

## Outline

I. Welcome / History / Background

II. Registration

III. Deadlines

IV. Judges

V. Forensics

VI. Debate

## I. Welcome / History / Background

The Eighth Annual Shenandoah Valley Forensics League Tor Johnson Halloween Costume Contest Tournament for Speech and Debate is here yet again!

Here are some good points to keep in mind when it comes to this awesome and one-of-a-kind tournament!

The categories and voting will be the same as they were last year. And in the words of the founder of this great event...

"We have trophies, old ones that are the real deal. We want to use them year after year as legacy trophies for five categories of "best costumes." They are big, heavy, impressive and a little funny... Of course, the costumes will have to meet high standards for respect (funny is fine) and tastefulness."

-Bill Wonneberger

The five categories (which have been named and described) are as follows:

"The Socratic Cup" - Best Historical Theme Costume

"The Trekkie Cup" - Best Sci-Fi/Fantasy Theme Costume

"The Boris Karloff Cup" - Best Classically Halloween Theme Costume

"The Beetlejuice Cup" - Funniest Costume

"The Duo" - Best Duo Costume (Think salt and pepper, Abbott and Costello, Mario and Luigi, etc.)

[Here](#) is a link to the ballot students will have available to them at the tournament if you'd care to check it out. This form will be helpful in identifying those participants who have registered for a particular category and assist in voting.

Costume competitors will be issued a name tag with a code to put on for voting purposes when their coach registers the team. All students, regardless of costume participation and/or tournament competition, are encouraged to vote!

The top-scoring entries will be recognized with the winner taking home the cup and belt for the year until the January Championship!

## **Costumes**

The long and short of it is this: common sense. Think about what your own school would allow when it comes to students wearing costumes during the school day. Considering that this is a speech and debate tournament this goes a bit further.

-No full face-covering masks. This is a safety matter. Masks for medical purposes are still okay and, if possible, should try to be worked into the overall costume.

-Distracting the judge so that they are more focused on the professional-grade open sore on your face oozing pus may not be the best choice.

-No weapons (or potential look-alikes).

-Same for drugs.

-Make use of the standard rule and avoid anything that "inflames or defames".

Again, let's apply common sense here and simply check with students ahead of time as to their plans, make sure they bring clothes as a backup (as they may want to change anyway), and when in doubt think about what your administration would most likely say.

For those students interested in participating I ask that you share with them (or do it yourself) the following link which will need to be filled out in order to be entered into the contest for bragging rights, big trophies, and ultimate glory!

The deadline for costume registration will be Wednesday, October 25th at 5:30 p.m. If a competitor or coach enters a costume entry after that they will most likely not be registered for the competition although they may certainly come dressed for the competition. There will be more details on voting as we get to registration week in about another week or so.

Costume registration: [Here](#)

Please do share this link with your competitors so they may register the more participation the more fun!

## II. Registration

Registration is now open!

-Tournament registration is still at [tabroom.com](http://tabroom.com) If you need help registering please let me know.

Our tournaments specific site link is:<http://shenvafl.tabroom.com>

There you should be able to find a listing and description of all events as well as this letter and the previous season opener letter.

-Here are some resources to help you out if you are new to Tabroom.com:

[Creating a Tabroom.com Account and Setting up your Team](#)

[Creating a Student Account in Tabroom.com](#)

[Linking Student Accounts in Tabroom.com](#)

### **Tabroom.com Competitor Accounts**

-Competitors need to have an account on Tabroom.com to receive postings as well as their ballots at the end of the tournament.

-Student Congress legislation/topic areas will be addressed below under VI. Debate.

-Don't forget to register costumes as noted above.

No entry limits in either Forensics or Debate.

If this creates too much of a problem we will deal with it at the tournament and make adjustments for the remaining tournaments of the year.

Don't forget the ShenVaFL website ([shenvafl.wordpress.com](http://shenvafl.wordpress.com)) when it comes to dues information (\$75) including an [invoice](#) if need be.

### III. Deadlines

Registration will end Friday, October 18th at 5:30 p.m. (That's next Friday!)

Name changes (and partner switches) may be made up until Wednesday, October 23rd at 5:30 p.m. when all things entered will be no longer open to editing.

This includes judges and any/all fees, especially if not enough judges are found!

The way drop fees are set up is that if a student drops on the day of the tournament for any reason other than an emergency (illness/death in the family/coach-approved emergency) there will be a \$10 fine.

If it is an emergency drop there will be no fine. If the kid "forgot" or didn't finish getting ready in time then the fee stands.

