

**New York Catholic Forensic League
Moderators' Meeting
September 8, 2018
9: a.m.**

Call to order:

A moderators' general meeting of the New York Catholic Forensic League was held on September 8, 2018 at Iona Preparatory School in New Rochelle, New York. The meeting convened at 9:20 a.m., President Thomas Beck presiding, and Treasurer Christopher Franz acting as recording secretary.

Member schools with representatives in attendance:

Bronx High School of Science, Byram Hills High School, Convent of the Sacred Heart - CT, Convent of the Sacred Heart – NYC, Democracy Prep Public Schools (DP Charter High, DP Endurance, DP Harlem, Bronx Prep, Harlem Prep), Iona Preparatory School, Montfort Academy, Monticello High School, Pelham Memorial High School, Pleasantville High School, Regis High School, Stuyvesant High School, Ursuline School, Xavier High School.

Officers' reports:

President: President Beck reported that the last competition year had run well, and that the league had a good showing at the national tournament. He has been elected to the board of directors of the National Catholic Forensic League and was chosen as publicity director and recording secretary for the NCFL.

Tournament Director: Mr. Charlie Sloat, our tournament director, reported that last year had been a very good one for the league from his perspective as well. He made the following requests:

- Moderators and coaches should be sure to enter all of their competitors and judges into tabroom no later than the Wednesday evening before each tournament. While registration will remain open through Thursday, if the registrations by Wednesday night are generally as close to accurate as possible he will have a much easier time of running the tournament efficiently.
- Similarly, coaches should be careful to strive to meet their judge quotas. If this is not possible for a given tournament, the league can be flexible, but coaches must inform the tournament director of this as early as possible so the situation can be addressed.
- The use of electronic ballots at the Convent-Connecticut Tournament last year worked very well and was adopted by the majority of judges. The option for judges to record ballots and critiques on paper for speech should always remain, but the league should expand use of electronic

ballots to more tournaments, and eventually to all categories of speech and debate and all tournaments.

- Moderators and coaches should review the league's by-laws and constitution over the course of this year and communicate to the executive board suggestions for updating and corrections.
- Among changes to the by-laws and constitution, we should consider how the addition of Programmed Oral Interpretation (POI) and perhaps Informative Speaking as categories at league tournaments should be addressed. Though these are NSDA categories and not NCFL sanctioned, he is of the opinion that we should offer the opportunity to our students to practice these through our competitions.
- The Judge's Handbook should also be reviewed, improved and updated.

Treasurer: Treasurer Christopher Franz distributed the treasurer's report (attached). He noted that the league's donation of the proceeds from the Sister M. Raimonde Bartus, F.D.C. Memorial Service Tournament to Msgr. Kelly High School in Beaumont, Texas, which was devastated by Hurricane Harvey, was met with overwhelming gratitude by the school, which has sent two letters of thanks over the last few months. He also made the following recommendation:

- The league still has sufficient cash in its bank accounts to function, but we are running a structural deficit, despite having raised entry fees for speakers at tournaments two years ago. He therefore recommended that the per-speaker fee be raised from \$5 to \$6, and from \$4 to \$5 for the school hosting that tournament and for schools hosting four league tournaments a year.
- In response to a question from Convent – NYC, the treasurer responded that the league is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization (our number is 47-3844584), under section 509(a)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code (this particular part of the 501 law is for organizations that receive less than one-third of their support from donations, and the bulk of their support from fees and dues charged). We are not licensed to publicly, actively solicit contributions, but we can receive them freely from members and even from non-members. "Fees for services" (speaker fees, dues, etc.) are not themselves tax-deductible for an individual or for-profit business, but "non-compensated gifts" (a straight, simple donation from, say a parent) would be.

