

NFL ALUMNI CONNECTION

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REFLECTIONS

When our graduates reflect,

J. Scott Wunn, NFL Executive Director

As its core mission, the NFL 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 NFL embraces, diversity, interconnection, and visionary leadership. The honor society empowers students to become effective communicators, ethical individuals, critical thinkers, and leaders in a democratic society. The mission of the NFL is noble and the pursuit of its fulfillment is challenging and rewarding. It is this mission that drives the vision of the Executive Council and the actions of the Office of the Executive Director.

This issue of the Alumni Connection asks us to reflect on how the National Forensic League and our experiences in forensics positively affected our lives. This creates an even more important question: "When our current student members of NFL activities reflect ten, twenty, thirty years from now, what will they see?"

They will see... a strong NFL community.

Communities allow individuals to enhance their personal identity, perfect essential skills, and exchange important resources for the benefit of themselves and others. The NFL community is no exception. One of the primary goals of the NFL is the development of an even stronger speech and debate community. The hope is that each individual student, coach, parent, alumnus, and administrator can play a role as a member of a stronger social environment of advocates for forensics education. This challenging goal requires an entire community of supporters to ensure the longevity of the activity and the scope of its influence. The National Forensic League will continue to reach out to its alumni through the promotion of alumni events and gatherings. In addition, the NFL will continue to create partnerships with organizations to promote community level activities that promote forensics and expose the public to the activity.

They will see...an identity.

The NFL has recently established The NFL Code of Honor and Oath. The NFL Oath reads, "As a member of the National Forensic League, I pledge to uphold the highest standards of integrity, humility, respect, leadership, and service in the pursuit of excellence." The NFL Code of Honor and Oath will serve as a symbolic reminder of the characteristics of a quality citizen, leader, and member of the National Forensic League. The NFL has established the Code of Honor to give written pronunciation to the outcomes of quality education that the League has promoted for 82 years. In addition to the Code of Honor, the NFL is creating a strong presence on the internet and in the media to further entrench the significance of the NFL and forensics education. Scheduled educational chat sessions, student and coach forums, blogs, instructional and promotional streaming video clips, and virtual debate and speech contests are among some of the exciting new elements of the NFL website that will allow more interaction and create identity.

Message to Alumni



what will they see?

They will see...service to the activity.

The National Forensic League's primary responsibility is to serve the activity of speech and debate. In providing this service, the NFL is developing an extensive and comprehensive educational program for forensic coaches. During this school year, over eighty scholarships will be given to high school educators to continue their training at summer institutes. Forensic Educators will be offered a formal educational program at the post graduate level, giving them the opportunity to earn continuing education units for recertification and graduate hours toward a master's degree in forensics. Additionally, the NFL's national coach mentoring program will provide support for over 500 novice coaches during the 2007-2008 school year. Partnerships with other prominent forensic organizations along with several thousand online teaching and coaching resources will yield incredible training opportunities. In addition, the NFL will start nearly 300 new forensics programs this year and provide financial grants for small and urban schools wishing to develop teams.

They will see...an ensured future for the League.

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. 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.

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. The NFL is taking the steps necessary to ensure the resources necessary to fulfill its mission today, tomorrow, and for years to come.

They will see...a tool for personal empowerment and active citizenship.

Participation in high school speech and debate activities is a vehicle for positive change in the life of a student. There are countless success stories of young men and young women whose active involvement in forensics provided the skills, opportunities, and attitude necessary for a successful and outstanding life story. College scholarships, improved admission rates, better job preparation, and heightened communication and critical thinking skills top the list of the tangible benefits to speech and debate participants. NFL membership is about more than competition rounds and wins and losses; it is about gaining the tools necessary to make a positive difference in communities throughout the world. Active participation in NFL sponsored national service projects and grassroots community outreach programs train students in the crucial art of advanced citizenry. Forensics education can breed the next great orator to change the course of history with the power of speech.

