

# THE EX FILES

**November Edition  
Volume 1, Issue No. 3**

## From the Publisher

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The first two editions of *The Ex Files* have generated a lot of excitement in the extemporaneous speaking community and the staff of *The Ex Files* hopes that you feel that this third edition of the magazine will be the best yet. The National Points Race has seen some changes after extemporaneous speaking tournaments at the University of Pennsylvania Liberty Bell Classic and the St. Mark's Heart of Texas Invitational, which counted for double points because it has a separate United States and International extemp tournament. Also, a recap of the 2008 election has been provided along with a very insightful brief about poverty, which will help any extemper who is befuddled by domestic social topics. Furthermore, the strategy articles provided in this edition by NFL United States Extemporaneous Speaking National Champion Colin West and CFL and NFL International Extemporaneous Speaking finalist Hunter Kendrick provide some new angles on the event that have not been explored before.

In order to be timely, this edition of *The Ex Files* contains a Glenbrooks preview, which is a must read for any extemper attending that tournament this weekend. This preview is written by Ian Panchevre, last year's Glenbrooks champion, who is best suited to provide you with some tips in order to help you walk away with top honors this weekend.

Expect to see the next edition of *The Ex Files* to come out in mid-December, a week or week and a half after the George Mason Patriot Games tournament concludes. The December edition of *The Ex Files* will be a special edition to highlight the prestigious Montgomery Bell Academy (MBA) Extemp Round Robin. This showcase of the top 16 competitors in the country will be the center of the extemp world in early January and the December edition will have an **exclusive** interview with Adam Johnson, the man behind the MBA selection process. Also, our contributing staff will provide some insight into the tournament based on their experiences and we will handicap the field of 16 (or as many that have been announced) prior to the tournament.

Again, the contributing staff of *The Ex Files* and I thank you for your continued support of Extemp Question Central and this magazine. Good luck in the prep room and at the draw table!

**-Logan Scisco**



### **Volume 1, No. 3**

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# Keeping Their Attention: A Judging Analysis

by Colin West<sup>1</sup>

Every extemper has, at some point, received a ballot after a tournament and wondered “was my judge even listening to my speech?” I know I have. But now that I have moved from the realm of high school competition into the pool of college judges, I can tell you the answer. They weren’t listening. At least, not to all of it.

Of course it is rarely the case that judges are simply tuning out for long passages of your speech. More likely, they are distracted by writing comments on your ballot, by trying to remember what time signal to give next, or because you said something so clever that it caused them to spontaneously recall an article they read in last month’s *New Yorker*. But the result is the same: a few seemingly random moments from your speech will have a great deal of influence on your final score; the rest is simply background.

What this means for you, as a competitor, is that you need to think more like your teacher does when he or she prepares a lesson plan. After all, it’s not easy to get teenagers to focus on *anything* for more than 15 seconds, unless “Pimp My Ride” and “Panic! At the Disco” are somehow both simultaneously involved. Applying this strategy starts at the very top of your outline, with the intro. Of course, it’s a well-known fact that the introduction serves as an “attention getter.” But such devices generally serve as just this and nothing more: they grab the judge’s attention momentarily, but relinquish it moments later when the speaker moves on to more substantive (read as: “boring”) issues.

There are a couple of steps which can be taken to remedy this. One is the use of a “divided” or “suspended” intro—one which begins with something funny but leaves an unanswered question to be answered later in the speech. Naturally, care must be taken not to make the introduction seem incomplete, but I suspect that many extempers have seen their teachers do just this. They begin the lesson with a joke or a fun fact about the subject at hand, and then hint at the prospect of an

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<sup>1</sup> *Colin competed in speech and debate for three years at Rocky Mountain High School, under the coaching of Mr. Paul S. DeMaret. He was a three time Colorado state finalist, winning US extemp in 2005 and Public Forum Debate in 2006. West is also a two time invitee to the Montgomery Bell Extemp Round Robin, a three time qualifier to NFL nationals in US extemp and a two time finalist. In 2006, he was the USX NFL national champion, as well as winner of the final round. Currently he is a physics student at the University of Colorado in Boulder and remains involved with speech and debate at local high schools.*

even funnier story, or an even more curious piece of trivia. The students are left waiting for the resolution, which forces them to pay more attention as the lesson goes along, never knowing when they might hear the completion of the story. In your case, the second punchline can be used to frame the speech in the conclusion, or perhaps in the transition between the second and third point.

Another, less radical technique is the oft-discussed (and yet wildly underused) concept of a *significance statement*: a short (one or two sentence) explanation of the relevance, urgency, and scope of the problem being discussed. Many extempers do not use such a device at all, and those who do frequently mistake it as an opportunity to show the judge that they, personally, know the topic is important. Much more than that, a significance statement gives you the chance to transcend the extemp round: you can convince your judge that your question is so urgent and so relevant to his life as an average American that it would be worth 7 minutes of his time to hear the topic discussed even if he weren't being paid to do it. Of course, not all topics lend themselves to this as well as others. But if you can make your judge feel a moment of personal concern about the issue (“my goodness! That’s really how big my daughter’s share of the national debt will be by the time she is 18?”) then there is a good chance you will hold their attention much more tightly.

Naturally, the strongest introduction in the world will not carry your speech if the content is still vaguely narcotic. Just as it happens in a classroom, strings of statistics or cascading citations have a way of putting one’s brain into a brief hibernation. I suspect the same is true for some judges: after years and years of hearing students make a claim, cite evidence to support it, and repeat for 3-4 minutes at a time, even the best judges start to pay less attention to the substance of the citations. For example, when a student says “the economy is getting worse,” the judge, feeling that the statement is intuitively true, probably feels there is no real need to pay as much attention as the student proceeds to cite figure after figure about inflation, GDP, and job loss. Of course, there are times when that is a good thing. After all, everyone has given a speech from time to time where their citations struggled to bear the weight of their analysis, and at times like those it can be nice when a judge takes your evidence for granted. On the other hand, there is something terribly tragic about delivering that perfect piece of evidence—a uniquely calculated figure pulled from a highly respected report—only to discover that the judge was busy jotting down your competitor code because they forgot to do it at the start of the round.

To compensate for this, you have to give your best citations a little something extra to make sure they hang in the air long enough for your judge to appreciate them. This amounts to a sort of “mini-significance statement,” except in this case, your goal is to get the judge to internalize the information rather than simply acknowledge the fact that you used a citation. Here are a couple examples of the classic “benchmarking” technique:

- Break down large economic figures in terms of the wealth of some famous person. Example: “the New York Times reports that the war in Iraq is costing us \$10 billion each month. That means that even if Bill Gates himself began personally funding the war in Iraq, he would be out of money in 6 months. In fact, he would be over 2 billion dollars in debt.
- Numbers of people can be described people in terms of well-known cities, as in “since the start of 2008, 1.2 million jobs have been lost. This is the same number of people affected as if every man, woman, and child in Denver had been simultaneously fired—twice.”

You will note a number of common threads in these two examples. First, the “real” statistic should always be clearly presented before it is put into any unusual comparisons. This gives the speech a nice balance between both academic rigor and relatability. Secondly, each example given withholds a little bit of information until the very end, to heighten the overall impact. In other words, just as the judge is beginning to process the fact that Bill Gates personal fortune could only support the Iraq war for half a year, he is told that in fact, Mr. Gates would fall two *billion* dollars short of his goal. And right when he has started to imagine firing every person alive in Denver, he is told that the number of people he is picturing is (to quote *The Grinch*) too sizes too small.

Of course, this benchmarking technique requires you to either memorize or carry with you a list of easily conceptualized figures: The population of China, the number of Americans killed in world war two, or perhaps the price of gasoline in 1960. Care must be taken also to ensure that you have benchmarks at a number of different scales. You don’t want, for example, to end up saying that “one one-hundred-thousandth of the earth’s population has been killed in the war on terror.” Still, with the investment of a little work at the outset, you will find that when these comparisons are sprinkled judiciously throughout a speech, it can do a great deal to draw the

speech out of the realm of the abstract and make it hit closer to home. After all, are *you* going to forget the story about Bill Gates and the Iraq war anytime soon?

