



# California Speech Bulletin

*California High School Speech Association*

<b>CHSSA Executive Council / CHSSA Mission Statement .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Letter from CHSSA President Sharon Prefontaine .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Letter from Editor Marcus Walton .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2009 Nationals Report .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2009 State Tournament Results .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>“How Coaching Forensics Made Me A Better Writing Coach” By Lynette Williamson .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>“Is There A Generation Gap In Speech?” By Linda Darling .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>“Where Are They Now?” By Ron Underwood .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Speaking Across the Curriculum Ordering Information .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>“Lessons Learned From The Kung Fu Panda” By Mikendra McCoy .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>CHSSA Membership Contact Information .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2009-10 Assessment Form .....</b>	<b>19</b>



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# CHSSA MISSION STATEMENT

*The California High School Speech Association will encourage, support and sponsor both curricular and co-curricular oral communication which will empower students to be productive participants in American society and the global community To accomplish this, we adopt the following goals:.*

- 1. Every student will participate in communication activities which promote self-worth and self-esteem.*
- 2. Every student will develop the critical and analytical thinking skills necessary for academic success.*
- 3. Every student will develop the skills necessary for success in a competitive environment.*
- 4. Every student will develop the interpersonal skills necessary for productive employment.*
- 5. Every student will develop the oral communication skills necessary for effective public presentations.*
- 6. Every student will develop the listening skills necessary for reaching informed decisions.*
- 7. Every student will develop skills necessary for the peaceful resolution of conflict.*
- 8. Every student will develop interpersonal skills necessary for establishing understanding among members of a diverse society.*
- 9. Every student will develop the communication skills necessary for effective & active participation in a democratic society.*
- 10. Every student will demonstrate ethical responsibility in the acquisition and practice of communication skills.*

# THOUGHTS ON SPEECH EDUCATION AND COMPETITION FROM CHSSA PRESIDENT

sharon prefontaine

**A**s president of CHSSA, I am liaison to the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) and CHSSA secretary, Chuck Ballingall, is our voting representative to the National Debate Topic Selection Committee. A day-long session for state organizations of speech and theater precedes the debate topic selection meeting. I would like to share some of what I have learned from the most recent meeting held at Grand Island, New York.

For many years, the means by which the national policy debate topic was chosen was a bit of a mystery to me. The topic selection process is hosted by NFHS. Having attended the meetings, I have witnessed the in-depth academic research and discourse that leads to the selection of the several topics upon which our coaches vote. However you might feel about the topics that we have used in policy debate, be assured that only through careful deliberation are the topics offered and only through our coaches voting is the annual topic selected.

In some states the interscholastic activities associations include music, theater, speech and debate as well as athletics. As a result, speech and debate representatives have more control over speech and debate throughout their states than do independent speech and debate organizations such as ours. This notion of control of our activity in state education is appealing. Having some voice in educational policy-making (unlikely ever to be on par with athletics but closer than we are now) is worth consideration and discussion.

With the perpetual demands made on speech educators, it is sometimes a difficult task to step away and view the activity from a different perspective. Some food for thought from other states:

- Texas and some other states are talking seriously about using computers in Extemp prep.
- The state of Wyoming reimburses schools for all tournament transportation costs including travel to the State and National tournaments. [I know, they have a budget in that state.]
- Liability issues, including release forms for transportation and medical treatment, need to be carefully examined with relation to compliance with state law and local restrictions.
- For those who cannot or do not want to travel, long-distance debate is being modeled. You would be able to debate internationally using this system. (See Utah debates on YouTube.)

With school opening and the competition season beginning, we will likely do what we have always done the way we have always done it – whatever system we use has worked and has brought us success. Still, opportunities do present themselves to discuss how we might improve our capacity in our individual schools, and our state, to increase awareness of the educational importance of speech and debate for all students and to preserve, promote, and protect both speech education and co-curricular competition.

I hope that you and your students have a successful year.

*Sharon F. Prefontaine*  
*President, CHSSA*

# FROM THE EDITOR

marcus walton

## Part-time Coaches Might Be Key To Expanding Competitive Opportunities

*By Marcus Walton*

If you ask just about any educator, parent or politician, speech and debate is one of those worthwhile activities that every child should be able to access. Unfortunately, there aren't enough teachers willing to coach the activity.

Unlike football, where teams without a single win in three years receive an overabundance of applicants, quality public school speech and debate programs seem destined to die when their coaches retire, quit, get laid off due to budget cuts or are told they are no longer "highly qualified" speech and debate teachers due to reputed educational "reforms."

As coaches, we often cite a lack of financial resources as a major reason for losing programs. That is only part of the problem. The largest problem is simply a lack of teachers willing to coach the activity. In my school district, there was money, the support of a superintendent and the support of principals to start competitive speech and debate programs in four high schools. After a year of very positive competitions and excited students, all four high schools lost their coaches due to moves or budget cuts. That was four years ago. Of those four high schools, only one continues to compete; and only because I began coaching those students in addition to my primary coaching responsibility. When we found the rare teacher willing to coach, budget cuts eliminated his position.

What is the solution? How do we sustain programs? Of course resources will help. A commitment to offering speech and debate classes would be not only a great way to help sustain programs, but improve the critical thinking, organization and test scores of thousands of students. Putting as much emphasis on academic competition as athletic ones would be a good start.

But those are long-term suggestions that rely on forces outside of our control. And none of those things work without committed teachers. If teachers aren't willing to take on the role as speech and debate coach, then how do we grow the activity?

The answer is off-campus coaches. Former debaters who have become attorneys; parents who want to support their children; college students (graduate, and yes, undergraduate) are all possibilities. CHSSA and school leaders need to welcome these part-time coaches with as much enthusiasm as schools welcome the football coach. There should be professional development opportunities and an attempt to welcome them into the school and forensics communities.

