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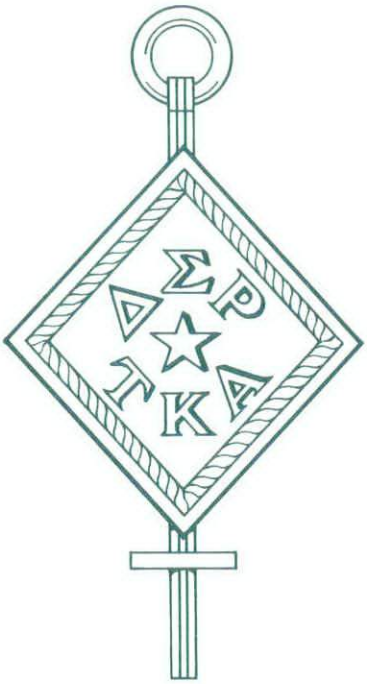
DONALD O. OLSON

speaker and gavel



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SPEAKER and GAVEL

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The names of new members, those elected between September of one year and September of the following year, appear in the November issue of SPEAKER and GAVEL. According to present regulations of the society, new members receive SPEAKER and GAVEL for two years following their initiation if they return the record form supplied them at the time their application is approved by the Executive Secretary and certified to the sponsor. Following this time all members who wish to receive SPEAKER and GAVEL may subscribe at the following rates: $2.00 per year for the standard subscription; $5.00 per year for those who wish to sustain the work of SPEAKER and GAVEL; and $25.00 for a lifetime subscription.

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Speaker and Gavel

Volume 7 November, 1969 Number 1

Plan Now to Attend!

THE SEVENTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The University of Alabama

March 25–28, 1970

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EDITOR'S PAGE

The editorial staff of *Speaker and Gavel* is pleased to welcome Don Cage as an Associate Editor. Don is a member of the Delta Sigma Rho–Tau Kappa Alpha chapter at Texas Tech University and Student Second Vice President of the national organization. It is upon the recommendation of the Student Council and with the enthusiastic approval of everyone that the appointment is made.

Obviously there are policy implications in this move. Student members have expressed a desire to play a more effective role in DSR–TKA and *Speaker and Gavel* may be able to provide an opportunity for influential activity. I'll refrain from referring to participation in our modest journal as an instance of student power, however.

Speaker and Gavel, in case you had not noticed, has traditionally been concerned with both the theoretical and practical aspects of forensics, including argumentation, debate, discussion, and public speaking. It has furthermore in recent years maintained a forum for the criticism of contemporary public address. Students immersed in the forensics enterprise are reflecting upon their experience, we may hope, with results which they may suitably share with the wider world of our readership. Articles and commentaries in these areas should be sent to Don Cage or to other members of the editorial staff for consideration. We will also welcome other statements of opinion or shorter pieces.

In addition, *Speaker and Gavel* still attempts to include the formal business of the Student Council of the society. In the March issue, for instance, we carried the revised by-laws of the Student Council, and each year we try to carry appropriate information on such activities as the Student Speaker of the Year Award. Material relating to these matters may also be transmitted through Don.

The Student Council officers for the current year, elected at the National Conference at Lincoln in April, are as follows: Charles Humphries, Michigan State University, president; James Swartz, George Washington University, first vice president; Don Cage, Texas Tech University, second vice president; and Linda Duff, University of Kentucky, secretary. We hope that they will all take part in making *Speaker and Gavel* a relevant forensics journal.

As a final note, we might remind everyone of the realistic facts of publication. It takes a while to get the journal published. As you read this, the editors are assembling the March issue, so please allow some "lead time" for anything you submit. We hope to be swamped with contributions.

R. O. W.

A PROPOSAL TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF NATIONAL DEBATE PROPOSITIONS

Austin J. Freeley

At the 1968 Business Meeting of the American Forensic Association a motion was introduced calling for the AFA to "assume the responsibility of selecting the national intercollegiate debate proposition."[1]

This proposal was rejected by the Speech Association of America at its spring Executive Committee meeting. When the proposal was presented at the national meetings of the various forensic fraternities during the spring of 1969 it evoked some highly critical—even bitter—responses. A proposal so potentially divisive should be considered only if a clear and urgent need could be established and only following a searching examination of a detailed plan and a convincing demonstration that it would produce advantages outweighing possible breaches in the until-now cordial relationships that exist among the organizations interested in forensics.

Let us consider for a moment the structure of the committee which is responsible for determining the national debate proposition. The committee consists of one representative each from Delta Sigma Rho–Tau Kappa Alpha, Pi Kappa Delta, Phi Rho Pi, the Speech Association of America, and the American Forensic Association. Thus every group interested in forensics is represented in the committee structure. In its call for suggestions and in its balloting the committee contacts virtually every college in the country which has a debate program. (There are approximately 1,000 names on the committee's mailing list; because of job turnover some few people cannot be contacted in any given year, but the vast majority of the nation's directors of forensics are reached each year.)

The value of this process was clearly demonstrated in 1954–1955. That year the proposition was, "Resolved: That the United States should extend diplomatic recognition of the Communist government of China." Those in forensics at that time will remember that some colleges refused to debate this "controversial" proposition, others, such as the military and naval academies, were forbidden to debate it by higher authority; the debate about debate was front page news for many days, it was a subject in Presidential press conferences, and Edward R. Murrow did a television special about it. Great damage might have been done to debate had not the speech and forensic community been united. When they were contacted by the press—and some reporters, of course, were hunting for a "Communist conspiracy" behind this "controversial" proposition—the leaders of the various speech and forensic organizations were all able to point out that their organizations had been represented in the process of selecting the national debate proposi-

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[1] "Official Business, Executive Council Meeting," p. 36 *Journal of the American Forensic Association*, Vol. VI, No. 1, Winter, 1969.

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tion and that virtually every director of forensics in the nation had received an open-ended questionnaire on which he was invited to suggest propositions. The whole process was open, democratic and fair. All interested organizations and individuals had been consulted and given an opportunity to make their views known. In the face of such obviously fair and democratic proceedings opposition faded. Debate was not harmed by the great McCarthy era "debate about debate"; rather it came out the winner and the critics of debate were exposed as hysterical and uninformed.

