

H O S T N A T I O N A L S ?

Y E S Y O U C A N !

During eight hour days at the Fargo and Indianapolis Nationals, and during countless hours over the last two school years, a group of dedicated NFL coaches has labored on the Future National Tournament Committee. This committee, chaired by Executive Council member Ted W. Belch of Illinois, included Rhoda Radow of Florida, Larry Highbaugh of Indiana, Don Crabtree of Missouri, Jacqueline Foote of North Carolina, Jim Paterno of Washington, and Randy Shaver of North Carolina. Their charge two years ago was to develop a bid packet for hosting the National Tournament; to construct a bid form that could be used by the Executive Council to fairly evaluate potential tournament bids and provide information for potential bidders with the requirements for hosting Nationals. A reproduction of that bid form is contained in this issue of the *Rostrum* and the entire bid packet will be available in April, 1994. It is the desire of this committee and the NFL National office that this information will be helpful, informational, and encouraging to future tournament hosts.

Hosting the National Tournament is a formidable task, but not one that is impossible, nor should it be discouraging. Thanks to generous grants from Phillips Petroleum, sound financial management by our National Secretary, James Copeland, and potential fund raising activities that can take place at the tournament, no NFL District, school, or university should be dissuaded from pursuing one of the most gratifying tasks in forensics education. The days of huge fund raising, enormous judge requirements, and impossible logistics are gone. With long range planning, sound judgment, adequate competition facilities, and through instruction provided by the Committee's bid packet, schools from across the US can bid for privilege of the hosting this most prestigious of educational events.

by Ted W. Belch

The Committee believes that the motto of any Nationals' host should be "Know Your Community." City Councils, Village Boards, Chamber of Commerce, and School Boards are all interested in promoting their communities and what they have to offer. Get their support first. Inform them of the media coverage of such an important convention, the economic gain for the community (approximately \$4 - 7 million!), the fact that 3000 - 4000 visitors (and potential future citizens) will spend a week in their community, and the importance of supporting such a worthwhile academic endeavor. Make them aware that Nationals' competitors are the best and the brightest, future leaders from across the nation. Remind them of former NFL members such as Oprah Winfrey, Jane Pauley, Shelly Long, James Dean, Rush Limbaugh, Lyndon Johnson, Janet Reno and Hubert Humphrey. Let them know that former champions are advising Congressional committees, representing Presidents as chief legal aides, chairing Fortune 500 companies, serving as deans of law schools and universities, and heading major foundations. Tell them of the generous support of important groups like Phillips Petroleum, the Bradley Foundation, and Reader's Digest. Sound the trumpet for NFL and what we have to offer.

The NFL provides a great deal of services, supplies, and staff to run the National Tournament. None of these are required of the host committee. The NFL supplies all trophies, office products, and final round taping equipment. They provide a staff for tabulation of results, judge assignments, and registration. Two receptions (new coaches and District Chairs) and the Hall of Fame Dinner are arranged and funded by the NFL. Because of the new judge requirement allocations, local hosts are no longer required to provided

judges (in 1972, when we hosted at Wake Forest University, we were required to provide over 200 local judges!). And most importantly, the local hosts are **NEVER** required to raise and give to the **NFL ONE SINGLE DIME** (in '72, we were asked to raise \$25,000; in 1991, when I hosted The Glenbrook Nationals, the NFL asked me for no money at all).

Any potential host, though must be able to provide the minimum requirements to host a convention of this magnitude. Contest rooms are the most important. Because of his clever methods of scheduling, Mr. Copeland has held the number of necessary contest rooms at any given time period to approximately 110. This can be accomplished in one building as at the Glenbrooks, or in multiple building in close proximity, like Indianapolis and Fargo. The tournament site must have adequate parking for approximately 1100 vehicles, a large room (a gym or lecture hall) for extemp prep, and space for tabulation of results (offices, a library, conference center). There should be space for students to eat and a lounge area for coaches and judges. Large assembly halls to seat approximately 2500 must be provided for the opening assembly and final rounds. These need not be on the tournament site. A convention center, theatre complex, or auditorium are ideal. Remember, also, with the advent of closed circuit TV, smaller spaces can be used.

Community logistics, with a convention of our size, are extremely important. Transportation and lodging are crucial. Since more and more schools are flying to the National Tournament, airport facilities and seat lift (the number of seats airlines fly to a particular location per day) are vital. The Committee believes that an airport should be served by a least three major carries and have a seat lift of at least 600 on Friday, and 1200 on Saturday and Sunday. The host community should be served by numerous

auto rental agencies that can provide at least 800 rental cars and 250 rental vans. If the host community is not a major city, local rental agencies will usually bring vehicles in from other locations if they are informed in advance. Some type of shuttle service between lodging sites and the competition site should be provided by the host committee. The Committee also recommends that the host committee contract a minimum of 1800 hotel/motel/dorm rooms, with the vast majority of the rooms able to accommodate three-four persons. These rooms should be provided at a range of prices to satisfy the tastes (and budgets) of our many member schools. Since the NFL requires that the host committee supply some complementary rooms for dignitaries and guests, negotiations should be made with the major hotels to establish a ratio of paid rooms to complementary rooms for this purpose. All hotels will provide this service. Most hotels will also provide the space required to host the two receptions on Sunday.

ANYTHING else that the host committee wishes to do is optional. The NFL makes no additional requirements whatsoever. Many hosts have provided mementos to each contestant and coach. Many have hosted a lavish coaches and judges lounge. Some have provided timekeepers, free judges, dinners for dignitaries, guides, entertainment, and shuttles. None are required, but can be done if the hosts so desire.

There are many potential fund raising activities that a host committee can undertake if it wishes to provide something "extra." Corporate donations are possible. Local businesses and restaurants may be willing to make in-kind donations. Concessions can be sold at the tournament site. Souvenirs and mementos are potential fund raisers (we sold over 1200 T-shirts at The Glenbrooks!). Shuttle tickets can be sold to offset the cost of the transportation between the competition site and the hotels. Local groups can "spon-

sor" supplementary events.

In my 25 years of coaching in the National Forensic League I have helped to host two National Tournaments. I will not suggest that it is not hard work and long hours. The planning is crucial and preparation is essential, but the rewards are enormous. Future National Hosts have a tremendous advantage over those of the past, though. The Future Nationals Committee has compiled into one easy to understand packet all that is essential to run a successful tournament. They have recommended, and the Executive Council has approved, a mentor system whereby future hosts can be tutored, assisted, and prodded by ones who have done it before. Secretary Copeland and Committee Chair Belch will be there for you every step of the way. The NFL has provided excellent training for hundreds of thousands of students over its almost 70 years of service. Nothing that I did in hosting two Nationals could ever take the place of what speech and debate has done for my students. Accept the challenge; take the plunge. **HOST THE NFL NATIONALS IN THE FUTURE? YES YOU CAN!**

(Executive Council member Ted W. Belch is Debate Coach at Glenbrook-North (IL) and Northern Illinois District Chair. He hosted the Glenbrook Nationals in 1991 and was a co-host of the 1972 Wake Forest University Nationals.)