These people who give up their nights, weekends and vacations to help provide an uniquely valuable educational experience to our students, are a valuable part of the forensics family and educational community at large.

*Marcus Walton is editor of The Bulletin and is a walk-on coach at C.K. McClatchy and West Campus High Schools in Sacramento.*

# Sweet Home Alabama

## ...Californians take advantage of Southern Hospitality

California schools excelled at the recent National Forensic League National Speech Tournament in Birmingham, AL this past June. Students from the Golden State took home national championship trophies in five events and 17 students appeared in final rounds.

**Ismael Williams** and **Drake Pough** of James Logan won Duo Interpretation; **Evan Larson** of Bellarmine won U.S. Extemp; **Sean Hernandez** and **Reid Ehrlich-Quinn** of Damien won Policy Debate; **Anuv Ratan** of Claremont won Extemp Commentary; **Vanessa Garcia** of Fullerton won Prose and **Vijay Sridharan** of Bellarmine was named the tournament's top speaker in policy debate, winning the Phyllis Flory Barton Debate Speaker Award.

Other notable accomplishments:

**Bellarmino College Prep**, coached by **Kim Jones**; **Gabrielino High School**, coached by **Derek Yuill**; and **James Logan High School**, coached by **Tommie Lindsey** received the Schwan's School of Excellence Award in Speech.

**Bellarmino** and **James Logan** received the Schwan's School of Excellence Award in Debate.

**Bellarmino** and **James Logan** also received the Schwan School of Excellence Award in All Events.

In Humorous Interpretation, **Ryan Vasquez**

of Bellarmine placed second. Vasquez also won the University of Alabama "Bama" Bowl for winning the final round.

In U.S. Extemp, **Taman Narayan** of Leland High School took second. Narayan also won the Mr. & Mrs. Donus D. Roberts United States Extemp President's Bowl for winning the final round.

In International Extemp, **Will Rafey** of Bellarmine took second place and **Jacob Baker**, also of Bellarmine, took third.

In Policy Debate, **Patrick Berger** and **Justin Chan** of James Logan placed second. **Sejal Parekh** and **Chander Ramesh** of St. Francis - Mountain View placed fourth. **Eric Johnson** of Bellarmine was named second speaker.

In Lincoln-Douglas, **Aparna Ramanan** of Leland placed third.

In Expository Speaking, **Madeleine Heil** of Presentation placed fifth.

In Student Congress, **Nipun Bhandari** of Monte Vista High School placed third in the senate, while **Anthony Paranzino** of Bellarmine placed fourth. **Sebastian DeLuca** of Monte Vista placed fifth in the House.

### *A Call for Submissions*

The Bulletin will gladly accept articles from students, coaches, teachers, former competitors. We are looking for articles that address such issues as curriculum, competition, what's happening in your league, how has speech changed your life, texts for the classroom (reviews), etc. The Bulletin will be published two or three times during the course of the academic year. Deadlines are Sept. 1, Dec. 1 and March 1. Items may be submitted to Marcus Walton by e-mail ([mewalton@gmail.com](mailto:mewalton@gmail.com)).



# 2009 STATE TOURNAMENT RESULTS

## HELD AT CULVER CITY HIGH SCHOOL

Name	School	Coach
<b>Original Prose/Poetry</b>		
1 Minhdang Nguyen	Kennedy	Chason Ishino
2 Katherine Frutchey	Fullerton	Sal Tinajero
3 Nate Howard	Helix Charter	Gregg Osborn
4 Elle Pratt	Fullerton	Sal Tinajero
5 Julie Brown	Helix Charter	Gregg Osborn
6 Sarah Khasrovi	Presentation	Timothy Case
7 Gary Nielsen	Granite Bay	Rita Prichard

Name	School	Coach
<b>Lincoln-Douglas</b>		
1 Avi Arfin	Palo Alto	Jennie Savage
2 Percia Safar	Monte Vista	Dave Matley
Semi Gordon Allen	Analy	Lynette Williamson
Semi Kevin Fu	Northwood	Sheryl Sloate
Qtrs Andrew Dorr	La Costa Canyon	Krista deBoer
Qtrs Zaki Khorasane	James Logan	Tommie Lindsey
Qtrs Jonathan Haderlein	North Hollywood	Cydney Fox

Name	School	Coach
<b>Policy Debate</b>		
1 Vijay - Rafey	Bellarmino	Christopher Wolf
2 Srinivasan - Deshmukh	Bellarmino	Christopher Wolf
Semi Sun - Bonilla	Bellarmino	Christopher Wolf
Semi Parekh - Ramesh	St. Francis - MV	Doug Dennis
Qtrs Braman - McCarthy	La Costa Canyon	Krista deBoer
Qtrs Arora - Parikh	St. Francis - MV	Doug Dennis
Qtrs Li - Kahn	Gunn	Ken Plough

Name	School	Coach
<b>Parliamentary Debate</b>		
1 Subramanian - Tang	Lynbrook	Sean Mumper
2 Hall - Shumaker	Valencia	Kim Forbes
Semi Wang - Zewail	San Marino	Oliver Valcorza
Semi Larson - Paranzino	Bellarmino	Christopher Wolf
Qtrs Unni - Kanth	Lynbrook	Sean Mumper
Qtrs Yu - Pai	Northwood	Sheryl Sloate

Name	School	Coach
<b>Public Forum</b>		
1 Abbasi - Tran	Monte Vista	Dave Matley
2 Crown - Margapuram	Leland	Gay Brasher
Semi Slobodien - Sidhu	Fullerton	Sal Tinajero
Semi Nguyen - Soman	Bellarmino	Christopher Wolf
Qtrs Schunk - Casey	Chaminade	Marianne Rosen
Qtrs Malani - Tran	Monte Vista	Dave Matley

