” is a show that gives aspiring filmmakers from around the world the chance to earn a \$1-million development deal at DreamWorks. There were over 12,000 submissions and David May was chosen to compete for the ultimate filmmakers prize.

So, as any good Alumni Coordinator would do—I tuned in. How exciting to watch someone who was once on the stage at Nationals...on national TV! After the entertaining show aired, I was able to find David and he agreed to talk with me about his experiences during high school, after high school, and what he plans to do in the future.

Heidi: David, why don’t you tell me a little bit about your high school experiences being part of the NFL?

David: My freshman year I was very shy and didn’t really get involved with speech at all. Then I found I enjoyed theatre and my friends in theatre were on the speech and debate team. So, I joined the team and started doing some interp. My coach, Mr. Chase, always pushed me to keep going. One thing I hated to do was get up early on Saturdays and give up my weekends, but both Mr. Chase and my mom said “stick it out one year.” So that year, my sophomore year, I placed at Districts and got to go to Nationals. I didn’t make it far, but I made it to the National Tournament. That was the exciting part. After going to Nationals that first year, I knew I was going to “stick it out.” My junior year I placed 14th in humorous interp with “Mr. Big.” I will always remember the person who got first did a piece called “Picasso.” I looked up to him. I realized how much more I could be doing with my pieces and with developing my characters. So then my senior year, I returned to the National Tournament again in humorous interp. I performed “Count Dracula” and earned 2nd place at Nationals. I was thrilled and realized how much I had grown from my freshman year!

Heidi: So, what did you decide to do after high school and how did you get on the show “On the Lot?”

David: After high school, I went to Chapman University for my undergraduate degree in film production. I knew it was the perfect school because it was a “hands-on” environment. What’s really funny is that my orientation tour guide was a guy I met at Nationals and totally looked up to. We’ve been friends ever since. In fact, he played roles in many of my movies that I made for “On the Lot.” So, while I was at Chapman, a group of us got together and started making films and created the Storytellers Society (www.storytellersociety.com). In fact we were awarded a significant scholarship to make a film in Colorado! One of the guys heard that there was a reality show for up and coming producers and so I sent in my films. Luckily I was chosen and made it to the final 12!

Heidi: What did you learn being part of the NFL that helped you succeed in film production?

David: One thing I realized is that in order to be a strong film director/producer you have to be able to have the correct pace and timing. You also have to do that in NFL competition. Making a movie is like popping from character to character. The artistic decisions you make are just like you have to make on stage. So, I really owe many of my skills to what I learned from the speech pieces I performed. Sometimes if there’s a scene that I’m having trouble working out, I will do it as a speech piece until it works itself out!

Heidi: So now what? You have been on Reality TV, what’s next for you?

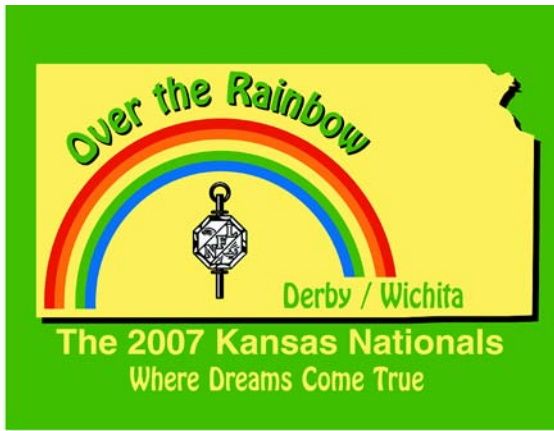
David: I am currently an Admissions Counselor at Chapman University and obtaining my graduate degree in Film Studies. Of course my dream is to work in the entertainment industry. I would love to make movies and get paid for it! I am actively looking for a manager or an agent who wants to work with myself and/or the Storytelling Society. However, if that doesn’t work out, I would like to maybe teach film studies or work at Chapman as the head of Admission for their Film program.

Heidi: What advice would you give to current students, alumni and those who are aspiring film producers?