Two elements stand out in the history of this incident: 1) the proposition was controversial and 2) the forensic community was united.

As we all know, debate propositions are necessarily controversial. We may safely assume that at some future time—next year or in five years—we will again have a "controversial" debate proposition—one that some group passionately believes should not be debated. If the forensic community is united we can probably ride out any storm of know-nothingism and anti-intellectualism that may arise. If the forensic community is divided—if some national organizations are forced to admit "we were not represented in the process," if significant numbers of debate directors can say, " I was not given a chance to vote, and I certainly wouldn't have voted for that proposition" we would be exposing the forensic community and the whole program of educational debate to serious potential damage.

In this day and age when we hear talk of "participatory democracy" and when leaders are urged to "consult their constituencies" the proposal advanced at the AFA Business Meeting must be judged to be sadly out of tune with the times.

All of us in the forensic community are willing to consider any proposal which might lead to an improvement in the quality of national debate propositions.

I would now like to make such a proposal:

1) Retain the structure of the committee to which each national organization actively interested in educational debate names a representative. Thus we will retain all the safeguards and advantages which are provided by the present system.

2) Assess each organization a sum of money—for example one hundred or perhaps five hundred dollars—which may be used at the discretion of the committee to contract for research on potential debate propositions.

Let us review the present system of committee operations—*with no funds for research*—and then contrast it with how the committee would be able to operate *with funds for research.*

Under its present policy the committee meets in March or April concurrently with the convention of the Central States Speech Association to select certain areas and potential propositions for further study on the basis of suggestions received from its nation-wide poll of forensic directors. Each member of the committee then undertakes to do research in one or two areas or propositions to determine if they really are suitable as national debate propositions and to search out the most desirable phrasing. The committee then meets again in May or June. The members report their research findings and the committee then makes a decision on what propositions will be placed on the ballot that will be submitted to the nation's directors of forensics for their decision.

The committee has, I believe, worked to the maximum of its present

capabilities in doing research. They have, I believe, consulted all possible sources of free information to the maximum extent feasible.

Let me cite just three examples as evidence of this. One committee member charged with the responsibility of doing research in the area of disarmament and arms control consulted then Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson. Mr. Johnson was at that time specifically charged by President Kennedy with the responsibility of co-ordinating all federal programs in the area of disarmament and arms control. The Vice President answered the committee member with a detailed personal letter in which he set out five specific propositions for the committee's consideration.

One committee member charged with the responsibility of doing research in the area of international monetary policy obtained detailed appraisals from, among others, the Director of the International Finance Division of the Department of Commerce, the Deputy Undersecretary for Monetary Affairs of the Treasury Department, the Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, a world famous economist who was the author of one of the five major proposals then under consideration in international monetary circles, the Vice Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, the President of the Foreign Policy Association, and a special Assistant to the President of the United States.

One committee member doing research in the area of domestic legal problems consulted some former debaters who are now successful attorneys. They had been very active as undergraduates and were thoroughly at home on the tournament circuit. They willingly gave considerable amounts of time to consultation on the subject and wrote detailed letters and supplied extensive bibliographies for the consideration of the committee.

Many committee members have had similar experiences and the list of examples could be extended indefinitely. Many have consulted high government officials and secured thoughtful replies. Many have had extensive conversations with faculty colleagues in the areas of economics, political science, and other relevant disciplines.

There is, of course, a sharp limit to the amount of time a committee member can hope to ask a Vice President or a world renowned authority to spend in thinking about debate propositions.

Less famous figures, faculty colleagues, or former debaters who have now attained some expertise, are more interested and can be pressed further. The committee has, I submit, pressed these sources to the maximum extent possible in their quest for free advice.

Now let's bring money into the picture. I submit that our organizations have now attained a modest level of affluence which makes it reasonable for each of them to approve the expenditure of a few hundred dollars a year in the search for better debate propositions.

Now let's see how the committee would be able to operate with funds available for research.

The committee would still consult major public officials and world famous authorities and would continue to get some help from these sources.

The committee would still consult the less well-known experts, faculty colleagues, and former debaters.

But money would make possible a new depth and thus, hopefully, a new quality of research.

After preliminary research the committee would be in a position to go to

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a good, if not world famous, economist for example. The committee could explain the problem they were interested in and ask, in effect,

> Will you prepare a paper for the committee on this problem? Will you indicate what the major issues are as an economist sees them? Would you indicate the major affirmative and negative arguments as this subject is debated at your professional meetings? Will you suggest possible phrasings for the proposition? What language do economists use when they debate this problem? Here are some specific problems we are concerned about; how would you answer these questions? Will you suggest further sources of information and provide a bibliography? We realize we're asking you to do some significant scholarly work and we're prepared to pay for it. Take a month to work on this project and we'll pay you *x* dollars as a consultant's fee.

I suggest that the quality of the recommendations the committee receives will escalate enormously under this process. If one asks an economist for free advice over coffee at the faculty club the economist will probably be quite willing to chat with one for an hour or two and give his very best "off the cuff" thinking. If, however, one asks that same economist to prepare a serious scholarly work and offers enough money to make the effort reasonably worth while there will be, I submit, a significant qualitative change in the recommendations one receives. This, of course, is the whole purpose of the plan: to improve the quality of the recommendations reaching the committee.

It is recognized, of course, that the advice of the subject matter experts must be taken judiciously. Subject matter experts rarely have any expertise in the field of educational debate; they may tend to overvalue their own special interest as a timely and significant subject for student debate; and their own indepth studies may lead them to attach too much weight to a particular position. The selection and phrasing of the propositions to appear on the ballot must rest with men chosen by the various national forensic organizations for their knowledge of argumentation theory and their active concern with directing forensic programs.

The plan is not limited to contracting for papers. It specifically provides the funds may be used at the discretion of the committee. For example, the committee might decide to meet in New York or Chicago or some other major city and invite two or three subject matter experts to consult with them for a morning or afternoon and offer a reasonable fee for this service. The committee might decide to hire some especially well-qualified graduate students and assign them to prepare a bibliography or do some other specialized research on a specific problem.

