

# The FORENSIC of Pi Kappa Delta

MAY 1978





# The FORENSIC of Pi Kappa Delta

SERIES 63

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## HERE I STAND

Apparently considerable controversy has been aroused as a consequence of some statements appearing in recent issues of this journal which have been critical of contemporary debate. That is not altogether unhealthy, I believe. Rarely does one side in a dispute have a corner on the truth. Moreover, when it comes to discovering the "Truth" and arriving at sound conclusions there is no better tool than reasoned argument. Surely if anyone should believe that, we should. So I hope to see more discussion and debate about the status of contemporary forensics, and I would hope to see some of that debate, both sides of it, in the pages of this magazine.

However, I do wish to take this opportunity to clarify my position and to correct any false impressions which may have been made by my remarks or by the remarks of others.

First, I want to emphasize that I still believe every word I wrote in my January message. I am troubled by much of what takes place in many of the debate rounds I observe. Furthermore, as president of the

nation's largest forensic honorary, I believe that I have an obligation to voice my concerns. I could not in good conscience remain silent. However, in stating my views I hope that I have not given anyone the impression that I presume to speak for every member of Pi Kappa Delta. I certainly do not, anymore than the president of any other organization can presume to speak for every member of it. I encourage those who disagree with me to speak out. I do hope, though, that my position is consistent with the views of the majority of our members. After all, my position was hardly a secret at the time I was elected to this office. But if the majority do not agree with me, I expect to be taken to task. I do not seek to lead Pi Kappa Delta where it does not wish to go. My intention is to raise this issue, tell you where I stand, ask for your support, and wait for your reactions.

I also hope that no one thinks my remarks in the January *Forensic* were a personal attack on anyone in particular or an indictment of all debaters in general.

*(Continued on page 9)*



# THE ROLE OF SOCIETAL CONTEXT IN PROPOSITION ANALYSIS

James I. Luck, James W. Paulsen, and F. Scott McCown

The learning experiences of thousands of students involved in collegiate debate revolve around a proposition chosen for a full year of examination. Consequently, the meaning of the resolution takes on great significance. Deliberations on what falls within the purview of the question begin with the topic's announcement and extend through the final round of the National Debate Tournament and beyond.<sup>1</sup> What may or may not be argued under a given proposition is an issue that has been labeled "topicality." The Committee on Intercollegiate Discussion and Debate of the Speech Communication Association has, beginning with the 1976-77 year, supplied with the topic an official statement of parameters. This decision reflects, at least in part, a dissatisfaction with the current interpretation of resolutions. This article will briefly examine current methods of proposition analysis and propose the use of a neglected concept, societal context.

In overview it may be suggested that there has been a generally unrecognized schism between theory and practice in conceptualization of the function of the national debate resolution. Is it a *proposition* (defined simply as "a controversy"<sup>2</sup>), or is it a *topic*? Although the vast majority of debate texts treat the resolution as a proposition,<sup>3</sup> ordinary usage (typified by use of the term *topicality*) seems to treat the resolution as a topic, providing only the general subject for discussion and a direction of change. The implications of this dichotomy cannot be overemphasized. While the former interpretation views the proposition as a *conclusion* about a controversy, the latter sees it as the *starting point* for discussion. James Unger describes the practical approach to resolution-as-topic.

Debate is primarily a debate about plans: competing policy systems. It is not a debate about the proposition. . . . If I might analogize

to the law court, it seems to me, it is the agreement of the plan with the proposition that gives the affirmative team standing to sue. It is what brings it in acceptably in court. We find out whether in fact this particular case is justiciable or not by determining whether it meets the perimeters of the given law, in this case the proposition that is before us. . . . Once that issue is determined, and it is a critical issue, [then] . . . our entire debate does in fact focus in one way or another on the plan. We do very much, I would suggest to you, for all practical terms bid right by the proposition and we begin the discussion of . . . the need for that particular plan, not the need for that particular proposition.<sup>4</sup>

Bernard Brock added that "the key thing is the relationship between the resolution and the plan . . . After you decide that a plan falls within the resolution, then the debate is over the plan."<sup>5</sup>

To view the matter in a different light, while standard debate texts would advise the advocate to discover through research the general area of controversy which inspired the resolution — and consequently the issues inherent in that area — the resolution-as-topic approach would not seek to discern the context of a proposition but would treat the proposition itself as the context for the plan. While the second approach would place strictures only on the plan, the first might impose requirements on the need area as well.