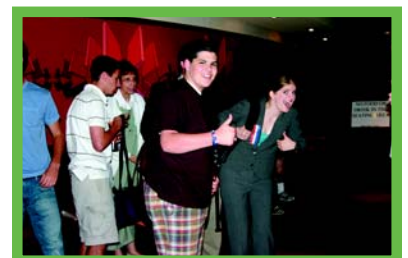
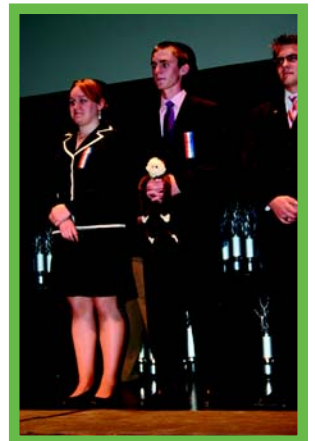
David: Don’t give up! I know it’s hard not to be selfish about your Saturdays, but I know I would not be here today doing what I love if I wouldn’t have been part of the NFL. Sacrifice your time to do what you love to do. I will give the advice my mom and dad gave to me, “It’s okay to be frustrated, but don’t quit. You might be frustrated but you’re learning something from it too!” So I would say stick it out, and go love what you do!

If you want to learn more about David May and his films check out:
<http://www.thelot.com/> and www.storytellersociety.com.





Snapshots From Somewhere Over The Rainbow 2007 Kansas Nationals





**There was
no place
like Kansas**



SENIORS
Welcome to the
NFL
Alumni Connection!

Thank you for Registering
at the
Kansas Nationals
NFL Alumni Connection booth.

Congratulations!!
Drawing Winners

\$500 Scholarship

Kelsey Brykman, Lincoln-Sudbury Regional HS, MA

\$250 Scholarship

Josh Leskar, Nova HS, FL

\$100 Scholarship

Danyon Satterlee, Powell HS, WY

\$50 NFL Merchandise

Caroline Crowley, Danville HS, KY

Setong Mavong, Montgomery HS, CA

Vendors at 2007 Nationals

- Bickel & Brewer
- CDE
- Colorado College
- Communican
- Dale Publishing
- Derby Host Committee
- Doane College
- Economic Thinking
- Finalist Files
- Florida Forensic Institute
- ForensicFiles
- Forensic Forum
- George Mason University
- Gustavus Adolphus College
- International Debate Education Association (IDEA)
- Joy of Tournaments
- Las Vegas Host Committee
- LBJ District
- Liberty
- Lincoln Financial Group
- Little Beast Workshops
- National Federal High School Association
- National Center for Policy Analysis
- NFL Alumni
- Ozark Delight
- People Speak
- Perfect Performance
- Planet Debate
- Public Forum Zone
- Sacred Heart
- The Forensics Files
- The Interp Store
- The Schwan Food Company
- Truman State University
- University of North Texas
- Victory Briefs
- West Coast Publishing
- Western Kentucky
- Wichita Convention Bureau
- Wichita State University



Thank you for your support!

Alumni Connection



Joel Meister- "Then What?"

On Tuesday July 24th, 2007, in Charleston South Carolina, eight candidates vying to be the Democratic nominee for President in the 2008 elections answered questions submitted by CNN and YouTube users in a debate. But that isn't what makes this story so interesting. There was one candidate's Deputy Director of Online Communication that took this opportunity to help his platform stand out and make a difference. Meet Joel Meister, he is Senator Biden's online support coordinator, blogger,

website manager, social network platform coordinator (YouTube, Flickr, etc) and so much more. Luckily, for me, he is also an NFL Alum who agreed to talk with me about his journey from shy freshman, to National Champion, to online political genius.

Joel Meister grew up in Kentucky and was coached by Steve Meadows. He was a shy kid, who didn't enjoy speaking in public, and certainly wouldn't want to join the speech and debate team. However, he was new to the area, had done some acting in the past, and due to the prodding from Steve Meadows, finally joined the team. He loved Extemporaneous Speaking, Oratory and Declamation. It opened a whole new world of possibilities for him. His interest in speech propelled his interest in politics.