Of course, at no point in the speech is it more important to grab your judge's attention than in the conclusion. Particularly if you have had the misfortune of going first, you will want to leave the room having just finished the best lines of your speech. A fantastic introduction will be long forgotten if you were forced to limp across the 7-minute finish line.

In addition to the tried-and-true method of returning to a theme from the introduction, it can work well to end your speech with some forward-looking analysis. Where do we go from here to address the problems you were discussing? What groups would you call to action on this issue? Extending your analysis like this helps convey that you are not just engaging this topic in order to win the round—you genuinely believe that global action must be taken with respect to whatever topic you have chosen to address. On the other side of the coin, you can end on a very hopeful note by painting a brief picture where the world has followed your advice—a handy way of summarizing the arguments in favor of your position in concrete terms. In either case, do not fail to memorize the last line of your speech. If, like me, you often find yourself running on autopilot and improvising your way through the last two minutes of your speech, having the last line planned out can be a wonderful way to make sure that you stick the landing.

Of course to many people, these techniques and strategies are old news. Nevertheless, When I judge, I never fail to be amazed at how infrequently I find myself truly absorbed in a competitor's speech—and I am an admitted policy wonk. A few simple steps (a significance statement in the introduction, a flashy comparison to highlight a key statistic, and a passionate, well-rehearsed conclusion) can easily compensate for analytical weakness early in an extemper's career. And more importantly, they can make the difference between the hundreds of intelligent, successful extempers across the country and the proud few who get to speak in the coveted final rounds. So when you rehearse your speech, ask yourself: if I heard this speech in one of my classes, would I be hooked? Or would I be texting my girlfriend covertly under the table?

If the answer is the latter, consider making some changes. Or at the very least, make your judge keep his hands where you can see them.

# 2008 Presidential Election Recap

By Logan Scisco<sup>2</sup>

The 2008 elections, an election cycle some extempers have been speaking about for the last two and a half years has finally come to a close. The election result, unlike 2000 and 2004, was announced at the end of evening, with Senator Barack Obama of Illinois becoming the first African-American to be elected as the President of the United States. Obama won the election by a large margin in the Electoral College, at last count 365 to Senator John McCain's 162, and also won a commanding margin of the popular vote, 52% to 46% (independent candidate Ralph Nader won 1% of the vote). Obama's share of the popular vote was the first time a Democratic candidate has won over 50% of the popular vote since Jimmy Carter defeated Gerald Ford in 1976.

Obama's victory was accompanied by Democratic triumphs in Congressional races across the country. In the House of Representatives, Democrats expanded their majority by twenty seats and in the Senate, the Democrats added to their majority by six seats, with three races in Georgia, Minnesota, and Alaska being subject to recounts, absentee ballot counts, or runoffs. If the Democrats win all three of those contested races they would have a 60 vote, filibuster-proof majority in the Senate, which would be intact for the first two years of an Obama administration.

This topic brief will give a brief analysis of why Obama managed to win, why McCain lost the election, and where the Republican Party goes from here for the 2012 elections.

## Obama's Victory

Without question, Obama's victory is owed to his ability to wage a campaign across most of the electoral map that kept John McCain on the defensive for much of the race. Assisted by an army of volunteers and raising a mountain of campaign cash to outspend McCain three to one on television (the final figure on the money war was Obama's \$639 million to McCain's \$360 million), backed by a thirty minute slot on primetime television that pushed back the beginning of the decisive game of the World Series, Obama managed to turn Republican-held territory in the Midwest, the West, and in the South red. States such as North Carolina, Indiana, Florida, Colorado, and Nevada all fell into the Democratic camp as McCain failed to wage a close campaign in a single blue state, astonishing some political observers who felt that he might be able to swing a few blue states with his "maverick" image.

Also, states such as Georgia and Arizona, which never should have been close, tightened in the closing days forcing the McCain camp to spend significant resources just to keep the election from being a blowout. It would not be surprising to look back at this election in a few years and come to the conclusion that the McCain camp knew the race was over, just like Walter Mondale

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<sup>2</sup> Logan Scisco competed for four years for Danville High School in Danville, Kentucky where he was coached by Mr. Steve Meadows. He also competed for two and a half years for Western Kentucky University. He was the 2003 NFL United States Extemporaneous Speaking Final Round National Champion, a CFL finalist, a two-time NFA finalist in college, a two-time Kentucky state champion in extemporaneous speaking, a two-time MBA invitee, and was a four-time qualifier to CFL Nationals in extemp and a four-time qualifier to NFL Nationals in U.S. Extemp. He has coached two Kentucky state extemporaneous speaking champions, an MBA invitee, ten extemp national qualifiers, a CFL finalist, and a NFL finalist (IX). He currently teaches social studies at Grant County High School in Dry Ridge, Kentucky.



admitted that he knew he stood little chance against Reagan in the closing months of the 1984 campaign.

However, one has to wonder if this race may have turned out differently had it not been for the economic meltdown. Prior to the economic turmoil on Wall Street, McCain had taken the lead over Obama in national polls and had leads in states like Pennsylvania and Virginia. With the economy being on the same playing field as national security issues, it looked as if McCain might defy the odds and become the oldest president elected to a first term in U.S. history. Once the economic turmoil hit, though, Obama's message of taxing companies and "spreading the wealth" to America's middle class became a theme voters were willing to follow. Facing home foreclosures, threatened retirement accounts, and tightened credit, American's were willing to take a chance on Obama, although exit polls concluded that more voters believed that McCain was the more experienced of the two candidates.

A final reason that Obama won this election was that he was able to turnout voters in record numbers and received a larger voting share in certain demographics than John Kerry received in 2004. For example, as the most recent edition of *The Economist* indicates, Kerry won 88% of the African-American vote in 2004, but Obama won 95% of it. Obama also managed to win 66% of young voters under the age of 30 and won 68% of the vote from people who were voting for the first time. Obama also won 66% of the Latino vote, a significant increase from 2004 where Kerry lost 44% of the Latino vote to President George W. Bush. Overall, the McCain campaign did a very poor job targeting these different groups, especially younger voters, and by losing each of these groups by a significant margin, it was very difficult for McCain to makeup ground.

### **Why McCain Lost**

Besides re-listing the ideas in reverse order above as to why McCain lost, there are some trends that the Republican Party needs to reflect on from this race. First, it is surprising that McCain did not carry a larger share of the Latino vote considering his record on trying to pass immigration reform with Senator Ted Kennedy in 2007, a move that almost cost McCain the Republican nomination. Over the last several years, the Republican Party's rhetoric on illegal immigration has become harsher and its moves in state legislatures to pass stringent immigration measures have most likely cost it significant shares of the Latino vote. With Latinos becoming a surging demographic in the United States, the Republican Party will need to craft a strategy to address these issues in the future.

Another reason McCain lost votes in this election can be attributed to his decision to move away from the center after he won the Republican nomination. Instead of sticking with a more centrist approach and distancing himself from an unpopular President, McCain continually felt the need to prove himself to the conservative base. While running without this base might have been a risky strategy, McCain's decisions to embrace the Bush tax cuts he initially opposed and then talk around the immigration plan he had concocted a year prior helped Obama and his aides sell the idea to voters that a McCain administration would be the same as the Bush administration. McCain's decision on these issues also hurt him among independent voters, which Republicans believed he would be attractive to in a general election.

The nomination of Sarah Palin as vice-president during this election season will also come under scrutiny for years to come from political scientists and campaign strategists. Coming out of nowhere to become the vice-presidential nominee, when it appeared that the choice was between Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, or Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal, she initially energized the Republican base and caught the Obama team

by surprise. However, after stumbling through several media interviews and suffering through the embarrassing revelations about Troopergate, Palin's favorability ratings declined among voters. The choice to put her on the ticket also brought social issues such as abortion back to the forefront of the campaign and put McCain in the uneasy position of defending himself on those issues. Over the past week, McCain advisors have issued some not so kind reports about Mrs. Palin, such as her tendency to throw temper tantrums, her willingness to berate campaign staffers, and her lack of knowledge of international events (ex. her belief that Africa was a country). Mrs. Palin denies all of these rumors, but it is clear that the McCain camp may have had buyer's remorse once the economy went sour and wished that it had chosen a more experienced running mate such as Mitt Romney, who is a proven specialist on economic issues.