The method of research, or the combination of methods, chosen by the committee would no doubt vary from year to year and from subject to subject. The research would not be limited to one subject area; rather the committee would contract for research in each of the areas it had under study. Access to research produced under this plan would not be limited to the committee. Once the national proposition was chosen all papers prepared on that proposition could be offered to the journals of the various forensic organizations and thus be made available to the entire forensic community.

The committee has, I believe, done the best possible job it could in securing free advice for us. Free advice was probably all we could hope for given the limited funds of our organizations in the past. But we are no

longer poor, forensics is not a poverty operation, our organizations have funds and I suggest that we put some of our money into research early in the process of selecting the national debate proposition.

Collectively we spend many thousands of dollars on debate handbooks and other materials after the proposition is announced. I propose that our organizations spend at least a modest amount to finance committee research before the proposition is chosen.

THE NIXON CAMPAIGN

WAYNE C. EUBANK

I.

"The time has come for us to leave the valley of despair and climb the mountain, so that we may see the glory of the dawn, a new day for America, a new dawn for peace and freedom to the world."[1]

With this admonition, Mr. Nixon challenged the American people to join him in the great adventure: the establishment of peace at home, the establishment of peace abroad.

James Perry, writing in *The National Observer*, declared, "Mr. Nixon's acceptance speech was, in fact, a polished version of a basic speech familiar to every reporter who has travelled with him."[2]

The speech, effectively delivered, which seemed to match the mood of the convention, was loaded with accusations, declarations, generalizations, and emotional proof. The Nixon strategy was clear: attack, take the offensive and keep it, awaken the American people to the dangers at home and abroad, and blame both conditions on the Johnson–Humphrey administration. Two major issues rang through the speech: law and order with justice at home, the establishing of peace and national integrity, abroad.

II. UNITY

Although tempers flared occasionally, there was no real bloodletting at the Republican convention in Miami. Uniting the few disenchanted was relatively easy for Nixon. He lost no time in launching the Republican "love-in." The week following the Miami convention, Nixon, his top advisors, and colleagues met in California to plan the strategy necessary for Republican unity and a campaign victory. Upon departing from California, Nixon engaged in a three-day "whirlwind trip wooing Republican moderates in the large states of the industrial Northeast."[3] Quickly the Three R's (Rockefeller, Reagan, Romney) took the pledge. In rapid succession followed big-state governors and such notables as Mayor Lindsay and Senator Edward Brooke.

Insured of party unity, Nixon retired to Florida. "As he sopped up the sun in Key Biscayne and waited for the Democrats to nominate his opponent, Richard Nixon could only hope to be as successful during his next venture in courtship—when he sets out to kindle a love affair with the American people."[4]

III. ELECTORAL VOTE STRATEGY

Traditionally, a Republican presidential candidate wins by building a strong voter support in the Midwest and mountain states and then achieving victory in at least five of the "big seven" states—New York, Pennsylvania,

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[1] *Vital Speeches*, September 1, 1968, p. 677.
[2] *The National Observer*, August 12, 1968, p. 12.
[3] *Newsweek*, September 2, 1968, p. 32.
[4] *Newsweek*, September 2, 1968, p. 33.

Michigan, Texas, Ohio, Illinois, and California—which carry 210 electoral votes. Uncertain of carrying five of the "big seven" states (he only carried three), Nixon and his staff devised a new strategy for victory. Writing off four states of the Deep South to Wallace (Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia), he would concentrate on the new south-border section (nine states—Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Oklahoma, and Texas)—he actually won seven of the nine. This strategy was the primary reason for Agnew's choice as a running mate. He was highly acceptable to the south-border section and not meaningfully offensive to the midwest and mountain states. With this strategy, Nixon was able to lose four of the "big seven" states—New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Texas—and still win.

IV. RADIO–TV AND ELECTRONICS IN THE CAMPAIGN or NIXON'S MIXED MEDIA BAG

A. *Talking Papers*

Customarily, presidential candidates are expected to issue a *position paper* which states their stand on a wide range of issues. Such a publication often gets lost in the heat of the campaign and usually has little real value. In lieu of such a paper, which he had issued in 1960, Nixon came up with a political first in his "talking papers." This technique consisted of a series of fifteen radio talks "covering the gamut from national resources to problems of senior citizens." The "talking paper" that attracted the widest and most favorable attention was entitled "The Presidency," in which Mr. Nixon advanced his conception of the office and incidentally his philosophy of government. Estimates of total listeners during the 15 "talking papers" ran as high as 7,500,000.[5]

Following each broadcast, the speech was reprinted in pamphlet form and distributed by Nixon's information centers.

B. *TV Spots*

Early in September, considerably in advance of the Democratic soft-sell commercials, one-minute Nixon spots were introduced on T.V. In the main, they were hard-hitting quotations taken from Nixon's acceptance speech "interspersed with crowd applause and all ending with waving, white-on-red 'Nixon's the One' placards filling the screen."[6] Forty to fifty such spots were employed during the campaign. These shorts—a few were longer than one minute—focused on the candidate Mr. Nixon, his face and voice. In contrast, the Democratic spots focused on the message rather than the candidate.

C. *The Richard Nixon Show*

The idea of a candidate–question panel television show grew out of the New Hampshire primary where Mr. Nixon had "head to head" talks with a representative group of citizens, usually about six, with no studio audience. The half-hour talks were taped for later showing and used in other states prior to the Miami convention. Following the convention, Mr. Shakespeare, a vice president on leave from CBS, lengthened the show to

[5] *Newsweek*, November 4, 1968, p. 28.

[6] *New York Times*, October 1, 1968, p. 32.

one hour and included a studio audience of about 200 selected loyal Republicans. The quiz panel usually consisted of about seven members—primarily Republican with some Democrat and Independent representation. Efforts were made to provide a fair cross-section on the panel. The Richard Nixon Show, always televised in a large city, received excellent response—particularly, it was thought, among dissident Democrats and Independents.