The most common current approach to discussing topicality issues is that of definition of terms, either alone or in semantic units. A standard reference work, usually a dictionary or legal dictionary, is normally enlisted to furnish the meaning of an individual term in dispute. But defining words in the absence of con-

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text is very unsatisfactory, as "words . . . may have different meanings in different contexts."<sup>6</sup> Ogden and Richards agree, characterizing the dictionary as "a list of substitute symbols. It says in effect: 'This can be substituted for that in such and such circumstances.' It can do this because in these circumstances and for suitable interpreters the references caused by the two symbols will be sufficiently alike."<sup>7</sup>

It is therefore vital to establish a context for the words before any meaningful definition can be derived. Ogden and Richards conclude, "All definitions are essentially *ad hoc*. They are relevant to some purpose or situation, and consequently are applicable only over a restricted field or 'universe of discourse.'"<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, treating the proposition as a topic — a context from which potential plans may be derived — is internally self-defeating. One must define the terms in order to determine the context, but the context must be determined in order to define the terms. The natural result is an uncontrollable crazy quilt combination of isolated words and phrases, fully justifying a description of the process as "an exercise which is no less silly than a Medieval syllogistic debate."<sup>9</sup>

A far more productive method of analysis would result from maintaining the conception of the resolution as a proposition. Not only would recognizing a context and background for the proposition render the process of definition sensible, but the context could itself serve to define the area of controversy. Windes and Hastings have addressed the subject of resolution formation in considerable depth. They suggest that development of propositions follows an essentially similar process that can be observed in the evolution of almost all public controversies.<sup>10</sup> They reduce this process to ten steps, reproduced here in abbreviated form.

1. Individual concern and anxiety over a threat to security.
2. Relation of threat to problem, attachment of causation.
3. Communication of problem to primary groups.
4. Communication by primary groups to others beyond groups; develop-

ment of opinion leaders.

5. Assumption of leadership by persons not in primary groups.
6. Arousal of public opinion by the mass media.
7. Resumption of face-to-face discussion in multiple groups of original problem placed in larger context.
8. Formulation of individual and group attitudes and opinions.
9. Channeling of problem alternatives into proposition.
10. Public debate on the proposition; advocates; resolution of problem; dissolution of public opinion.<sup>11</sup>

In this ten-step process, advocacy in the form of public debate represents the final phase of the evolution of a proposition. Analysis by the debater, then, begins with an awareness of and deference to the context of the proposition as a necessary precondition of any reasonable definition or understanding. Ehninger and Brockriede agree, noting that the advocate's "task is to 'locate' rather than 'invent' [the issues] because they inhere in the proposition itself and are there to be found."<sup>12</sup> Windes and Hastings elaborate:

Every proposition possesses a background or history all its own; the proposition did not suddenly happen; it emerged from a complex process of controversy evolution. From the inception of a situation which created basic original concerns to the focusing of those concerns through the proposition, this evolutionary development demands the study of the advocate. The advocate must be aware of the evolution, for without the perception and knowledge such a study results in, he would work in an atmosphere of relative ignorance. . . . The evolution of a proposition represents the "plot" for the advocate; his advocacy is only the climax or the final act. Unfortunately, in society there are too many "last-act advocates" who attempt to carry out their responsibilities partially or largely unaware of the "plot" of the proposition they defend. They see only the end product, not the processes . . .<sup>13</sup>

Assuming the significance of context to the defining or understanding of proposition, a critical question in the specialized arena of academic debate is that of the *relevant* context. Some may argue that the resolution does not follow the Windes and Hastings process of evolution but rather is formulated by a committee and adopted for discussion by the debate



community. Would the relevant context, then, be the academic debate community, the committee charged with wording the topic, or the society as a whole?