After a very successful high school career, Joel went on to study politics at George Washington University. He joined the college radio station, and although he had never thought of doing broadcasting, he realized it was a way to keep involved with speech and debate. That's also where he started podcasting and enjoying the internet side of broadcasting. Although it wasn't a competition to be a radio broadcaster, it made him realize something else he enjoyed doing. Even with a busy class schedule and extra-curricular activities, Joel would still make a point to come home to judge tournaments, especially during spring break and holidays. It was something he looked forward to since that was where he got his start!

After graduating cum laude in International Affairs, he participated in a number of paid internships "On the Hill." He served as a congressional intern for Congressman Ben Chandler, a Policy Intern for former Virginia Governor Mark Warner, and is currently serving as the Deputy Director for Online Communications for Senator Joe Biden. Recently on a YouTube debate in South Carolina, Joel posed the question..."Then What" to YouTube viewers. He asked them to send in the question "Then What?" to the debate, so their voices would be recognized by the Presidential hopefuls and CNN. Although the question did not get asked, the campaign did not go unnoticed and actually had its own segment on CNN.

Joel has played a significant role in this political campaign and when asked how his past experiences led him to this career path he said, "I wouldn't be the person I am today without great coaches like Steve Meadows, my parents, my friends, and my fellow competitors within the NFL. Keep doing what you're doing because it is life changing. I found I could do great things with what I learned from the NFL and all those involved." I then asked Joel what advice he would give to those students who might want to pursue politics, "Get out there and try new things. Don't be afraid to look at lots of different options. Internships, internships, internships! I always loved classes, but not as much as I enjoyed getting in the field and getting my 'hands dirty'. I recommend you do the same." He went on to say, "Get involved and try working on a campaign even if it's in high school or college. See if that's really what you want to do!" Finally he said, "Give back....coach, judge; you are able to give students a different perspective, and have an impact on their lives. I cannot thank those enough who made an impact on mine!"

To learn more about Joel Meister and Senator Biden's campaign please visit http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1x85nJ_Zbg, and <http://www.joebiden.com>.





Alumni Connection

Featured Alumnus: Jeffrey Blitz

I graduated in 1986 from Ridgewood High School in New Jersey. As a teenager, I stuttered. I think high school speech and debate was a way of testing myself, of proving to the world that I could master public speaking even though all the evidence suggested otherwise.

Policy Debate was my biggest love. I also happily participated in Original Oratory, Foreign Extemp, Dramatic Interp and Impromptu. My favorite event was Policy Debate. I think it is fair to say that I was obsessed by it. There was just such a rush that came with doing well. We won state in my senior year and that achievement, along with successes in speech events, felt like the major accomplishment of my high school years.

After high school, I studied fiction writing at John Hopkins and then film in graduate school at USC. I think through debate and speech, I learned a love of words that I've never lost.

Being part of a speech and debate program made a huge impact on my life. My first movie, the documentary, *Spellbound*, while not about debate or speech is about an academic competition (a spelling bee) and about the kind of massive effort that goes into that. My connection to those kids came mostly from my own experience in speech and debate. My second movie, *Rocket Science*, is a fiction film set against the backdrop of high school policy debate. (BTW, *Spellbound* was nominated for an Oscar and named as one of the ten best films of 2003 by the New York Times, and *Rocket Science* just got me the Best Director Award at Sundance this year.)

I am currently working on a documentary project about lottery winners and planning my next fiction film.

My advice to high school students today is, "Do the things you love doing and devote yourself to them with abandon."



Featured Alumnus: Daniel Johnson



The walls of the NFL Regional Office at Western Kentucky University echoed with laughter as Daniel Johnson cracked another joke. No stranger to humor, this former state champion and national finalist in Humorous Interp doesn't look like the typical forensicator.

Standing 6'5, Daniel looks like a basketball star. While he dabbled in basketball, Daniel can still recall the moment he decided he was going to be on the Truman High School (Missouri) speech team: "When I was in 8th grade, we had an assembly where members of the high school forensics team from Truman came to showcase a reader's theatre. I was sitting with my friends (who also became members of the high school speech team) in the audience and during the performance I made up my mind that I wanted to do speech in high school."

