

JOURNEY

**SPECIAL
COVERAGE**

Spring 2006



NATIONAL CHAMPIONS!

FROM THE PRESIDENT



National Champions. *National Champions.* I was half a world away when I received the email, "Carson-Newman College Wins Comprehensive Forensics National Championship."

Sitting at a computer late at night in Christchurch, New Zealand, my reaction was outwardly subdued, but internally intense. Wow! National Champions. I like the way that sounds.

For the uninitiated, forensics is the umbrella term for debate and related public speaking competitions, and there are several organizations that oversee particular forms of the discipline. More than 200 American colleges and universities are members of the Pi Kappa Delta National Forensics Honorary, and the organization opens its even-year national tournament to programs all across the country. On the first weekend of spring break, our forensics team traveled to Gatlinburg for the meet. Three days later, having taken titles in Duo Interpretation, After Dinner Speaking and the Individual Events Pentathlon, as well as taking the Individual Events (IE) Sweepstakes, C-N won the coveted Overall Combined Sweepstakes: PKD's National Championship.

This was not our first national victory in forensics. In 1965, the team of Barnett Pearce and John Wittig, under the tutelage of Coach Forrest Conklin, captured the national debate trophy. Our current champions, like that storied pair, represent the very heart of C-N. This championship is a link to the gloried past.

You should know something about our championship team. It is comprised of young men and women who, beyond their major and general education courses, take on mountains of material and diligent practice sessions. We have a remarkable crop of forensics students who are a pleasure to talk with and get to know. They are led by Chip Hall, a young man who came to us from Berry College last year. Chip and his team deserve our thanks and congratulations.

So congratulations, Chip. And congratulations to Wendell, Ryan, Aaron, Rachel and the rest of our forensics team. But, most of all, congratulations to Carson-Newman College for being the kind of place that produces young men and women like these. With this group, I don't think we will have to wait four decades to say the words again.

National Champions. I do like the way that sounds.

James S. Netherton
James S. Netherton



Dr. James Netherton and Forensics Coach Blaine "Chip" Hall hold the 2006 PKD Overall Sweepstakes trophy, one of four national title awards Hall's team won at the March 10-12 tournament. (Photo by Charles Key)

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On the Cover – Photo of the PKD National Comprehensive Tournament trophy courtesy of Ricke O. Hester, '75.



There's No Debating It: Forensics Squad Earns National Hardware

They went, they saw, and they communicated. And they won!

Carson-Newman's forensics team prevailed at the 2006 Pi Kappa Delta National Comprehensive Invitational Tournament, bringing home titles in the Overall Combined Sweepstakes, Individual Events (IE) Sweepstakes, as well as championships in Duo Interpretation, After Dinner Speaking, and the Individual Events Pentathlon.

The competition, held March 10-12, saw 300 competitors from 48 colleges and universities across America converge on the Smoky Mountains for hundreds of competitive speech slots. The tournament's offerings included reader's theatre, student congress, 11 individual events, and three styles of debate. The tournament also offered elimination rounds in each event, along with several sweepstakes categories and speaker awards in each of the divisions.

When the smoke cleared Sunday evening, and with his team holding the overall award, C-N's Coach Chip Hall was beaming, his initial surprise having been overtaken by great pleasure. Having fielded only part of his squad, he had expected a solid-but lower-ranked-performance.

"It's amazing!" he said, trying to comprehend the victory. "It's just incredible."

"I didn't know what to expect going in (to the awards ceremony)," he remembered. "I thought third (place) was a realistic goal for us; I thought that was in the ballpark of where we'd end up. And that would have been wonderful. So this was beyond-well beyond-any expectations I had."

The Overall Sweepstakes victory was brought home with 236 total points. McKendree College, from Lebanon, Illinois, ranked second for the weekend with 217.

The IE Sweepstakes championship came down to a C-N and Bowling Green State University tie at 181 IE points, sending members of the tabulating committee to the American Forensics Association rule-book. Hall's team won the tie-breaker based on the number of

entrants who made it to final rounds, combined with the number of first-place finishes in those events.