Speech Representative (1): Ms. Julie Sheinman, one of our two speech representatives on the board, made the following recommendations and observations:

- She noted that while schools are generally cooperative and fulfill their obligations, there are still too many schools bringing untrained judges to tournaments, even to the Grand

Tournament. For the fairness of the tournament and for the benefit of every speaker, judges must be trained through the league's training program, and moderators should strive to bring only their best judges to the Grand Tournament.

- She also noted that this applies to the debate side of tournaments as well: for instance, at last year's Grand Tournament the debate side was so short of judges that judges were being pulled out of speech categories, making the tournament more difficult to run for both sides of the competition.
- She suggested that we consider some method by which judge quotas and judge training requirements could be more stringently enforced.
- She also suggested that moderators take care in all categories of competition that students be given opportunities to achieve half-qualifications for the New York State Forensic League state championship: some students keep competing in a category and rack up three or four times the number of half-qualifications they need, which deprives other students of a better chance to qualify as well.

Speech Representative (2): Ms. Michaela Ablon, our other speech representative on the board, offered the following observations and reminders:

- Team moderators should be the "point persons" for their judges: a judge should be turning to this or her own moderator first for information at tournaments – the tab room staff can be overwhelmed at times with the urgencies of running the tournament but also being approached by judges for directions to restrooms, questions about how to contact their own moderators, and questions about the simple "mechanics" of the day.
- Moderators should, however, direct new judges to her for training. Moderators should not try to program their trainee judges' training day themselves or pass on a team's own idea of what a "good" speech is, but should allow the league to handle all of this. This will allow trainees to follow a specific, purposefully sequenced experience on their training days that has been developed by the league and help to ensure that standards and understandings of rules are as uniform as they can be throughout the league.
 - In response to a suggestion from Pelham, she accepted a suggestion that judge trainees be provided with actual model ballots/critiques to better understand what a "good" ballot looks like.
- A general discussion about speaker and judge demeanor resulted in general agreement that:

- Speakers should be carefully reminded by coaches that the principles of civility, mutual respect, and good sportsmanship should always prevail in competitions.
“Unparliamentary language” and insults have no place in Congress or debate, for instance; openly being distracted or worse, being distracting, in speech events is unacceptable; expressions of contempt (eye-rolling, etc.) demonstrate attitudes unwelcome in our league.
- Judges should be reminded of the “Brother Zehnle Rule” (“A good judge is a silent judge.”) and should not worry the speakers by announcing their own inexperience.
- Judges should not fear acting in such cases by directly addressing speakers and should bring this to the attention of the speaker’s coach, if known. In the case of Congress, both the speaker and the presiding officer may be held accountable on the ballot, as this is an element of their legislative behavior. In speech, it should be mentioned in the critique but should affect rankings only if the behavior seems aimed at interfering in some way with the quality of another speaker’s performance.

Congress representative: Mr. Jeremy Norris, the Congress representative on our board, stated that he is in the process of attempting to redesign our Congress ballot. He also made the following suggestion:

- Congress is the only category in which judges can judge speakers from their own teams. For scheduling reasons there are no judge conflicts normally recognized in Congress. This often means that parents are judging chambers in which their own sons and daughters are competing, which is difficult to do objectively even for the most conscientious of judges. He suggested that as far as possible coaches try to use family member judges for speech if their relatives are competing in Congress, and vice versa.
- In response to a general discussion, it was generally agreed that coaches should try to follow more broadly the spirit of the “three times and it’s dead” rule: rather than a bill or issue being considered unusable by one school after being submitted three times in a competition year, coaches should try to avoid the issue or bill if it has been used three times by any school and avoid reusing old topics year after year. This may create a greater variety and creativity in the legislative debates.
- In response to a general discussion, Mr. Norris and the tournament director agreed to create a semi-moderated GoogleDocs system for Congress. It is well known that Congress debaters have created among themselves their own chat rooms in which many participate in pre-agreements about agendas for competitions. This, however, does not

necessarily include all competitors equally or fairly. An official GoogleDocs site would be advertised and open to all competitors, and the discussion would be lightly monitored to insure both fairness and timely agreement on agendas, or the league would step in and set bill dockets for them.