Currently studying at Western Kentucky University, Daniel has continued his forensics passion in college. However, Daniel attests that the competitions have become harder and the commitment has intensified. "It's tough, but well worth the challenge. To balance college level classes with practicing can be hard at times – but I love it!" Daniel's passion is what is keeping him going. His advice to those competing is to do what you love to the best of your abilities. "Whether it's speech, sports, or the math club - these activities are completely worth it as long as you have fun."

As for future aspirations, Daniel would like to continue to perform. "After I graduate from Western, I would love to move to L.A. and become an actor." In fact, he's well on his way to achieving this goal. Daniel has already landed a brief stint on *The Ghost Whisperer* with Jennifer Love Hewitt and has future appearances for regional work in the making. However, his future career doesn't cloud the vision that he has for the NFL alumni connection. "I know how much this program helped me to develop into the person that I am today, and I want to do everything I can in order to help others enjoy the same experiences I've had with NFL."

Meet New NFL Staff

Welcome Tyler and Jenny Billman



Jenny & Tyler at 2007 Nationals

Tyler Billman began his career with the NFL as the administrator of the NFL Regional Office in Bowling Green, Kentucky. He was an extremely successful collegiate competitor and coach and recently graduated with his Master's Degree in Education from WKU. At the National Office, Tyler will coordinate all NFL Special Programs including The People Speak Global Debates, the National Public Policy Forum, and the NFL's national initiatives on District development and coach education/retention. Tyler will also be developing "new and improved" coach and student recognition programs at the local, district, and national levels.

Jenny Billman is the newest addition to the National Office staff. She is also a recent graduate of WKU, earning a Master's Degree in Communication Studies. Jenny will be testing her incredible writing and public relations skills as she coordinates the public relations and marketing aspects of the League. Jenny will be working directly with the development and publications departments of the National Office to enhance all promotional and educational materials, the NFL websites, and both the *Rostrum* and *Alumni Connection* magazines. Jenny will also be completing the development of the NFL's new "Forensics Publications Clearinghouse". Finally, Jenny will work directly with local, regional and national media outlets to bring stronger publicity to the activities of the NFL."



Staff
in the
News

MEET THE NFL STAFF



Jackie Oakes
Administrative Assistant
Office of the Executive Director



Carol Zanto
Director of Accounting/
Finance



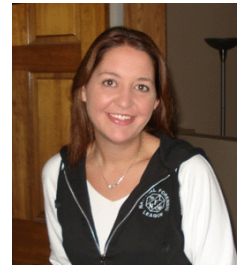
Scott Wunn
Executive Director



Jenny Billman
Public Relations/Marketing



Sandy Krueger
Director of Publications



Heidi Christensen
Alumni Relations



Kathy Dumke
Finance/Merchandise



Diane Rasmussen
Asst. Director of
Accounting/Finance



Megan Wunn
Accounting/Finance



Andrea Neitzel
Publications/Merchandise



Tyler Billman
NFL/NJFL
Special Programs



Patti Kilburg
Membership Services



Lisa Vossekuil
Membership Services/
Pi Kappa Delta



Chris Joffrion
NFL/WKU Regional Office



Alumni Connection

Featured Alumnus: Randy Abrams

My NFL experience began in 1976 at Pacific High School in San Bernadino, CA. The late Georgia Stathis was our coach, teacher, and mentor. I participated in various events including HI, DI, Impromptu, Extemp, and Debate. At the time, I thought I would become a lawyer. Goals and dreams change and I never pursued law. For 20 years I made virtually no use of my NFL experience.