D. *The Neo-Psychedelic Campus Pitch*

Seeking to capture the attention and support of the voting-age college student, Mort Allen of the Youth for Nixon Committee contracted with Jimini Products of California to produce a psychedelic poster in rainbow colors to brighten Mr. Nixon's image. "Under the legend 'Nixon's the One' the central motif is a broad, smiling charcoal sketch of the candidate, leading a throng of celebrated supporters ranging from Senator Dirksen to Anita Ekberg."[7] The initial printing was 25,000. These posters were distributed on major college campuses for one dollar each.

E. *Electronic Aids*

Under the Citizens for Nixon "Participation Politics" program, thousands of citizens talked with Mr. Nixon each day. "The 'Speak to Nixon' Program . . . invites voters to say whatever is on their mind on tape recordings that will reach the Republican presidential candidate and key staff members.

"Every person who accepts this invitation gets a reply from the candidate, punched out by a trained staff from a battery of computers that have in their memory bank 67 Nixon positions on the key issues, drawn from speeches and writings.

"The computers, keyed to electronically controlled typewriters, produce individual answers responding to the questions. . . ."[8]

An electronic signature machine adds "Richard M. Nixon."

This new technique, another campaign first for Nixon, was also used to isolate the issues that voters were thinking about in various sections of the country. This phase was called "Listening Post." A statistic section, the third element in the "Participation Politics" program, tabulated the issues foremost in the thinking of the public week by week. The findings were transmitted directly to Mitchell, campaign chairman, or Klein, communications manager. They in turn informed Mr. Nixon of the hot issue of the week. For example: law and order, a strong issue in September, had dropped to 12% by October 11. Foreign policy, triggered by the Czech crisis, had jumped to 40% by October 11.

In a more personal fashion, Mr. Nixon has utilized a brave new world of gadgetry. During a motorcade in transit, chatting with farmers in California, Nixon need only reach for the "Briefcase"—the handy leatherette case containing a cordless mobile radio telephone. The "Briefcase" enables Nixon and staff to remain in constant contact with aides in New York and Washington.[9]

"The Nixonite's other favorite gadget is the 'Magic Carpet,' a portable telecopier over which New York (headquarters) can transmit news stories,

[7] *New York Times*, October 9, 1968, p. 35.
[8] *New York Times*, October 21, 1968, p. C38.
[9] *Newsweek*, September 30, 1968, p. 28.

letters, and other materials to the touring team wherever it is. . . . Nixon's number one campaign jet also boasts an air-to-ground telephone . . . and a telephone-linked teleprinter capable of sending and receiving in the air."[10]

Mr. Nixon's politico–cybernetic system was located in the Willard Hotel, Washington. There 600 full-time employees plus some 1300 part-time volunteers meet the public and man the machines.

"The Nixonites have put on magnetic tape more than 1,100,000 names and addresses of a reserve army of workers. National director, John Warner, says his goal is 5,000,000 names by November 5. Within 72 hours, Warner boasts, leased computers across the nation can crank out five million letters."[11]

V. THE STANDARD OR CAMPAIGN SPEECH

Nixon's campaign speech was composed primarily of a restatement of the issues in his acceptance speech. The issues were not discussed in a substantive way; rather, Mr. Nixon clung rather closely to a variety of tried and true applause lines on the issues. As *Newsweek* pointed out near the end of the campaign, "The set speech that Nixon delivers at one hermetic rally after another is much like cotton candy, long on promises and all but devoid of particulars."[12] For want of a better term, I call this "sloganeering."

The following examples illustrate Mr. Nixon's sloganeering on most of the major issues:

On Vietnam: "We will bring the war to an honorable conclusion." "I belong to a party that ended one war and kept us out of war for eight years."

On Washington: "The crime capital of the world."

On law and order: "The first civil right of every American is to be free from domestic violence."

On lack of respect for America abroad: "The American flag isn't going to be a doormat for anyone when we get into the White House."

On social justice: "Progress without order is tyranny."

On time for a change: "Let's not send in the old team for a new job." "We can't be led into the 70's by the men who stumbled into the 60's." "When you're in trouble, you don't turn to the men who got you in trouble to get you out of it."

On the administration's poverty programs: "We are going to take millions off welfare rolls and put them on payrolls."

On Democratic party disunity: "A party which cannot unify itself cannot unify our nation."

On America's future under the Republicans: "Prosperity without war, progress without inflation."

On Nixon's credibility: "I will never promise what I can't deliver."

On Humphrey: "The fastest, loosest tongue in America."

And, of course, the kicky slogan of Nixon, the fighter, and the motif of the Republican campaign of 1968: "We're going to sock it to 'em."

VI. EFFICIENCY OF CAMPAIGN MECHANICS

Midway through the campaign, *Time* magazine declared, "Smooth as a space satellite, precise as a computer, the 1968 Nixon-mobile whirs around

[10] *Newsweek*, September 30, 1968, p. 28.
[11] *Time*, October 25, 1968, p. 26.
[12] *Newsweek*, October 21, 1968, p. 31.

the country like a politician's dream machine. The candidate is seldom more than ten minutes late for an appearance. The bands strike up on cue; balloons tumble down at just the right moment. Meticulous planning schedules put the nominee at just the place where the turn-out will be largest and the crowd will be the most responsive."[13]

During the final week of the campaign, *Newsweek* observed regarding Nixon's preplanning, "The speech is always well received because it is almost always given to a carefully recruited rally of the faithful drummed up by a hard-eyed team of 75 advance men, especially trained and armed with a 75-page manual on crowdsmanship."[14]

Time correspondent Simmons Fentress, assigned to the Nixon campaign, declared, "You do get the feeling that Nixon's campaign is as carefully planned as the Normandy invasion."[15]

The campaign was really rather paradoxical. Nixon's stumping was programmed to project the feeling of intensity, vitality, and sweep; however, for the candidate it was a rather leisurely affair. Nixon's strategy board carefully booked his appearances in order to avoid over-exposure or over-exhaustion. He seldom missed a regular night's sleep and spent several of the campaign weekends relaxing in the sun. The mad race of the 1960 campaign, when he visited every state in the union, was missing. In 1968 he covered 31 states, confining his appearances primarily to large population centers. Practically all of the 50,000 miles travelled was in a luxury fleet of Boeing 727's.