Name	School	Coach
<b>Student Congress</b>		
1 Angrew Chang	Arcadia	Ashley Novak
2 Ryan Schaeffer	Mountain View	Sharon Moerner
3 Sebastian DeLuca	Monte Vista	Dave Matley
4 Tanay Kothari	Bellarmino	Christopher Wolf

Name	School	Coach
5 Brendan Bashin-Sullivan	Miramonte	Kristen Plant
6 Jonathan Ma	Mark Keppel	Patrick Reis
7 Emily Wells	Esperanza	Suzanne Munsell
8 Alia Fite	Miramonte	Kristen Plant
9 David Sun	Mark Keppel	Patrick Reis
10 Sam Stone	Monte Vista	Dave Matley
11 Eric Brewster	Long Beach Poly	Brett Alexander
12 Reza Saidi	Esperanza	Suzanne Munsell
13 Stacey Wong	Granite Bay	Rita Prichard
14 Sarah Jiang	Los Osos	Erik Pielstick

<b>Student Congress Presiding Officer</b>		
1 Kevin Hsiue	Monte Vista	Dave Matley
2 Joseph Lim-Effendy	Mark Keppel	Patrick Reis
3 James Pesavento	Redlands	Stephen Caperton
4 Chris Enright	Bellarmino	Christopher Wolf

### Sweepstakes (Top 5)

<b>AAA</b>	
1. Bellarmino	143
2. James Logan	103
3. Leland	90
4. Gabrielino	73
5. Fullerton	65

<b>AA</b>	
1. San Marino	40
2. St. Francis - MV	27
3. Presentation	16
4. Helix Charter	13
5T Esperanza	11
5T Northwood	11

<b>A</b>	
1. Lynbrook	16
2. The Ribet Academy	13
3. Palo Alto	12
4. Valencia	10
5. Gunn	8

## CHSSA State Championships 2010

Host: Bakersfield College

Dates: April 16 - 18, 2010

# How Coaching Forensics Made Me a Better Writing Coach

By Lynette Williamson

I was not a speech or communications major in college; I only dabbled in debate when I was in high school. When I landed my first teaching position, I was given the choice of coaching junior varsity girls basketball or forensics. I was equally qualified for both jobs: I could dribble and I could talk. I opted for forensics, rationalizing that my tongue might hold out longer than my knees. It was the best decision of my professional career.

Twenty-two years later, I can earnestly say that coaching forensics has made me a better English teacher. Most importantly, it has honed my skills as a writing coach. Coaching forensics has taught me how to insist on solid arguments; how to stay focused on student improvement, not scores; how to enlist students as peer coaches. And it has given me a chance to network almost weekly with inspirational colleagues from a wide range of districts and disciplines.

With the recent surge in on-demand writing situations-SAT I, exit exams, and AP tests-I have come to an even greater appreciation of the correlation between the coaching of forensics and writing.

## Insisting on Solid Arguments

The juniors and seniors I teach consistently struggle with the primary command of most upper-level writing rubrics: the author must uphold a consistent point of view. When forced to respond to a particular prompt and told to agree or disagree-often in a limited amount of time-most high school students waffle, explaining both sides of the issue and never fully committing to one position. It wasn't until a debater faced a particularly wicked dilemma that I learned a trick for coaching the "waffle writers."

One of my former students, Mara, attended the Stanford Invitational debate tournament when she was a sophomore. She was overwhelmed by the size of the campus, intimidated by her briefcasetoting competitors, and terrified of the Lincoln-Douglas debate topic: "Nuclear weapons are morally justified." Mara came from Sebastopol, a Birkenstock-wearing, "nuclear-free zone"; her personal politics swung to the left of Michael Moore. Expected to uphold both the affirmative and negative positions, alternatively, for eight rounds, she was going to need something to make her sound convincing on the affirmative.

Sure, Mara could borrow some tired and trite philosophical musings from Kant or Mill on morality, but she was going to need to believe her arguments to be persuasive. We brainstormed for ways that she could find a personal buy-in to her argument. Mara discovered that if she substituted a personal weapon (e.g., a loaded gun) in her topic, she was able to generate reasons why abandoning the weapon might be a bad idea and why, as the weapon's owner, she had a moral responsibility to care for it properly. With this as her premise, she was able to build an argument, complete with facts and philosophers, that was based on ideas she felt strongly about. Surprising only herself, Mara emerged from the tournament as the second-best speaker.

After the tournament, I returned to my seniors who had been whining about having to take a stance with persuasive prompts and cited the Mara example. With an "if she can do it, so can you" speech, I was able to coach the senior writers on the following.

## The Importance of Building an Argument from Personal Conviction

Even if it's a small anecdotal example, an essay with personal buy-in has greater potential for persuasive power than a logically sound but bland paper. In Mara's case, I tell students, this required the

use of an analogy.

## The Flexible Power of a Qualified Thesis Statement

Most on-demand writing prompts give students the options of confirming, challenging, or qualifying an aphorism or statement. Often students argue that they can't support just one side or the other. To ensure these "wafflers" still develop a point of view, I encourage them to "qualify" the claim by writing a qualified thesis. Qualified claims save time and set parameters for the writer of an argument (Lunsford and Ruskiewicz 135).

To illustrate, here is the sample SAT I writing prompt from the College Board:

Are people motivated to achieve by personal satisfaction rather than by money or fame? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view

Continued on Page 9

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# How Coaching Forensics Made Me a Better Writing Coach

Continued from Page 8

on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience or observations. (Brackett, par. 8)

A sample “waffle-lover” thesis might read, “Both money and personal satisfaction motivate people; it’s hard to say that one is more important than the other.” A sample qualified thesis would read, “Although money may initially motivate people, tending the fires of personal satisfaction keeps them achieving even when they’ve earned enough money to survive.” Now this former “waffler” has a position and structure. The writer can first address how people are initially motivated by money, then transition into why fame remains the perpetual generator of achievement.

