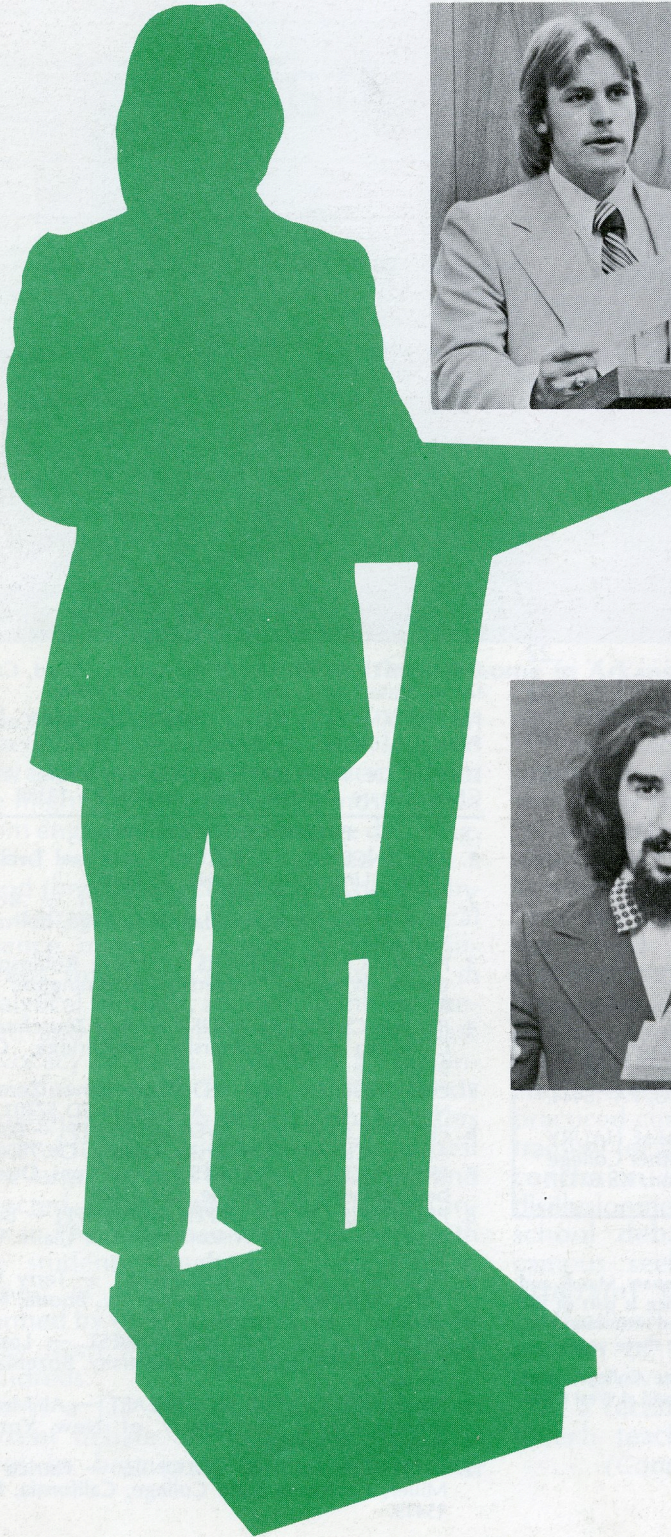
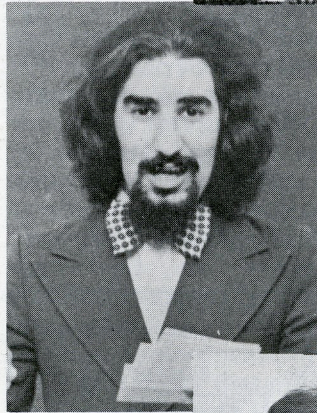
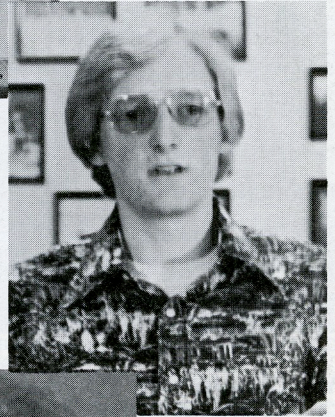
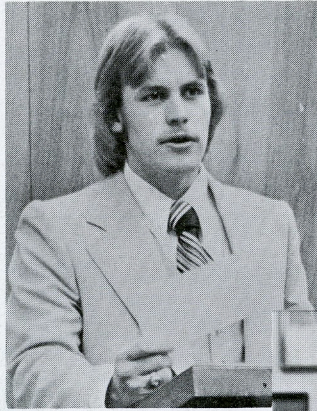