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Proud to support

Jamie Mohan
Danville High School, KY



I have competed in Duo, Extemp, and Declamation. I even went to Nationals for Public Forum Debate. This year I'm trying Humorous Interp. I started competing in forensics because it was something my brother always did. I gave it a shot, I really liked it and now I love it; the early mornings, the camaraderie, meeting new people, and trying to do my best.

Tanner Marchisello
Park Hill High School, MO



I compete heavily in the Interpretation events Dramatic, Humorous, and Duo. I was a Duo Alternate for Nationals my Freshman year and I qualified to Humorous Interpretation last year in Wichita, Kansas. The reason I compete in the National Forensic League is to further my knowledge of acting. When I am done with school I want to pursue a career in acting. Speech and Debate allows me to play more exciting and dramatic characters that challenge me far beyond any high school play character could. The competition aspect of debate brings an exciting new spin on acting that theatre can't. Thanks to the NFL when I am done with high school I will have gained enough knowledge to help me on my way to a career in acting.

Students Making Memories

Carley Sattler
Lakewood High School's Center for Advanced Technologies, FL



I participate in: Public Forum Debate, Congress, and Dramatic Interpretation. What being part of NFL has meant to me: NFL has become a major part of my life since I first started during my Freshman year of high school. Not only has it helped me improve my public speaking skills and gain confidence, but it has opened numerous doors for me. Due to my involvement in debate I have been offered many opportunities that I normally would not have been, such as a spot in a youth policy retreat on energy efficiency in Keystone, Colorado this past summer. It has allowed me to learn a lot about subjects that I may have normally not have even taken a second look at and has helped to properly prepare me for my soon-to-be entrance into the real world, the one that lies beyond the doors of my parent's home or my high school's science class.

Memory Bytes

We Asked, You Reminiscenced

Amber Moyer
Lake Brantley High School
2004 Alumni
Altamonte Springs, FL

My most favorite memory from all of debate in high school was from 2004, my senior year. I went to Harvard and was put in a really difficult preliminary chamber for student congress. I got to semis and was again put in an incredibly difficult chamber. I broke to finals and would have been completely content with that! When I was sitting with my friend Elizabeth at the awards ceremony I jokingly said to her "I don't want a cup, I want a bowl!" because the top 6 got bowls in increasing size whereas the finalists who didn't make the top 6 got a cup. They called off all the names in alphabetical order for the students who didn't make it in the top six so you knew if you were passed over you made it into the top 6. They passed over me and I looked back at my mentor who was on tab staff, Kristen Soltis and she gave me the biggest smile because she had already known that I made it into the top 6. It was the greatest feeling I've ever had.

Andy Siegel
Pennsbury High School
Pennsylvania

In 1995, I made the Congress Finals at Nationals. I remember thinking that I had to stand out somehow, so I made every intro about my younger brother. I'm not sure if that's what did it, but I got nominated and finished 6th. I'll never forget the last speech of my career, I used up all the time and finished by saying "it's been a great four years in forensics."

Borrowed Prep Time

Dawna Lewis learned the value of kindness, charity, and extemp tubs at the 1991 Nationals.

Submitted by Dawna (Levang-Dupont) Lewis
Alumni Oceanview HS, Guam 1992
Coach Edmonds HRC, Washington since 2004

At first glance, my greatest memory may seem like one that should be filed (maybe even buried) under Most Horrible High School Experiences. It involves utter humiliation, plenty of tears, and the 1991 Nationals.

In the 9th grade, I didn't belong to the speech team at Warren Township HS in Gurnee, Illinois. However, respect for Coach John Davis and a crush on one of the team members kept Speech on my radar.

In the early weeks of my sophomore year, my dad transferred from the naval base in Chicago to one in Guam. The following year, I joined Oceanview High School's brand new speech team. (Thanks, Mr. Whedbee, for pushing me into forensics!) I joined in the 90-91 school year, just as the district committee introduced Extemporaneous Speaking as an event. You might not be surprised to read that forensics in Guam wasn't particularly competitive. We had just one tournament per month and I do not recall that there were ever more than four competitors in Extemp. I won almost every round and easily secured the island's slot to 1991 Glenbrook Nationals.

