

The Forensic

of Pi Kappa Delta

The Forensic
V. 88—89 #2
Winter—Summer 04

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THEMED ISSUE

FORENSICS AND THE FAMILY

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SCOTT JENSEN, GUEST EDITOR

Managing Emotions in Forensics and Family: A Family Dialogue
about Emotion Labor and Emotion Work
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CLAY REDDING

The Forensic Family: A Call for Research
DAVID E. WILLIAMS AND PATRICK C. HUGHES



Series 88
Number 1
Winter 2003

Pi Kappa Delta National Forensic Honorary Society

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The *Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta* invites authors to submit manuscripts related to scholarship, pedagogy, research and administration in competitive and non-competitive debate. In keeping with the vision of the present administration of Pi Kappa Delta, the Editor and Editorial Board seeks articles that are especially about ways to increase diversity in forensics. The Editorial Board will consider manuscripts of this nature of top priority. Manuscripts submitted by undergraduate students and previously unpublished scholars will also receive serious consideration.

This journal reflects the values of its supporting organization, *Pi Kappa Delta*, which is committed to promoting "*the art of persuasion, beautiful and just.*" The journal seeks to promote serious scholarly discussion of issues connected to making competitive debate and individual events a powerful tool for teaching students the skills necessary for becoming articulate citizens. The journal seeks essays reflecting perspectives from all current debate and individual events forms, including, but not limited to: NDT, CEDA, NEDA, NPDA, Lincoln-Douglas debate, as well as NIET, NFA, and nontraditional individual events.

Reviews of books, activities, and other educational materials will be published periodically (as submitted), and those submissions are also sought. Potential authors should contact the Editor regarding the choice of materials for review.

All works must be original and not under review by other publishers. Authors should submit **3 print copies AND a PC-Compatible disk version** (for editing purposes). Submissions should conform to **APA guidelines** (5th edition). Manuscripts should not exceed 25 double-spaced typed pages, exclusive of tables and references; book reviews and educational materials should be 4-5 double-spaced pages. Submitted manuscripts will not be returned. The title page should include the title, author(s), correspondence address, e-mail address, and telephone numbers. The second page should include an abstract of 75-100 words. The text of the manuscript (including its title) should begin on the next page (with no reference to author), with the remaining pages numbered consecutively. Avoid self-identification in the text of the manuscript. Notes and references should be typed and double spaced on pages following the text of the manuscript. Tables should be clearly marked regarding their placement in the manuscript.

SEND MANUSCRIPTS TO: Nina-Jo Moore, Department of Communication, Appalachian State University, Box 32039, Boone, NC 28608-2039, 828-262-2171. Do not fax or e-mail submissions, although feel free to contact the Editor by those modes of communication: moorenj@appstate.edu; 828-262-2543. Authors should have an editorial decision within 3 months.

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THE FORENSIC OF PI KAPPA DELTA (ISSN:0015-735X) is now published twice yearly, Winter and Summer, by Pi Kappa Delta Fraternal Society. Subscription price is part of membership dues. For alumni and non-members the rate is \$20.00 for 1 year, \$40.00 for 2 years, and \$60.00 for 3 years. Second class postage is paid at Ripon, WI. Postmaster and subscribers: Please send all address change requests to: PKD, 125 Watson St., P. O. Box 38, Ripon, WI 54971. **THE FORENSIC** is also available on 16 mm microfilm, 35 mm microfilm, or 100 mm microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

Forensics and Family: An Introduction

GUEST EDITOR'S NOTE

SCOTT JENSEN
WEBSTER UNIVERSITY

This *Forensic* addresses an issue central to forensic activities but underrepresented in the discussions found in forensic literature and social circles. While there is, arguably, no relationship in our lives more important than family, that dimension of our lives often takes a backseat to other competitive and educational aspects of the activity. Frequent weekend travel and balancing full teaching or class loads with forensics responsibilities creates burdens on our family relationships that can lead to implications ranging from stress in our social lives to the ending of important relationships (Jensen and Jensen, 2002; Bartanen, 1996). At the same time, forensics can foster an environment that allows for enduring relationships to evolve and promotes the metaphor of family in meaningful ways (Jensen and Jensen, 2002).