The FORENSIC of Pi Kappa Delta

MARCH 1977



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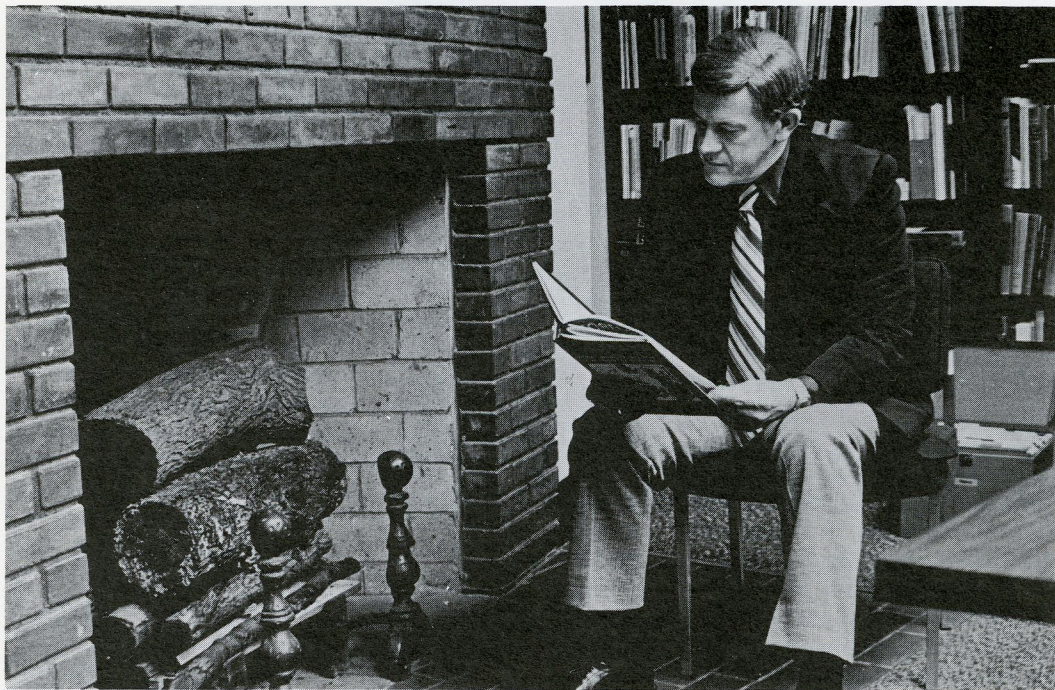
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The President's Message...



Evan Ulrey at home in Arkansas

I am concerned that forensics as practiced today appears to have less and less appeal to the college student whom we might expect to have the most to gain from engaging in intercollegiate debating.

The year of the BYD seemed to be a good time to attract some new people into debate, some pre-law or political science majors to whose academic interests forensics can contribute skill in analytical thought, ability to think-on-the-feet, and the development of articulate advocacy of ideas. I planned a Lincoln-Douglas debate for a student body program, chose two of the senior debaters whom I thought could communicate best to a large general college audience, and selected a topic with broad student interest. The audience identified well with the students, laughed at their humor, gaped at their articulateness, were stunned by their esoteric skills, and stayed away from the debate program by the hundreds.