Imagine how excited I was to return to the Chicago area! I was going to see my friends from 9th grade, visit familiar sites in the city, and experience the thrill of Nats all in one week. I was elated! Everything should have been perfect. On Monday morning, I excitedly reported to Extemp Prep.

When I arrived at the enormous gymnasium, however, I was sure that there had been a mistake. I saw hundreds of students sorting through their debate tubs. Where was the library? Where were the magazine stacks? Current newspapers? Worried that I would miss my first round, I reported directly to the tournament officials at the front of the gym. I calmly explained that I was supposed to be in Extemp and asked if they would kindly direct me to the Library. I have, for my own emotional protection, managed to black out their reaction. In my worst nightmares, it's raucous laughter and pointing. I suspect it was really a mixture of annoyance and surprise that a national competitor would waste their time with such a silly joke. However, they calmly explained to me that I was indeed in the prep room and asked me kindly to retrieve my extemp tub and find a seat immediately.

Instead, I found my dad, who was chaperoning, and related the situation. He left to find our district committee chair and figure out what was going on. It turns out that the district chairperson thought it would be easiest at our first tournament back on Guam to put us in the library until we could build our own files. The trouble was that he never informed us that this was a deviation from the NFL system. We never knew that we were supposed to have our own materials.

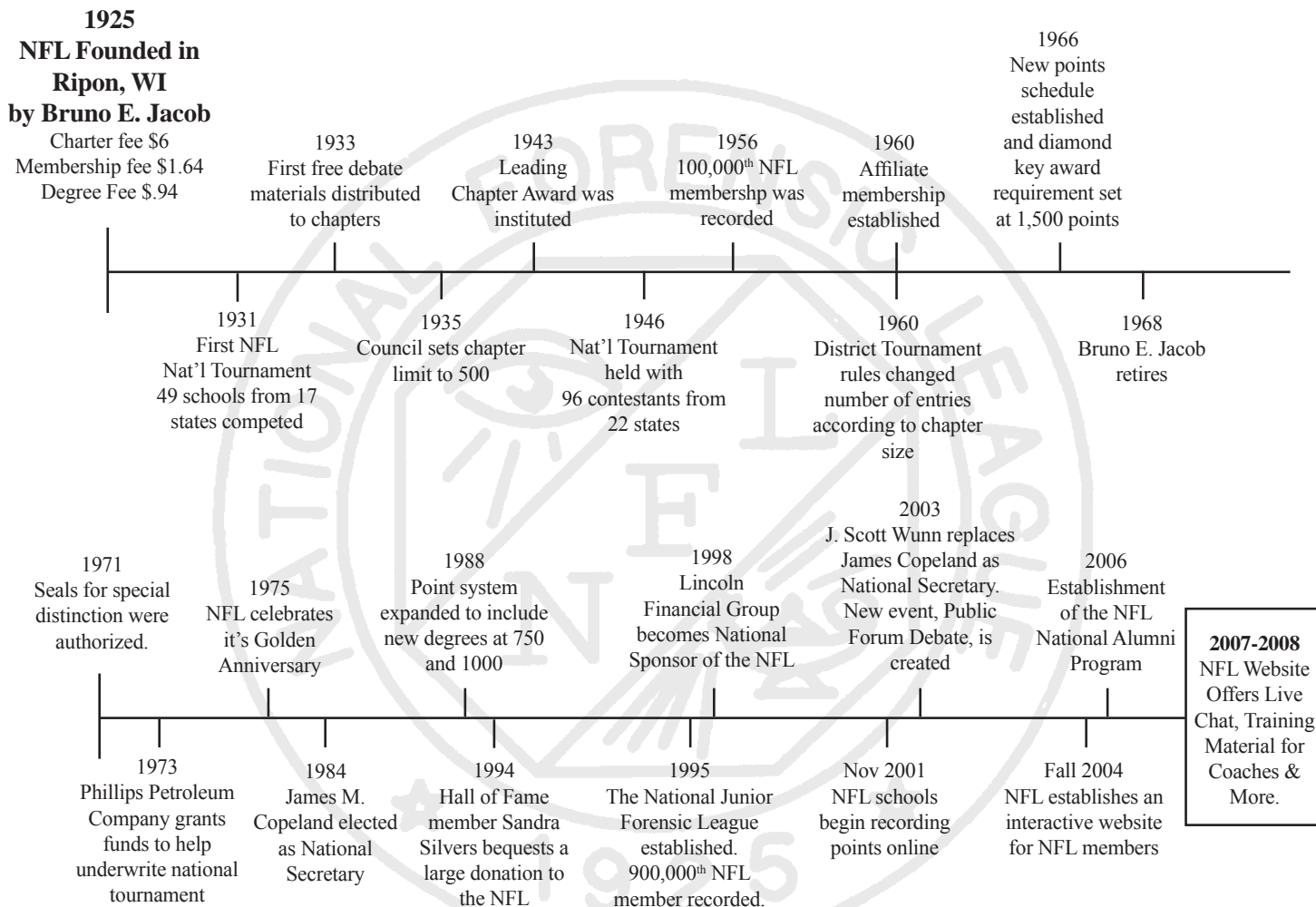
When I realized that I had traveled 10,000 miles to compete without a fundamental tool, I did what any self-respecting 15-year-old girl would do: I went to the ladies' room and cried. While in the restroom, another competitor heard me crying and asked how she could help. She also competed in extemp and offered to share her tub with me. Her coach and the tournament directors approved the arrangement and, only minutes before the draw, I received my first lesson on extemp files.