VII. INTO THE STRETCH

During most of the campaign, the Nixon staff had purposely shielded him from unstaged, open appearances. Most of his public speeches were delivered in a carefully set atmosphere. Open radio and television appearances, with trained newspaper men, had been ruled out in favor of television question and answer sessions with local people. Only during the last week of the campaign did the Nixon strategists really open their candidate to the public in such presentations as "Meet the Press," "Face the Nation," and the election eve television telethon—incidentally or intentionally—without the presence of his running mate.

SUMMARY

On August 8, 1968, with the ringing phrase, "We're going to sock it to 'em this year," Richard Nixon vowed to bring "law and order with justice at home" and "restore peace and national integrity abroad." Within ten days following the Miami convention Nixon had solidified the main forces in the Republican party. If a few hold-outs needed a nudge, the unfolding horror of disunity in the Chicago Democratic convention sent them racing for the unity bandwagon.

Denying the accepted Republican formula for victory, the Nixon team chartered a new strategy. Instead of building a voter base in the midwest and mountain states and then trying to win at least five of the "Big Seven," the Nixon electoral strategy lay in courting the new south-border states with

[13] *Time*, September 27, 1968, p. 18.
[14] *Newsweek*, November 4, 1968, p. 28.
[15] *Time*, October 18, 1968, p. 23.

their 127 electoral votes. Nixon was right. He carried only three of the "Big Seven" but seven of the nine south-border states, which insured the victory.

"Fantastic" describes the Nixonite's employment of electronics during the campaign. Electronic firsts for the Nixon campaign were: "Talking Papers," "Participation Politics Program," the "Psychedelic Poster Campus Campaign," the "Magic Carpet," the "Briefcase," and the wide use of computers at the Willard Hotel headquarters in Washington.

Long before the Democratic campaign program emerged, hard-hitting television spots, taken from Nixon's acceptance speech, were a steady household diet.

The "T.V. Panel–Question Show" insured Mr. Nixon of a partisan studio audience and a relatively friendly panel. Developed through months of campaigning prior to the convention, the Nixon stump speech advanced the issues presented in his acceptance speech—less through solid forms of support than by fool-proof applause phrases which may be labeled "sloganeering."

The Nixon campaign was a technical masterpiece, "a triumph of the politics of methodology." A 350-man advertising staff, dedicated to the technical mastery of campaigning, gave Mr. Nixon the best merchandising a presidential candidate has received.

Is there really a new Nixon? I don't think so. Certainly his last four years on the resurrection road have brought change. He is more confident, more objective, more mature, far better equipped to be President than in 1960. The campaign victory certainly established him as an adroit political technician. In his "talking speech" on "The Presidency," Mr. Nixon declared, "The President must articulate the nation's values, define its goals, and marshal its will." To achieve this purpose he must rally the American people. Near the end of the campaign he stated, "I intend to get the very best men and women I can find in this country and give them responsibility." I can think of no wiser action, no surer formula for success on the part of a minority President than the assembling of a genuine coalition government.

Mr. Nixon did a masterful job of putting a party and a presidential campaign together. We hope that he will be as astute in wedding his American dream to the American people.

THE LETTER TO THE EDITOR: AN EXERCISE IN "ARGUMENTATIVE COMPOSITION"

RAY LYNN ANDERSON

> It is evident that in its primary signification, Rhetoric had reference to public *Speaking* alone, as its etymology implies. But as most of the rules for Speaking are of course applicable equally to Writing, an extension of the term naturally took place; and we find even Aristotle, the earliest systematic writer on the subject . . . including in his Treatise rules for such compositions as were not intended to be publicly recited.[1]
>
> —Richard Whately

Most instructors who have taught speaking and writing courses for any length of time sooner or later get the impulse to write an essay making generally available the fruits of their experience. This impulse, however common, often arises soon after the teacher has convinced himself that his students have come to recognize that rhetoric—defined simply as the art of speaking and writing effectively—is an inevitable and valuable part of their lives, a means of realizing themselves and influencing others, and that they can control this powerful instrument by taking a little effort. The purpose of this essay, therefore, is to discuss a simple assignment in argumentative composition—the didactic letter to the editor—which I think can, in I. A. Richards' words, "minister successfully to important needs" of those who travel through high school and college "courses in English and Speech."[2]

DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The letter to the editor assignment described here was developed as the first of seven writing experiences for students in the third term of the English composition curriculum in the Institute of Agriculture of the University of Minnesota.[3] This course, entitled "Communication III," moves from fundamentals (organization, paragraphing, basic elements of style) to specialized techniques (methods of development, proof, audience analysis, deductive and inductive logic, and elementary principles of rhetorical criticism). Such a sequence is, of course, common to many composition courses in American universities and, while it is not offered as a Procrustean formula to fit all needs and tastes, it has been tested and found serviceable in the classroom.

As a first assignment in a course the explicit purpose of which was to

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[1] *Elements of Rhetoric*, ed. Douglas Ehninger (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1963), p. 2. Certainly Whately's definition of rhetoric as dealing "*generally*, and *exclusively*" with "Argumentative Composition" arose from his desire to see the province of rhetoric sufficiently broad so as to include prose material. Thus, in the paragraph preceding his famous definition of rhetoric, Whately says, "In the present day, however, the province of Rhetoric, in the widest acceptation that would be reckoned admissible, comprehends all 'Composition in Prose;' in the narrowest sense, it would be limited to 'Persuasive Speaking.'" p. 4.

[2] *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York, 1965), p. 3.

[3] The author of this essay was the director of this multi-section course.

adapt the principles of rhetoric to the practical business of improving student writing, the letter to the editor was especially designed to provide the student with experience in thesis sentence selection and argument construction; casting the argument in paragraph form, organizing the paragraph as a whole and developing it piece by piece in meaningful relationships from thesis to supporting statement to word.

The student was given the following one-page statement of the assignment.