Is it a fair question to ask whether current debate instruction and practice gives its best practitioners appropriate

skills, most of which have high relevance for and carryover value into business, public life, law, the ministry, or teaching? Very likely forensic skills do carry over into research, speech organization, and delivery of a certain hue. But are the skills in which we train our students relevant to "real life"? Are these skills appropriate to the kind of communication that audiences expect in the pulpit, in the courtroom, in the legislature, in the business conference, or in the classroom?

I regret to say that much interscholastic and intercollegiate debate as taught and practiced currently is not communication training for life. There is evidence for this conclusion in growing student debater disillusionment. Do most excellent high school debaters who come to your campus seek out the college debate program? If they do, what is their motivation? After they have attended a number of tournaments, does their interest grow or sag?

At a recent informal meeting of Ph.D. speech teachers, most of whom were
(Continued on page 14)

DISCUSSION AS CONTEST EVENT

Bob Derryberry

Few doubt the vital place of group discussion in tournament formats. Indeed, one feature of the Pi Kappa Delta National Tournament is the opportunity for students to experience problem solving within groups. Since group formats call for active task group experience and not the mere presentation of a panel or symposium, problems of organization, communication, and fulfilling expectations must be recognized. Volumes of research demonstrate that effective group discussions do not "just happen." Research, knowledge of group process, and communication skills are involved. Yet, the forensic director and student colleagues are often tempted to conclude that "anybody can discuss."

Organizational problems frequently hinder group progress while diminishing member satisfaction. Students of group discussion have long utilized the problem solving steps set forth by the noted educator and philosopher John Dewey. The procedure, adapted from Dewey, typically includes problem statement and limitation, analyzation, presentation of possible solutions, determination of the best solution, and final testing or verification. Though the procedure provides a valuable organization pattern, it is often used in an artificially restrictive manner. As groups in "real life" establish a number of avenues for problem solving, the discussion group must also be able to exercise freedom in organization.

Effective groups, when viewed as they actually operate, are known to "organize" their decision-making in segments or periods. Research done by Fisher, for example, explains that decisions emerge in phases. In an orientation segment, members explore opinions in a preliminary manner; attitudes are uncertain and indefinite. A second period, the conflict phase, is characterized by members supporting definite proposals. Though an emergence phase is marked by some reappearance of ambiguity, disagreement lessens and the final outcome is evident.

In the fourth segment, members reinforce and add support to the achieved decision.¹

Other researchers note additional methods of reaching decisions. For example, Professor Ernest Bormann, citing the findings of Zaleznik and Moment, explains that groups may progress through levels of work. First, members interact personally about the shared problem. In a second level, they begin to suggest reasons to support opinions, but more difficult and vital questions are raised in step three. At level four, participants really become group members; they generate and test ideas.²

To further support his contention that groups do not adhere to a linear model in problem solving, Bormann cites the work of Scheidel and Crowell. They explain that discussions are characterized by spontaneous introduction of ideas with groups following a "reach-test cycle rather than a straight line."³ Bormann concludes, "Decisions emerge from group interaction in the same way that roles emerge and normative behavior develops."⁴

An organizational reminder is then appropriate for students and evaluators of discussion. Certainly group organization should continue to be recognized as a desirable quality in evaluating discussion; however, the group should be free to "work through" its organization. The reflective steps, while valuable and helpful, should not be artificially imposed.