Sometimes, I’ll guide students through a series of questions to arrive at their qualified position. The following is an example from a midterm prompt after students studied Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* and Machiavelli’s “The Prince”:

\* Prompt. Citing examples from our readings, your observations, and experiences, determine to what extent effective leaders can remain true to themselves.

\* Questions to guide students toward a qualified thesis. What should an effective leader be willing to

compromise? What should an effective leader never compromise?

\* Qualified thesis generator. After answering the above questions, fill in the blanks:

Although effective leaders may have to compromise\_\_\_\_\_ (strive to list only one quality), they should never compromise\_\_\_\_\_ (list one to three qualities).

## The Position-Strengthening Blend of Concession and Refutation

Any good debate round has its share of feisty cross-examination. And while it’s fun to observe the fur fly, the purpose of cross-examination is not simply destruction of an opponent’s argument; it’s strengthening one’s own. Kate Shuster, director of Claremont College’s Debate Outreach at Claremont McKenna College, has devoted a large portion of her career to bringing debate to middle schoolers. She devised the following four-step method of refutation to give beginning debaters something to say in their rebuttal speeches (Shuster and Meany 103). I use it regularly when teaching persuasive writing to build concessions and refutations. My students have dubbed it “The Debater Four-Step” (see fig. 1).

Together, these four steps form a cohesive argument

Continued on Page 10

FIGURE 1. The Debater Four-Step

Step One: “Some may argue . . .”

It is important to reference the argument being refuted so that the audience can easily follow the line of thought. In a debate, there’s a risk of reinforcing an opponent’s argument by better explaining it; it’s best to rephrase the argument being refuted in just a few words: for example, “Some may contend that leaders shouldn’t compromise their friends, but. . . .”

Step Two: “But I disagree . . .”

In this part of the refutation, state the basics of the counter-argument. This can be simply the opposite of an opponent’s claim. It can also be an attack on the

opponent’s reasoning or evidence: for example, “But I disagree that leaders should privilege their friends

Step Three: “Because . . .”

Having advanced the counterargument, it’s time to offer reasoning: for example, “Because leaders should treat everyone fairly . . . .”

Step Four: “Therefore . . .”

Finally, draw a conclusion that connects the refutation to the central argument of the thesis: for example, “Therefore, treating subjects fairly is a quality that leaders should never compromise since they should be obligated to providing justice for all.”

# How Coaching Forensics Made Me a Better Writing Coach

Continued from Page 9

that acknowledges an opposition. I encourage my writing students to remove the signposts (e.g., “Some may argue,” “I disagree,” and so on) that can aid a speaker but bog down a writer: “Some may contend that leaders shouldn’t compromise their friends, but (I disagree that) leaders should privilege their friends; (because) effective leaders should treat everyone fairly. (Therefore,) Treating subjects fairly is a quality that leaders should never compromise since they should be obligated to providing justice for all.”

## Staying Focused on Skills, Not Scores

### Coaching as a Mentor

A few years ago, I was asked to give a speech at our school’s graduation ceremony. This was probably the only time I regretted choosing forensics over JV basketball. At least a dozen different faculty members, including the principal, told me, “You’d better do a good job since you’re the speech coach.” The basketball coach went so far as to say, “You know, your whole program is resting on this speech if you screw up, your whole team looks bad.” No one would expect the basketball coach to do a left-handed lay-up in front of a packed gymnasium; they wouldn’t even expect him to bounce a ball. It’s freely recognized that certain skills fade with time. In public speaking, however—as in writing—the coach is expected to perform as well as, if not better than, the team. Actively participating in a debate round or a writing workshop adds authenticity to a coach’s value for the activity. Most importantly, it helps me appreciate the stress and struggle of on-demand writing and the shame of making mistakes (I have yet to escape a full week without paying a student in extra-credit points for catching one of my spelling errors). Standing to deliver a practice run of my little speech in front of a couple of debaters before graduation was one of the hardest things I have ever done as a teacher, but it was also one of the most rewarding. They gave me accurate criticism and constructive suggestions that demonstrated their knowledge more than any trophy ever could.

*Hearing better arguments from an opponent or observing a more persuasive speaking style constantly refines a debater’s approach.*

That’s why I continue to write most assignments with students; that’s why before my seniors present seminar papers on Frankenstein, I present one; that’s why before my seniors tackle their personal statements for college, I trot out my pathetic old essay and make them feel instantly better. Part of being a coach is being willing to take the risks, the fame, and the shame generated by your team.

### Actively Coaching from the Sidelines

I used to look forward to in-class writing days—plopping down in my desk chair, savoring the silence as they wrote. Then I realized that my debaters and extemporaneous speakers worked better under time constraints than my writing students because they had an internalized sense of time borne out of distractions.

In a debate round, debaters are given a limited amount of prep time—often in thirty-second intervals. This time is called out by a judge or timer in the room (e.g., “sixty seconds of prep time remaining”). One would assume this is distracting to the person thinking and scribbling notes, but after the first few rounds, the students adapt. While debaters speak, the judge often slaps the desk or holds up fingers to announce how much time has elapsed. All of this commotion is terribly annoying—at first.

After a few rounds, the debaters develop an innate sense of what a six-minute speech or a three minute rebuttal “feels” like. They’ll come back from rounds and tell me that they know the timer flubbed up and was off by a minute or thirty seconds. Those seemingly distracting time signals and annoying interventions actually gave them an internal pacesetter that helps them manage their speech and preparation time more efficiently and with less anxiety.

I have found that giving this gift of internal time markers to writing students is just as imperative. They’ll feel more in control and less surprised when time runs out. They’ll be able to sense when prep time is over and when the paragraphing must give way to those last two minutes of proofreading.