Any career that demands the weekend travel that accompanies the job description for most forensics educators would bring with it challenges to family relationships. I know, as our children approach school age, I will have to begin making decisions between little league games and tournaments. My students often have to choose between family events at home and important tournaments at which they want to compete. These challenges, while difficult for the forensics educator and student, are sometimes even more profound for the family members who are looking in from outside of the forensic arena. Whether it be a lack of familiarity or appreciation for the importance of forensics to the educator or student, or a sense that the season is simply too long, or contains too many tournaments, family members often have difficulty adapting to the lifestyles of their loved ones who are involved with forensics.

This issue of *The Forensic* brings together issues of family and forensics in a forum of scholarship and discussion. At present there is a

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void in forensic literature that leaves the relationship between forensics and family unaddressed, but nevertheless vitally important to those who balance the pressures of the two on a daily basis. Gilstrap and Gilstrap offer a personal look at the role emotion labor and emotion work play in their relationship. Their paper provides a valuable look at how one spouse's forensic career creates challenges for both partners. The dialogue between the two authors gives readers a window into a relationship that is no doubt representative of many other marriages that include a forensic professional. Williams and Hughes provide a well argued justification for incorporating matters of family within forensic research agendas. They cite, for example, studies of college athletes that indicate the importance of nurturing family relationships in athlete success and satisfaction with college. Their case addresses a number of ways in which the contemporary forensic culture places pressure on family relationships, steps that can ease these pressures, and research strategies that can more fully address the forensics/family connection. Finally, the essay by Hobbs, Hobbs, Veuleman, and Redding establishes the forensic culture as a metaphor for family. They focus on ways that our "will to power" results in a dysfunctional family, giving particular attention to instances of verbal abuse. Their paper argues for the need to recognize our tendencies to use verbal abuse as an organizing principle for exercising power in forensic relationships, and lays out ways in which these tendencies can be avoided.

These three papers provide insightful and meaningful examinations of a critical relationship within our activity—that of family and the forensic participant. The variety in their approach, content, and suggestions gives us a window into the myriad ways that family and forensics influence one another. I have enjoyed editing this issue, and thank Nina-Jo Moore for the opportunity, as well as Gina Jensen and Tom Huebner for their assistance. This theme represents what may be the most salient issue in my forensic life; a number of my colleagues share that sentiment. Greater attention to how family and forensics can co-exist may well ease tensions for those who continue to devote their lives to both a wonderful activity, and the most important people in their lives.

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Managing Emotions in Forensics and Family: A Family Dialogue about Emotion Labor and Emotion Work

CURT A. GILSTRAP AND CRISTINA M. GILSTRAP
DRURY UNIVERSITY

Abstract: *In this candid conversation we—a professional couple in academe—examine the ways in which we have experienced emotion labor and emotion work in relation to forensic life. Specifically, we explore instances from our previous five years together that explain our own lessons learned about managing, experiencing, and masking emotion as regards professional and family life in concert with forensic coaching. We hope that this dialogue will spark additional contemplation of both the various manifestations of emotion labor across forensic event preparation as well as the ways emotion work supports emotion labor in the forensic family.*

I can't believe her ranting again today. I'm to the breaking point. She just doesn't understand that her peers and I will not drop everything we're doing to administer to her needs. She's impossibly engrossed in her work, her own successes and her own life. Even her own debate partner can't seem to find the time to work as a team member since he's too busy smoothing out squad indifferences exploded due to her comments and, often, bickering. She maintains that nobody respects her and nobody cares about her. A senior member of the squad attempted to work things out with her, but he also pushed for her to recognize her problem-causing and continual pettiness. Ouch. I had to step in and sound both sober and categorically comforting. I tried to appear "objective" ... if that's even possible. At the urging of several folks I called a debate meeting to address the acute problems developing recently out of squad squabbles. After all, that's what they are. Our squad tends to have great practices during practice rounds, but we have horrid discussions afterwards. Rather than debate/research theory/substance debriefings, we end up carried off along tangents that appear more like guerrilla warfare (you never now what ad hom might come next ...nor do you know from whom it'll spring) than a war theater. Rather than drawing a line in the sand with some semblance of dialectic, we have fragmentary comments that resemble email flaming. It's no good. So we had a meeting and it went awry in the beginning. I attempted to lay out what I saw as divisive behavior on everyone's part. With as little emotion in my voice as possible, I also pointed out that a fairly large majority of folks had explained their disgruntled attitudes arriving due to Kelly's actions. After tense moments with various

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students weighing in—most with great stress in their voices and emphasis marked by volume—there was a general relaxing of words and fewer “in your face” moments. In fact, students appeared more at ease considering that their concerns were out in the open for the entire squad to deal with. Though I’m not sure this “issue” has blown over for our squad, it does not feel as if it’s festering just below the surface as it has been these past weeks. What’s more, I feel comfortable in knowing I did what I could to be objective in facilitating the discussion.