## **2012: The New Frontier**

With the 2008 election over, talk has already emerged on the Republican side concerning who will want to challenge Obama for the presidency in 2012. Top Republicans would prefer that anyone harboring presidential ambitions keep their mouths shut until after the midterm elections in 2010, where the Republican Party needs to mount an offensive to reclaim some of the seats in Congress that have been lost over the last several election cycles.

The Republican Party does have several reasons to worry. First, the party is heavily divided against itself, which will make it difficult to make a tough stand against the Democratic Party, who has engineered an amazing political recovery. In 2004 political experts wondered if the Democrats had become too out of touch with American voters and if their hatred of President Bush had doomed them forever to second party status. However, aided by Hurricane Katrina, a corrupt Republican-controlled Congress, and an ailing economy the Democrats have emerged as the dominant party and it is the Republicans who now worry about being thrust into permanent minority party status. As this election demonstrates, the Republican map is shrinking to the South and performing well among limited demographics such as white men. The party must find a strategy to reach out to minority voters to expand its offensive against the Democrats.

The party is also infested with ideological divisions, some of which emerged during this election. Although Libertarian candidate Bob Barr got a disappointing .4% of the popular vote, there are fiscal conservatives who are tired of the social conservatism that has permeated the Republican Party for the last two decades. These conservatives function as social libertarians that would like to take the party more to the center in order to give it a more moderate image. They believe that by making this adjustment the party will become an acceptable alternative if they can sell the idea that they can be trusted to balance America's budget. However, social conservatives argue that there is still appeal for family values within minority communities and that abandoning that message would lose a significant part of the Republican base, further depressing voter turnout and entrenching the Democratic majority. Basically, the Republican Party is about to enter a period of civil war where the side that wins will have control over the party's nomination for president in 2012. In fact, Jim Nuzzo, a White House aide to Bush 41, told the *UK Telegraph* on October 28<sup>th</sup> that the fault line in the Republican Party will be drawn over one pivotal question: "Where do you stand on Palin?" and those who fall on the negative side of that question will be excommunicated from the party, such as columnist Peggy Noonan who criticized the Palin choice when it was announced. **It is extremely important that extempers follow what is going on in the Republican Party over the next two years because you are bound to get questions such as "What is wrong with the Republican Party?" over the next two seasons.**

So where does the GOP stand on presidential contenders for 2012? Looking into my crystal ball there are a few:

**Governor Sarah Palin (Alaska):** As McCain's vice-presidential nominee she has gained national exposure and primetime experience from the debate with Joe Biden. While her brand of social conservatism is criticized by experts who worry that it will not win a general election campaign, she is amassing an army of loyal followers inside of the Republican Party. She also has the benefit of being a female candidate, and the Republican Party would love to say that it did more for women's political advancement by having the first female president in the White House. However, Palin will face a challenge to win the Republican nomination in states like New Hampshire and Michigan, which will not react well to her brand. Also, getting national exposure from a state like Alaska will be difficult, which is why many think that Palin may try to run against Alaskan Senator Lisa Murkowski in the Republican primary next election cycle to build up her track record of experience. If Palin runs, look for her to most likely win the Iowa caucus and compete well in the South Carolina primary.

**Governor Mitt Romney (Massachusetts):** The former governor of Massachusetts and the man who saved the Salt Lake City Olympics is the favored candidate among the fiscal conservatives in the party. Moving to the right on social issues most likely cost Romney the Republican nomination, as he was characterized as a flip-flopper. Some Republicans have to be wondering if Romney could have beaten Obama's message on the economy and he may still get his chance in 2012. However, in order to stand a chance in New Hampshire, where a stand will have to be made against Sarah Palin, Romney will need to reorient himself on social issues, where he will again be open to charges of flip-flopping.

**Governor Bobby Jindal (Louisiana):** If you ask many Louisiana residents they will tell you that they wish Jindal was governor when Hurricane Katrina hit in 2006. Jindal would be a very young candidate if he seeks the presidency in 2012, clocking in at 40 years old. However, he brings to the table a good governing record of oversight and decision-making. Also, Jindal's heritage as an Indian-American would redefine the GOP's image and would help in raising contributions because of the wealth in the Indian-American demographic.

**Governor Mike Huckabee (Arkansas):** The former Arkansas governor who made health and wellness a major issue in his state, shocked the political establishment by defeating Mitt Romney in the Iowa caucuses in January. However, Huckabee's campaign failed to build on that momentum and win the South Carolina primary which doomed his chances. Huckabee plans on making more trips to the Iowa area over the next several years and his new show on the Fox News Channel will help him build a base of followers if he does seek another run at the White House. Also, due to the fact that he was the last candidate to drop out of the race, Huckabee already has a working knowledge of some of the states down the stretch in the Republican primary calendar, an asset that may prove valuable if the nomination battle gets bruising and tight.

**Governor Jeb Bush (Florida):** I know what your thinking...is this crazy? Not necessarily. Remember, it was Jeb Bush who was pegged to run for the presidency in 2000, but when he lost a very close governor's race in 1994 the momentum swung his brother George W., who emerged to get the nod. Jeb is seen as a better decision maker than George W. and would be seen favorably by both sides of the Republican Party. Also, while governor, Bush had good outreach to minority communities, especially Latino voters, the demographic the Republican Party will need to build on in 2012 to capture the White House. By being a Bush, he could rely on the support of a lot of factions in the Republican Party, both moderate and far right, as well as reach out to contacts in the Republican Party machinery. The only lingering questions are if America would be willing to put a third Bush in the White House if Jeb was nominated and if the Republican Party wants to

move beyond the Bush years. While a wild card and showing little inclination of running, a Jeb Bush campaign would be interesting for all the attention it would get.

# Glenbrooks Preview

by Ian Panchevre<sup>3</sup>

A typical prep room experience does not involve recognizing someone from the nationals final round video. At the Glenbrooks, however, this sort of encounter is typical. The Glenbrooks can be an intimidating tournament. But you will learn that the excitement of the tournament can easily overcome most apprehension. The Glenbrooks offers an incredible learning opportunity and I hope to share with you what I got out of it, but in order to do so, I'll have to break the spirit of extemp. Instead of covering three distinct points, I will begin by addressing the sort of preparation I did and then precede to reveal the attitude that I had throughout the tournament. In the process, I hope to address specifics about the tournament.

While preparing, it is important to keep in mind what really matters. You have a limited amount of time and therefore you have to be selective in regards to how you devote yourself.

Reading is obviously important. I encourage extempers to increase their reading load before a tournament such as the Glenbrooks. However, be realistic about how much you can read and what sort of knowledge will be useful in rounds. Reading a journal article about the fishing industry in Fiji will have little applicability. Moreover, trying to go through an entire book is probably unrealistic. In addition to regularly reading *The Economist* and *Foreign Affairs*, I would read the entire domestic and foreign section of *The New York Times* for about a week and a half before a big tournament. Also, while filing, I would set aside articles that clarified situations I did not completely understand to read at a later time. If you have the time to read a journal, go for it. Otherwise, stick with more general news.

You should also have a similar attitude when it comes to filing. Early in my career I excessively printed and filed because I over calculated how comprehensive my tubs needed to be. Though depth in your tubs is desirable, you have to consider whether or not a particular article covers a subject that will likely appear. Do not waste your time with an article that covers the details of labor strikes in Kazakhstan, for example. Additionally, if your tubs don't have many foreign, journal, or think-tank, articles, use the week prior to the tournament to broaden your diversity of sources. Put aside the *Washington Post* and instead collect articles from *The London Times*, *Der Spiegel*, *The Chicago Tribune* (for local appeal), The Council on Foreign Relations, The Human Rights Watch, etc.