My rounds were terrible, of course. I placed last in each preliminary round. In 1991, I blamed the district chair, my coach, and the stress of the situation. I know now, however, that I walked into Nationals lacking adequate competition and experience. I would have placed last even if I did bring a tub of my own.

I learned several valuable lessons that week in June 1991. I discovered what it was to be a big fish in a small pond and that heartbreaking embarrassment does not cause 15-year-olds to spontaneously combust. More importantly, I learned how to face a judge/employer/teacher/spouse when I would rather hide in the bathroom and cry.

Though I appreciate those lessons, I cannot say that reminiscing about that morning makes me smile. Instead, my greatest NFL memory is of the kindness, charity, sportsmanship, and proactive effort shown by the young woman in the ladies' room. For 16 years, the traits she showed that day have been my gold standard. My greatest NFL memory is of Brenda Lippert from North Dakota.

History in the Making



NFL Established in 1925

1925	49 Chapters	1966	2000 Chapters / Affiliates
1926	100 Chapters	1977	2010 Chapters / Affiliates
1932	400 Chapters	1987	2300 Chapters / Affiliates
1953	600 Chapters	1997	2655 Chapters / Affiliates
1959	800 Chapters	2007	2745 Chapters / Affiliates
1964	1000 Chapters		

www.nflonline.org/Alumni.Alumni

Their Legacy Lives On



Yilu Zhang is a senior from North Allegheny High School in Pennsylvania. Her coach is Sharon Volpe. Yilu's cartoons are featured in both the *NFL Rostrum* and the *NFL Alumni Connection*.

Jen Kober



“If you want to succeed you just have to get up there, take the risk and do it!”

For those of you who may not know her name, you will. Jen Kober is not only an NFL alum, but an extremely funny and extremely popular comedian. Growing up in Louisiana, Jen said her mom often told her, “You can’t do anything with that smart mouth.” Luckily for all of us, Mom was wrong!

Jen got involved in speech and debate her sophomore year in high school. She heard an announcement over the loudspeaker that said Forensic informational meeting. So she went. She was one of two students who attended. Jen did speech and the other guy did debate. It worked out well! I asked her with such a small team how did she get so good? “I learned a lot by watching video tapes of different competitions. I then realized what was so important to learning speech was to go, watch and do. Go to as many competitions as you can, watch as many performances as you can, and get on stage and perform as much as you can.” Jen was very successful throughout her high school career using that method. She placed at Nationals in both Oratory (4th) and Humorous (1st).