> You are to write a one-paragraph (200–300 word) letter to the editor. The letter may be designed to register public protest (e.g., "The exit from Interstate 94 onto 12th St. in St. Paul is poorly designed") or refute previous letters (e.g., "I am disappointed in the report of a young man's senseless destruction of 165 harmless, beneficial garter snakes"), etc.
>
> Your letter should develop only one persuasive thesis. The thesis statement should be specific (e.g., "I agree 100 percent with those who wrote regarding the half-time 'concert' given by the University of Minnesota marching band").
>
> This assignment assumes that argumentation is cumulative; that is, it develops through what might be called a process of addition. Typically, the writer introduces a topic (thesis) and then adds comments about it, which extend throughout the manuscript. The comments about the thesis should develop and prove it to be true. Hence, care in paragraph development is the key to writing an effective letter to the editor. If the thesis sentence is stated at the start of the paragraph, argument (and paragraph) develops by moving outward from the thesis. If the thesis sentence is withheld until the end of the paragraph, development of the argument moves toward it.
>
> Proof for the thesis statement may be of any type. You may wish to develop by comparison, exemplification, narration, etc. Although this assignment does not strongly emphasize supporting materials (proof), your instructor will insist that comments in support of the thesis are relevant and consistent.
>
> No detail of the form used in an effective letter to the editor is sacred, but here are two suggestions to keep in mind:
>
> 1) The letter to the editor should be short. A newspaper editor normally anticipates short and terse comments from his readers and selects letters to be printed partly on these grounds.
> 2) The salutation and ending of the letter should be as follows.
>
> salutation (in italics): *To the Editor*:
> ending (also in italics): *Mr. John Doe, Slaton, Minnesota.*

The student was then asked to make two typewritten copies of his letter, one for the instructor's criticisms and the other to be mailed to the "Letters to the Editor" column of the newspaper of the student's choice. The student was also informed that in the event that his letter was printed his mark on the assignment would, if possible, be raised by one letter grade.

DISCUSSION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

Given the purposes of the letter to the editor as used at Minnesota, the assignment proceeded with what appeared to be excellent results. The assignment did in fact place emphasis upon the careful construction of unified paragraphs—the business of thinking in terms of supporting and developing an *argument* prompted more rigorous message coherence than the alternative

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of encouraging the student to think of imitating the characteristics of a formal model of a well-formed "paragraph." It was observed that students were more prone to address specific, manageable issues. This latter effect of the assignment probably resulted from the student having a clearer conception of the audience to which he was appealing. Seldom do teachers of English or Speech confront the following sort of limited yet meaningful thesis sentences: "A special election should be held for the financing of the new Como park zoo." "I do not agree with Mrs. Wilson's recent charge of nepotism by Ramsey County Commissioners." "Bingo is beneficial so why ban it in Minneapolis?" "Laws should be enacted and enforced to insure that those operating snowmobiles in Minnesota are competent to do so." "Why can't we make Frazee an all-American town?"[4]

An interesting by-product of the Minnesota experience with the letter to the editor exercise relates to student accessibility to the public media of communication. Out of almost four hundred letters actually sent to the metropolitan and local newspapers of southern Minnesota, one hundred and thirty-six were printed.

Apart from the application of this assignment at the University of Minnesota, there are several features of the letter to the editor which recommend its use in high school and college courses in English and Speech.[5] For those interested in argumentation and debate, this assignment is significant because it demonstrates that the principles of reasoned discourse can be readily extended from the confines of the forensic contest and the courtroom. In its broadest sense, the assignment adds weight to Glen E. Mills' assertion that the study of argumentation can be treated "As an offering under general or liberal education . . . or as a part of a course in communication arts, English composition, editorial writing, critical thinking, public speaking, or contemporary problems."[6]

From the point of view of the instructor, this assignment carries with it the possibility of giving the student extra (nonclassroom) criticisms of his work.[7] The shortness of the assignment, about as long as a solid speech outline, and the fact that it does not consume valuable class time, as does the simple one-point argumentative speech, serve to free the instructor for additional assignments or more criticism and discussion.

It is from the viewpoint of the student, however, that the most significant advantages of the letter to the editor assignment are to be found. The assignment, because it operates from a public media of communication as well as within the classroom, inherently expands and authenticates the context within which the student is asked to participate. Most classroom exercises encourage within the student an anesthetizing sense of gamesmanship; the impression that his work is in fact only an "exercise" intended, to alter the

[4] See *St. Paul Dispatch*, April 2, 1968, p. 4; *Minneapolis Tribune*, November 8, 1967, p. 4, and February 25, 1968, p. 3c; and the *Frazee Forum*, April 4, 1968, p. 2.

[5] The range of courses wherein this assignment could be used appears quite broad. Along with beginning courses in English and Speech, the letter to the editor assignment can easily be included as a part of an extended persuasive campaign in advanced courses in persuasion.

[6] *Reason in Controversy* (Boston, 1964), p. v.

[7] Although the editor's decision not to print a letter carries with it an implicit criticism, the sort of criticisms referred to here relate to the editor making corrections of the student's original letter and then printing the revised copy.

title of an Ian Fleming spy-story, "For Your (the instructor's) Eyes Only." The letter to the editor does not allow the student to view himself as a character within a play, continually suspending disbelief in the significance of his classroom "games." With a potential audience of several hundred or thousand, the student realizes that he is not merely "gaming"—he is actually attempting to influence while learning the art of influencing through language. Those of us who teach should remember, then, that the most important alterations available within the learning situation do not relate to the fullness of our bibliographies or to the tightness of our syllabi. Rather, the differences that make the greatest difference relate to the student and his willingness to throw himself into the overall learning situation with wild, yet "controlled," abandon.