Certainly a case can be made for the debate community as the relevant context. Debaters and coaches are the segment of society that actually establishes the proposition, and they are also the segment of society that suffers the consequences of faulty definitions and analysis. A. Tennyson Williams, while not endorsing this view, describes it well:

... perhaps debate propositions should mean what the debate community says they mean. Thus, while indirect legalization of marijuana would not appear to an outsider to be controlling the gathering and utilization of information, it does so appear to the community using the terms. ... Whether I am a judge concerned with literal definition or with the spirit, I must realize that both derive from the sense of the debate community. If a particular case is accepted by the debate community generally, then I should not decide it is not topical (unless of course there is a winning negative argument to that effect). This may well mean that I may vote against a case on topicality early in the year and reject the same negative arguments at a later tournament, once I find that the debate community has generally decided that this case is a reasonable interpretation of the resolution.<sup>14</sup>

Whether practiced consciously or unconsciously, this resolutorial context is undeniably in operation. It is axiomatic that interpretations of topicality generally become more standardized and liberal during the course of the year. Brock endorses this contextual approach, arguing that "the debate community has operationalized the language quite well."<sup>15</sup> Additionally, one recommendation of the National Developmental Conference on Forensics calls for regional seminars during the year to openly discuss interpretations of the proposition.<sup>16</sup>

Considering the context to be the debate community has little to recommend it. Briefly, it virtually mandates a degree of arbitrary judging in order to adequately "direct" the topic; it offers no *pre facto* guides for participants and only the sketchiest of *post facto* controls; and it does not necessarily serve even to change the attitude of specific teams. Debaters who lose a "topicality ballot" to a "conservative" judge are likely to respond by

developing a secondary case just for him and his ilk, "striking" him from panels when possible, or accepting the statistical hazard of a later loss rather than modifying their interpretation of the proposition. Finally, it should be observed that the current, often bizarre interpretations of resolutions have developed despite this framework.

A second possible context, and one that received considerable scrutiny this past year, is the intended meaning of the actual framers of the resolution, the Committee on Intercollegiate Discussion and Debate. This was done through the attachment of an official context — parameters — to the resolution. The efficacy of formal parameters, on the basis of a year's experience, would seem doubtful. On the strength of personal observation, it appears that the parameters were rarely appealed to, but when invoked they were more likely to be cited by an affirmative team attempting to support a liberal definition of terms than by their opponents. Perhaps a single sentence is not specific enough (Alan Nichols, an advocate of parameters in the 1940's, suggested that a minimum of several hundred words would be necessary<sup>17</sup>), or perhaps this is a demonstration of the truth of Brock's warning: "No committee can dictate or stipulate definitions or interpretations very well because debaters will shift their attention from the word in the resolution to the stipulation. They would shift the debate from one area to another, so pragmatically it wouldn't work."<sup>18</sup>

The most telling indictment of official parameters, however, is that they serve to legitimize the notion of the context of the proposition as being within the debate community, rather than in society as a whole. The report of the National Developmental Conference noted that "opponents of the resolution [on parameters] argued that ... if the resolution achieved one of its objectives, the responsibility of the debater to analyze the proposition would be usurped."<sup>19</sup> Concurrently, the opportunity to use this analysis in a determination of propositionality is also forfeited. The strictures proposed in the suggested parameters for



the 1977-78 resolutions clearly demonstrate this extreme.

Were it not for the fact that an intercollegiate debate proposition is artificially formulated, the obvious "best choice" for an appropriate context would be that of the "real world." It can be posited, however, that the artificial elements of resolution formulation should not serve to bar treatment as a real-world proposition.

First, it would seem that if we were to agree that the resolution is an arbitrary agglomeration of words, understandable and analyzable only in the rarified atmosphere of interscholastic debate, then there could be no rational basis for using statements by authorities and factual material drawn from the realm of public policy-making. Additionally, there would be no justification for the development and application of models of argument based on real-world situations (legislative, judicial, or scientific — or "reasonable man," for that matter), and no reason to analyze the effects of the proposition if enacted in the real world.