That’s why I’ve abandoned my desk chair for an uncomfortable stool where I perch, beeping stopwatch in hand, coaching them through the intervals of a successful timed essay. For practice with the new SAT I twenty-five-minute essay, I distribute prompts and then distract students in the following ways:

1. Start the stopwatch with a “beep,” telling students that they should take five minutes to break down the prompt and sketch out their outline.

Continued on Page 11

# How Coaching Forensics Made Me a Better Writing Coach

Continued from Page 10

2. After five minutes, I interrupt them and announce that they have the next fifteen minutes for paragraphing their essay.

3. After a total of twenty minutes have elapsed, I let the beeping of the stop watch interrupt them; then I whisper that they now have five more minutes to finish, proofread, and slap a title on the top of the page.

4. In the final two minutes, I alert them with a slap on the desk as the final two-minute warning.

I usually repeat this procedure four to five times, eventually leaving them alone to monitor their intervals. They cheer, grateful not to have me barking out commands, and I finally get to plop in the chair and collapse, grateful that they have an internal pacesetter in place.

## Coach as Critic

One of my all-time debate stars, Heather, once told me that the best thing about debate was learning how to lose. Heather was one of those 5.0 students with a perfect SAT score and an early acceptance to Stanford. It wasn't often that she failed. One of the first lessons learned in debate, however, is that no one wins every round. Even the best and brightest national champions have lost rounds—probably several. Why is a loss so much less devastating than a bad grade or a failing test score? Because judges must give reasons for their decision, and whether speakers agree with those reasons or not, they know that their opponent chose options that had greater impact. Sure, students return from rounds disappointed, but they quickly learn to take pride in their performance against a tough opponent and not necessarily the judges' final decision. Hearing better arguments from an opponent or observing a more persuasive speaking style constantly refines a debater's approach.

Writers are not necessarily in competition with each other in our classrooms, but in a sense they are competing for the top grades on our rubric. Helping them adjust their writing to achieve those high scores involves exposing them to their “worthy opponents” and encouraging them to learn from their mistakes before the “next round.”

For years, I struggled with how to return a set of papers: Sprawl them out on the table buffet-style? Distribute them one by one, and hear the refrain “What did you get?” followed by the crumple of paper? Read a few exemplary papers aloud only to look up and see eyes rolling and attention spans wandering? Finally, I resorted to what I offer my debaters at the end of a round—the oral critique.

Following a round of debate, most coaches will critique the speakers on their performance based on a specific list of criteria

called stock issues. An otherwise perfect speaker may have lost a round for inadequately addressing one of the stock issues. This is explained aloud in front of all the participants and observers. There is no shame, only proof of what was said and done in the round.

Trepid at first, I began by critiquing my student writers' “Best of” only: “The best introductions were written by . . .”; “The best qualified thesis statement came from . . .”; and so on. Then I tread onto

more instructive ground: “The world's longest run-on sentence was created by . . .,” and for a few extra-credit points the student transcribed the sentence onto the board and we corrected it. I now spend at least thirty minutes returning papers, sharing small segments from several student papers and awarding extra-credit points for examples of what to avoid in the next essay.

Of course, this requires taking notes as I read a set of student papers. My notes often look like the following:

Thesis statements to die for: Julie, ¶ 2, last line / Ian, ¶ 1, line #3

Slick transitions: Eva, last line ¶ 4 + first line ¶ 5

Pronoun/antecedent confusion: Paul, ¶ 7, lines #3-4

I strive to find a few minor problems with some of the A papers and to broadcast the golden moments of the weaker papers. I'm not suggesting that this completely dissolves the sting of a bad grade any more than receiving a glowing ballot at the end of a lost debate round offers full compensation, but it does serve to remind students-aloud—that there is more to an essay than whether it “won” the A or not.

Continued on Page 12

*Working with teachers who teach math, drama, and leadership and who coach forensics on the weekend has helped me appreciate the crosscurricular value of the speaking and listening skills taught in my language arts classes.*

# How Coaching Forensics Made Me a Better Writing Coach

Continued from Page 11

## Enlisting Students as Peer Coaches

There are over seventy students on my forensics team, and while they don't all compete at once, it's not uncommon for me to have over thirty speakers in my room for a two-hour evening practice. The average debate round lasts more than forty-five minutes. So while I do oversee the practice, the majority of my debaters are being judged and critiqued by their peers. Armed with a detailed set of objectives on a standardized ballot, my peer coaches need only listen and take careful notes to determine who's doing the better debating and why.

Peer editing and critique are nothing new, but allowing students to actually be responsible for evaluating each other's work contains rewards worth the risks. A recent study published in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* argued that "instructor concerns about peer evaluation reliability and validity should not be a barrier to implementing peer evaluations" (Cho, Schunn, and Wilson 891). Sitting on the other side of the desk gives students a valuable vantage point; they learn what's being inspected and come to emphasize those qualities in their writing. Like my debaters girding up for another round, the student-coaches have a clearer idea of what it will take to "win" the next essay.

Students often believe that the only true form of assessment comes from the teacher. But with a solid rubric and some time spent "norming" a set of papers, I learned that student writers can become effective coaches. I begin by training the coaches:

1. I conduct a "norming session." Distributing the six-point rubric for the SAT I from the College Board (or another assignment specific rubric) and sample essays either taken from the College Board Web site or my other classes, I ask students to score the essays. Then they reveal their "official" scores and as I plot the results on the board, we talk about why the essays received the evaluations they did.

2. I then distribute copies of a single essay and ask the students to T-score it. A T-score is a brief evaluation of a piece of writing that includes at least one compliment and a suggestion for improvement based on the rubric being used. The suggestion should reference the item on the rubric that kept the paper from achieving the next notch on the rubric (see fig. 2). I emphasize that the compliments and suggestions must borrow language from the rubric.