Extemp coordinator: Mr. Christopher Franz, as extemp coordinator, asked coaches to train students in, and remind them of, extemp rules: particularly, rules forbidding communication while preparing speech preparation, forbidding connectivity to the Internet during speech preparation, and concerning the proper use of notes (junior varsity may have a single card with fifty, 50, words or less; varsity may have no notes at all). He also asked for recruits for the drafting of extemp topics/questions.

Elections: Elections were held and the following were re-elected by unanimous consent:

President: Thomas Beck (Pelham Memorial)

Vice President: Joseph Vaughan (Scarsdale)

Tournament Director: Charles Sloat (Iona Prep)

Treasurer: Christopher Franz (Msgr. Farrell)

Speech Representative: Julie Sheinman (Stuyvesant)

Speech representative: Michaela Ablon (Convent – NYC)

Debate Representative: James Menick

Congress Representative: Jeremy Norris (Xavier)

Calendar: The league's own competition calendar for the year was then finalized. (attached).

National Catholic Forensic League Agenda Items: Items to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the

NCFL's national board include the following:

- The National Grand Tournament will be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin this year.
- A proposed change to the bylaws speech rules includes striking the words, "Only the performers' feet may touch the ground." And adding, "Positions other than standing should not be excessive in length nor dominate the performance. Judges' ranks may reflect this if they feel the positions and/or movements have dominated the performance." This would apply to all categories of speech, if adopted.

- A proposed change to the bylaws debate rules includes adding, "In Policy Debate, Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Public Forum Debate, and Student Congress, connectivity to any persons other than the competitors or judges in the round is not allowed."
- A discussion will be held on allowing the use of audio enhancements (microphones and speakers) in Dramatic Performance and Duo Performance at nationals, as these tend to have very large audiences for the finals, which are sometimes held in rooms with poor acoustics and visibility.
- A discussion will be held about judge qualifications for nationals.

Motions:

Raising of speaker fees

Moved by the treasurer, that the speaker fee for each speaker competing at a regular tournament shall be \$6 for all schools, but \$5 for the host school of that tournament or for schools that host four or more tournaments in the year.

Motion carried by unanimous consent.

Creation of a GoogleDocs account for Congress

Moved by the tournament director, that the league create a lightly moderated discussion board and Google Docs account for bill packets for Congress tournaments, and that the league set dockets and agendas for tournaments in each case where students seem to be unable or unwilling to agree among themselves to a docket and agenda in sufficient time for tournament preparation.

Motion carried by unanimous consent.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m..

Respectfully Submitted by:



Christopher W. Franz, Treasurer
Acting recording secretary
NYCFL

September 8, 2018

Attached: Treasurer's report, League calendar

Date	Tournament	Location	Notes
9/29	NYCFL "First Regis"	Regis	JVX, VX, JV Prose, V Prose, Duo (mandatory binders), DP, OO
10/6	NYCFL -- Hugh McEvoy Memorial	Stuyvesant	Dec, JV Prose, JV Poetry, Congress
10/20	NYCFL "Regis Debate"	Regis	LD, PF
10/27	NYCFL - Sr. Raimonde Memorial Service	Xavier	All Speech (OI-Poetry only), Congress -- Certificates (No trophies)
11/3	NYCFL	Fordham Prep	All Speech, Congress
11/17	NYCFL - "Bx Science Debate I"	Bx Science	LD, PF, Policy
12/1	NYCFL - Emily Clemente	Ursuline	Dec, JV-X, OI, OO
12/15	NYCFL Christmas Chlassic	Regis	LD, PF, Congress
1/12	NYCFL - Fr. Rippon Memorial	Regis	All Speech, Congress (Rippon/Raimonde Scholarship nominations due)
2/2	NYCFL	Convent CT	All Speech, Congress
2/9	NYCFL - "Bx Science Debate II"	Bx Science	LD, PF, Policy
3/9	NYCFL - Last Chance	Bx Prep	All Speech, Congress
3/16	NYCFL - Mini Stuy	Stuyvesant	Dec, JV-X, JV-OI
3/16	NYCFL - Grands	Stuyvesant	All Speech, Congress, LD, PF -- Qualifier for Nationals
5/25-5/26	NCFL Nationals	Milwaukee, WI	Qualifiers only



