

Calling All Students

By Travis J. Carter

Are you a high school debater or coach looking for a debate competition unlike any other?

The law firm of Bickel & Brewer and New York University recently announced the fourth annual National Public Policy Forum (NPPF). The NPPF is the first national contest that gives high school students the opportunity to participate in written and oral debates on issues of public policy. The one-of-a-kind competition offers high school debaters the chance to compete for cash awards and prizes, and an all-expenses paid trip to New York.

Here's how the contest works.

Everyone is Invited:

All schools – public and private – are invited to participate for free. Each school must submit a qualifying round essay of no more than 2,800 words on the topic, “*Resolved: That the United States federal government should establish a foreign policy substantially increasing its support of United Nations peacekeeping operation in the Middle East.*” The contest topic is similar to the 2004 NFL topic, so debate research can contribute to NFL and NPPF competitions. High school teams can be comprised of any number of students, and qualifying round essays may be written in the affirmative or negative. One essay is allowed per school. Qualifying round essays must be sent by November 5, to nlc@bickelbrewer.com, or call 214-653-4804.

Among the hundreds of teams that compete, 16 will be chosen to advance to the written elimination rounds. These 16 schools will compete against each other in individual written debate matches, with one school submitting a written argument and

the other responding in written opposition. The schools go back and forth two times in written debate.

All submissions are reviewed by a panel of judges, and individual winners advance to the next round. This process continues for several rounds until we reach the final four teams.

The Finals:

The final four teams earn an all-expenses paid trip the weekend of April 16, 2005 to the finals competition at New York University, located in the heart of the world's most exciting city.

The trip provides up to three students and two coaches the opportunity to participate in written – and oral – debate before a panel of the world's foremost experts in debate, business, law and journalism. Recent judges for the NPPF Finals include: Justice Michael H. Schneider, Texas State Supreme Court; John Sexton, president of New York University and member of the NFL Hall of Fame; Melissa Maxcy Wade, director of debate at Emory University; Kurt Eichenwald, award-winning author and writer for the New York Times; Will Baker, director of debate at New York University; Les Lynn, director of the National Association of Urban Debate Leagues; and John Bickel and Bill Brewer, partners at the national litigation firm of Bickel & Brewer.

Going for the Prize:

At the finals competition, the final four debate teams supplement their written debate with oral advocacy. The winning team claims a \$5,000 grand prize and the Bickel & Brewer Cup, a traveling trophy that resides annually at the home of the contest champion. Awards and cash prizes are also awarded to the other finalists at a special

National 'Written' Debate Contest Begins

Dinner & Awards Ceremony.

Last year's NPPF champion was Westminster Schools of Atlanta, Georgia. Westminster defeated NPPF Runner-Up Highland Park High School of Dallas, Texas. Highland Park earned a \$2,500 Runner-Up prize and the second place trophy. Other teams competing in the finals included East Carteret High School of Beaufort, North Carolina and Maize High School of Maize, Kansas, which were each awarded \$1,000. Previous NPPF champions also include Woodward Academy of College Park, Georgia and East Carteret High School.

The Perfect Opportunity:

The NPPF proceedings are governed by an all-star advisory board of debate supporters. The board includes Bill Brewer of Bickel & Brewer, John Sexton of NYU, Melissa Maxcy Wade of Emory, Will Baker of NYU, Alfred Snider, director of debate at the University of Vermont, Ted Belch, debate coach at Glenbrook North High School, and Jim Copeland, secretary emeritus of the National Forensic League. The contest and its focus on written scholarship come at a pivotal time, with the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) now including a written component.

“I've been involved in high school debate for more than 40 years as a student, coach and mentor,” says Sexton. “This is one of the most challenging and interesting competitions available to students today.”

Bickel & Brewer founded this contest in 2001. Brewer explains one of the main reasons why. “This contest opens the doors of opportunity,” he says. “It invites the participation of all students country-wide – from public and private schools.”