After a very successful high school career, Jen went on to school in Chicago for acting. However, soon into her classes she realized she didn’t want to be only an actor, she wanted to do more. So she left Chicago and went to Lake Charles, Indiana where she attended a state school and performed on the Forensics teams for scholarship money. She took 1st place in all 8 events, so of course she had to quit. “I felt like a robot. I was winning but I wasn’t feeling satisfied.”

After leaving Indiana Jen went on to Graduate school at the University of Florida, Gainesville until being hired by Disney to perform at their “Comedy Warehouse” on Pleasure Island. Three years later Jen left Disney to take her one woman show on tour. While on tour she often ran into other members of the NFL and it always amazed her how many of them there were out there!

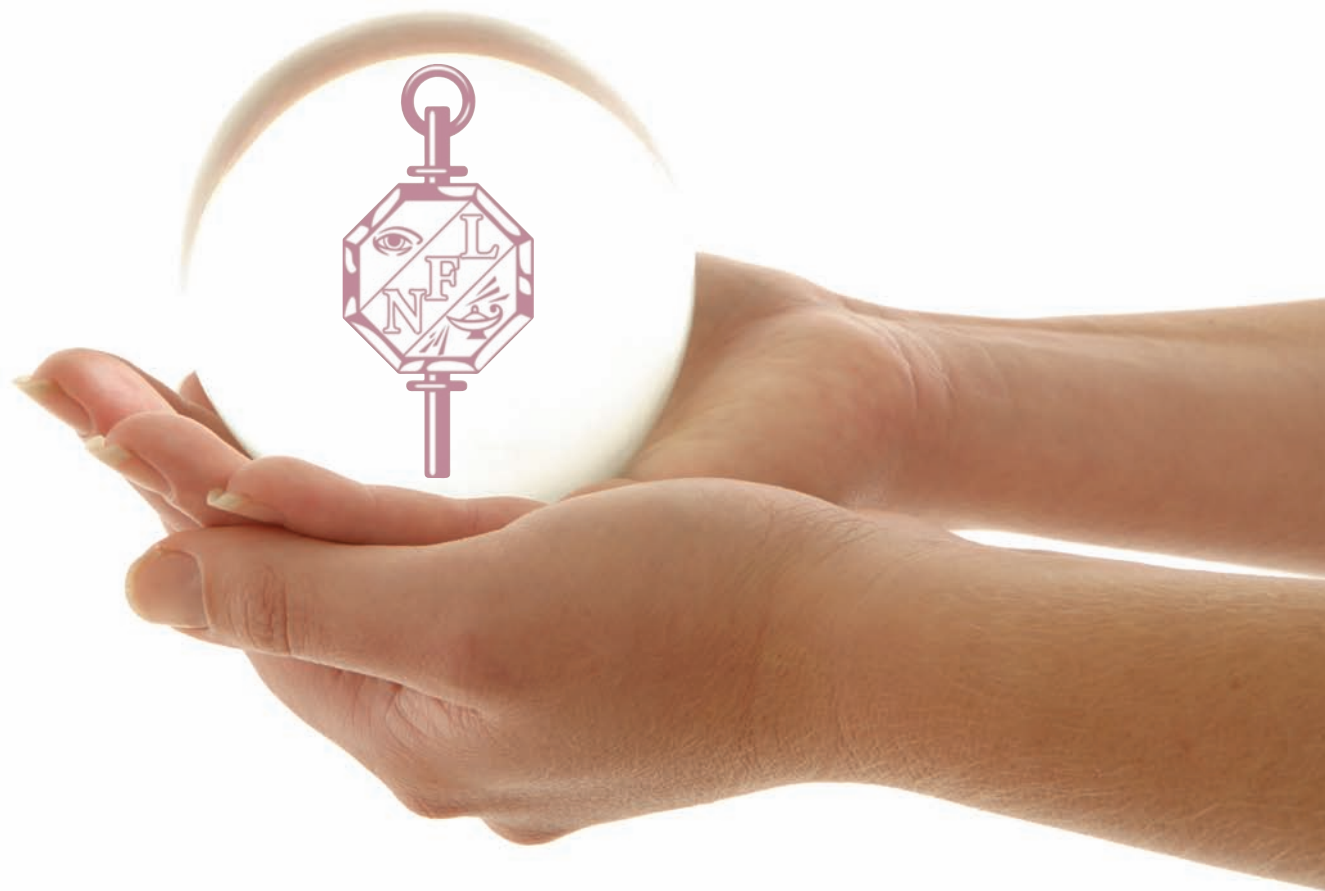
Soon after her tour ended, Jen landed a radio show on a cable access network in her home town in Louisiana. Because of her radio show she was asked to introduce the comedian “Sinbad” at the local casino before his performance. Before the show Jen went up and introduced herself and ended up doing a 20 minute set for him. He was so impressed that after the show he made some phone calls and said he was going to set her up! Six months later the Cinderella story happened. Jen was picked up by an agent who worked nationwide and moved to Los Angeles.