### **Arrival Times**

If you are going to be arriving after 5 p.m. please call me ([540-421-3716](tel:540-421-3716)) or text and let me know if there are any drops or changes that we need to know about.

I will try to call coaches, as well, starting from here on out, but I need cell numbers to be entered into Tabroom, and be accurate, for me to make use of them.

The sooner we know if you have any drops/changes the sooner we can go ahead and publish rounds and get things moving in the tab room. Even though you may be showing up after 5 we can make up for any lost time by not waiting for rounds to be announced.

Just a reminder from the season opener e-mail that there will be the ability to check your team in via Tabroom.com so if you have everyone you may mark yourself as "registered" which lets us know that you're good to go. You'll still want to check in once you arrive, but indicating your arrival on Tabroom.com is just as acceptable as calling or texting me.

### **Welcome Letter**

Our first tournament of the new year is being hosted by the always-wonderful and essential Mr. Michael Villacrusis at Turner Ashby High School! The week of the tournament those schools that have registered will be receiving more explicit instructions and details directly from him.

#### IV. Judges

##### **Judge Notes/Registration**

Please check any notes you have on judges as we DO look at those and can use that information to make sure that we are using people to the best of their abilities. If you have someone entered into Speech to judge for Congress, but they are qualified for Lincoln-Douglas or Policy please do put that on there. If we end up being short in an area when setting up the night before we look at the notes to see who we might be able to slide into another category.

Judge requirements -

- One judge for every **six** Forensics (speech) and/or Student Congress (debate) entries.
- One judge for every **two** Lincoln-Douglas debaters.
- One judge for every **two** Public Forum teams.

If there are any questions/concerns about judge burdens do let me know.

Also, per the season opener e-mail please ensure that judges have a Tabroom.com account. If they judged for ShenVaFL OR VHSL last year they should be good to go. If they are new to judging or took last year off they will need to set one up.

Here are some resources to help aid in this effort:

[Creating a Judge Account on Tabroom.com](#)

 [Judge Account Linking Directions](#)

[Tabroom.com Judging](#)

## V. Forensics

### **A. Scripts**

We will also be allowing scripts in the Forensics categories since this is the first tournament of the year and so early on. So there will be no penalty for the use of scripts at this tournament, but following the October tourney, the standard script rule will be in effect.

### **B. Double Entries**

Double-entry is acceptable in Speech except for Extemp.

How Double Entry Works...

Since there may be people new to the world of Double Entry here is how Double Entry works:

After a coach has registered all of their competitors and shared their codes with them the competitor will need to check in with BOTH events at the start of the round. Judges are often getting things sorted out before beginning so there is no need to rush.

Competitors should visit the event they are doing second ***FIRST*** to let the judge know that the double-entered and will return once they complete their first event. This keeps the judge from waiting around for everyone to show up before beginning and is considered to be a professional courtesy.

Once in the first event that the competitor has chosen to complete first they should, again, let the judge know that they are double entered and so should be moved up to the top of the speaker order so that they may then leave after finishing their piece/performance/speech and go to their second event.

A double-entered competitor should take note of their speaking order in both events - typically the preference would be to do the event that has the competitor listed higher on the speaker order to avoid too much disruption to the flow of both events, but if there is a true preference for doing one event first that is up to them.

This affects the judges in that they are seeing a competitor sooner rather than later on the speaker order for the first event and often the double-entered competitor may be moved to the last spot for the second event. Of course, the judge is always the ruler of the room and may work in the double-entered competitor however it works best for the second event, but double-entry should always be given deference to speaking first to help the timing of the tournament and completion of the rounds to take place.

The biggest thing to remember, again, is that competitors should be checking in with both judges starting with the second event that will be competed in for the round.

In the past competitors would write their code and name on the board with a DE to indicate their double-entry status, but with many schools that have SmartBoards or SmartPanels, it would be best to avoid writing on any surface out of respect for our host schools. Also, since ballots are online the judges will already have the list of codes and names with them.

### **C. Extemp**

Extemp questions will be provided by NSDA for this first tournament and questions will be available for coaches/competitors to help introduce extemporaneous speaking and ease the process along the lines of script usage for other Forensics Events.

[Here](#) are the questions that will be used for this first tournament.

This will be the only tournament where questions will be previewed before the tournament. This is to try and help provide a "Scripts allowed" rule for Extemp. Also, after this tournament questions will be provided courtesy of the NSDA. We will use VHSL-provided areas in determining questions for champs in January.

Laptops in Extemp - "In preparing their speeches, students may refer to magazine and newspaper articles or printouts they have brought with them, or to files they have previously saved to a laptop computer. They may not use the Internet during their prep time."