"Every point we scored made a difference this weekend," said the first-year Carson-Newman coach who has a lesson he says he will use in practice sessions for years to come. "Even the students who didn't break out (move up to higher rounds)... If they hadn't been there, we wouldn't have won the IEs. That's part of what makes it particularly great — every point counted!"

As pleased as he is about the present, Hall can't help but anticipate the future. "Here's something that's very important to think about," he enthused. "Out of this group of kids, only two are seniors. Just two! So that's amazing — you think about what that means beyond this point. It's just very exciting."



C-N's Forensics team displays some of the PKD trophies collected at the organization's 2006 national tournament March 10-12. (Photo by Charles Key)

Wendell Moon: In a (sophomore) Class All by Himself



Moon

Wendell Moon was leaving Sunday's awards ceremony when a pair of Webster University coaches stopped to congratulate him on the IE National title. "So, you're a junior?" asked Dr. Scott Jensen.

"No," replied Moon.

"Oh, you're a senior..." Jensen said.

"No, I'm a sophomore."

"WOW!" exclaimed Tom Serfass, Jensen's assistant coach.

"Man, I hope you break a leg next year at Nats (nationals)," said Jensen.

"Thank you," said Moon warmly.

"Nooo," smiled Jensen sheepishly. "I mean it; break a leg. Really, we'll even help!"

Moon chuckled and he walked away loaded with awards and trophies.

Jensen and Serfass spoke to a passerby who had heard the exchange. Asked why they were so impressed, Jensen explained. "The college context is so different from the high school experience," he said. "It usually takes a while to accomplish what this kid's done, and he's just getting started."

"To have the success he's just had," interjected Serfass; "and to have it over that number of events is incredible. The Pentathlon Award he won says that he did the best of anybody here, and he is only a sophomore."

He may be concluding his second year in the college ranks, but Wendell Moon is to individual forensics events what Peyton Manning is to football. Like the first-tier quarterback whose success is tied to his family's pedigree, Moon grew up in the thick of his discipline. His parents, David and Teresa Moon, were both competitive speakers who operate Communicators for Christ and train homeschooled debaters on the finer aspects of oratory.

"Wendell was firing on all cylinders," said his coach, Chip Hall. "He won the Pentathlon award at the national level, and that's the best you can do."

Dynamic Duo Wins Out



Watson

At the National Comprehensive Tournament, Aaron Watson and Wendell Moon were two peas in an interpretive pod. The C-N freshman-sophomore team capitalized on a season of hard work, garnering first-place

in Duo Interpretation at the national event.

"I paired the two together at the first of the year following a retreat," recalled Coach Chip Hall. "We had duo tryouts, where I had them read snippets from different plays." The reading yielded what Hall sought: compatibility. "Wendell and Aaron seemed to really connect with the individual characters themselves."

Successfully connecting in "duo interp" can mean the difference in taking home the prize and just going home. The rules are simple: perform a ten-minute cutting from a play. The partners depict two or even more characters with the objective of making the audience suspend its natural disbelief. Those who are most successful win.

Watson and Moon staged a piece called Brooklyn Boy, a play by Pulitzer Prize-winner Donald Margulies in which an author who has finally found success visits his dying, overly-critical father. Though emotionally tough, the piece allows the team to showcase their talent.

Both competitors bring a lot to the table according to their professor. "Wendell devotes a lot of time to making himself better," credited Hall, who describes the sophomore as a workhorse. "He has a lot of charisma and that really works in his favor."

Though a freshman, Watson impresses Hall on several fronts.

"I don't think Aaron knows how good he really is," said Hall, who praises Watson for possessing a broad range of talent. "He does so well in duo, but he's also an amazingly good debater, which requires a polar-opposite approach."

"Wendell and Aaron have been a good duo all year, and in just the last few tournaments have passed just being 'good,'" championed Hall. "They have just really put it together and have gotten into it."