Practice speeches are also important. Try to give at least two practice speeches before you leave. Work on reoccurring issues. Give speech redoes to apply the advice you receive and to polish your delivery. Do whatever is sufficient to develop a nice rhythm.

After having told you that you should read, file, and practice, I doubt you feel particularly enlightened. I recognize that this advice is generic. But I share it with you so that you understand that it's important to practice prudently. To succeed at the Glenbrooks, you will need to maximize your effectiveness. With less than a week until the tournament, you need to selectively choose

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<sup>3</sup> Ian graduated from Tom C Clark High School in San Antonio, Texas in 2008. Throughout his career he has won several national tournaments in Extemp including The University of Texas, St. Marks, and the Glenbrooks. He competed at MBA, placed fourth at the Extemp TOC, and was a national semi-finalist in IX. Ian is attending Yale University where he plans on majoring in Ethics, Politics, and Economics as well as International Studies.

how you will focus your time. Devote it according to what will help you improve in an actual round.

Unlike tournaments such as MBA or NFL, the Glenbrooks does not have a unique format. It is fairly standard in the sense that it has four preliminary rounds the first day, three outrounds the second day, and asks both foreign and domestic questions. The final round is unique, but that will be addressed later. In order to succeed you need to have the right mindset. My following advice will attempt to relay the attitude I had during the tournament.

First, it is important to be comfortable, relaxed, and focused before competing. This involves being rested and having everything in order. Put aside the temptation to overly socialize the night before to instead sleep at a reasonable time. Try to get to the prep room as early as possible so that you can claim a preferable location to work in. Do whatever you need to do to calm your nerves and relax.

The second bit of advice is to not be intimidated. There is a very strong competitive field at the Glenbrooks. Despite this, it's important that your competitors do not affect your performance. I didn't come from a high school that traveled or had a history of producing quality of extempers, so being surrounded by people who came from this sort of environment was slightly unnerving. However, I ignored the competition as much as possible. The only thing you can control is how you perform. Ignore the "who is who" and "who won what" gossip to focus on yourself. There are numerous factors that determine how your judge will rank the room. Therefore, a reputation is not as advantageous as you would think.

A third issue that's worthy of discussion is what sort of "style" to pursue. There is a general divide in the activity over how much emphasis to place on analysis over delivery. Many competitors hailing from different regions may be unsure of what will work at the Glenbrooks. Keep in mind that the judging pool will be diverse. There is no way to identify a preferable style. Therefore, don't view analysis and delivery as mutually exclusive. Strive for a universal appeal by articulating smart arguments in a clear fashion and delivering them well. If you plan on using humor, don't let it distract from your arguments and use it sparingly and appropriately. If you aim to win every type of judge, you generally do.

A fourth token of counsel is to pace yourself. Tournaments like the Glenbrooks should be seen as two separate competitions. The first is prelims. Your speeches must be strong enough to place you in the top quarter of the pool to advance. However, you don't need to consume unnecessary energy to break. If you consider yourself a solid competitor, don't feel pressure to give your best speeches early on. If you are less sure of your abilities, then consider making more of an effort and see where it gets you. Either way, think about your performance within the context of the entire tournament. The outrounds, on the other hand, require you to commit your fullest effort. Leave absolutely nothing for granted and focus your entire mental capacity on each outround. An impressive preliminary performance is worthless if you cannot carry the energy over into the quarterfinal round.

In regards to the final round, the most important thing is to relax and be you. I know this sounds cliché, but it's true. I did not enter the final round nervous, nor did I feel the need to change my entire strategy. Keep doing what you have been doing and let your personality reveal itself. Engage the audience with an energetic delivery and you will lift the mood of the room. Use the large audience to improve your speech as opposed to hinder your performance.

Further discussion of the final round is appropriate. Odds are, you have never been in a similar situation before. The Glenbrooks is one of a few national tournaments (St. Marks and MBA are others) that offers an experimental round. An experimental round does not involve the standard “draw three questions from an envelope” routine. Last year, the final round was a “Do-It-Yourself-Triadic.” We were given a list of about 20 nouns and asked to select three to construct our own question to speak on. I understand that the final round prior to the one I competed in consisted of a hypothetical scenario that asked the extempers to explain how they would respond in a certain situation.

I genuinely enjoyed experimental rounds because it offered an opportunity to think in an unusually abstract fashion. However, my impression is that most people don’t share this sentiment. If the final round is once again an experimental round, the way to approach it is to relax. No matter how crazy it may seem, you still have thirty minutes to develop a seven-minute speech. Approach it like you would any other round and you will have an inherent advantage over your competitors. At least one person in the room will not perform well because of the nature of the round. Don’t let that person be you.

There’s one last issue I would like to address, and that is how much pressure to put on yourself while you compete. I believe that it is counter-productive to expose yourself to excessively high expectations and pressure. I didn’t go to the Glenbrooks expecting to win. I went to learn and to see how I compared to others. Now that I am removed from the activity, it has become painfully obvious that I would perform better at the tournaments where I didn’t place excessive pressure on myself. When I entered a tournament wanting, or even expecting, to win, I would over-think the process and commit errors I didn’t typically commit.

I recognize that performance related advice is idiosyncratic. What works for me may not work for you. While I was at the Glenbrooks, I unintentionally followed the rules I just delineated. I prepared intelligently and effectively. I remained comfortable and focused. I didn’t allow the other competitors to disrupt my mindset. I spoke in a style that I believe appealed to an array of judging preferences. I paced my performance in prelims and elevated the intensity in quarters and semis. In finals, I relaxed once again and had fun with a speech that played well with the audience. And finally, I didn’t put unnecessary pressure on myself. Though this approach works, I don’t claim that it’s the only way to win a quality tournament. It’s important to find what works for you and to commit yourself to it. I wish you the best of luck competitively, and I hope that you enjoy your time at one of the best tournaments you can attend.

# Poverty Topic Brief

By Bill Thompson<sup>4</sup>

**Preface:** While the point of this brief is not to advocate for Universal Healthcare, it is not an unfair expectation to suggest that children should NOT suffer medically because of their socio economic status. According to the US Census Bureau 34% of those in poverty in 2007 were children.

It is entirely possible that there is no task more daunting than trying to explain “Poverty” in a single extemp brief. Before I begin I would like to preface that I have a larger investment in this issue than most who will read this. For the last 7 years I have worked with homeless and abused teens in my hometown of Louisville, Kentucky. I have seen firsthand the toll that poverty has on its victims and the gravitational pull that it emits, making it at times like a blackhole pulling in those who get too close to it. Poverty is also not just an issue because of America’s current economic woes. “From 1975 to 2001, the U.S. child poverty rate did not go below 16%. For much of that time, the child poverty rate was at or above 20%.” (National Center for Children in Poverty, *Low Income Children in the United States: A Brief Demographic Profile*, March 2003)

I suggested this brief to Logan because in the 16 years I have judged extemp I can count on one hand the quality extemp speeches I have seen on the topic. This is due to a few causes:

1. Most extempers have an aversion to the subject that causes them not to take poverty questions or write them when they become coaches.
2. Those who do take poverty questions address them in a very narrow manner and do not understand the many facets of this subject.