◆ Policy Debate

Enter Today: Qualifying Essays are due Nov. 5

The process for participating in the NPPF is as follows:

1. Submit a qualifying round essay of no more than 2,800 words on the topic, “Resolved: That the United States federal government should establish a foreign policy substantially increasing its support of United Nations peacekeeping operation in the Middle East.” Essays can be written in the affirmative or negative. There is no entry fee.

2. Essays must be received by **November 5**. Papers can be sent via e-mail directly to nlc@bickelbrewer.com.

3. Remember, teams may write in the affirmative or negative. Teams can be comprised of any number of students – but only one essay can be submitted per high school.

4. Schools will be notified by mid-November regarding the final 16 selections. Those 16 schools will then begin a round-robin written debate competition.

5. Questions? Visit www.bickelbrewer.com/debate to view a complete contest calendar and program guidelines. Or call 214-653-4804 or contact contest director Travis Carter at 214-360-7815.

◆ The National Public Policy Forum is a unique forum that supplements the research and oral advocacy skills developed in traditional debate competition with another – written advocacy



Melissa Maxcy Wade, Director of Forensics at Emory University was keynote speaker at the NPPF final ceremony held in Dallas, Texas.

2004-05 Competition just around the corner.

On behalf of Bickel & Brewer and New York University, thank you for your continued support of the National Public Policy Forum. The NPPF is the first national contest that gives high school students the opportunity to participate in written and oral debates on issues of public policy. The 2004 – 05 competition is just around the corner. Here is a complete update.

Inviting all Schools:

The topic for the 2004 – 05 competition is, “Resolved: That the United States federal government should establish a foreign policy substantially increasing its support of United Nations peacekeeping operations in the Middle East.” All high schools – public and private – are invited to participate in the competition by submitting a qualifying round essay of no more than 2,800 words on the NPPF topic. Essays may be written in the affirmative or the negative, and teams may be comprised of any number of students. Only one essay is allowed per school. All essays must be sent to nlc@bickelbrewer.com by **November 5**.

The Elimination Rounds:

The qualifying round essays will be judged by Bickel & Brewer and members of the NYU debate team. The top 16 teams will be announced in mid-November. Those 16 schools will then compete in individual written debate matches, with one school submitting a written essay on the topic, and the other responding in written opposition. The schools volley written debates two times. All the submissions are reviewed by a panel of judges in the order in which they were submitted. The individual winners are chosen and advance to the next round. The process continues for several rounds until we reach the final four teams.

New York, New York:

The final four teams earn an all-expenses paid trip to the finals competition on April 16, 2005 at New York University, located in the heart of the world’s most exciting city. This trip provides up to three students and two debate coaches the opportunity to participate in an exciting finals weekend, where the students have the opportunity to supplement their written scholarship with oral advocacy.

The winner claims a \$5,000 grand prize and the Bickel & Brewer Cup, a traveling trophy that resides annually at the home of the NPPF champion. Awards and cash prizes are also awarded to the other finalists at a special Dinner & Awards Ceremony. The winner of the 2003-04 NPPF was Westminster Schools in Atlanta, followed by Runner-Up Highland Park High School of Dallas.

Sound Interesting?

Encourage high school students to begin writing! The contest is free and open to all schools across the country. A special contest announcement is being mailed to schools next week. In the meantime, debaters can visit www.bickelbrewer.com/debate to view contest procedures and a schedule of events. And look for an upcoming article in *Rosstrum*, the flagship publication of the National Forensic League.

Remember, qualifying round essays are due by November 5. They can be sent directly to nlc@bickelbrewer.com.

On behalf of Bickel & Brewer and NYU, I look forward to working with all of you on this year’s contest. Thanks again for your continued support of this unique academic competition.



Westminster Schools, Atlanta, GA, named the 2003-04 Champion of the National Public Policy Forum. (Pictured left to right) Coach Jenny Heidt, Tejas Sathian, Eric Huh, Josh McLaurin, Stephen Weil & Jacob Byrne.

Questions?

Feel free to write or call me direct at:

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