3. I then prepare for a scoring session during which each essay will be read and scored at least twice. I set

up three baskets in front of the room labeled "Read Once," "Read Twice," and "Needs a Third Read." I also have scraps of paper and staplers in the front of the room.

4. I distribute student essays (preferably with student ID numbers rather than names) and the scraps of paper.

5. Students read and T-score the essays on the scrap of paper.

6. When they come to the front to place the essays in the "Read Once" basket, they fold and staple their T-score to the essay to hide their score.

7. Then they extract a second essay from the "Read Once" basket.

8. The second essay gets scored on the back of the scrap of paper and then the evaluator gets to "peek" at the previous score. If it matches or is within one point of the second score, the essay goes into the "Read Twice" basket, and it is finished. If there is a two-point discrepancy, the essay goes into the "Needs a Third Read" basket.

9. The steps are repeated until all of the essays have landed in the "Read Twice" basket.

10. I then allow the class to debrief on what impressed them about various essays and what they discovered to be the top impediments to the higher scores.

I must confess it took me twelve years of having students T-score each others' essays before I had the courage to let these scores go into the grade book as real points. I have two safety nets in place that allow me to feel comfortable with my decision: (1) essays holistically scored on a six-point scale receive a small number of points compared to a thoroughly drafted essay graded by me that may be worth fifty or more points; and (2) disgruntled students are invited to meet with me before or after school within a week of getting an essay back. They can challenge the score. If I agree, they get the bump; otherwise, they get to revise for the score they thought they had earned. Last year I had four challenges (two by the same student) and only one essay was incorrectly scored.

Continued on Page 13

# How Coaching Forensics Made Me a Better Writing Coach

Continued from Page 12

## Networking with Inspirational Colleagues

I teach in a small district with fairly affluent middleclass students, but I coach in a league that includes the inner-city schools of Oakland and San Francisco. My forensics students are regularly exposed to life outside their bucolic hometown, and I have opportunities to learn and share with colleagues from several districts and disciplines.

Working with teachers who teach math, drama, and leadership and who coach forensics on the weekend has helped me appreciate the cross curricular value of the speaking and listening skills taught in my language arts classes. When we are not running the tournaments, we are swapping ideas on classroom discussion techniques or classroom management. In the early '90s, before the surge in standards-based assessment, I observed a science teacher grading lab reports with a highlighter pen at a tournament. She gave me a copy of her grading sheet; I had never seen a scoring rubric before. As a result, detailed rubrics became essential components of every unit of my instruction long before they were fashionable. I have learned more from my "Saturday Swap Meets" with forensic coaches than I have learned in twenty-two years of professional development courses.

Coaching forensics has made me a better writing teacher, and it has nourished my need for collegial support, rejuvenating me when I am otherwise parched and on the verge of burnout. This is the inspiration that fuels my commitment to extracurricular forensics, making me grateful that I chose this coaching job and hopeful that more English teachers will do the same.

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*Lynette Williamson teaches English and coaches forensics at Analy High School in Sebastopol. Her recent publication, On Demand Writing is available at Amazon.com.*

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# Is There a Generation Gap In Speech?

By Linda Darling

When I was hired at Highlands High School, in the fall of 1989, little did I know the journey on which I would embark. The interim principal, Leo Burns, an old speech man himself, hired me to take the speech program because a “drama person was the next best thing to a speechie.” Highlands had been a powerhouse; Leo was looking for a chance to keep it going, after the retirement of the great Lou Ramos.

The first day of class, when I met my team, two boys asked if I was a Democrat or Republican. I was shocked, to say the least, and replied that it was none of their business. The “captains” laughed, jabbed each other, and declared me a Democrat. Thus began a twenty year love/hate relationship with speech and debate.

We coached each other that first season. I was amazed at their knowledge of current events and their poise; I was bothered by their arrogance and laziness. Most of that year, I felt like a deer in the headlights; the whole thing was overwhelming, but I survived, or most importantly, my team survived.

When I was caught in a district wide lay-off that June, I was devastated. I was sent to another school and my program fell into the hands of the football coach. I found myself pacing on Saturdays, when I thought there were tournaments; I missed the kids talking to walls; I missed their utter belief that they aced all their rounds even though they took last; I even missed their arrogance and laziness...and I missed the camaraderie in the tab room;

When I got back to Highlands later that year and got “my” team back, I was thrilled, to say the least. Over the decades, I’ve had brothers and sisters at the same time; I’ve had younger brothers and sisters of previous competitors; I’ve even “been responsible” for two that got married after they both graduated. I’ve had ups and downs, good years and lean years. I’ve gone to tournaments with and without kids. I have made a difference.

So, why does it matter? We have ALL made a difference; we have all had ups and downs, good years and lean years. Speech and debate is itself, like a phoenix-dying in the fire of budget cuts and administrator apathy, only to rise on the

ashes of arrogance, seeming laziness, and, of course, talking to walls.

Before last September’s council meeting, I was in my hotel room, putting the finishing touches on my agenda, when I checked my emails. There was an email from my first debater, informing me that his son was a freshman at Highlands. He, the father, wanted to know if I was still at Highlands, if we still had a program, and wondered what he could do to help get it going again. I was excited, thrilled, and feeling older than I ever thought possible.

Is there a generation gap? Have there been changes in the students over the years? Is a second generation any different than the first? I’m not sure there are any concrete answers to these questions. We don’t always know when, or how, or even if, we reach them, but we must. The fact that we have kids come back to judge as college students, take us out to dinner at the state tournament when they are

adults in the “real world”, or coach their own team, lets us know as nothing else can, that we did make a difference, whether they were our student in 1989 or 2009, that speech and debate IS alive and well; that the walls still won’t answer, that students still “ace” every round, and that a second generation is as much fun as the first, because the new ones will be the “elders” at State some year. Their advocacy and oratory topics are timely, dealing with topics that they are concerned with and feel passionate about; their interp cuttings are from edgier pieces that weren’t even

written a generation ago; their extemp and impromptu topics are NOW, on the news, and very much alive.