Second, although the procedure used by the Topic Selection Committee does not duplicate the process described by Windes and Hastings, it certainly approximates the real world. One need only consider the groundwork involved in determining whether the areas selected for voting represent substantial policy issues (on which a large amount of written material is available) to conclude that even if a proposition does not arise *from* an actual controversy, it is certainly a conclusion *about* some real-world issue, with a clear societal context. Most, if not all, of the eight steps preceding proposition development will certainly occur in any adequate selection process.

The content of past topics and the current effort to provide parameters clearly indicate that we wish to address problems which do have societal context. The Topic Selection Committee process might be compared to a Congressional committee which formulates a bill for ultimate consideration by the full Congress. It is the concerns of the populace which are manifested in the process that produces the bill, and it is the intent of the com-

mittee and the purpose of the legislative system for Congress to address those concerns when it focuses on the bill.

As a final consideration, if the societal context of the proposition is rejected as an appropriate concept, students of forensics would be placed in the position of wasting the vast majority of their analytical learning experience on a process with absolutely no application outside the milieu of academic debate. Refusal to teach and use analytical techniques and procedures common to other situations would subvert the academic value of the activity. The conferees at the National Developmental Conference recognized that "... the traditional practice of debating propositions of public policy has many educational purposes, and they particularly endorsed its value as a means of preparing people to participate as advocates or critics in situations in which policy decisions must be made. The theory and practice of debating propositions of public policy in interscholastic competition, therefore, should be based upon sound theory and practice appropriate for realistic policy deliberations."<sup>20</sup>

It is evident, of course, that "societal context" bears more than a passing resemblance to the thoroughly discredited "spirit of the resolution" form of topicality argument. Certainly the bases for the two arguments are very similar. It must be pointed out in defense of societal context, however, that the nearly universal denigration of "spirit of the resolution" stemmed from its ritualistic use to invoke judge prejudice rather than appeal to reason. Even when attempts were made to advance the argument seriously, the underlying substantive issues were rarely reached. An appropriate question to be asked, however, might be whether the determination of societal context could be made any more substantive an argument than "spirit of the resolution." If judges were willing to accept reasonable attempts to demonstrate such a context, then the energies of debaters would turn in the direction of societal context. Substantive arguments could be expected to naturally and quickly develop.

Some situations would be relatively un-



ambiguous. As an example, the "supply and utilization of energy" topic had a relatively clear context. Few would seriously object to a judge or a debater who would argue that during an Arab oil embargo, with natural gas shortages causing mass unemployment, and the words "energy crisis!" screaming from the cover of every major news magazine (not to mention tournaments cancelled because of gasoline shortages), the proposal of a national nutrition program, gun control, returnable bottles, or sodium light bulbs as a crime control device quite probably would be outside the societal context of the resolution. On the "land use" topic, fewer still would accept heroin maintenance, prison overcrowding, or bail reform as being any of the social conditions crying for land use controls. Likewise, the qualifications of ambulance attendants or chiropractors probably do not rank high on the list of action priorities of any of the major consumer product safety organizations. There would certainly be many shadow areas that would leave a great deal to the judge's discretion. This kind of a *priori* judgment cannot be defended as a fair or adequate process. But conversely, can any system which not only allows but virtually mandates outré "examples of the resolution" be similarly defended?

Some potential guidelines, however, for specifying the appropriate societal context of a resolution come to mind. A debater could easily demonstrate the relevant context of a proposition by indicating the type of articles found under the appropriate subject headings in social science, legal, government, and popular indices. He might consult speeches by experts in the field. The Congressional Research Service annually publishes a bibliography and list of readings related to the collegiate topic. Certainly the opinion of the policy research arm of the United States Congress might provide a hint of the appropriate context for the resolution.

On the other hand, a simple and effective test might be required of the affirmative team. Do the subject matter experts cited by the affirmative team in defense of their particular policy option

perceive themselves as being involved in the controversy surrounding the resolution? On the consumer product safety topic, would the advocates of marijuana legalization see themselves as involved in the product safety controversy or, rather, the illicit drug controversy? Do they contribute regularly to consumer publications? Do they testify at the Senate hearings on the subject of consumer product safety? Would they attend and contribute to conferences and seminars on the subject? In short, do people who talk about the plan or the need it addresses think of it as a problem which would result in the resolution? Should the affirmatives be unable to demonstrate that the authorities they cite perceive themselves as being consciously involved in the subject area indicated by the resolution, the approach could probably be safely labeled nonresolutional.