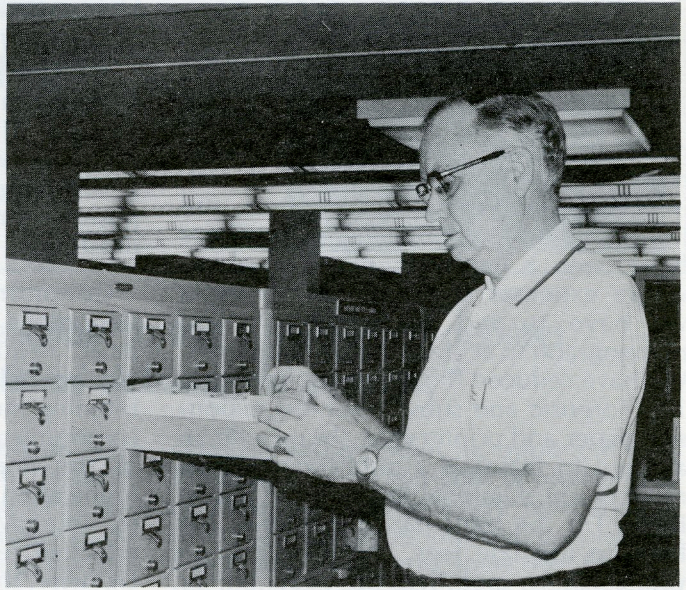
Role "performances" certainly merit acknowledgement and evaluation. Numerous texts explain categories such as task and sustaining roles that contribute to group research, questioning, recording, testing, clarifying, and harmonizing.⁵ These designations are usually noted in contrast to roles that hinder or block group progress.

Though roles should be observed carefully, attention must also be given to why and how roles emerge. Further, one should be cognizant of the extreme

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Bob Derryberry is governor of the Province of the Missouri. He sponsors the Sigma chapter at Southwest Baptist College in Bolivar, Missouri.

Larry Norton — present historian, past president, past secretary-treasurer — probably has spent more time at PKD files than any living or dead member. Now retired from teaching, he is still at the files. In this article he gives readers a review of PKD finances.



In *The Forensic* of February 1917, Editor E. R. Nichols apologizes to the readers for reducing the number of pages in that issue and the one to follow because of "the state of the treasury and the mounting costs of printing." This history has repeated itself periodically over the past sixty years.

It may be advisable to review the financial history of Pi Kappa Delta, since the question of increasing the membership fee is before us this year, and the excellent report on the subject by former Historian D. J. Nabors in the May 1974 *Forensic* will not be available to many active members at this time. Much of the information reviewed by Nabors in his article, "Dollar Days Are Gone," will be repeated here.

With very minor exceptions, the only source of revenue for the Pi Kappa Delta treasury is the membership fee assessed at the time of initiation. The exceptions have been the annual membership dues which were assessed from 1913 to 1924 and then eliminated because they were too difficult to collect; an assessment of chapters to help support the Golden Anniversary Convention in 1963; and a few times the national convention attendance exceeded expectations and a small surplus was added to the treasury. Although conventions have always been planned to be just self-supporting, some have produced a small balance, and a few have resulted in a

deficit. Traditionally, items such as keys, certificates, charters, decals, pennants, initiation keys and triangles, and stationery have been sold to members at cost. Such essential supplies as membership forms, key order forms, brochures, rituals, and copies of the Constitution have been furnished to chapters without charge. Each member has been entitled to a copy of *The Forensic* while in college and for one year after graduation. In 1975 this provision was modified to reduce the number of *Forensics* sent to chapters.

Membership fees have been raised five times in the sixty-four year history of Pi Kappa Delta. Starting at \$1.50 in 1913, the fee was raised to \$2.00 in 1918, to \$4.00 in 1924, to \$5.00 in 1928, to \$7.00 in 1953, and to \$10.00 in 1965. The two major expense items have always been office expenses and *The Forensic*. During the twenty-five year period when the membership fee remained at \$5.00, each of these major items was held to an average of \$1,500 or \$1,600 a year. By the early fifties the cost of *The Forensic* had doubled, but office expenses remained about the same. By 1965 when the fee was increased to \$10.00, the expenses for office operations was still \$1,600, but the cost of publishing *The Forensic* had jumped to more than \$4,000. Since that time the annual cost of *The Forensic* has averaged over \$5,400. Expenses for other printing, the Questions

Committee, and summer Council meetings have steadily increased.

