

## STATE DEBATE AND DRAMATIC CONTESTS

**Debate.** In the debates at the State Capitol, March 22, the participants showed splendid preparation and marked ability. Eau Claire was awarded the championship, Red Granite second place, and Oconomowoc third. The conference breakfast, through the cooperation of the Forensic Board and Speech Department of the University, proved not only entertaining but especially worthwhile.

**Dramatics.** The experiment of holding the state dramatic contest in one of the towns participating proved especially satisfactory. An audience of approximately 800 showed a keen interest in the splendid and finished productions. The proceeds, in accordance with action at the annual meeting, was applied on the traveling expenses of the visiting casts. Oconomowoc, presenting "Dust of the Road," ranked first; Oconto Falls with "Pot Boilers," ranked second; and River Falls with "The Twelve Pound Look" ranked third. The entertainment for the contestants and the get-together breakfast so ably planned by Principal Krueger and his staff, added much to the successful contest.

## NEWS ITEMS

**Entertainment.** The contestants will be guests of the sororities and fraternities for lodging Thursday and Friday nights.

**Breakfast Conferences.** The breakfast conferences are proving interesting as well as helpful. A joint breakfast, with the Future Farmers of America, is scheduled this year at the Memorial Union (see program on page one). A reservation blank is enclosed.

**Hotel.** Special arrangements have been made with the management of the Park Hotel for rooms with bath at \$1 per person per night when two or more persons occupy the same room. There are many large rooms with private baths which will accommodate five or six people. Make reservations with Mr. W. R. McNeil, Manager, Park Hotel.

**Membership.** The membership, exceeding that of last year by fourteen, has reached 377. Any other schools desiring the selections and News Letters may still register and begin planning for next year.

**Coaches as Judges.** The coaches will act as judges at the state contests, in accordance with the recently adopted amendment to the constitution.

**Material for News Letter.** The News Letter is your publication. The coaches and principals are urged to send a report on any interesting development of the past year, as well as suggestions for subjects to be discussed in the News Letter. The articles on Judging in this issue are in response to numerous requests.

**Blanks.** It is very helpful to know what selections are used by the students. For a National survey on speech activities, you are urged to give information requested on number in audience. Enclosed are blanks for report. Please mail to the secretary at the earliest possible date.

**Program of Central States Speech Association** is enclosed. Much of real interest, as well as of educational value, is scheduled. All interested are urged to attend.

**Speech Institute.** One very successful speech institute was held this year at Eau Claire. The Forensic Board is ready to plan such institutes for different parts of the State, as far as financially possible, at the request of at least twenty-five schools. Requests will be handled in the order received. If you are interested, begin to plan.

# WISCONSIN HIGH SCHOOL FORENSIC ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER

Vol. V

MADISON, WISCONSIN, APRIL, 1934

No. 4

Additional copies available to member schools at five cents each.

Copies available to other than member schools at ten cents each.

## ON TO MADISON FOR STATE CONTESTS AND CONFERENCE PROGRAM

The Forensic Association and the Future Farmers of America are again sponsoring the state speech programs. The following schedule has been adopted:

May 4—9:00 a. m.—Forensic Association Oratorical Contest—Assembly Chamber, State Capitol.

May 4—11:00 a. m.—Forensic Association Extemporaneous Reading Contest—Assembly Chamber, State Capitol.

May 4—2:30 p. m.—Forensic Association Extemporaneous Speaking Contest—Assembly Chamber, State Capitol.

May 4—3:30 p. m.—Future Farmers of America Contest—Agricultural Hall. This program will be broadcast over Stations WHA and WLBL.

May 4—8:00 p. m.—Forensic Association Declamatory Contests—Humorous and Non-humorous—Assembly and Senate Chambers, State Capitol. Room will be decided by lot.

May 5—8:00 a. m.—Breakfast Conference—Memorial Union—George J. Balzer, Chairman of the Wisconsin High School Forensic Association, presiding. The contestants will be the guests of the Forensic Association and Future Farmers of America. Others, 40 cents per plate. Reservations should be made with the Secretary of the Forensic Association, Almere L. Scott, University Extension Division, Madison, Wisconsin. Greetings—Howard Schneider, President, University Forensic Board. Heads I Win, Tails You Lose—Professor A. T. Weaver, Department of Speech.

Freedom for Public Discussion—Chester D. Snell, Dean, University Extension Division.

Public Discussion and Leadership—Chris L. Christensen, Dean, Agricultural College.

Music—Mrs. A. T. Weaver.

Speech Work in Life—Harold M. Wilkie, Regent, University of Wisconsin.

Reading—"Heyday of the Blood" by Dorothy Canfield Fisher—Professor Gladys Borchers, Department of Speech.

May 5—11:00 a. m.—Broadcast by the state champions over Station WHA.

## WISCONSIN HIGH SCHOOL FORENSIC ASSOCIATION

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## JUDGING THE DECLAMATORY CONTEST

by

Gladys Borchers, Assistant Professor of Speech,  
University of Wisconsin

The forensic contest was over. The expert judge had rendered his decision. The contestants, their coaches, and the judge had withdrawn to a private room to find out why the judge had considered some performers superior to others. He discussed the contest frankly and honestly.

"The winning contestants gave me the thought better than the others," he began. "When the program was over, their stories were more clear in my mind than those of the others. I remembered more of what they said, and less of how they said it."