Certainly this article has not illuminated all of the issues raised by the analysis of a proposition's societal context; however, the authors hope that it will serve as a stimulus to a thoughtful reconciliation of theory and practice in topicality argumentation. Whatever tools are selected, however, let the end be the training of effective advocates for a future in real-world policy deliberation, not as "last-act advocates."

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>See particularly David W. Shepard, "Burden of What?" *JAF*, 9, No. 3 (Winter 1973), 361-63; Kathy Corey, "The Spirit of '72: A Response to David Shepard," *JAF*, 9, No. 3 (Winter 1973), 364-66; and William Demougeot, "Intercollegiate Debate: Intrapersonal, But Still Unrealistic," *ST*, 21, No. 2 (March 1972), 135-37.

<sup>2</sup>Russel R. Windes and Arthur Hastings, *Argumentation and Advocacy* (New York: Random House, 1965), pp. 35-36.

<sup>3</sup>For the purposes of this discussion, the question of whether the question is technically a *proposition* or a *hypothesis* is not addressed. A delineation of the issues may be found in David W. Shepard, "Logical Propositions and Debate Resolutions," *CSSJ*, 11 (1959-60), 186-90, and Alan Lichtman and Daniel Rohrer, "Critique of Zarefsky on Presumption," in *Proceedings of the National Conference on Argumentation* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University, 1973).

<sup>4</sup>James J. Unger, "Perimeters of the National Debate Resolution, A Forum," Owen Coon Debate Tournament, Northwestern University, February 10,



1973, in *The New Debate: Readings in Contemporary Debate Theory*, ed. Robert J. Branham, I (Washington, D.C.: Information Research Associates, no date), 63-64.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>6</sup>Hubert G. Alexander, *Meaning in Language* (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman Company, 1969), p. 87.

<sup>7</sup>C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1923), p. 207.

<sup>8</sup>Ogden and Richards, p. 111.

<sup>9</sup>Shepard, "Burden of What?" p. 362.

<sup>10</sup>Windes and Hastings, p. 47.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>12</sup>Douglas Ehninger and Wayne Brockriede, *Decision by Debate* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1970), p. 212.

<sup>13</sup>Windes and Hastings, pp. 37-38.

<sup>14</sup>Cited by William Reynolds, in *Forensics As Communication*, ed. James H. McBath (Skokie, Illinois: National Textbook Company, 1975), p. 114.

<sup>15</sup>Branham, p. 56.

<sup>16</sup>McBath, p. 114.

<sup>17</sup>Alan Nichols, *Discussion and Debate* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1941), p. 117.

<sup>18</sup>Branham, p. 55.

<sup>19</sup>McBath, p. 28.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 20.

## President's Message

(Continued from page 3)

They were certainly not offered in that spirit. Indeed, in that column I took pains to try to avoid that impression. I understand, however, that some readers may have been offended not so much by what I said as by what Michael Volpe said in his article which also appeared in the January *Forensic*. Permit me a few observations about that matter.

The article represented Professor Volpe's position, not necessarily the position of Pi Kappa Delta. Indeed, I cannot agree with everything which Mr. Volpe says. For example, I violently disagree with his statement that today's debaters are ignorant and unintelligent. I simply do not believe that. (I doubt seriously whether Mr. Volpe really believes that either.) But that does not mean that such a statement ought never to appear in *The Forensic*. The pages of *The Forensic* seem to me to be an appropriate forum for such comments because if, in fact, they are typical of what those outside the forensic community are thinking, we ought to hear them. I think Volpe's article should be required reading for every student engaged in forensics, not because every word he says is true, but because there is enough truth in the article to give us pause. Granted, he may overstate his case. (Hyperbole is one tool in the rhetorical arsenal.) But he says some things which, in my judgment, are worth reading and considering. As to his criticism of specific

passages from the official text of an NDT final round, I do not view them as personal attacks. As published utterances they should be able to withstand published analysis and criticism. Perhaps Mr. Volpe's comments are abrasive. No doubt they could have been considerably softened. But it was their very intensity which drew my attention to them in the first place and persuaded me that they should receive circulation among the forensic community. I sincerely regret that anyone found the article personally offensive or threatening, but if he did I encourage that person to speak out in rebuttal. The editor of *The Forensic*, I am certain, would welcome such dialogue.