The increase in expenses through the years has been due almost entirely to inflation and not to increased services to members. These inflationary pressures have been met by reducing expenses, adding to the number of new members, and increasing the membership fee. There have been a limited number of places where expenses could be cut. At times we have turned to lithograph and mimeograph to achieve minor reductions. We have reduced the number of pages in *The Forensic* and substituted less expensive paper and printers but always with an attempt to maintain a publication which reflects a professional image for Pi Kappa Delta. For the most part, the answer has been to increase fees. There have been years when membership reached or slightly exceeded the 1,000 per year that national officers have considered necessary in order to maintain a favorable balance in the treasury. There were some early years of rapid growth, typified by the 1,047 new members in 1925. Then throughout the sixties and into the early seventies, membership was very near or sometimes over 1,000 per year. The first significant decline in membership was noted in 1967-68. An all-time high of over 1,200 had been reached in the convention year of 1966-67. In the following year, the number dropped below 1,000 but held around the thousand mark for the next three years, although the downward trend was evident. Each year since 1970-71, the number of new members has failed to reach 1,000, decreasing annually except for a slight improvement in 1975-76. The total for the two-year period 1973-75 was barely over 1,600.

This review cannot end without reporting the dream of every Pi Kappa Delta treasurer — that sometime we shall have a reserve fund of such size that the interest will support the publication of *The Forensic*.

Our purpose in reviewing the financial history is the same as that stated by D. J. Nabors in his 1974 article: "I have considered the role of the National Historian to be that of a resource person, and have submitted this information without recommendation of any kind."

Discussion as Contest Event

(Continued from page 4)

difficulty in evaluating roles, especially in contest discussion. Since they are normally "worked out" and changed as a group progresses, the contest setting imposes restrictions that should be understood.

Communication remains a major signpost in evaluating contest discussion. Basic requirements of clarity, ample volume, adjusted vocabulary, and active listening must be maintained. Students of communication should be keenly aware of the importance of nonverbal communication in discussion. Genuine efforts to improve communication through effective feedback should be rewarded. Likewise, the alert critic certainly "listens" for more than entrances and spoken messages as he evaluates. He is particularly aware of communication networks, their possible reasons for formation, and effects.

Finally, in any task group there are expectations of participants. Contest discussion also implies responsibilities. It assumes an interest that motivates research and concern about the question; it implies a desire to share through active and responsible communication; and it calls for cognizance of the need to be open, probing, and objective. Discussion as a contest event does not have to be artificial or restricted. Group communication and problem solving are too complex to assume that group discussion is a simple event that "anyone can do well."

Notes

¹For a complete explanation of decision emergence, see B. Aubrey Fisher, *Small Group Decision-Making: Communication and Group Process* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974), pp. 140-45.

²Ernest G. Bormann, *Discussion and Group Methods* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1969), pp. 281-82.

³*Ibid.*, p. 283.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 303.

⁵For further classifications, see John K. Brilhart, *Effective Group Discussion* (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company, Publishers, 1967), pp. 15-16.

Forensic Forum...

Bob Beagle



"What is your reaction to the Carter-Ford debates and to political debating in general?"

I thought the Carter-Ford debates were analytically weak and generally uninspiring. In fact, unless the format of future Presidential debates is significantly changed, I see little reason for them to be continued.

A Presidential debate, in addition to providing the opportunity for persuasion, should be informative and analytically enlightening. It should also generate new issues and therefore help set the national agenda. The Carter-Ford debates did little of this.

Essentially they followed the level of most political debating in our country today and became a contest between claims ("Jobs must be our number one priority") and counter-claims ("Inflation must be our number one priority"). Little attempt was made to offer reasons why these claims should be accepted (Why ARE jobs more important than inflation?). Even less attempt was made to analyze and challenge the assumptions which underlay opposing claims. And yet, as we teach in debate, such assumptions are crucial components of an argument and therefore are important to analysis.