In 1997, I was a fairly low level employee at Microsoft and I was unexpectedly tasked with creating a quality control system to prevent Microsoft from releasing infected software. I attended the Virus Bulletin (VB) 1997 conference in San Francisco and I immediately realized I needed to regularly attend this annual conference to perform my job well. The problem was that the conference alternated between North America and European locations and the likelihood that Microsoft would send me to Europe was about ... zero. In 1998 the conference was to be in Germany. There appeared to be no chance that I would attend the VB 98 conference. I stewed



over the problem for about 3 weeks and then had my "ah ha" moment. If I was invited to present at the conference, Microsoft would probably send me. In 2005, I left Microsoft and joined a small anti-virus company named ESET. My job duties include education and public relations. I am frequently called upon to interview for radio, TV, and both the printed and online press. You can find my podcasts at <http://www.eset.com/podcasts>. I submitted an abstract for the conference and it was accepted. Microsoft did send me and upon my return, I was unexpectedly granted "expert" status by my management. Neither my knowledge nor the soundness of my advice had significantly changed, but "internationally known speaker" translated to "bona fide expert." As my dentist told me - "an expert is a person with a PowerPoint presentation who is more than a hundred miles from home."

If not for the NFL experience, I am certain that I would not have thought to consider presenting. Even if I had, I doubt that I would have thought I could actually do it. Having been 20 years since my last "public speaking" experience I was a bit nervous. I knew I could speak to an audience - I was just a bit concerned about how I would actually react to being on stage. Prior to the conference, I joined toastmasters to get some more experience. The logical progression from NFL is to Toastmasters. NFL impromptu experience came in handy at the end of my presentation in Germany when it was Q & A time. You don't get 15 minutes to prepare an answer in that environment. The presentation in Munich in 1998 was truly a life altering event. I began to travel the world. I made friends throughout the world, and I met and worked with highly skilled professionals who helped me to develop expertise in my field. The contacts I made then are both friends and essential resources even today working as a competitor. Since Munich in 1998, I have gone on to present at well over a dozen international conferences and several more trade shows throughout the US and Canada, as well as other foreign countries including many European countries.

Without the training from participation in NFL events, I would have been missing a vital ingredient to my success. Just as being published is a mark of status in academic circles, presenting at conferences enormously enhances professional status in most any profession (except for the mime industry). When opportunity knocked on my door, the key required to open the door was the ability to speak confidently and competently in front of an audience of strangers. As a result of that ability, I have enjoyed travels throughout the world, the friendship of the best minds in my industry, and a truly enjoyable career traveling internationally.

My motto is "Have mouth, will travel."

Randy Abrams, Director of Technical Education
ESETLLC
abrams@eset.com
<http://www.eset.com>

VIVA LAS VEGAS!



Committee Members from Las Vegas Schools greet attendees during 2007 National Tournament Registration Day

ELVIS WELCOMES NFL STAFF

**POSSIBLY A SURPRISE
VISIT BY ELVIS
AT 2008 NATIONALS?**



Pictured: (L to R) Carol Zanto, Jackie Oakes, Elvis, Lisa Vossekuil and Sandy Krueger

**2008
National Tournament
June 17 - 22, 2008**

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~PLAN AHEAD~

2008 ALUMNI RECEPTION

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

WATCH FOR FUTURE DETAILS

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!

Viva Las Vegas

Viva Las Vegas

Viva Las Vegas

Viva Las Vegas

Viva Las Vegas

Viva Las Vegas

Viva Las Vegas

Viva Las Vegas

Viva Las Vegas



NEWS FLASH!



NJFL/IDEA Tournament

June 29 - July 1, 2007

The IDEA-National Junior Forensic League 2007 National Championship Tournament was held this summer in Greeley, Colorado. There were 171 students from 18 schools competing in 10 different forensics events: Public Forum Debate, Lincoln Douglas Debate, Extemporaneous Speaking, Impromptu Speaking, Duo Interpretation, Humorous Interpretation, Dramatic Interpretation, Poetry, Prose, and Original Oratory. The 18 schools come from all over the USA: The Commonwealth of the Northern Marianna Islands, Colorado, Texas, Massachusetts, New York City, and California.

The students competed on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The days were filled with tough competition in all events! What a talented group of students. In between rounds the students enjoyed playing frisbee on the lawn, just hanging out in the cafeteria, and of course preparing for their next round.