"But that does not help me to improve," ventured one timid contestant. "Tell me what I did that kept the thought in my declamation from standing out over everything else."

"In the first place, your dress detracted," the judge answered. "It was too formal for the occasion. Next time wear something which will make the audience notice you more than the dress. Then when you came before the audience you came as if the selection you had was light and frivolous and after you started we had to change our impression because the selection was very serious. Have the central idea in mind as you come out, so that your walk, your facial expression, and your standing position will prepare the audience for what is to come."

"In the second place, I could not understand you easily. I listened intently and sometimes missed the thought because I did not get all of the words in the sentences. You did not say your words clearly, and you did not say them with enough volume. You missed whole syllables in some long words, and you were very careless about the endings of words. You can easily see that this drew my attention away from what you said to how you said it."

At this time a girl who felt confident that she had been heard with ease, called the judge's attention to the fact that many people had commended her because of her loud voice and clear pronunciation. "Why did you rank me so low?" she asked.

"You went to the other extreme," said the judge. "I forgot the thought in your selection because your words were said so very carefully and loudly that they drew attention to themselves. People who speak well do not say every sound as carefully as you did, and they adapt their voices to the rooms in which they speak. In your case, too, I forgot what you said and thought of how you said it."

"I was impressed with this boy to whom I gave first place in the declamatory contest, because his voice was always appropriate to the thought. You may remember that when he depicted a coarse, rough character, his voice was harsh and loud, but when he gave the lines of the heroine his voice was rich and beautiful. And at all times what the character said stood out over everything else. The change in voice made the story more clear."

"I can't remember that he used any gestures at all," said another student. "But do you remember his story?" asked the judge.

"Yes, I remember it very well," answered the girl. "That is one reason why I voted for him. It was hard for me to notice his bodily action because the thought stood out so clearly. I stopped several times (feeling my responsibility as a judge) to note whether he moved at all, and to my amazement I found he used his body a great deal. But every movement of his face, his arms and hands, his feet, his entire body was so very appropriate to the story that it called attention to the story rather than to the action. Good bodily action calls attention to the thought."

"You really judge then on whether or not you get the thought, don't you?" "I give that person first place who gives me the story or poem most completely. I often stop to notice why I am getting the thought and find that it is because the person is succeeding in the use of appropriate voice and bodily action. I find that nothing in appearance, in sound, or in movement detracts from the thing he has come to give. But on the contrary all of these help to make the characters more clear cut, the pictures more vivid, the story more lasting."

## THE BASIS FOR JUDGING ORATORY AND EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING

by

Henry Lee Ewbank, Associate Professor of Speech,  
University of Wisconsin

You have asked me to write down, as nearly as I can, my procedure in judging contests in oratory and extemporaneous speaking, and my reasons for so doing.

I have never liked those score-cards that ask me to assign a certain percentage to gestures, vocal inflections, choice of subject, etc. When I must use such a card, I rank the speakers in what seems to me to be the order of their general excellence, and then fix up the percentages accordingly.

We should remember that judging is a relative, not an absolute, matter. The judge is not placing the speakers in terms of an absolute, fixed standard, but is ranking them with reference to the other speakers in the group. Thus, a speaker may rank first in one event and take last place in another.

I take running notes on each performance, but try not to take so many notes that I cannot watch the speaker and the audience. The judge, in my opinion, should keep himself free to note how the listeners react and how the speaker adjusts his efforts to these reactions. At the end of each speech I decide what my judgment would be if the contest were ended at that point. Judgments so formed are, I believe, more accurate than those arrived at after all the speaking is done.

My score card might look something like this:

Speaker	Rank after each speaker					
A	1	2	2	3	3	3
B		1	1	2	2	2
C			3	4	4	5
D				1	1	1
E					5	6
F						4

### Judging the Oratorical Contest.

In most instances, the orations are not original. The standards for judgment are, therefore, much the same as for the memorized declamation. Here are some of the questions that I ask myself:

(1) Does the speaker seem aware of what he is saying, or is his attention focused on how he is saying it?

(2) Does the speaker seem interested in what he is saying? Does he make it seem vital and important to me?

(3) Does his face reflect what he is saying or do I see there only the effort of recall?

(4) Do the vocal inflections and bodily actions combine to make a unified picture? Do the gestures "stick out"? Does the voice call attention to itself?

(5) Are there other annoying mannerisms that deflect my attention from what the speaker is saying?

(6) Does the speech seem long or do I listen easily? If a speaker makes me forget I am judging a contest and carries me along with him in his discussion of the subject, so that I am surprised and sorry when he is through, I know he has given a fine oration.

### Judging Extemporaneous Speaking.

This contest attempts to measure what the student can do in an emergency—when he must collect and arrange his thoughts, and speak on short notice. I ask myself such questions as these:

(1) Does the speaker talk about the subject or does he slip over onto some topic that he knows more about?

(2) Does the speech show evidences of planning? Is there an orderly progress of ideas?

(3) Does the speaker show ability to form good sentences?

(4) Does the speech contain specific, illustrative materials or is it a series of general assertions?

(5) Is the delivery reasonably free from mannerism? Can I focus my attention on what the speaker is saying?

(6) Does the speaker seem to believe what he is saying? Does he have some information that he seems eager to share with his listeners?

(7) When the contest is over how much can I remember about what the speaker said?