A significant cause of this analytical weakness can be traced to the fact that both candidates came into each debate carefully programmed and leaving little to chance. They both had a well laid out game plan which included glib question responses, certain selected data, and predetermined stock appeals. Both men seemed less concerned with adapting to each other than with using the debates as a forum for reaching their intended constituencies. As a result, neither debater

seriously probed what his opponent said. It was a scene reminiscent of old fashioned collegiate debates where both affirmatives and negatives utilized preplanned block arguments and speeches. Overall, the debates were little more than snippets and paste jobs of material taken from stump speeches and media ads. Much of the rhetoric used in the debates was merely a duplication of rhetoric used elsewhere.

The press conference type format which was used also greatly contributed to this lack of clash between Mr. Carter and Mr. Ford. Too many questions were asked and too little time for response was provided, thus fostering superficiality. Failure to provide each speaker with ample rebuttal time further diminished the opportunity for clash and analysis. Predetermined questions by the panelists frequently precluded needed follow-up and also controlled the direction of the debates. In a true debate situation, however, the clash of argument produces follow-up probing and determines direction. Unfortunately, this kind of format is usually followed in most campaign debates.

As a professional in debate, I find the nature of the post-debate commentary upsetting. Little attention has been paid to the traditionally significant aspects of a debate — the arguments used, the nature of the analysis and refutation employed, the quantity and quality of the evidence, and the debating techniques used. Perhaps these things are of little concern to the average voter. If so, why bother

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The Negotiation of Political Debate Formats: Rhetorical Implications and Strategies

Myles Martel

During the past national elections, the popularity of political debate may have reached an all-time high. For the first time in history, a President and two major Vice-Presidential contenders engaged in a series of campaign debates. In addition, forty-nine Representatives and Senators, or eighty-eight percent of those personally surveyed for this study, debated during their 1976 campaigns.¹

This recent popularity of political debating is probably rooted in two factors: the influence of the Presidential debates and the Bicentennial celebration. Political debate in the Bicentennial year was perceived by candidates on all levels as "the American thing to do," as an opportunity to demonstrate both the participatory nature of our democracy and their confidence in the electorate. Congressional, state, and local candidates may have decided to debate in response to the popularity of the Presidential debates.

Another factor, which helps explain the popularity of political debating in general, is the public's reaction to the word *debate*. *Debate* registers a connotation of alluring conflict which brings out the audience; it conveys the impression that the opposing candidates are either not afraid or are, in fact, anxious to expose their records and positions in a confrontative setting.

The ensuing discussion will clarify the meaning of political debate, identify the format options available to the political debater, assess the rhetorical implications of these options, and suggest means by which they can be secured in negotiation with the opponent's representatives. These concerns will be treated as they are likely to appear chronologically in the initial planning stages and negotiations leading up to the first debate. More specifically, this discussion will focus on those rhetorical implications and negotia-

tion strategies related to: 1) handling the challenge to debate, 2) negotiating the format in general, 3) selecting topics, 4) deciding on opening and closing speeches, 5) designing the questioning format, and 6) arranging the physical layout of the debate.

The conclusions presented herein are based on my experience as a consultant to the negotiation of political debates, including a series of Congressional debates, and on the Congressional Debate Survey, a personal research project which involved interviews and questionnaires administered to approximately twelve percent of the Congressmen seeking reelection or to their representatives. Two tables will show the quantitative results of this research.

Political debate has been operationally defined by the candidates and their representatives in numerous ways. Unlike collegiate or scholastic debate in which the debate topic, time limits, speaking responsibilities, and other basic factors are clearly and consistently defined by third parties, political debates are operationally defined during negotiations between the candidates' representatives or solely by the sponsoring organization. Whenever a candidate has the opportunity to select a format, he will ordinarily base his decisions on his relative strengths and weaknesses in relation to those of his opponent.

The principals involved generally apply two criteria to their conception of political debate. First, they regard political debate as involving the joint presence on the same platform of two or more competing candidates. Second, they make an assessment, however rudimentary, of the format's clash potential. That is, regardless

Myles Martel is an associate professor of speech communication at West Chester State College. Dr. Martel, a former director of debate, is a member of the Pennsylvania Iota chapter.