The letter to the editor places the student squarely in the marketplace of competing ideas. It insists that the student see himself as a more or less fully endowed agent, capable of influencing as well as being influenced. And this greater sense of potency encourages the student to open himself to the maturing tensions and risks of public counterargument, of exposure to possible error, and thus to legitimate change.[8]

While the letter to the editor theoretically confronts the student with areas of action or belief which are open to challenge, disagreement, and risk, not all students participating in this assignment at Minnesota perceived it as a self-risk situation. It was generally true, however, that most students approached this particular assignment with a heightened sense of self-awareness and seriousness. And it was generally agreed among the various instructors that the student was more inclined, to use Martin Luther King's comment about his "Letter From A Birmingham Jail," to indulge "in the author's prerogative of polishing it for publication."[9]

If we are honestly to believe our own propaganda that the art of rhetoric (in either oral or written form) is vital to the life and spirit of democracy, that only through the process of mutual response can the governed implicitly become the governing, part of our special charge as teachers of speech must be to encourage, indeed to sponsor, inside and outside the classroom a continuing and realistic dialogue between all citizens. Perhaps then the paramount advantage of the letter to the editor assignment is that it represents a practical and realistic way by which we may show young men and women, many of whom have lost faith in their ability to influence the social forces surrounding them, how they may speak for human and humane values which "are reflected in the democratic ideal."[10] And in so doing, our students' actions supply proof for Jacques Barzun's claim that "True: debate is not scientific inquiry, yet it leads to new knowledge. Political democracy relies on debate for sifting rival versions of the truth and so does, ultimately, every form of learning, including science."[11]

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[8] For an excellent analysis of the relationship between personal involvement and the persuasion process, see Thomas H. Olbricht, "The Self as a Philosophical Ground of Rhetoric," *The Pennsylvania Speech Annual*, XXI (September, 1964), pp. 28–36.

[9] Quoted in *The Borzoi College Reader*, eds. Charles Muscatine and Marlene Griffith (New York, 1966), p. 344.

[10] See Virgil L. Baker and Ralph T. Eubanks, "Democracy: Challenge to Rhetorical Education," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, XLVI (February, 1960), p. 73.

[11] *Science: The Glorious Entertainment* (New York, 1964), p. 220.

ROLLINS COLLEGE INSTALLATION

Among those participating in the installation of the Rollins College chapter were (l. to r.) Doug Allen, Lima, Peru, John Dornish, Atlanta, Ga., Dr. Gregg Phifer, Prof. Dean Graunke, Lorrie Ball, Altamonte Springs, Fla., and Carol Skodje, Clearwater, Fla.

On March 25, 1969, Rollins College of Winter Park, Florida, became the latest chapter to join the roster of distinguished Delta Sigma Rho–Tau Kappa Alpha members. Ceremonies were conducted in the newly opened multi-million dollar Bush Science Center.

Dr. Gregg Phifer of Florida State University was the installing officer. New initiates were Carol Skodje of Clearwater, Florida, and John Dornish of Atlanta, Georgia. Assisting in the installation was Dean F. Graunke, Director of Debate and Forensics at Rollins. Dr. Paul Douglas, Director of Rollins' Center for Practical Politics, delivered the address of response to the assembly of guests.

This affiliation climaxes Rollins' most outstanding year in debate and forensic achievements. Four towering trophies and other awards have been received by the varsity squads, including honors as the Best Negative team in the 20th Annual Seminole Debate Tournament at Florida State and first place in the Deep South Model U.N. meet at the University of Miami.

—Dean F. Graunke

REPORT OF A SURVEY TO DETERMINE THE EVENTS DESIRED BY THE CHAPTERS FOR THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF DELTA SIGMA RHO–TAU KAPPA ALPHA

AUSTIN J. FREELEY

Attendance at the National Conferences of Delta Sigma Rho–Tau Kappa Alpha has been excellent and the participants have been most generous in their comments about the quality of the program and the efficiency with which the events have been operated. As part of its continuing effort to provide Conferences of the highest quality featuring the events desired by the chapters, the National Conference Committee from time to time conducts surveys of the chapters to determine their current wishes regarding events to be provided at the Conference.

During the spring of 1969 a questionnaire was sent to all chapters. The following events, which have been provided at the last six National Conferences were listed on the questionnaire: two-man debate, four-man debate, extemporaneous speaking, persuasive speaking, and student congress. In addition the following events, which have been suggested occasionally by some of the chapter sponsors as being of potential interest, were included in the list: after dinner speaking, discussion, and forensic progression. At the conclusion of the list a space was provided for "other" events in which chapter sponsors were invited to suggest events of potential interest which were not included in the listing.

The respondents were asked to indicate their preference for these events by checking one of the following statements for each event: a) "You may usually *count on us* to enter this event," b) "Our participation in this event will be *irregular*," or c) "We probably *will not enter* this event."

The respondents were further requested to indicate which of the last three National Conferences their chapters had attended and which of the next three National Conferences their chapters planned to attend. On the basis of this information the replies were divided into two groups: those chapters which had attended at least two of the past three Conferences and planned to attend at least two of the next three Conferences were classified as "Regular Participants"; all other chapters were classified as "Irregular Participants." The results from these two groups are reported in Tables I and II respectively. The results from all chapters are reported in Table III and the responses received on "other" events are reported in Table IV.

CONCLUSIONS

1. There is no significant difference in the preferences of those chapters who attend National Conferences regularly and those who attend irregularly. Both groups favor exactly the same events and in almost exactly the same order of preference.

2. Two-man debate and four-man debate are clearly the backbone of our Conference; these are the events that attract attendance. The actual numbers participating in two-man and four-man debate will vary from year

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TABLE I

Chapters Participating Regularly in the National Conference N = 50.
All respondents did not check all items.

Two-Man Debate	
Usually count on us to enter this event	41
Our participation in this event irregular	8
We probably will not enter this event	1
Four-Man Debate	
Usually count on us to enter this event	27
Our participation in this event irregular	19
We probably will not enter this event	3
Extemporaneous Speaking	
Usually count on us to enter this event	22
Our participation in this event irregular	23
We probably will not enter this event	4
Persuasive Speaking	
Usually count on us to enter this event	22
Our participation in this event irregular	23
We probably will not enter this event	4
Student Congress	
Usually count on us to enter this event	9
Our participation in this event irregular	14
We probably will not enter this event	25
After Dinner Speaking	
Usually count on us to enter this event	4
Our participation in this event irregular	14
We probably will not enter this event	27
Discussion	
Usually count on us to enter this event	4
Our participation in this event irregular	12
We probably will not enter this event	29
Forensic Progression	
Usually count on us to enter this event	2
Our participation in this event irregular	11
We probably will not enter this event	28

TABLE II

Chapters Participating Irregularly in the National Conference N = 52.
All respondents did not check all items.