These days Jen is a very busy woman. She has a huge fan base both at the shows and at her ever growing Myspace site www.myspace.com/jenkober. Currently she is working on a cooking show/comedy show called “Big Dish.” “I love to eat, I love to cook and I love doing comedy. This is everything I love all rolled into one.”

I asked Jen what she attributes all her successes to, and she said quite bluntly, “I have all of this and can do all of this because I listened to the announcements and joined the speech team.” She went on to say, “if I have any advice I can give to up and coming actors, comedians, lawyers or doctors, it would be if you want to succeed, you just have to get up there and take the risk and do it!”

To learn more about Jen Kober, her show schedule, or her new TV show go to www.jenkober.com

Heidi Christensen
Alumni Coordinator



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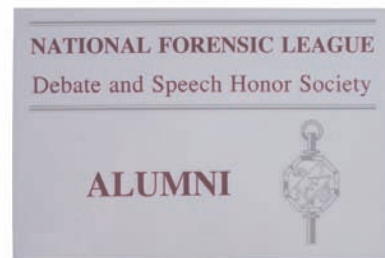
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MEET AMY DORMAN

Life As An Intern

Throughout the alumni magazine, there are countless stories of famous alumni sharing their NFL experiences and how those experiences helped them gain the notoriety they currently hold. I am not famous, clearly. I'm not even an NFL alumni. I am, however, the NFL's newest intern working primarily with the alumni office and publication crew. For about 10 hours a week, I get to take a break from finishing my Theatre and Spanish degrees at Ripon College and walk the two blocks down to the National Headquarters in Ripon, WI.

Every time I walk through the double doors, I am greeted with friendly smiles from the women who keep the NFL running. Even Scott, the executive director, makes it a point to come down from his office to see how things are going, and then proceeds to make fun of me for jamming with my iPod while I work (even though I go to school in the middle of Wisconsin, a girl can only handle so much country music!).

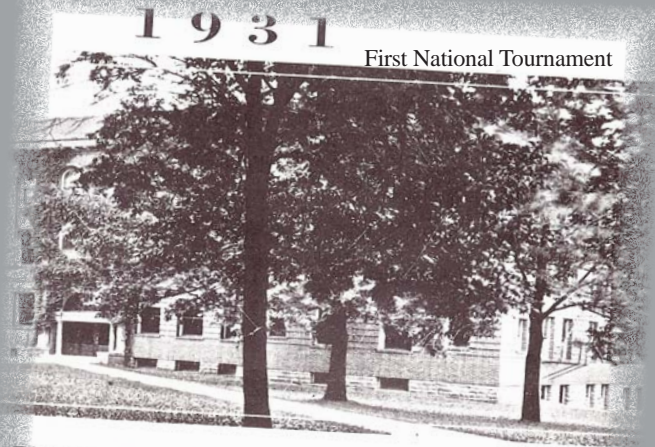
While I am technically the intern for the alumni director, in actuality I'm really everybody's intern. Whenever someone in the office needs assistance, I'm the one they usually call. Because of this, my jobs so far have included researching current politicians who are NFL alumni, creating a database of randomly selected alumni to encourage alumni philanthropy, organizing and executing bulk mailings, and editing the manuals for districts and nationals. The latter has been my favorite job so far. I have a secret love of editing papers and even work as the copy editor for my college newspaper. But what I love the most was that it was a great way to get to know the NFL, the events, and procedural protocol. When I was in high school, I didn't even know a national tournament existed. It wasn't until my first year of college that I discovered that not only was there a national tournament, but that the headquarters was two blocks away from where I went to class.