I say this because there is no way in a single brief that I will be able to adequately navigate all the causes and effects of poverty. However, it is my hope that by first addressing what poverty is and how it is measured and next the side effects of poverty on American citizens that those reading will have a better understanding of poverty and it’s toll on America

In order to have a concise idea of what poverty is I will defer to Mollie Orshansky who developed the measurements used in the US to determine poverty. Mrs Orshansky states that “to be poor is to be deprived of those goods and services and pleasures that others around us take for granted.” (Schwartz, J. E. (2005). *Freedom reclaimed: Rediscovering the American vision*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.) While a simple definition it does point to the essence of poverty. It is also important to realize that poverty can be separated into two parts; situational & generational poverty. This is a concept that has been discussed in

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<sup>4</sup> Bill Thompson has been involved with forensics for almost two decades. He was a founding member of his schools forensics team and qualified for the NCFL every year that he competed. In college Bill was a four year competitor for Western Kentucky University (WKU) focusing on limited prep events and debate. Bill won WKU’s Team Top Speaker Award 3 times and the Patrick Henry Vincent award (most points LP/Debate) twice. Bill was also a national outround competitor numerous times in extemporaneous speaking and was a DSR National Champion in Impromptu. Additionally, Bill was the head instructor for WKU’s Summer Institute’s Limited Prep Lab. These labs produced numerous state finalists, national out-round competitors, and a future DSR national champion in extemp. Since graduating Bill has been active as a judge on the high school (and occasionally the college) level, judging approximately 12 National tournaments and 15 local high school state championships. During this time he has helped coach at Bethlehem, Trinity, and Assumption high schools in Kentucky. Six of his students have been state finalists in extemp. Last year one of his students was an NCFL national semi-finalist in extemporaneous speaking.



numerous articles and books on the topic. Concisely, situational poverty is a person(s) that find themselves in poverty due to an event (eg. Layoff, accident, house fire, etc..). In instances of **situational poverty** the effects are much more short term and easily rectified. Primarily this is because those in situational poverty have adequate support systems (family, friends, etc...) that are able to help them financially. **Generational poverty** is the term referring to those who were born in to poverty and that currently find themselves in poverty. Sometimes this is referred to as inherited poverty. Typically generational poverty is much more difficult to transcend because of the centralization of poor in both rural and urban areas. It is for this reason that when I get to the solutions portion of this brief I will primarily deal with combating generational poverty.

## I. Defining Poverty

In terms of measuring poverty the USFG poverty thresholds are:

### 2008 HHS Poverty Guidelines

<b>Persons in Family or Household</b>	<b>48 Contiguous States and D.C.</b>	<b>Alaska</b>	<b>Hawaii</b>
1	\$10,400	\$13,000	\$11,960
2	14,000	17,500	16,100
3	17,600	22,000	20,240
4	21,200	26,500	24,380
5	24,800	31,000	28,520
6	28,400	35,500	32,660
7	32,000	40,000	36,800
8	35,600	44,500	40,940
For each additional person, add	3,600	4,500	4,140

**SOURCE:** *Federal Register*, Vol. 73, No. 15, January 23, 2008, pp. 3971–3972

Keep in mind that this is just to meet the legal definition of poor. Imagine getting by in any city in the US on \$10,400. To put this in perspective “The medium income in the United States for a family of four is \$43,318. 12.5% of the population is living below the poverty threshold (That is 7.6 million families, 35.9 million people). The number of people living in poverty has risen by 4.3 million since 2000. Experts suggest that a more realistic poverty threshold would be \$30,000. Therefore **nearly 30%** of the US population would be living in poverty.” (<http://www.wsana.org/id79.html>)

Additionally, it is important to remember that these measures are based on a system devised by Orshansky in the 1960’s. While there have been numerous proposals to change the matrix

used to determine poverty, by and large the Orshansky model has changed very little since it was developed a half century ago. If you have an interest in looking at previously proposed alternative measures for determining the threshold for poverty, I would suggest <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/contacts.shtml#g> .

It is necessary to establish a brightline in determining where poverty begins and ends. However, there are undisputable correlations between areas of poverty and topics like drug dependence, crime, suicide, homelessness, health, etc... I mention this because these are all topics that are the focus of many domestic extemp rounds, but few speakers reference poverty when answering these questions...

## **II. Side Effects of Poverty**

### *A. Housing*

It is estimated that on any given night in America that up to 2 million people are homeless, according to estimates of the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty ([http://www.policyalmanac.org/social\\_welfare/homeless.shtml](http://www.policyalmanac.org/social_welfare/homeless.shtml)). It is further estimated that there are another 2 million Americans living in inadequate housing (<http://www.wsana.org/id79.html>) . The same site goes on to point out that half of low income or poor families spend more than 50% of their income on housing, while anything less than 30% of a household's income is considered affordable. Clearly poverty and no/poor/inadequate housing go hand in hand. Nationwide as America experiences a housing collapse it is predictable, if not inevitable, that these numbers will only become more alarming when they are released for next year.

There are numerous theories as to why there is a concentration of poverty in America. Undoubtedly the centralization of public housing contributed to this phenomenon in urban areas across the US. Additionally, the centralization of poverty has been seen in rural areas such as Appalachia, the southwest, and elsewhere. In most areas there is a scarcity of resources in rural areas, so once an area has been established as an area in need of resources, more people migrate to that area in hopes of obtaining these services for themselves and their families. In other words, there are instances when poverty eradication efforts can increase the amount of poor entering an area.

Statistically, areas of concentrated poverty have higher crime, drug use, violence rates. This correlation further emphasizes the need to address poverty in a comprehensive manner. While there is no causal relationship that can be clearly determined between poverty and the previously mentioned issues, it seems unrealistic to not include the idea of poverty when answering questions on these subjects.

### *B. Health Care*

While there is a general lack of consensus in America with how to solve our nation's health care issues, it is undeniable that poorer Americans do not receive equitable health care. In 2006 CNN posted a story stating that, "In 2005, 40 million Americans had gone without insurance at some point. Additionally the report went on to cite CDC reports that as wages decrease individuals are less likely to have healthy lives."

(<http://www.cnn.com/2006/HEALTH/08/29/poverty.health/index.html>) Further, a Cornell study titled, “Childhood Poverty Leads to Health Problems, Lower Life Expectancy in Adulthood” was released on 11/07/07. The study found that the longer people spend in poverty as children the worse their health will be as adults (regardless of their socioeconomic status in adulthood).

While the point of this brief is not to advocate for Universal Healthcare, it is not an unfair expectation to suggest that children should suffer medically because of their socioeconomic status. According to the US Census Bureau 34% of those in poverty in 2007 were children

(<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/histpov/perindex.html>). While most states have Medicaid for children in poverty, there are many parents who do not obtain this insurance for their children. Whether this lack of insurance is due to parental oversight or an inability to navigate the social services system, the point remains that children without access to healthcare pay the price for their entire lives.

### C. Education

In terms of education there have been numerous studies that show a direct correlation between poverty and low test scores. Perhaps no study has more decisively established this relationship than The International Mathematics and Science Study for 2003 (Gonzales, P. & Guzmán, J. C., Partelow, L., Pahlke, E., Jocelyn, L., Kastberg, D. & Williams, T.(2004). *Highlights from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2003. (NCES 2005–005)*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Retrieved Nov 28, 2005 from: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2005/2005005.pdf>). Theories concerning the cause of this correlation range from access to resources, expectation levels of schools and students, to the difference in educational levels between poor and rich parents. While there is no clear explanation for the cause of the achievement gap between poor and rich students, it is still necessary to acknowledge the gap and to attempt to address it.

One of the first forays into exploring and combating this issue was done by Ruby Payne in her groundbreaking “A framework for Understanding Poverty”. While in recent years this book has received criticism on several levels, this criticism does not negate the importance of the initial work. The mere fact that Payne addressed the issue and took a stab at narrowing the educational gap between poor and rich students was ground breaking for its time. If nothing else Payne’s work attempts to illustrate cultural and communicative differences between socioeconomic statuses that transcend racial lines.

### III. Conclusions

It should not come as a surprise that a Google search for “US poverty eradication efforts” does not produce a domestic link until page 6. The clear message is that most Americans prefer to think that poverty is a problem for the rest of the world. Clearly there is a basic need for most Americans to become more aware of Domestic poverty and its far reaching implications. The southern Poverty & Law Center is doing some of the most progressive work in this area through their site

<http://www.tolerance.org/teach/activities/activity.jsp?ar=875&pa=1> . In recent years the SPLC has expanded its vision from antiracist activism to promoting tolerance on many fronts. It seems apparent that combating poverty will be impossible without first acknowledging the prevalence of poverty in the US and understanding the pervasiveness of the issue.