Ryan Hubbard's Hard Works Pays Off



Hubbard

For a mid-Friday afternoon prose round, Hubbard showed up at Room 2217 of the River Terrace Conference Center. He entered the room and at the appropriate time took his place in

front of the television armoire. He bowed his head, slowly blinked his eyes once and looked up. No longer Ryan, he was "Davey," the character he developed from Ryan Boudinot's absurdly humorous short story, The Littlest Hitler.

In somewhere around nine minutes, Hubbard's "Davey" recounted the time he went to his fourth-grade Halloween party as the German dictator, solely basing the choice on his fascination with the "costume." Among the witches, ghosts and ghouls, "Davey" stood out like a sore thumb. Things were going okay-but just barely okay. Finally, a classmate introduced her chosen character: Anne Frank. Confronted by the disparity, "Davey" learns several life lessons.

It takes a special ability and a great deal of effort to be a prism, to let a writer's words flow through and bend the way people think about issues, particularly something as difficult as the Holocaust. Chip Hall calls Hubbard's talent and dedication "phenomenal."

"Ryan is the kind of student you wish for," noted the assistant professor. "He is one of our team's most devoted members."

To portray "Davey," Ryan created personas for at least four different characters, granting each one individual mannerisms, unique speech patterns and facial contortions. He says doing this sort of work is what he always wanted.

He also always wanted to come to Carson-Newman. He didn't apply to other schools because his mind was made up from early on.

A sophomore who went to Morristown West High School, just 15 miles from C-N, Hubbard also knew he wanted to continue the forensics experience he began there.

"I love being at Carson-Newman," said the 2006 Pi Kappa Delta After Dinner Speaker champ. "It fits me."

Effort and Teamwork Key to Success, says Coach

Chip Hall is pleased by his squad's success, but he's equally pleased of the effort behind it.

"It's really fantastic," said the Maine native and graduate of Berry College and University of West Florida. "It shows our students, our campus and our community what diligence and teamwork can do."

Tom Huebner, Hall's predecessor, maintains that the first year C-N coach should be credited for his leadership.

"Chip understands the kind of work it takes to be successful," assessed the former forensics director. "He isn't afraid to do the hard work and to spend unlimited hours working with his students. Most importantly, though, Chip is a strong Christian whose combination of forensic and classroom excellence coupled with his personal faith commitment made him a logical choice."

Hall's team members second Huebner's affirmation.

"Chip is very, very personable, and he knows what he's talking about," said Ryan Hubbard. "He does this for the right reasons. He's very interested in each of us."

To challenge his interpretation students, Hall uses a style that sounds like a cross between Socrates and The Actor's Studio.

"He asks us questions that we have to answer in character," said the sophomore from Morristown.

"It's like we were here," he said, holding his right hand about chest high. "And Chip has brought us up to here," he concluded, lifting his left hand to eye level. "He has made us better."



Immediately following the conclusion of Sunday evening's awards ceremony, Hall gathered his students to ensure that they understood the magnitude of their victory. "Every point counted," he proclaimed. (Photos by Charles Key)

"Chip gives us tangible, concrete and practical critiques," praised Wendell Moon. "And he meets with each of us an hour per week."

That means that on top of his class and team practice schedule, Hall spends almost 20 hours per week working one-on-one with students. By the time he concludes the travel season in mid-April, he will have taken them to 10 tournaments covering some 7,000 miles.

While Hall is pleased with the monumental victory, he said his discipline offers its practitioners life skills, not the least of which is humility.

"Forensics provides you more definite feedback than other things do," he reflected. "And one of its most valuable lessons is that you learn how to lose."

For now, that's a lesson for another day.



The 2005-06 Forensics Team: (Front Row) **Aaron Watson**, comm./ political science, Keller, Texas; **Jessica Deason**, child & family services, Nolensville; **Chris Heggem**, communications, Morgan Hill, Calif.; **Justin Musick**, communications, St. Augustine, Fla.; **Nathanael Lee**, communications/political science, Knoxville; **Alisha Watson**, communications, Keller, Texas; **Emily Smith**, English/philosophy, Gilbert, La; **Brandi Bolyard**, sociology, Talbott. (Second Row) **Coach Chip Hall**; **Brandon Winters**, political science, Verona, Va.; **Ryan Hubbard**, speech communications /applied psychology, Morristown; **Rowdy Cloud**, communications, Rutledge; **Hannah Oliver**, English, Bear, Del; **Rachel Nave**, communications/vocal performance, Morristown; **Joe Greene**, English, Sevierville; **Jared Pickens**, history, Hermitage. **Wendell Moon**, a communications major from Murfreesboro and **Jonathan DeViney**, an economics major from Hattiesburg, Miss. were unavailable for the picture. (Photo by Charles Key)