Sure, I feel old coaching a second generation, but I also feel younger than I thought possible, because I AM coaching a second generation. In spite of the impossible hours, the fund raising, the budget cuts, apathetic administrators, and transportation nightmares, we have second and third and fourth generations to make us think, to tweak our own belief systems, to take us on their journey, sometimes as the guide and sometimes as the follower, to help us grow with them. And yes, to watch them talk to walls and listen when they are convinced they aced every round!

*Linda Darling is the Area II chair and coaches at Highlands High School in Sacramento.*

***So, why does it matter? We have ALL made a difference; we have all had ups and downs, good years and lean years. Speech and debate is itself, like a phoenix-dying in the fire of budget cuts and administrator apathy, only to rise on the ashes of arrogance, seeming laziness, and, of course, talking to walls.***

# Where Are They Now?

*By Ron Underwood*

While researching for the CHSSA History Book, I began to wonder what happened to all of these fine young speakers who worked so hard in their high school days to become champions. This is an ongoing process. I hope to have enough to share in each of the next several editions of The Bulletin. If you have knowledge of any former champions, please let me know. You can reach me at [underwoodron@msn.com](mailto:underwoodron@msn.com).

**Martha Mangahas**  
Edison - Stockton  
Original Advocacy Champion 1999

Martha was a graduate of UCLA with a BA in English and History. Her Masters in Education is also from UCLA. She is currently teaching English and speech at Edison, her alma mater.

**Andrea Toy (Ohta)**  
Grace Davis - Modesto  
Impromptu Champion 1994

Andrea graduated summa cum laude from UC San Diego with a BS in biology and a minor in health care and social issues. She received her J.D. from UCLA. Following a year clerking for a federal judge in Los Angeles, she moved to Philadelphia with her husband. She is currently an associate with Pepper Hamilton LLP. She concentrates her practice in commercial litigation.

Of her high school speech experience she claims: Participating in speech and debate provided wonderful training for eventually working as a commercial litigator. It helped to sharpen my analytical skills and provided an opportunity to gain valuable experience with thing on my feet and public speaking.

**Gerald Posner**  
St. Ignatius - San Francisco  
Boys' Extemp Champion 1972

Gerald was a Phi Beta Kappa and Summa Cum Laude graduate of UC Berkeley and an Honors Grad of Hastings Law School where he served as the Associate Executive Editor for the Law Review.

He is currently a freelance investigative reporter for several news magazines, and a regular contributor to NBC, the History Channel, CNN, FOX News, and MSNBC.

Gerald lives in Miami Beach with his wife, who is also

an author. John Martin of ABC News says, "Gerald Posner is one of the most resourceful investigators I have encountered in thirty years of journalism." The LA Times labels him "a classic-style investigative journalist" and the Dallas Morning News calls him "a resourceful investigator and skillful writer."

**Bill Heil**  
Bellarmine - San Jose  
Expository Champion 1997 and 1999

Bill attended Brown University with a double major in Computer Science and Political Science. He worked for a New York consulting company on internet start up. He just completed his MBA at Harvard and has returned to the Bay Area to begin work with Adobe in San Francisco.

He still contends that the most important factor in getting his first job was his speech and debate background.

**Rosemary Jackovic (Schwimmer)**  
Soquel  
Policy Debate Champion 1976

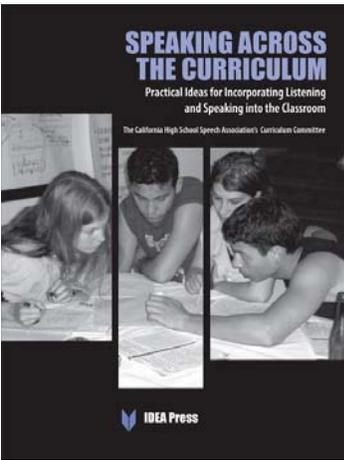
Rosemary was also second at State in 1975 in Girls' Oratory and second in Policy in 1977. She attended USC with majors in Communications and Journalism. She continued her successful debating as a Trojan. She did her graduate studies at Harvard and earned her law degree from Loyola. Her husband is also a lawyer. For the past five years they have lived in Portland where she has stopped practicing law in favor of motherhood.

Rosemary enjoys judging at the local tournaments and helping to coach her children's speech and debate team. Her daughter was a qualifier for the Oregon State Speech Championships in policy debate. Commenting on debate she said she "enjoy(s) the excitement of 'spread' debating" but realizes that "there is also satisfaction in making a successful persuasive appeal." She did both styles in college and "thinks it is important for debaters to have both experiences."

She feels that her speech and debate experiences were extremely valuable in her law practice and also finds that she uses her persuasive speaking skills on a daily basis in her various volunteer activities. "Whether it is raising funds for a new playground structure or leading a PTA meeting, being comfortable speaking in front of an audience is an essential skill," Rosemary said.

Winning the state championship (on a 4-3 decision) remains one of (her) proudest accomplishments.

*Ron Underwood is CHSSA Historian and retired after a long tenure as coach of Modesto Beyer High School.*



## **SPEAKING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM: Practical Ideas for Incorporating Listening and Speaking into the Classroom**

*By The California High School Speech Association's Curriculum  
Committee*

*Speaking Across the Curriculum* gives teachers ready-made speaking and listening activities that can be infused into any curriculum. Over 50 activities help educators encourage debate and discussion and teach students speaking and listening skills. Students will learn how to outline a speech, build active listening skills, develop a media presentation, persuade an audience, and speak spontaneously. Activities also help students analyze and evaluate arguments and sources, including Web sites.

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Activity and resource sheets as well as assessment tools and evaluation tools are available for downloading from the Web site.