While understandings are important to dealing with the issue there are some other issues which would help in more effectively combating this issue. It seems preposterous that the formula for calculating poverty has remained largely unchanged for over a half century. Taking a broader look at what it means to be poor and defining accordingly could be of benefit to lawmakers and those who are poor. If poverty includes lacking those things that others take for granted there should be numerous layers that go in to calculating what it means to be poor.

In recent years there has been a push to do away with the large housing complexes that abounded in urban cities until the mid to late 1990's. While breaking up these enclaves of poverty will present some immediate benefits, there is a risk that just moving people will not solve their poverty issues and will displace them from the resources and agencies designed to help them. While moving to neighborhoods with more employment opportunities and better schools is an unquestionable improvement, this will not break the cycle of generational poverty in a few weeks, months or years.

Currently in America there are no safety checks to insure that kids have medical insurance. Aside from mandatory vaccinations to attend school, there is no guarantee that kids go to the doctor outside of these occasions. While I am not suggesting a big brother state or suggesting that universal health care that is extended to adults is necessarily the solution, it is obvious that all kids deserve an equitable start in life. In light of the long term effects of poverty on a child's development and life expectancy that were previously mentioned, it would be helpful to pursue progressive legislation that better meets the health needs of our younger citizens. If 34% of the poor in America are children (previously cited) not meeting their medical needs today will cost our country on many levels in future generations, even if those who are currently in poverty are able to pull themselves out of poverty in later years.

While "No Child Left Behind" and Ruby Payne have been criticized in recent years as being ineffective or out of touch, it is clear that there is an achievement gap between rich and poor in the US. Not doing anything is also not an answer. There is groundbreaking work being done nationwide in schools like Portland's "Open Meadows" ([www.openmeadow.org](http://www.openmeadow.org)). A large part of the schools success is due to their pursuit of competitive grants from corporations and philanthropies. Schools like Open Meadows work primarily with youth that have not experienced success in traditional classroom settings and help them to become successful. While education is not a one-size-fits-all affair, it would be beneficial to look to schools that are successful working with youth in poverty in order to establish best practices for US schools.

Undoubtedly I am biased by my interactions over much of the last decade working with youth and families in poverty. While this paper does not propose a singular solution to eradicating poverty or even a precise framework for defining it, my hope is that extempers who have read this are now more aware of some of the far reaching effects of poverty on our nation. While I don't think this paper will lead to a plethora of people choosing to do poverty

speeches, it would be nice if poverty were mentioned in speeches that dealt with the housing crunch, health care, or even education. I encourage each of you to follow the extra links provided and do further research on this issue on your own. With pending economic woes our country will more than likely be forced to deal with this issue sooner than later. It is for this fact alone that I hope that this brief helps to prepare you for this topic and causes you to start thinking of possible solution to dealing with this issue. In a few years it WILL be up to you to solve in the real world.

Thanks to Logan for your patience with this brief and the opportunity to address this issue that most extempers avoid like abortion and the death penalty.

# Extemp Question Central National Points Race

by Logan Scisco

There have been three tournaments counting towards the inaugural Extemp Question Central National Points Race since our October edition, one occurring at the University of Pennsylvania Liberty Bell Classic and the other at the St. Mark's Heart of Texas Invitational, where both the United States and International extemp tournaments counted for points. To see a breakdown and basis for the Extemp Question Central National Points Race, please look at previous issues of *The Ex Files* that can be accessed on the Extemp Question Central website.

The University of Pennsylvania Liberty Bell Classic, held on October 18-19<sup>th</sup>, and the St. Mark's Heart of Texas Invitational, held on October 16-19<sup>th</sup>, featured diverse fields of competition. The inclusion of these three additional tournaments into the rankings, which have already included the Wake Forest Early Bird and the Yale University Invitational, helped to break the tie that existed in the number one spot in the rankings in our last issue. To view the results of the Liberty Bell Classic and the St. Mark's Heart of Texas Invitational, please look at the results section at the back of this magazine.

### Individual Standings

Here are the updated individual standings as of November 18, 2008. The top fifteen in the rankings are included below:

RANK	NAME	SCHOOL	POINTS
1	Dillon Huff	Carroll HS (Southlake, TX)	90
2	Nick Cugini	Cypress Ridge HS (Houston, TX)	80
3	Brennan Morris	Randolph-Macon Academy (Fort Royal, VA)	70
4	Jovalin Dedaj	Fordham Preparatory (Bronx, NY)	56
T5	Alon Elhanan	Bronx High School of Science (Bronx, NY)	50
T5	Matt Arons	Millburn HS (Wyckoff, NJ)	50
T7	Siobhan Tellez	Oakwood HS (Dayton, OH)	40
T7	Stacey Chen	North Allegheny Senior HS (Wexford, PA)	40
T7	Morgan Booksh	McNeil HS (Austin, TX)	40
T7	Michael Watson	Desert Vista HS (Phoenix, AZ)	40
T11	David Goette-Luciak	Blacksburg HS (Blacksburg, VA)	30
T11	Rebecca Goldstein	Newton South HS (Newton, MA)	30
T11	Virginia Hogan	Convent of the Sacred Heart (New York, NY)	30
T11	Nick Stevens	John H. Guyer HS (Denton, TX)	30

The top two spots in this month's rankings come to us from the state of Texas with **Dillon Huff** of Carroll High School and **Nick Cugini** of Cypress Ridge High School making their rankings debut. Huff's spot at the top of the rankings was propelled by St. Mark's as he managed to win the International extemp portion of the tournament and placed second behind Cugini in the United States extemp portion of the tournament. For his part, Cugini finished third in the International extemp portion of the tournament behind Huff to accompany his victory in the United States extemp portion. Depending on their travel schedule for the remaining part of the year, these two extempers could stay near the top of the rankings for the next few months, or they could fade as the Glenbrooks, George Mason University Patriot Games, and the Montgomery Bell Extemp

Round Robin, a second tier tournament, will be added into the rankings within the next month and a half.

In other rankings news, **Brennan Morris** of Randolph-Macon Academy in Virginia vaulted up the rankings from the eighth position into the third spot, twenty points behind Huff, after a victory at the University Liberty Bell Classic. This added fifty points to his rankings total to accompany a fourth place finish at the Wake Forest University National Early Bird at the beginning of the season. Not far behind him is **Jovalin Dedaj** of Fordham Preparatory in New York, who finished second to Morris at the Liberty Bell Classic and finished behind Morris a second time in fifth place at Wake Forest. Dedaj's runner-up finish at the Liberty Bell Classic moved him up from a tie for tenth in the rankings into sole possession of fourth place with 56 points.

Early season winners **Alon Elhanan** of the Bronx High School of Science in New York and **Matt Arons** of Millburn High School in New Jersey fall from a tie for first in last month's rankings into a tie for fifth place based on inactivity. A similar fall can be attributed to the two competitors who placed behind them at those tournaments, **Siobhan Tellez** of Oakwood High School in Ohio and **Stacey Chen** of North Allegheny Senior High School in Pennsylvania, who currently occupy a four-way tie for seventh place. This logjam is joined by **Michael Watson** of Desert Vista High School in Arizona, who finished second in International extemp at St. Mark's. The final competitor in this tie for seventh is **Morgan Booksh** of McNeil High School in Texas, who placed fourth in both extemps at St. Mark's.

Last year's unofficial rankings winner **Rebecca Goldstein** of Newton South High School in Massachusetts fell to a tie for 11<sup>th</sup> in the rankings after a period of inactivity at the national circuit level last month, but will most likely rise when the Montgomery Bell Extemp Round Robin is calculated into the rankings in the January edition.

### Team Standings:

There was a shakeup in the team rankings from last month after the inclusion of the Liberty Bell Classic and St. Mark's. Here are the updated top ten in the Extemp Question Central National Team Points Race as of November 18, 2008:

RANK	SCHOOL	POINTS	# OF FINALISTS
1	Carroll HS (Southlake, TX)	106	3
2	Cypress Ridge HS (Houston, TX)	80	2
3	Randolph-Macon Academy (Fort Royal, VA)	70	2
4	Fordham Preparatory (Bronx, NY)	56	2
5	Newton South HS (Newton, MA)	50	2
T6	Bronx High School of Science (Bronx, NY)	50	1
T6	Millburn HS (Wyckoff, NJ)	50	1
8	McNeil HS (Austin, TX)	40	2
T9	Oakwood HS (Dayton, OH)	40	1
T9	North Allegheny Senior HS (Wexford, PA)	40	1
T9	Desert Vista HS (Phoenix, AZ)	40	1

Team rankings are determined by applying points extempers earn in competition from the National Points Race to the team that they compete for. Ties are broken based on the number of finalists teams have had at the national tournaments that factor into the Extemp Question Central National Points Race.