Curt on his journal excerpt: Not long after I entered this early passage into my forensic coaching journal, I had a conversation with Cristina,¹ my significant other, regarding my handling of the situation. I expressed worries about the sound of my voice and the look of my nonverbal communication. I wondered if I had managed my squad with some detachment so as to eschew any visuals that might give away how I felt about certain individuals, their comments, the manner in which they approached others during our meeting, and the general energy of discussion as it unfolded. In the later conversation with Cristina, a family conversation I might add, I referred to my desire to maintain control of squad conversations by implementing the visage of a level-headed mediator. I wanted then, and still want today, to offer the “objectivity” students appear to need. To do so, I have thought a great deal about what I should look like and how I should sound as I interact with my students (as well as those students with whom I interact at workshops and competitive tournaments).

Of late, Cristina and I have initiated exploration of our experiences regarding my managed emotion at work—known by scholars as “emotion labor.” As well, we have reflected about our forensic life together and our managed emotions at home—known by scholars as “emotion work.” The reasons for our qualitative expedition are obvious: we are a forensic family. What is more, her area of academic interest amplifies emotion labor in the workplace—the use of organizationally appropriate displays at work—and I just cannot seem to quit coaching competitive speech and debate in my workplace. So, our current family conversations are only now examining what professional forensic coaches deal with in terms of understanding and deploying emotion both on and off the job. Lately, we have been particularly interested in uncovering both the modes of masking and the modes projecting emotions I use as I seek to enhance our familial experiences. In partaking of this exercise, we recognize that conversational and journal excerpts as well as continuing dialogue will not end with this conversation, either for us or for the greater forensic community. Moreover, we see our discussion as a performance, both allowing us more reflection on our interactions and serving to improve our comprehension of what it is we do as a family in forensics always already engaged in laboring emotionally. We hope our

1. Except for “Cristina” and “Curt,” all other names have been changed to protect the identity of those individuals.

experiences serve as a sounding board for the forensic community at large. Perhaps this discussion will engender more conversations about managed emotion work and emotion labor as well as their subsequent implications in private and competitive forensic arenas.²

Cristina starts the discussion by introducing emotion labor: Emotion labor is a communication phenomenon introduced by sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild (1983) in her seminal book *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Hochschild defines emotion labor as the management of emotion to “create a publicly observable facial and bodily display” as a job requirement (p. 7). She argues that it “requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others” (p. 7). It involves the management of feelings in that employees perform feeling requirements of certain emotions, or at least appear to perform them, when engaging in job-related interactions (Kruml & Geddes, 2000; Wharton & Erickson, 1993).

This research explains many experiences Curt and I have had together. I remember when we first had the conversation about Kelly and how frustrated Curt was with the whole situation. I am surprised I remember this instance so well since he has brought so many of these stories home, especially after tournaments. I guess that is what you get when you “marry into” forensics. This story probably sticks out in my mind because I got to know this student myself while traveling with the squad several times that particular year. Looking back, I realize that this is only one of many times we have talked about how he feels he needs to manage his emotions during interactions at practices, in van rides, and at tournaments. I do not think I realized how frequently this occurs until I also spent several hours in fifteen passenger vans with six to ten students who have different personalities, range in academic pursuits, and come from all manner of disciplines