In summary, then, I meant nothing personal in my stand against what I perceive to be abuses in academic debate. My comments and, I trust, the comments of Mr. Volpe were not meant to polarize and alienate but to open up discussion and dialogue. I sincerely hope I have not offended anyone. Nonetheless, I stand by my statement in the January *Forensic*. I hope that we in Pi Kappa Delta can debate this crucial issue openly and rationally without acrimony, for if we cannot, then who can?

**The Cover:** A modern version of old-fashioned spring rug beating — Robin Weyand, debate coach from Glassboro State (NJ) College, beats dust out of PKD pennants. Editor Keefe got her head together with Brian Walker, speech and drama editor of Prentice-Hall, for this one. Allegra Sensenig of West Chester State College did the photography.



# Forensic

## Focus on . . .

John Bliese

Marshall University

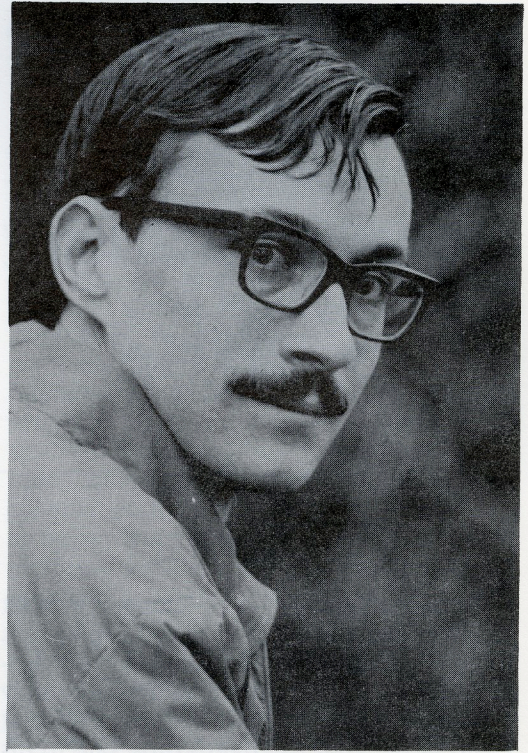
*The Forensic* salutes a director of forensics for his constructive response to its criticisms of debate.

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The pages of *The Forensic* have recently been full of criticisms of contemporary debate practices, especially at the national level of competition. The January issue, for example, opens with President Harte calling for reform. A couple of pages later Professor Volpe condemns the practices of debaters. Next, Professor Hufford finds a number of faults. In all, about a third of the issue is devoted to criticism.

The Pi Kappa Deltans who are so upset focus on a limited number of things currently done in "big time" debate: the rapid rate of delivery, the massive amounts of evidence gathered and read in each round, and the tendency to run affirmative cases that are at best on the outer fringes of the proposition. While I have found many pages of such criticism in *The Forensic* of recent years, I have come across very little about other levels of debate and almost no constructive suggestions for improvement. Therefore, I would like to consider the state of debate and to suggest an alternative which Pi Kappa Delta should take the initiative in implementing.

Most of the objections to national debate center around the fact that it is no longer an exercise in communication. President Harte quotes Professor Unger's statement that "you can't invite a large audience to a debate. Debaters live in a world of their own, so to speak." He then calls for reform of our activity. Now, it certainly is true that under the influence of the "national style," debate has become a relatively narrow activity, with no appeal for outside audiences. How-



ever, that fact itself hardly establishes a need for reform. We do thousands of things in the academy that are not spectator sports. One need only scan titles of dissertations, journal articles, research projects, and graduate seminars to see that we spend much time and many dollars on activities that could equally be indicted for not "communicating" with the masses. Few dissertations become best sellers, but we do not therefore call for reform of the custom of writing them. The facts that national debate goes at 250 words per minute, requires incredible amounts of research, and is no longer attractive to outside audiences are just that: facts, not indictments.

