

UNITED STATES TEAM WINS WORLD HIGH SCHOOL DEBATE CHAMPIONSHIP

A team of high school students from across America and sponsored by the National Forensic League won the World Schools Debating Championship at the World Tournament held in New Zealand, August 10 through August 18. The five students, who had neither met nor worked with each other until the long flight from Los Angeles, defeated teams from most of the English-speaking world. After winning seven of eight preliminary rounds held in schools in and around Auckland and Wellington, the United States team defeated Wales in the quarterfinal round and Scotland in the semifinal round. The final round, held in the Beehive, the home of the New Zealand Parliament, saw the United States team defeat the team from Pakistan, 4-3. The topic debated in the final round was that *the United Nations is the one best hope for the future*. The United States team was assigned the affirmative in the final debate.

To overcome the handicap of the debaters not having worked together earlier, the team arrived in Auckland three days early to prepare its positions on those topics released in July. Since six of the eleven debates would have only sixty-to-ninety minutes of preparation between the release of the topic (and assignment of side) and the debate itself, and since no coaches could assist in those preparations, the team had to use those early days to learn each other's particular strengths and to become an organized team instead of five individuals.

The competition was opened officially, on Wednesday, August 10, at a Maori holy place in Auckland when Her Excellency, Dame Katherine Tizard, Governor-General of New Zealand, Queen Elizabeth's personal representative, welcomed the contestants and their adult coaches and coordinators. The following day, two rounds of competition were held before everyone flew to Wellington where they met the families that would house them for the next week. Additional preliminary rounds were conducted on Friday, August 12; Sunday, August 14; Monday, August 15; and Tuesday, August 16. These were held at schools within a 70 mile radius from Wellington, with enthusiastic audiences of students and adults at every venue. The Governor-General hosted a reception at Government House to welcome the participants officially to the capital city of New Zealand.

Quarterfinal and semifinal debates were held on Wednesday, August 17, and the final round, in front of an audience of many hundreds, took place on Thursday, August 18. The wooden trophies presented had been hand carved and blessed by Maori tribesmen. Deputy Prime Minister Don McKinnon greeted everyone following the final debate, and Prime Minister Jim Bolger then hosted a reception for the participants. A farewell banquet was held in Wellington's Civic Centre that evening.

Team captain and NFL Point Leader **Ami Arad**, from Arroyo Grande HS in California, was recognized for his individual skill in an impromptu debate competition organized by the New Zealand hosts to showcase the participants ability to use humor to good effect. He finished second in this event. Team member **Dan Krebs**, of Mullen HS in Denver, Colorado, was a finalist in this event. Other team members were **Mark Krumholz** of Teaneck HS in New Jersey, **Karuna Patel** of New York's Bronx HS of Science, and **Jennifer Rotman** of Taos HS in New Mexico. The coach, **Cat Horner Bennett** of Taos, New Mexico, was assisted by **Richard Sodikow** of New York who was also the delegation chief. **Anne Shapiro** of New York attended as a team supporter who observed rounds and scouted the opposition (an encouraged practice in international debate).

Among the topics released in advance (in addition to the one debated in the final round) were:

Feminism has corrupted the family.

One superpower is better than two.

Technology has outstripped morality.

Some of the limited preparation topics were:
Hollywood has a lot to answer for.

Tourists are a global menace.

Repression of civil rights justifies violent action.

This year's United States team received major underwriting from the National Forensic League, the coordinating organization for competitive debate and speech for secondary schools in the United States. The United States had fielded a team in each of the previous world competitions, but this was its first championship. The best previous showing by a United States Team occurred in February of 1993, at Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada, when the team finished third (semifinalist). The Seventh World Schools Debate Championship will be held in February, 1995, in Cardiff, Wales.

Future proposed tournament hosts include Wales, Pakistan, Bermuda, and Israel. The National Forensic League is seeking major sponsorship to bring the World Schools Debate Tourna-