After a grueling few days, IDEA and NFL brought the event to a close with an extraordinary awards ceremony. The plaques, trophies and medals, donated by IDEA, were truly amazing. This was an event all involved seems to enjoy. A big thank you goes out to IDEA for making it possible and those many helpers from the Greeley Public High School. What an amazing team! We are all looking forward to next year's NJFL Nationals at Western Kentucky University!

Check It Out!

NFL Website

forensiconline.net

Forensiconline.net is the internet's leading speech and debate website. With a focus and a greater emphasis on specialized content, ForensicsOnline is poised to continue delivering the best and most-informed forensics related content to high school speech and debate students.

Forensiconline.net was founded in 2000 as an off-shoot to extemp.net, the internet's first high school extemporaneous speaking website. Now in its seventh year, ForensicsOnline has been read by visitors from more than 80 countries and receives more than 800,000 hits a month. During the 2007 NFL National Tournament, the site received record-breaking activity with over 3 million hits. Advertisers on this site have included tournaments from across the country to speech and debate institutes.

Among the many achievements of forensiconline.net include being the first site to launch high school rankings for extemp, student congress, Lincoln Douglas debate, and original oratory students. As well, forensiconline.net has attracted more than 3,600 users to our diverse message boards.

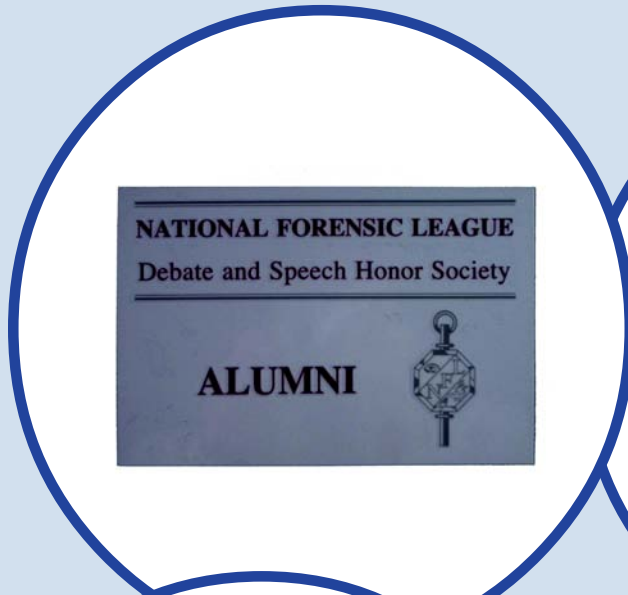
The site's success has been directly contingent on the hard work and dedication of many students and teachers who have advised, managed, and directed the site's future.

In 2007, site creator and webmaster, Jason Mehta graciously donated ForensicsOnline to the NFL to promote the ideals and vision of the League through an online community. His incredible contribution to the League and to the forensic community will help achieve the goals of the NFL as well as ensure the continued growth of the ForensicsOnline community.

The site is currently maintained by the webmaster, Cherian Koshy, under the leadership of the National Forensic League.

Alumni Connection

HAVE YOU SEEN THE NEW NFL PRODUCTS?



TO SEE ALL THE NFL PRODUCTS VISIT OUR WEBSITE

WWW.NFLONLINE.ORG

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Alumni Connection

NFL VOLUNTEERS

WANTED: Volunteers. The National Forensic League is seeking responsible individuals who love speech and debate. If you meet the following description, you are **WANTED**. Are you:

- **Someone who has free time? At all? Even a little?**
- **Someone who lives within a community that does not have an active NFL program and would like to start one?**
- **Someone who is retired and would like to become involved in “Training Youth for Leadership?”**
- **Someone who at one time was an active NFL member?**
- **Someone who is retired and would like to become involved in “Training Youth for Leadership?”**
- **Someone who is a retired coach/teacher/parent/grand-parent/college student/community resident?**
- **Someone who would like to provide financial support?**

If you or someone you know can fulfill any of the above criteria, please contact:

Ms. Heidi Christensen, Alumni Relations
hschristensen@nflonline.org
or call
920-748-6206