2. Indeed, there have been many laundry-lists concerning the implications of coaching work on the health of coaches and coaching families. Olson (2001) articulates, for example, the consequences of coaching work on coaches' health. In particular, Olson elicits Jones (1997) and Cronn-Mills (1999) to indicate how coaches pay little attention to basic tenets of physical, nutritional, interpersonal and psychological health. Included in his call for coaching wellness, Olson also divines Deaton, Glenn, Milsap & Milsap (1997) concerning family and forensics, and the need to examine tensions that accrue in the spaces and bridges between the two. Toward this same end, Dickmeyer (2000) uses family communication theories as a filter to assess a coach's family life as impacted by the similar communicative bond that exists in mentoring and working with students. She explicitly highlights work as the emotional experiences and duress that accrues via normal, everyday coaching activity integrated with and contrasted to the coaching family. More recently, McDonald (2001) enumerates possible solutions to the problems of institutional and professional requirements, travel stress, student motivation, and mentoring activities that debate coaches experience. He includes in his possible work hazards list the under-realized “emotional labor” that debate directors experience and maintain as part of their/our normal squad and travel activities. Cristina and I use these forensic, family, and emotion work dialogues as points of departure for the nexus of our current conversation. Our hope is that we will elicit continued interest in these issues as substantive concerns in the realm of competitive forensic and debate coaching families.

and socioeconomic backgrounds. It was during one of these trips that I witnessed Curt's challenge to suppress, express, and induce certain emotions in himself and in the students "for the good of the squad." Why does he play Techno, Zydeco, or Disco music and act happy and energetic to wake the students up and get them excited about competing, especially early on tournament mornings? Why does he display a seemingly emotionless face when you know he really wants to tell a student to shape up in light of the fact the student is getting a competitive scholarship? Why does he suppress his disappointment when catching students indulging in controlled substances?

Curt believes he has to. He believes he has to because it is part of his job as a forensic coach. He believes he has to because it is the role he has chosen for himself as an educator and mentor. And since he participates in and reconstitutes this role, he reifies his choice to be ethical and sensitive to student needs as well as to legal requirements by way of managing his appearance as he institutes and enforces responsible coaching practices. To illustrate this fact, I have noticed over several years that he spends a great deal of time interacting with his students while mentally monitoring those interactions.

Initially, I did not realize he and I would be dealing with so many instances like the ones mentioned above. The more we reflect on our family, forensic, and, thereby, professional lives, the more we realize emotion management is a natural, familial fixture for us. We have, after all, become surrounded by it, permeated by it. We are as much a part of it as it is a part of us. In the past, experiences like the journal response noted above seemed to involve spontaneous reactions to sporadic instances external to Curt's job requirements. However, I have recently begun application of a new lens to understand that his emotion management is not always spontaneous and external but actually planned, effortful, and part of the job itself. This new understanding stems from my academic interest and continuing work in emotion labor.

In the past several years, we have had myriad exchanges about how Curt attempts to manage his emotions during forensic interactions. Usually I try to use my relational role as a way to understand his experiences and provide support for him. In turn, we both strive to integrate our careers into a manageable family life. I have deployed the use of the emotion labor lens to understand what Curt has been describing to me concerning his work. According to Hochschild (1983), a person is engaging in emotion labor if her/his job requires, either implicitly or explicitly, the management (i.e., suppressing, evoking) of her/his emotions when interacting with others (i.e., students, other coaches) in order to induce or sustain the desired mindset in others. For example, a forensic coach may learn through socialization and/or past experience that it is necessary to smile while providing a pep talk to students in order to induce excitement and motivation before a competition. She or he might also suppress displays of extreme frustration when students are not adequately

improving during practice sessions. In these organizational interactions, emotion is not considered a reaction to work; it is work because it involves the activity of regulating emotional experiences and expressions so they are congruent with organizational (i.e., forensics) norms or demands (Hochschild, 1983). In this light, emotion labor occurs when emotion management is sold for a wage in public settings. To illustrate, a forensic coach "acts" in certain ways (i.e., suppresses frustration, displays positive emotions) in order to produce appropriate emotional states in others with the motive of constructing and maintaining an educational and competitive climate essential to forensic life. This acting can take the form of altering inner feelings (i.e., deep acting) or outward appearances (i.e., surface acting) in order to meet those goals.