Despite not having a national tournament to aim for, I have been very involved in forensics for ten years (holy cow I'm getting old!). In high school, I competed primarily in an event called Farrago, which combines poetry, prose, and drama to create a program around a common theme. I never achieved much success until my senior year when I won several first and second place awards. When I entered college, I became so busy that I quit forensics. I figured since I had achieved my goals in high school, I could stop and be happy. Then in my first semester, I was involved in the school's theatre production along with one of the student coaches. He convinced me to join the college team, and because of his encouragement I finished my four events at all four tournaments I attended that year.

During my collegiate career, I have finished in every event except extemporaneous speaking and impromptu, achieving the most success in public address speeches. Last year I was state champion in Rhetorical Criticism and was the only one from Ripon College to attend the American Forensics Association National Individual Events Tournament, by far the hardest collegiate national tournament. While I did not make it to quarterfinals, I placed higher by myself with only three events than 20 schools. I plan on competing at that national tournament again this year and am well on my way to achieving my goals. My persuasion speech, for example, has already taken second place twice, and I plan on competing with four additional speech and interpretation events by the end of this year. I have also coached and judged high school forensics, as well as been a student speaker at college fundraisers highlighting the importance of this much-beloved activity.

My position as an intern here is unique because I am not stuck to just one facet of the organization; rather I get a chance to be involved with many of the departments and see how the organization works from all levels and angles. It's also great to be on the business side of forensics. I've been a competitor for so long and have experienced the tournaments. Now I have the chance to see the other side and just how much work goes into maintaining this activity. I have gained so many skills from forensics that I am able to use not only in my internship, such as organization and critical thinking, but also in my school work and life beyond. This internship is invaluable to me because I plan on pursuing a career in the non-profit sector, and what better way to prepare than with an internship with an organization that I love.

Pictures from the Past



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Ripon College, Ripon, Wisconsin
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NFL ONLINE HAS A NEW LOOK!

The NFL website is getting even better! New features of the site include a news box, press releases, more prominent online polls, expedited access to the community feature, and more...

In keeping with the NFL's commitment to expand technology, NFL online has a new look! While the basic structure of the site remains the same, new homepage features are improving the appearance and applicability of the site. Among the additions; a news box, press releases, more prominent online polls, and expedited access to the community feature.

NFL online is constantly evolving, but these most recent changes reflect a careful analysis of the website by NFL staff, who wanted to facilitate a more attractive and user-friendly site. While the current NFL website received favorable reviews from its members after its September launch, NFL plans to continue to upgrade the site to ensure that its members can access the best possible web resources and community.

The newest additions to the website present a number of opportunities for NFL members. The news box, for example, is intended to broadcast news items relevant to the entire NFL community; if a member wanted to share tournament results, details of a service project, or other notable information, it could be featured on the news box. Along these lines, the expanded community feature can be a tool for classroom instruction or evaluation; teachers could assign students to contribute to the forums or research a facet of forensics online, then grade their work.

NFL welcomes feedback from its members concerning changes to the website or any other facet of the NFL experience. To provide this feedback, send comments, complaints, or suggestions to nfl@nflonline.org.

Be sure to log on to [nflonline](http://nflonline.org) and actively participate in the online community.