Observing and learning: From the season opener e-mail - We would strongly encourage competitors to observe after they complete their performance to better learn by watching others. The only speaker that this would prove difficult for would be the first speaker in the second round. Everyone should be staying and watching during the second round in October, November, and December.



## VI. Debate

### **A. Student Congress**

Legislation submission is located [here](#).

There you will find directions and outlines on how to post.

Reminder to coaches, be sure to look over and personally verify legislation BEFORE it is submitted!

Legislation MUST be in by the registration deadline of 5:30 p.m. Friday, October 18th otherwise your Student Congress Debater will be dropped.

In the spirit of trying to create the best environment possible, we are also asking that schools only submit a MAXIMUM of two pieces of legislation. There is no need to label dockets as the two pieces should be from two different areas of the DIEV. This is to help ease newcomers into the event and hopefully create better all-around competition. The goal here is to have new debaters learn by observing more experienced ones and also reduce the research/preparation burden for all since it is the first tournament of the season.

This is for this tournament only. After October EVERY Student Congress Debater will need to submit legislation to be eligible.

We will be having mixed chambers for this first tournament with novices and veterans together. This is to help those who are new to Student Congress learn by observing and interacting with much more experienced Student Congress debaters.

Also, just a reminder - just like everything else we are trying no-limits on entries for Student Congress as with everything else. One judge should be provided for every 6 entries, though, just like Speech.

Link to Student Congress Topic Area Submissions: [Here](#)

Lastly, this is just a reminder from the season-opening letter that speeches will be scored and shared utilizing an online ballot this year. Parliamentarian and Presiding Officer ballots will still be on paper (with the PO score coming from the Parliamentarian). This is something that we are trying out this year to help expedite the tabbing process and at the behest of another league.

## **B. Lincoln-Douglas**

There is both Varsity and JV offered at all ShenVaFL tournaments. We do **NOT** make use of the Novice Lincoln-Douglas debate topic provided by the NSDA.

October topic: **Resolved: The United States ought to require that workers receive a living wage.**

Per the previous e-mail concerning JV versus Varsity placement: "JV helps ease some new debaters in by ideally starting them off with someone of their caliber or experience level. Some coaches don't believe in JV which is their prerogative, but to help establish ourselves as a learning league and encourage debaters of all backgrounds, we offer a stepping stone that maintains all of the rules and topics but ideally tries to pair debaters with those that are starting just like they are.

I start all new debaters, regardless of age/grade level. Also, after two years of competition in ShenVaFL starting in JV is not an option for those in my program.

But, again, this is my prerogative as a coach and everyone may decide to approach it differently.

We have never felt the need to have a hard and fast rule for this as we know coaches know their debaters better than any of us and know what is appropriate for them and their program."

One other thing to note is that there is no JV (anything) at Champs this year. The top two in JV are automatically moved to Varsity for the rest of the regular season. Top 8 now qualify for Champs instead of 6 to account for this change including the top 2 JVs in the final regular season tournament in December.

## C. Public Forum

**Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially expand its surveillance infrastructure along its southern border.**

One other note on PF - we will be using the NSDA November/December topic for the Public Forum just like they do in September/October. We will follow suit since they provide topics for other programs as well and we have used NSDA topics in the past.

January's topic will be different just as the March and April ones will be as well.

Also, per the previous e-mail - we will **NOT** be making any adjustments to the structure of the Public Forum this year. For now, we will proceed with the structure as it has been set over previous years with two minutes of prep time and two minutes for Summary Speeches and for each Final Focus.

From the beginning of the year letter: We do have JV PF this year, but the top 2 in the first tournament will be prohibited from entering as JV for the next two tournaments. There will not be a JV category (of anything) at Champs in January. Top 8 in PF qualify for champs and the final top 2 in JV will be permitted to enter as well to the Championship tournament in January at JMU.

## D. Policy

There is only Varsity offered in ShenVaFL (due to low numbers) and we are working on developing a workshop/clinic with JMU at this first tournament.

No judges are required for this first one. There will be more updates as this is developed. We are currently in talks with JMU.

The topic for 2024-25: **Resolved: The United States federal government should significantly strengthen its protection of domestic intellectual property rights in copyrights, patents, and/or trademarks.a federal jobs guarantee, expanding Social Security, and/or providing a basic income.**

That's all for now, hopefully. I've tried to address everything so that I am not filling your inbox with e-mails. I will send out a reminder (with a lot of the same information that is contained in this e-mail) the week registration is due.

I look forward to seeing everybody in less than a month! If you have any issues with any of the links/attachments please do let me know.

-Steve

[Link to Google Doc of this letter.](#)