Curt contemplates his appearance: As a forensic coach I started wondering if I was doing more than managing team practices, argument-making, performance critiques and travel schedules. Was I fretting over more than budget balancing? Though I did not know it then, I was. Cristina has introduced me to the lexicon of emotion labor. That is, she has improved my understanding of coaching instances like the one above concerning Kelly and our speech/debate squad. This early illustration demonstrates the way in which I, without immediate reflection, engaged in a type of internal labor so as to affect myself and those around me. I am paid to be an educational and competitive coach. By managing these features, which I use to interface with students, I am likewise using emotion awareness to aid the execution of my job. What is more, such management and control of my facilitative discourse and emotive appearance are a necessity in the sense that I must control my urges to express emergent feelings when such expressions would be of no service to coaching.

Maybe I was just born with a non-expressive face. This particular thought has crossed my mind often. In the short amount of time I have been coaching, I have been given the same moniker as those once-famed pathos-less Greek teachers who, so it seems, taught on porches: "stoic." Some students have elicited for me the somewhat racist title of "chief." Other students have accounted for my bursts of outward energy contrasted to a sometimes somber look by labeling me "bipolar." I have taken all of these titles as an expression of how students view me. I do not assume they are terms of endearment, though they are often cast as such. I can never be sure. What seems apparent now is that these nicknames aid my understanding of the way my squad members perceive me as a coach who tends to show little in the way of outward emotion.

Cristina contextualizes Curt's emotion worries: One thing I have learned during the last few years is that coaches are required to do a lot more than just run practices, drive a van, and judge during tournaments. I have also noticed that every one of these and the other required duties for this profession hold one thing in common: communicating with others, whether they be current students, potential students,

departmental faculty, or other coaches. During reflection, Curt and I have decided that what makes these interactions so challenging is that each requires Curt to portray different emotions appropriate for the situation. Maybe the importance lies not in whether he feels them but what people actually perceive?

The emotion labor literature argues that employees alter inner feelings (i.e., deep acting) and/or outward appearances (i.e., surface acting) in order to conform with organizational expectations for desired emotions in specific types of situations (Hochschild, 1983). The majority of research focuses on how certain occupations require employees to be emotionally positive or negative on the job. For example, a bill collector's job requires she utilize negative emotions (i.e., rudeness) (Hochschild, 1983; Sutton, 1991), while a flight attendant's job requires he portray positive emotions (i.e., smile, pretend the passenger is a guest in his own home) (Hochschild, 1983). Based on our conversations, the organization (i.e., squad) is probably more likely to meet its goals in a given situation if Curt manages his emotions to appear emotionally positive or negative. Would students ever improve if he did not portray some negative emotions, at least to a certain degree, when the students do not perform up to par during practice? Would students ever want to remain with the squad if they never received positive reinforcement from Curt after a job well done? In either case, probably not. As a forensic coach it is not only necessary to be emotionally positive or negative but also neutral. In fact, researchers are starting to point out that it is important to focus on the difficulty of emotional neutrality as a form of emotion labor in certain occupations (i.e., 911 call takers) (Shuler & Sypher, 2000; Tracy & Tracy, 1998). It is easy to see how this plays an important role in Curt's position when you hear his students refer to his stoic displays and witness his concerns to remain objective in certain situations. What we have found ourselves discussing is whether those positive, negative, or neutral emotions he portrays matches those he is really experiencing. What are the consequences of his use of emotion labor?

Curt recognizes theory in his coaching praxis: The distinction between the outward management of emotion and the consequences of that management is an excellent clarification for what it is I do. I know that I have engaged in sounding and looking "neutral" to maintain a positive climate based on a general squad desire to act objectively. Though I do not think I am good at it, I have done the same to provide seemingly thoughtful yet emotionless feedback both at heated practice debates as well as interpretation event rehearsals. I am also well aware of instances where I have had to work at appearing angry with students for degenerate behavior even when I found it quite amusing. I have labored to appear light-hearted during competition trips when personal items weighed heavily on me. All of these instances represent my masking of feelings in order to better accomplish specific tasks, maintain productive interactions, and exhibit professionalism within my coaching role. Masking involves communicating an emotion that is different than what an individual

is actually experiencing (see Anderson & Guerrero, 1998). Although this substitution may be necessary and is often successful, it is still taxing to express an emotion that is very different than what I am feeling.