Keeping Tabs: C-N VP Stays Connected to “Family”

by Mark Brown

The “Tab Room” of the Pi Kappa Delta National Forensics Tournament is sort of like a Russian novel: it would help to have a chart of who is connected to whom and how the connection was made.

For instance, Tom’s first debate was judged by Scott, who hired Robert sight unseen at McNeese State nine years ago. Back in graduate school, Robert shared an apartment with Dan, who is now the Cassese Director of Forensics at Ohio University. It’s that way all around the conference room of Gatlinburg’s River Terrace Resort and Convention Center; “She hired him; he coached this guy, and those two over there are married.”

It often makes speech and debate gatherings take on the feel of family reunions held many times an academic year. The ultimate connection is a love of competitive speaking.

“We average 15 to 17 weekends on the road each year,” responds McNeese State’s Robert Markstrom, sitting on the floor sorting ballots. “But with (Hurricane) Katrina, we did three in the fall, this is our sixth one for the spring, and we have three more scheduled after this.”

“Yeah, that’s close for us,” concurs Scott Jensen, who directs the forensics program at Missouri’s Webster University, where his wife Gina is both an assistant professor and the assistant director for his team. “We probably average 15 a year.”

Beyond leading their team members in the rigors of preparation, including exhaustive reading, fact research, and intense practices, coaches oversee budgets, coordinate trip itineraries and travel thousands of miles each season, which lasts from September to April. Once they arrive at a meet, several have been handpicked to oversee the all-important score-compilation.

Dr. Tom Huebner, C-N’s vice president for enrollment and the school’s previous debate and forensics coach, knew who he wanted compiling scores when he agreed to direct the national meet. “Scott is one of my best friends,” smiles the Arkansas

native. “I met him when he judged my first debate. He and the rest of the folks in this room are like my family.”

Huebner went to Southwest Baptist University as an undergraduate music major who wanted to be a violinist. Dr. Bob Derryberry, who has taught at the Bolivar, Missouri school for 42 years and is a legend in the debate and forensics community, remembers the innate curiosity Huebner displayed as a student two decades ago.

“Tom always had an inquiring mind and was just very questioning,” he says. “He just seemed to have the idea of, “Hey, there’s something we don’t know.”

“Tom represents role reversal in the highest form,” adds Derryberry. “It’s gratifying when you have a student who goes on to join your profession and then he creeps up and, before you know it, he’s on the national council and over you.”

Huebner came to C-N from William Carey College three years ago to lead the institution’s speech and debate program.

He held the position for a year when President Netherton named him to lead C-N’s admission and recruiting program, a post he had held at Carey some years before. Elected as the 2007 PKD national president before taking the administrative role, he had agreed for C-N to host the 2006 national competition.

He took on dual roles in admissions and forensics while he helped look for his own replacement, Blaine “Chip” Hall, who took over the program after serving as the assistant coach for the Berry College Forensics Union.

“I surely didn’t expect it to work out this way,” shrugs Huebner; “But it was not an opportunity I wanted to turn down.”

Current PKD President Dr. Sandy Alspach says there is a bitter-sweetness to seeing Huebner leave forensics for the administrative ranks.

“So many of our excellent forensics leaders like Tom get tapped for administration,” she sighs. “We seem to have so many of the skills necessary for administrative work, and we learned them by managing forensics programs.”

“The move to administration was a natural fit for me,” Huebner says. “I’ve always enjoyed thinking about the big picture—where do we want to go, what do we want to be, how are we going to get there? My training as a teacher and as a speaker/debater prepared me to analyze, evaluate, and focus—these are the tools I use daily in my role as a college administrator.”