Based on a string of strong finishes by two of their extempers, Dillon Huff, who currently occupies the top spot in the Extemp Question Central Individual National Points Race, and Bryan Campanello, **Carroll High School** has taken a 26 point lead in the National Team Points Race. The three finals that they earned at St. Mark's might work to their advantage if they hold onto the top spot and end up in a tie at the end of the year.

In the second position is another Texas school, **Cypress Ridge High School** who can credit their 80 total points to the efforts of Nick Cugini, who finaled twice at the St. Mark's tournament and won the United States extemp competition there. **Randolph-Macon Academy** of Virginia and **Fordham Preparatory** of New York are in third and fourth place, respectively, for the same reason of relying on two strong competitors, Brennan Morris and Jovalin Deda for their rankings points thus far in the season.

Although they were inactive in the counted tournaments for last month, **Newton South High School** in Massachusetts, who finished second in last year's unofficial rankings and who was in the top spot last month, has fallen only into fifth position thanks to the third and fourth place finishes of Rebecca Goldstein and Alex Tolkin at the Yale University Invitational. Newton South avoids a tie with the **Bronx High School of Science** in New York and **Millburn High School** in New Jersey thanks to having two finalists.

**McNeil High School** of Texas also avoids a three-way tie for ninth position and resides in eighth place due to a series of fourth place finishes in both extemp competitions by Morgan Booksh. Rounding out the top ten, with the same point total as McNeil but only having one finalist thus far in the season are **Oakwood High School** in Ohio, **North Allegheny Senior High School** in Pennsylvania, and **Desert Vista High School** in Arizona.

On a sidenote, it is worth mentioning that extemp powerhouse **Eagan High School** in Minnesota is sitting at 16<sup>th</sup> in the rankings with 28 points, based off of the fifth and sixth place finishes of Namita Desai and Amanda Johnson in International extemp at St. Mark's.

### Tournament Overview

Here is an overview of the tournaments that will count for this year's competitive calendar towards the Extemp Question Central National Points Race, how many points each tournament will be worth, and who the big winners have been so far.

TOURNAMENT	DATE	LOCATION	WINNER'S POINTS (TIER)	WINNER
Wake Forest National Early Bird	9/12-9/14/2008	Winston Salem, North Carolina	50 (3rd Tier)	Alon Elhanan (Bronx HS of Science, NY)
Yale University Invitational Tournament	9/26-9/28/2008	New Haven, Connecticut	50 (3rd Tier)	Matt Arons (Milburn HS, NJ)



St. Mark's Heart of Texas Invitational (IX)	10/16-10/19/2008	Dallas, Texas	50 (3rd Tier)	Dillon Huff (Carroll HS, TX)
St. Mark's Heart of Texas Invitational (USX)	10/16-10/19/2008	Dallas, Texas	50 (3rd Tier)	Nick Cugini (Cypress Ridge HS, TX)
University of Pennsylvania Liberty Bell Classic	10/18-10/19/2008	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	50 (3rd Tier)	Brennan Morris (Randolph Macon Academy, VA)
The Glenbrooks	11/22-11/24/2008	Northbrook, Illinois	50 (3rd Tier)	
George Mason University Patriot Games	12/5-12/8/2008	Fairfax, Virginia	50 (3rd Tier)	
Montgomery Bell Academy Extemp Round Robin	1/9-1/11/2009	Nashville, Tennessee	100 (2nd Tier)	
Barkley Forum for High Schools	1/23-1/25/2009	Atlanta, Georgia	50 (3rd Tier)	
Harvard National High School Invitational Tournament	2/14-2/16/2009	Cambridge, Massachusetts	50 (3rd Tier)	
2009 California Invitational Forensic Tournament	Not available at this time	Berkley, California	50 (3rd Tier)	
Extemp Tournament of Champions (TOC)	5/8-5/10/2009	Chicago, Illinois	100 (2nd Tier)	
2009 CFL National Tournament	5/23-5/24/2009	Albany, New York	150 (1st Tier)	
2009 NFL National Tournament (IX)	6/15-6/19/2009	Birmingham, Alabama	150 (1st Tier)	
2009 NFL National Tournament (USX)	6/15-6/19/2009	Birmingham, Alabama	150 (1st Tier)	
2009 NFL Final Round (IX)	6/19/2009	Birmingham, Alabama	25 bonus pts. (1st tier)	
2009 NFL Final Round (USX)	6/19/2009	Birmingham, Alabama	25 bonus pts. (1st tier)	

# The Shark, The Guppy, and the Jobber

by Hunter Kendrick<sup>5</sup>

People who know me realize that I do not mince words. I say what I am thinking at the moment I think it. For example, I once remarked to my coach in practice that, “So many of the world’s problems could be solved with a handgun and a well-placed café waiter,” (a viewpoint I would not recommend espousing in a round). Sometimes my candidness is good, other times people hate me. But, at least I am honest and upfront. Now and then, the people I express my opinions to are somewhat surprised at the words that flow forth from my mouth. One such incident happened at the 2007 NFL National Tournament.

The conversation occurred sometime between the octafinals rounds and the semifinals postings for US Extemp. The conversation involved me and a good friend of mine, Jack Grennan, from North Allegheny Senior High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Jack had asked me a very simple question. My answer, however, wasn’t as simple.

“Do you think that (name has been omitted for obvious reasons) will do well?”

“Oh yeah, he’s a shark.”

“A shark?”

“Um-hum.”

“Ok, ok... What about (see above parentheses)?”

“Hell no.”

“Why?”

“He’s a guppy.”

“A guppy...”

Jack had not known it at the time, but he had actually stumbled upon one of these event-related theories that I tend to develop. This particular theory, the “Shark, Guppy, Jobber Theory,” had been in the works since December of 2006 (the December before this conversation took place). It all started at the “Hilltopper Invitational” held annually at Western Kentucky University. That year, the extemp section of the tournament was a bit bare. There were Kentucky state contenders (like myself and my teammates), but that was the extent of the talent pool. Of course, there was one notable exception.

By now, when I drop the name “David Kumbroch,” I probably don’t need to add an explanation after it. But, just in case, I will. In my opinion, David was one of the best to ever compete in our event. His analysis was always spot on, and his delivery was impressive, to say the least. To his credit are wins at the Wake Forest “Early Bird,” the Barkley Forum, and (fanfare, please) NFL Nationals. The 06-07 season could be referred to as the “David Kumbroch Experience.” He literally went to every tournament he could, like the Hilltopper.

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<sup>5</sup> Hunter Kendrick is a 2008 graduate of Danville High School in Danville, KY. He competed in speech and debate for four years, and over that period of time he amassed fourteen different state championships in six different individual events – including eight different titles in Extemporaneous Speaking. Nationally, Hunter is most notable as a two-time finalist at the Barkley Forum of Emory University, the 3<sup>rd</sup> place finisher at the 2007 NCFE National Championships, the 3<sup>rd</sup> place finisher at the 2008 MBA Southern-Bell Round Robin, and as the 4<sup>th</sup> place finisher in International Extemp at the 2008 NFL National Championships. In the summer of 2007 Hunter was named an NFL “Academic All-American,” and by the end of his forensics career he had earned the degree of “Premier Distinction” from the NFL. Hunter is a freshman at the University of Kentucky where he is pursuing degrees in History and English.

During the tournament prelims, one of the Kentucky competitors asked me who the “new guy” was in the prep room. I informed them that the new guy was the next Hilltopper tournament champion in extemp. And then, I jokingly added that, “He’s probably looking at the schematic saying, ‘Num, num, guppies for my belly, num, num.’”