Two-Man Debate	
Usually count on us to enter this event	39
Our participation in this event irregular	8
We probably will not enter this event	3
Four-Man Debate	
Usually count on us to enter this event	21
Our participation in this event irregular	17
We probably will not enter this event	10
Extemporaneous Speaking	
Usually count on us to enter this event	25
Our participation in this event irregular	20
We probably will not enter this event	4
Persuasive Speaking	
Usually count on us to enter this event	17
Our participation in this event irregular	22
We probably will not enter this event	9
Student Congress	
Usually count on us to enter this event	10
Our participation in this event irregular	15
We probably will not enter this event	25
After Dinner Speaking	
Usually count on us to enter this event	6
Our participation in this event irregular	20
We probably will not enter this event	21
Discussion	
Usually count on us to enter this event	2
Our participation in this event irregular	19
We probably will not enter this event	27
Forensic Progression	
Usually count on us to enter this event	1
Our participation in this event irregular	6
We probably will not enter this event	42

TABLE III

Summary of All Chapters Responding to Survey N = 102.
All respondents did not check all items.

Two-Man Debate	
Usually count on us to enter this event	80
Our participation in this event irregular	16
We probably will not enter this event	4
Four-Man Debate	
Usually count on us to enter this event	48
Our participation in this event irregular	36
We probably will not enter this event	13
Extemporaneous Speaking	
Usually count on us to enter this event	47
Our participation in this event irregular	43
We probably will not enter this event	8
Persuasive Speaking	
Usually count on us to enter this event	39
Our participation in this event irregular	45
We probably will not enter this event	13
Student Congress	
Usually count on us to enter this event	19
Our participation in this event irregular	29
We probably will not enter this event	50
After Dinner Speaking	
Usually count on us to enter this event	10
Our participation in this event irregular	34
We probably will not enter this event	48
Discussion	
Usually count on us to enter this event	6
Our participation in this event irregular	31
We probably will not enter this event	56
Forensic Progression	
Usually count on us to enter this event	3
Our participation in this event irregular	17
We probably will not enter this event	70

TABLE IV

Other Events Suggested by Chapters N = 4.
Table shows event and number of times it was suggested.

Oral Interpretation	2	Scripture Reading	1
Impromptu Speaking	1	Cross-exam Debate	1
Address Reading	1	Expository Speaking	1

to year. An examination of the responses indicates that this variation will be more a matter of finances than of preference. A number of respondents added the obvious, but significant, comment to their questionnaires: "If the Conference is near us we will probably enter both two-man and four-man debate; if it's a medium distance from us we will probably enter four-man debate; if it's a considerable distance from us we will probably enter two-man debate."

3. Extemporaneous speaking and persuasive speaking are the most popular individual events. Although this fact cannot be derived from the tables, observation at the National Conferences makes it clear that participants in these events are drawn almost totally from participants in two-man and four-man debate. The time schedule of the Conference is, of course, designed to make dual entries of this sort possible.

4. This survey gives the National Conference Committee a positive mandate to continue two-man debate, four-man debate, extemporaneous speaking, and persuasive speaking.

5. The student congress is obviously the weakest event currently provided by the Conference. Only nine of the "regular" chapters may "usually be counted on to enter this event" and when all chapters are considered more will "probably not enter this event" than will enter it "usually" or "irregularly."

6. After dinner speaking, discussion, and forensic progression also all reveal more "probably not enter" responses than indications of "usual" or "irregular" participation. The disinterest in the forensic progression was overwhelming. Although this event is described in any good argumentation text, many respondents indicated they were unfamiliar with it. No warrant is found in this survey for adding any of these events to the offerings provided at the National Conference.

7. It is clear that there is no interest in adding other events to the Conference. Only four chapters suggested possible other events and only one event was suggested as much as twice.

8. It seems reasonable to conclude that the present National Conference Committee and its predecessor committee have accurately discerned the preferences of the chapters and have provided the events most desired by most chapters. The findings of this survey are consistent with the findings of previous surveys and with the actions of the chapters as expressed in their registration for events at National Conferences. It is hoped that this survey may serve as a useful guide to the Committee in planning future National Conferences and as an indication of the current interests of the forensic community.

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Initiations	$ 3735.00	(Budgeted:	$3800.00)	
Investment Income (Cash)	3099.30	(" :	3000.00)	
Charters	250.00	(" :	100.00)	
Special Gifts	50.00	(" :	—)	
Miscellaneous	1459.75	(" :	50.00)	Note (1)
Members-at-Large	40.00	(" :	—)	
Keys	777.00	(" :	—)	
	$ 9411.05		$6950.00	

DISBURSEMENTS

Speaker and Gavel:				
Issues	$ 5545.92	(Budgeted:	$3400.00)	Note (2)
Editor's Office	300.00	(" :	300.00)	
Printing and Postage	165.71	(" :	300.00)	
President's Office	200.00	(" :	200.00)	
Secretary's Office	1150.00	(" :	1000.00)	Note (3)
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Expenses re. SAA Committee on Debate–Discussion	132.50	(" :	150.00)	
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Speaker-of-the-Year	74.84	(" :	250.00)	
Distinguished Alumni	25.00	(" :	25.00)	
Trophy for NFL	148.83	(" :	100.00)	
SAA Life Membership Payment	200.00	(" :	200.00)	
Student Council	292.90	(" :	100.00)	
National Conference	982.20	(" :	800.00)	
Miscellaneous	168.25	(" :	50.00)	
Keys	1204.11	(" :	—)	Note (4)
	$12276.42		$8325.00	

Note (1): National Conference Refund in 1968— $1305.87

Note (2): *Speaker and Gavel* for May, 1968, paid in this period— 1379.50 (Net:$4166.42)

Note (3): Typewriter for Secretary's Office— 150.00

Note (4): Keys for 1967–68 paid in this period— 345.41 (Net:$ 858.70)

Gross Deficit: $2865.37

Net Deficit (deducting 1967–68 items): 1140.46

Net Deficit not including Conference refund: 2446.33
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