Tom Huebner and Chip Hall listen to a colleague tell a humorous anecdote during a break in the tourney proceedings (Photo by Mark Brown)

FIRST CHAMPS STILL APPLY SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Carson-Newman College's first national championship did not come on the gridiron, the court or the diamond.

Teammates Barnett Pearce, John Wittig and their coach, Forrest Conklin, were feted like Julius Caesar when they stunned the 1965 National Debate Tournament, held at West Point, and came back to East Tennessee as the best debaters in America.

"It was really quite a surprise to be greeted by the C-N band, students and Dean (Joseph) Ernest as we landed in Knoxville after our victory," recalls Wittig, a senior lecturer at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

"The honor of being the first 'team' of any sort to win a national championship for Carson-Newman meant that Barnett and I were the recipients of public congratulations from both Knoxville papers, the Tampa Tribune and the Sebring, Fla. paper," he notes. "We really thought we were hot stuff, and apparently walked around campus for several weeks with heads the size of watermelons.....pointed comments from friends and family burst our self-congratulatory balloons."

"Had the participating teams been classified according to the size of the institution, it would still have been an extraordinary achievement," said Sciences Dean Carey Herring, '65, O&B editor at the time. "That all universities and colleges, large and small, public and private, competed for one trophy made the results even more outstanding!"

After beating San Fernando Valley State in the octafinals, C-N edged out a 3-2 judges' decision over MIT in the quarterfinals. In the semifinal round, Pearce and Wittig defeated Florida's University of Miami team before trouncing Oklahoma's Northeastern State University 6-1 in the championship round.

"John and I worked on debate (sleep-deprived; no social life) so that we could 'administer a therapeutic thrashing' to specific other debate teams," remembers Pearce, a Fielding Graduate University pro-

fessor. "But largely unnoticed in our competitiveness were certain invaluable habits of mind. The most obvious: sifting through piles of information, organizing and expressing thoughts clearly, and constructing cogent arguments."

Wittig joined UAB's communication studies department in 1981. He directs the school's public relations program and was recently honored with the establishment of an endowed presidential scholarship to recognize his service.

Pearce is the principal developer of the Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory. He has written seven books and over one hundred articles and chapters.



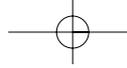
Dr. Barnett Pearce



Dr. John Wittig



The Orange & Blue devoted its entire front page to the news of the debate team's retort heard 'round the world. The picture shows C-N Dean Joseph Ernest greeting Pearce, Wittig and Coach Forrest Conklin as they arrive in Knoxville. (C-N Archives)



Tournament Results

Team

CHAMPIONS Overall Sweepstakes
CHAMPIONS Individual Events
Debate Sweepstakes (8th place)

Ryan Hubbard

CHAMPION After-Dinner Speaking
8th place Pentathlon
3rd place prose interpretation
3rd place duo interpretation (w/Rachel Nave)

Wendell Moon

CHAMPION Pentathlon
CHAMPION Duo Interpretation (w/Aaron Watson)
2nd place duo interpretation (w/Rachel Nave)
2nd place prose interpretation
Excellence award impromptu speaking

Nathanael Lee

Quarter-finalist parliamentary debate team
Quarter-finalist impromptu speaking

Justin Musick

3rd place parliamentary debate speaker

Semi-finalist prose interpretation
Quarter-finalist parliamentary debate team
Excellence award extemporaneous speaking
Excellence award persuasive speaking

Rachel Nave

6th place Pentathlon
2nd place duo interpretation (w/Wendell Moon)
3rd place duo interpretation (w/Ryan Hubbard)
3rd place after-dinner speaking
Semi-finalist poetry interpretation

Aaron Watson

CHAMPION Duo Interpretation (w/Wendell Moon)
5th place prose interpretation
Semi-finalist persuasive speaking
Quarter-finalist parliamentary debate team

Brandon Winters

Quarter-finalist parliamentary debate team

For a Tentative 2006-07 Forensics Team Travel Schedule, visit www.cn.edu/communication/forensics.htm

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