In another forensics instance from a few years ago, I experienced what it means to confer with another coach concerning the masking of feelings to better accomplish requisite administrative tasks. During the week leading up to a tournament our school hosted, Helen, the other coach, and I split duties we normally shared. We were both working for the same school with the same squad, and so we normally went about coaching and administering together. This particular week we had markedly different agendas and tasks to accomplish. We had predetermined this split course of action and, as well, we had decided to get together once a day to make sure our ducks were in a row. The first few days, things seemed to go smoothly and as planned. On the third and fourth days, our meetings took on a different tenor. Both Helen and I expressed that we were feeling over-burdened and isolated from the squad and our department. While she prepared tournament logistics, I coached our novices. While I was contacting attendant schools about entries, she made copies. Our discussions led us to discover that we both went about our tasks in different ways but that we both worked to maintain a certain level of professionalism while working within department walls, working with secretaries, working with students, and talking on the phone to other coaches. These discussions led us to recognize the basic rules of face-maintenance we deployed as we went about the tournament preparation. In fact, we both had a chuckle about the way we strove to keep both the tournament preparation looking professional and squad practices feeling concerted even though we were working on different schedules. It just so happens that she and I performed the rest of our duties throughout the remainder of the week and through the whole of the tournament.

The following week we had another discussion regarding our previous meetings, the tournament outcomes, and our mode of functioning throughout. Though noting how we both found our oft-clandestine actions humorous, we both also realized that we maintained a type of emotional decorum for the good of the tournament and for the reputation of the school. We wanted tournament business to appear worthwhile and "serious" to the department so that forces therein would know we take our jobs and forensic activities seriously. We wanted other coaches to recognize our tournament focus as serious via the appearance of competent conduct. Thus, while we were laboring in tabulation and coaching scenarios, we were simultaneously laboring emotionally. That same week, Helen and I met with our immediate superior regarding the weekend's fiscal outcomes and our post-tournament responsibilities. I would be remiss if I did not tell you we switched from looking neutral during the tournament to sounding as positive as possible in this later interaction. Helen and I agreed afterward that we both played up the enthusiasm in this

administrative meeting in contradistinction to our private debriefing. In fact, we both felt a bit strange in light of our tandem effort to “paint a good picture” of the tournament event so that our superior would see our efforts as quality work. We both felt we had energized our speech and posture to manifest a sense of excitement about hosting and coaching the event. In another brief and personal conference after the administrative meeting, we both expressed a sense of curiosity at the ways we had managed our “personas” at both the tournament and in the tournament debriefing.

Now while many forensic coaches would agree that “emotions run high” in tabulation rooms across the country from September through April of each year, I am not sure many would come to the conclusion Helen and I did. We were concerned with the way we went about facilitating our tournament and our coaching with a constitutive emotional vector. Moreover, I am not sure most coaches take the time to evaluate the emotional expenditures of coaching, traveling, dealing with superiors, and managing squad personalities as accruing integral features of forensic life.³ Personally, I feel that these kinds of mental and physical activities are ubiquitous across experiences coaches have even while their minds maintain focus on the critical aspects of administration and forensic theory and praxis.

Shuttling this story back home, Cristina helped me think through some of my experiences and aided my understanding of how Helen and I labored to maintain a visual posture for our team and for our school. The ensuing discussion revealed that we had constructed a portal to assess genuine emotions as contrasted against the emotion displays we engaged in at various professional moments. As two individuals operating at the same level in an organization, we had uncovered the ways in which we labored as emotion compatriots for our jobs and for our organization. Though we were exploring our own “work” in such display maneuvers, we only then started to realize how we use this experience as forensic coaches to attain outcomes. According to Cristina’s research, we had used positive and neutral displays in our meeting and at the tournament, and we had used negative displays with each other and with students the week prior. With such operant modes, we had labored emotionally to produce both negative and (but mostly) positive results as we engaged in what it means to be forensic coaches and tournament directors.

Cristina casts a wider net for Curt’s emotion management: What has been

3. The previous footnote amplifies the published accountancy of coaching experiences. Obviously, conversations regarding health have begun. Besides the proliferating panels and roundtables at the National Communication Association Conference held each November, health and well-being conversations have permeated the discursive face of more focused conferences such as the Developmental Conferences on Individual Events, the Pi Kappa Delta Professional Development Conference, and the Developmental Conferences on Forensics. It is our contention that emotion labor and/or emotion work are newly emerging phenomena and very necessary research foci for the greater forensic community of coaches and coaching families.