

# Tenets of the Modern Forensicator

by

Terri Branson, Associate Coach

- \* While all of us want to win, **forensics is about meeting people, making friends, and learning how to get along in the world.**
- \* Be sincere. Don't tell other competitors they are wonderful just to be nice. If their sheets come back with poor scores, they will know you weren't truthful or think you don't know what you're talking about.
- \* People who compete in forensics have a way of running into one another later. You're the ones who somehow manage to run for office and have positions of respect in civic organizations and church. The people you were disrespectful toward will remember. Don't let poor manners come back to haunt you.
- \* Don't be afraid to give compliments to people whose performance you enjoyed. Sincere praise won't hurt our own performance!
- \* Do watch other performers. No one is so wonderful that he or she can't learn something! If the performance is terrible, then simply pretend to watch. That performer needs all the help you can give. Remember, you'll be up there at some point. Do you want people yawning, looking out the window, reading, or laughing inappropriately?
- \* Don't play the intimidation game! Don't make faces while someone is performing to indicate how bad you think the person is. Don't glare, and don't act as if you're better than the other performers. If you have to intimidate your competition, then you don't have confidence in yourself, your performance, or your talent. Think of it this way: If you have to intimidate others to win, how good can you really be?
- \* Speech competitors are incredibly good mimes, as a rule. Save the mimicry for the ride home. Never, ever mimic another competitor in public. In fact, just don't talk about anyone's performance except your own.
- \* Be a gracious winner as well as a gracious loser. Save the dramatics for private celebration and grieving. I don't mean you shouldn't be thrilled about that

trophy—you should. I mean don't act like the college players who used to get in trouble for spiking the ball or running up in the stands. If you lose, just decide to learn from it and take your grief home. You get to cry your eyes out or pound things there. A sincere handshake or a hug for the other folks can do nothing but spread good will. Notice the word "sincere."

\* Don't take a group of team members to support someone in finals so that your group can laugh at your team member and no one else. You aren't helping the finalist with that behavior, but you are making your team look bad. Don't troop in and watch that person, and then leave before the rest of the finalists take their turn. That's rude. Do take a group for support, but be polite to every performer in the room. Someday, they may repay the favor when you're the one in finals.

\* This may seem harsh, but saying, "Good luck everybody!" before you leave if you're doubling can seem fake. Sure, say, "See you later!" or make a polite exit remark, but don't wish people luck when you don't mean it. Also, just as a side note, don't say, "Thank you for judging!" "Thanks!" on your way out the door is plenty. It isn't that we don't appreciate your thanks; it's that so often the phrase seems forced.

\* Finally, let's end where we began: One purpose of a tournament is competition, but perhaps **the most important purpose of the competition is making friends.**