Of course, the guy looked at me like I was nuts. But, sure enough, in finals that day David beat my cumulative score of 5 with his 4, garnering the tournament championship. As I stood in that ballroom (where awards are held) and congratulated my friend, I began to realize something. I realized that, in my opinion, all extempers can be classified into one of three areas: sharks, guppies, and jobbers (surprise!).

So, let us begin. These are pretty self-explanatory, so I won’t beat you about the head with the obvious. When we think of sharks, we think of godless killing machines, or, at least, I do. Sharks patrol the oceans looking for things smaller and weaker than themselves to prey on, like guppies (yes, I realize that guppies are usually freshwater creatures and that sharks inhabit saltwater – but this is my article, and if I want to change how things work in the natural world I will). And some sharks, like the Great White, literally have insatiable appetites. Extemp sharks (which David was the archetype of) fall along the same lines. They are “bigger” than other competitors – they have more talent, are more practiced, and are more confident. No matter whom he faces where or when, a shark walks into a round expecting to win.

The guppies are the exact opposites of the sharks. Guppies are “smaller” and “weaker” than the sharks (the form I was in back then). This could entail many things. Perhaps the guppies just don’t have as much natural talent as the sharks. Or, as is most often the case, talent isn’t the problem – the guppies are merely outworked by the sharks. The guppies have marginal success; sometimes they even survive shark attacks (in one of the prelim rounds that tournament I actually got the “1” over David). But, because of their nature, guppies are never consistently “safe.” This means that, unlike the sharks, the guppies do not go into every round thinking they will win (unless they are a very foolish guppy, which makes them even more of a guppy, I might add).

And then there are the jobbers. If you’re trying to figure out a maritime reference, stop – there isn’t one. This is a term that I learned from Logan Scisco (the founder of the *Ex Files*), which he borrowed from professional wrestling. In the ring, a jobber is the loser of the match. It comes from the phrase “doing one’s job” (as the matches are fixed). After all, not everyone can win. Jobbers are the competitors who, for whatever reason, get beat. They get beat so bad and so regularly that you’d think they were getting paid to do it, that they were doing their job. There are two types of jobbers, and one form of jobber is more respectable than its counterpart. The respectable jobber is the competitor who wants to do well and is interested in the event, but the talent is just not there. There is nothing wrong with that – competitive speech just is not everyone’s strength. I love football, but that does not mean I could throw a game-winning touchdown in the National Football League, just like a love of speech does not mean that one has the ability to be in the International Extemp finals of the National Forensics League.

So, when looking back to today’s question. “Do you think that \_\_\_\_\_ will do well?” the answer is, it depends on if they are a shark, a guppy, or a jobber (and on luck of the draw, of course). A brief caveat, do not waste your time in the prep room trying to decide who fits what role. These observations are merely an interesting topic of discussion. However, focusing on the abilities of other performers and not on your own speech is a surefire way to bowing out from a tournament sooner than you would prefer.

# OCTOBER/EARLY NOVEMBER 2008

## EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING RESULTS

**Note:** *This section will be used to contain extemporaneous speaking results from around the country. If you have the results of a local/state tournament you would like to see here, simply e-mail them to [logan.scisco@wku.edu](mailto:logan.scisco@wku.edu).*

### *National Circuit Results*

**ST. MARK'S HEART OF TEXAS  
INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT (IX)**  
*Dallas, TX @ St. Mark's School of Texas  
October 16-19, 2008*

**Champion:**

- Dillon Huff (Carroll HS, TX)**  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Michael Watson (Desert Vista HS, AZ)  
3<sup>rd</sup>: Nick Cugini (Cypress Ridge HS, TX)  
4<sup>th</sup>: Morgan Booksh (McNeil HS, TX)  
5<sup>th</sup>: Namita Desai (Eagan HS, MN)  
6<sup>th</sup>: Amanda Johnson (Eagan HS, MN)

**ST. MARK'S HEART OF TEXAS  
INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT (USX)**  
*Dallas, TX @ St. Mark's School of Texas  
October 16-19, 2008*

**Champion:**

- Nick Cugini (Cypress Ridge HS, TX)**  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Dillon Huff (Carroll HS, TX)  
3<sup>rd</sup>: Nick Stevens (Guyer HS, TX)  
4<sup>th</sup>: Morgan Booksh (McNeil HS, TX)  
5<sup>th</sup>: Bryan Campanello (Carroll HS, TX)  
6<sup>th</sup>: Aneesh Rai (Canfield HS, OH)

**UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
LIBERTY BELL CLASSIC**  
*Philadelphia, PA @ University of  
Pennsylvania  
October 18-19, 2008*

**Champion:**

- Brennan Morris  
(Randolph Macon Academy, VA)**  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Jovalin Dedaj (Fordham Preparatory, NY)  
3<sup>rd</sup>: Virginia Hogan (Convent of the Sacred  
Heart, NY)  
4<sup>th</sup>: Phil Gillen (Regis HS, NY)  
5<sup>th</sup>: Mike Barton (Regis HS, NY)  
6<sup>th</sup>: Patrick Anstine (Dallastown HS, PA)

### *State/Local Results*

**CAMPBELL COUNTY HAUNTED  
INVITATIONAL**  
*Alexandria, KY @ Campbell County HS  
October 25, 2008*

**Champion:**

- Brian Bickers (Beechwood HS)**  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Emily Martin (Boone County HS)  
3<sup>rd</sup>: Jacob Delong (Scott County HS)  
4<sup>th</sup>: Ryan Eldridge (Grant County HS)  
5<sup>th</sup>: Will Modrall (Highlands HS)  
6<sup>th</sup>: Lori Lovell (Boone County HS)

**BOONE COUNTY "I KNOW WHAT YOU  
DID LAST SPEECH TOURNAMENT"**  
*Florence, KY @ Boone County HS  
November 1, 2008*

**Champion:**

- Jamie Mohan (Danville HS)**  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Aaron Williams (Harrison County HS)  
3<sup>rd</sup>: Brian Bickers (Beechwood HS)  
4<sup>th</sup>: Tory Cooney (Assumption HS)  
5<sup>th</sup>: Tom Christy (Highlands HS)  
6<sup>th</sup>: Jim Laskey (Highlands HS)

**CALLOWAY COUNTY "I STILL KNOW  
WHAT YOU DID LATS SPEECH  
TOURNAMENT"**  
*Florence, KY @ Boone County HS  
November 1, 2008*

**Champion:**

- Jordan Foster (Boone County HS)**  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Jamie Mohan (Danville HS)  
3<sup>rd</sup>: Emily Martin (Boone County HS)  
4<sup>th</sup>: Max Tagher (Ryle HS)  
5<sup>th</sup>: Aaron Williams (Harrison County HS)  
6<sup>th</sup>: Lawrence Rodgers (Paul L. Dunbar HS)

***SUSAN MOORE INVITATIONAL  
Georgetown, KY @ Scott County HS  
November 8, 2008***

***Champion:***

- Jordan Foster (Boone County HS)***  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Jilian Rodgers (Henry Clay HS)  
3<sup>rd</sup>: Carrie Newcomb (Rowan County HS)  
4<sup>th</sup>: Aaron Williams (Harrison County HS)  
5<sup>th</sup>: Tegan Dolan (Rowan County HS)  
6<sup>th</sup>: Alexandra Belzley (St. Francis HS)

***HARRISON COUNTY "GIFT OF GAB"  
TOURNAMENT  
Cynthiana, KY @ Harrison County HS  
November 15, 2008***

***Champion:***

- Jordan Foster (Boone County HS)***  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Emily Martin (Boone County HS)  
3<sup>rd</sup>: Max Tagher (Ryle HS)  
4<sup>th</sup>: Lawrence Rodgers (Paul L. Dunbar HS)  
5<sup>th</sup>: Nicole Schladt (Paul L. Dunbar HS)  
6<sup>th</sup>: Katlyn Teager (Rowan County HS)