The New York Catholic Forensic League

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September 1, 2018

Treasurer's Report, Fiscal Year 2017-2018

(September 1, 2016 – August 31, 2017)

I. Introduction

The League's finances remain delicate. Though we raised entry fees for speakers from \$4 to \$5 two years ago, this has not quite stabilized our cash flow. In addition, we experienced a slight increase in the cost of trophies and we face unpredictability in numbers of participants at tournaments.

Last year we one extraordinary expense. As a gesture of solidarity, the league donated the entire proceeds of the Sister Raimonde Bartus, F.D.C. Memorial Service Tournament to Msgr. Kelly Catholic High School in Beaumont, Texas, a member of the National Catholic Forensic League the community of which was devastated by Hurricane Harvey. The school has been most appreciative (see attached). However, those funds (\$1,200) would normally have helped fund the Raimonde/Rippon Scholarships.

The league ended the year having lost, apparently, some \$451. Given the donation to Msgr. Kelly, a one-time event, we would seem to have been \$749 to the good in a "normal" year. However, schools have paid \$2,233 in total "ahead" for the coming year – as they draw down on this balance, the league will receive no further cash. That puts the league \$1,484 behind breaking even, should next year be the same as this. That deficit is lower than it has been but still presents a worrisome reality.

The treasurer therefore recommends that the speaker fees be raised again. Given that we had a total of 2,572 students compete in regular season competitions (excluding the Grand Tournament, that is), an increase to \$6 should be sufficient.

II. Fiscal Status: Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS

Current Assets

Bank Accounts	13,600.85
Other Current Assets	0.00

Total Current Assets	13,600.85
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TOTAL ASSETS

13,600.85

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

Liabilities

Current Liabilities

Other Current Liabilities	0.00
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Total Current Liabilities	0.00
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Total Liabilities	0.00
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Equity	13,600.85
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TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	13,600.85
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III. Cash flow

OPERATING ACTIVITIES

Net Revenue	-1,470.41
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Adjustments to reconcile Net Revenue to Net Cash provided by operations:

Pledges/donations Receivable	1,055.00
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Total Adjustments to reconcile Net Revenue to Net Cash provided by operations:	1,055.00
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Net cash provided by operating activities	-\$ 415.41
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Net cash increase for period	-\$ 415.41
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Cash at beginning of period	14,016.26
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Cash at end of period	13,600.85
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IV. Financial activity, FY 2016-2017

Revenue	
Membership Dues	4,050.00
Services	16,581.00
Total Revenue	\$ 20,631.00
Gross Profit	\$ 20,631.00
Expenditures	
Bank Charges	46.00
Charitable Contributions	1,200.00
National Dues	1,300.00
National Tournament Fees	3,600.00
Office and General Admin Expenses	1,584.00
Sympathy gifts	265.00
Tab and Judging	875.00
Trophies	10,079.43
Total Expenditures	18,949.43
Net Operating Revenue	\$ 1,681.57
Other Revenue	
Interest Earned	3.02
Total Other Revenue	\$ 3.02
Other Expenditures	
Scholarships	2,000.00
Truckenbrodt Award	100.00
Total Other Expenditures	\$ 2,100.00
Net Other Revenue	-\$ 2,096.98
Net Revenue	-\$ 415.41

V. Recommendations for action

1. The League should increase speaker fees for regular tournaments from \$5 to \$6 (from \$4 to \$5 for hosting schools).