Much of the criticism is based on very limited knowledge. For example, Professor Volpe's article is a reaction to judging at just one high school tournament and reading the transcript of the 1976 National Debate Tournament final round. Other objections seem to be based on misunderstandings. Volpe does not seem to grasp the strategy of that disadvantage Kansas presented in first negative. (It won them the debate!) Nor does he understand the conditional counterplan. (It is not a "heads



I win, tails you lose" argument.) Harte objects on irrelevant grounds to debaters asking him to "call for the evidence." Why shouldn't a judge see the exact wording of disputed testimony? After all, Harte himself had just previously objected to claims that go beyond the evidence!

Furthermore, some debate practices which clearly merit indictment are never even mentioned in *The Forensic*. One has only to think of the custom of presenting patently ridiculous disadvantages that are based on a chain of a dozen or so tenuous causal links, all treated as absolute.

Many of the criticisms in *The Forensic* surely seem to be sour grapes reactions. Are our debaters that much better? Granted, there are national teams that present thirty pieces of evidence and no analysis at all. But I remember a more consistent team, one rated superior at the Philadelphia National Tournament, that not only had no analysis but no evidence as well! If such a team could be rated superior at PKD Nationals, our own debating is hardly without fault.

In themselves, most of the practices of so-called national debaters do not disturb me. But the narrowing of the activity does bother me because it has excluded many bright students from the potential benefits of debate training. It is difficult to train novices and then take them to tournaments: they are almost guaranteed to lose their negative rounds, simply because they have not researched all the nooks and crannies of the current super-broad topics. Naturally, most novices soon get discouraged and drop out of debate. There are also many students who like debate and could benefit from the training four years of competition could give them but who do not want to sell their souls to the activity. They do not want to do research for thirty or forty hours per week in order to be prepared on the negative. All too often they drop out of debate altogether.

It seems to me that we do not need a reform of national debate to make it communicative again, but a *supplement* for it to broaden the attractiveness of argumentative competition. We need a form of debate in which a mere mortal with limited time can participate, a form such

that the relevant arguments can be presented at somewhat slower speaking rates. This means, above all, a *narrow proposition*. (If it is a policy proposition, it should specify the plan.) It also means that this same narrow topic must be debated at a *series* of tournaments, not just at one off-topic tournament. Students have no motive to do serious research for just one tournament.

In the West, an attempt has been made to provide such an option in the form of CEDA debate. In October the Cross Examination Debate Association selects a narrow topic. Schools which are members of the Association normally have three debate divisions at their tournaments: varsity and novice (both on the national topic) and CEDA (debating the Association's topic). CEDA keeps cumulative records of the results of its division, and at the final tournament of the season it awards a national championship trophy.

CEDA debate is thus a supplement for national debate, and, while it is far from perfect, it at least attempts to eliminate those factors which discourage students from participating. Unfortunately, it is only available in the West. Therefore, I propose that we in Pi Kappa Delta go and do likewise — select a narrow topic (perhaps with a relatively short season) and encourage all PKD schools to add a division for this proposition at their tournaments. I suggest that the CEDA topic be adopted for the benefit of those schools in the West.

It is time for us to quit complaining and to do something constructive to restore debate as a viable activity for larger numbers of students.

#### IMPORTANT NOTICES

1. Reminder to Governors: Please make sure that copies of minutes, financial statement, and awards are sent to the National Office.
2. We are still accepting Fall Reports.
3. THIS IS A LAST REMINDER TO SEND IN CHAPTER FEES OF \$15.00. Several chapters have not sent in their fees yet.
4. LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP FEES WERE RAISED BY THE 1977 NATIONAL CONVENTION TO \$15.00, EFFECTIVE AUGUST 1, 1977. We are still receiving \$10.00 memberships.

Theodore O. H. Karl  
National Secretary-Treasurer