### **About the Authors**

The California High School Speech Association's Curriculum Committee is a non-profit organization that promotes cross-curricular application of speaking and listening skills by developing curricula and facilitating workshops for educators.

Retail Price: \$27.95

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# Lessons Learned From Kung Fu Panda

By Mikendra McCoy

I am not a “movie person,” for some reason I am adamantly opposed to the big screen; not just for the ridiculous ticket lines, or the smell of popcorn that doesn’t wash out of your clothes, but I’m specifically against watching what my mind can create when reading; call me old fashioned ... and you’re going to be right! However, despite my disdain for technology and its handiwork, there are greater forces than my will in this world ... the begging and pleading from my nieces and nephews. So, when necessary, in order to facilitate family bonding and remain as the “cool aunt,” I am dragged against my will to the local theater; this last time to Kung Fu Panda.

Let me set the stage of this movie... it is a story about an overweight panda, frustrated with his life, longing to avoid following in his dad’s noodle shop-proprietor footsteps and wishes for more. He longs to be like the greatest kung fu fighters in the world. Through a wacky mishap, Po (the panda) winds up being chosen as the famed Dragon Warrior who will protect the village from bitter kung fu titan-turned-villain, Tai Lung. Hard as it is to believe that he is the one, the others reject him. He too rejects himself, simply because he couldn’t do all that the others could. Eventually, he finds his place, both in the community and within himself.

Now for the meaning behind the story, while I realize that I am not Ebert and Roper; there is no doubt that this movie was one of the greatest creations of all time ... the wisdom, the action moves and simultaneous sound track were amazing, but it was the lesson that the story taught which was priceless.

Come, sit with me for a moment and soak up the wisdom ... (Imagine a gong sound here) ... recall the words spoken:

“You... you’re just a big... fat... panda!”

Po : “I’m not a big fat panda. I’m \*the\* big fat panda.”

Now hear the translation: “You are \*the\* panda.” You are \*the\* coach.

This is your job, a chosen profession, and it’s time to see what kind of coach you are going to be ... this means that like Po, you have a need to find who you are; where you fit, and how those two things work together.

As with any coach there is nothing more prevalent than the battle that wages within; why do we coach? I know that there are different kinds of people, and different reasons why we coach, but there is a very real presence of “good and evil” in the world of words.

“Good coaches,” or mentors are those who teach the skills beyond the need for the glitter and gold. They provide reason to the activity, beyond the momentary satisfaction of titles. The “win” is not just the placing, rather they are the experiences had and the lessons learned. That’s why they can see the potential in the panda, when others can’t or won’t! Most great coaches, have been in the field themselves, both Oogway and Shifu had been students of Kung Fu, and both understood its value. Now don’t get me wrong, there are those who have never been in the field and are forced by some act of God or an administrator who knows just how far to push a new teacher under the promise of a stipend. Regardless of your means of getting into coaching, it is for the life application that the field strives, not for increasing egos.

On the other hand, “Evil Coaches,” such as students who “go bad,” like Tai Lung, live vicariously through the success of their students or in their own inflated recollections of their participation, creating for themselves a false self worth. This inevitably dies and must be reclaimed again and again ... this vicious cycle dominates the individual and becomes an addiction to power. It controls them and the lines between black and white become grey and compromise becomes a new standard. Those who live vicariously through the successes of their students are capable of hurting the world of speech and debate, by teaching the wrong reasons to be involved ... on a whole it seems that their “victories” are totaled in the amount of plastic angles

***St. Francis of Assisi said, “at all times I preach the gospel, and sometimes I use words.” Whether you are religious or not, the truth is our actions, behaviors and personalities are picked up by those watchful eyes far before the supposed wisdom is spouted from our mouths. What lessons are you teaching? What are your students learning?***

Continued on Page 18

# Lessons Learned From Kung Fu Panda

Continued from Page 17

and momentary titles that are brought home at the end of the day ... however, that old adage of “you can’t take it with you ...” seems to be the perfect warning to those who might fit this category.

As the master Shifu is forced to face his student, Tai Lung, he explains that his love of Tai Lung, superseded his responsibility to him. Meaning he thought this battle was literally between the two of them, but metaphysically it was within Shifu; had he not wanted the title so badly, perhaps Tai Lung would have never turned to the dark side and become evil. That is the consequence of living for the trophy. When we do this, we harm the student by telling them that they are the best, giving them a “God complex” and then unleashing them on the world. If we keep in check our egos and our students; the students will learn what we are teaching.

St. Francis of Assisi said, “at all times I preach the gospel, and sometimes I use words.” Whether you are religious or not, the truth is our actions, behaviors and personalities are picked up by those watchful eyes far before the supposed wisdom is spouted from our mouths. What lessons are you teaching? What are your students learning?

We have all seen two types of coaches, some which disgust us and others that we desire to be; the question regardless of their type is what type of coach are you?

No matter what type of coach you have been, you can become the grand master of all! In the infamous words of Oogway, “You just need to believe.” You have time to reevaluate and begin a new ... that’s what summer breaks and holidays are for ... a reflective time with opportunity to change. However, if you are already on the “good” side of coaching, then keep up the good work, grab a new coach and take them under your wing and continue the legacy of greatness.

Oogway said, “Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, but today is a gift. That is why it is called the present.”

I concur ... I mean really, who doesn’t like gifts?

*Mikendra McCoy is the Area II Curriculum Representative and coaches at Clovis East High School.*

## Interested In Joining CHSSA?

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4. Mail two copies of the signed form with the check to the Area Chair below.
5. If your league president requests it, mail the last copy to your league president

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Please use only the current year’s form. Sending your assessment to the wrong address could subject your assessment to the \$20.00 Delinquent fee even if it was mailed before the deadline. The current form and current area chair contact information are available at [www.cahssa.org](http://www.cahssa.org)

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