

**President's Report**  
**NCA Business Meeting of the NPDA**  
**Submitted November 13, 2008**

The following is a report on the activities of the President, as required by the NPDA Constitution, for the period between the NPDA's last organizational meeting in Colorado Springs (March, 2008) and November 12, 2008.

**Summer Meeting**

At the Business Meeting in Colorado Springs I announced that the officers of the organization and select committee chairs needed to transact business, would be invited to a summer meeting to "clear the docket" of accumulated business that had gotten mired-down in committees and to set a pattern for an annual officer's retreat to get the organization's work done. An initial date was set for the meeting in June that would have involved the Executive Council, the Tournament Director (Joe Gantt), the Chair of the Finance Committee (Marty Birkholt), and the Chair of the Site Committee (also Marty Birkholt). Subsequent to the scheduling of that date the Tournament Director indicated that a wedding made him unavailable to attend and it was also subsequently determined that any other available weekend would then exclude the National Student Representative. In consultation with the Tournament Director, he and I both determined that it was more important to have the Student Representative present at the meeting. Subsequent to this meeting's scheduling, when it was determined that the meeting would be held in Missouri, I enlisted the assistance of Bill Cue, of Metropolitan Community College-Longview, to assist in airport transportation from Kansas City and to sit in on meetings both in his capacity as a member of the Finance Committee and a member of Phi Rho Pi (which has been asked to, but has not yet provided, a recommendation for Community College Representative for NPDA). After the meeting we briefed the Tournament Director on the results of the discussions and made some additional adjustments in the procedural changes.

As is now fairly widely known, this meeting generated, first, recommended Constitutional changes to streamline the national tournament's appeals process and to create the office of Ombudsperson. These recommendations were sent to the membership using our mail ballot procedure and were approved by a significant margin.

The second series of actions by the Executive Council involved a number of proposed changes to national tournament operating procedures, which have been subsequently published and placed on the NPDA website. These changes received both vocal praise and vocal condemnation from different segments of the community, despite the Council's best intentions. Since the time of their release every effort has been made by members of the Council to dialog with those expressing concerns directly to us—mostly through e-mail and phone contact. Subsequent to this dialog I published a document clarifying the procedure by which we would suspend or review these actions at the NCA business meeting, hoping to assure the membership that these actions could be changed or suspended before the national tournament.

## **Member Action**

Interestingly, despite the vocal objections of some community members to the actions taken during the summer, and despite nauseatingly detailed instructions about how to act to repeal one or all of the Council's actions...only two of these actions received amendment or repeal suggestions by the deadline for the NCA agenda. Both were submitted by the same person.

Speaking only for myself, I underscore this point because I think it is descriptive of the greatest threat facing NPDA today...the apathy of its membership when it comes to policy making. Despite over a month of rancor in the wake of the publishing of the policy changes, and numerous specific claims of intent by people to change specific actions, ultimately only one person actually acted to try to change something the Council did (Note: two other amendments from outside the Council, on matters not related to the Tournament Operating Procedures, were also submitted). If nothing else had come over the controversy generated by these changes, and if every action we had taken this summer had been repealed, I would have at least had the satisfaction of knowing that members felt motivated to take the time to learn how the organization conducts its business, to put pen to paper, and propose changes. Despite my urgent plea on this point last spring, and despite a lot of public expressions of a desire for change in September, we have once again slipped into the pattern of relative apathy when it comes to actually submitting proposals for a vote. NPDA may have reached a point where it again needs to have a serious discussion about its fundamental leadership and management model, and whether its current model of participation works.

## **Member Action and Committees**

During this time I also called upon the membership to self-nominate for seats on the NPDA Nominating Committee (which called for two district reps, a former President, and an at-large member, in addition to the Vice-President). Only one person responded. Therefore, I appointed the following individuals to the Committee:

- Marlin Bates, University of the Pacific, District Rep.
- Dan Schabot, Cameron University, District Rep.
- Skip Rutledge, Pt. Loma Nazarene University, Former President
- Kevin Calderwood, SIU-Carbondale, Member-at-Large
- Renea Gernant, Vice-President (Chair)

Subsequent to the formation of the Committee, Marlin Bates resigned due to a conflict of interest and I appointed Jay Bourne of Cumberland College to fill the vacated district rep seat, keeping in mind the requirement for regional diversity and also avoiding appointees who might be considered for the VP slot currently under review by the Committee.

I also reappointed last year's members of the Ad Hoc Committee and Season Sweepstakes to reconsider legislation sent back to committee by the Spring Business Meeting. That Committee has not generated a report at this time.

## **Committee and Representative Vacancies**

In making committee nominations, it should also be noted that a limited number of actual district reps have been reported to me at this time. Currently I am missing names of the following faculty and student district reps:

- District 4 Faculty
- District 4 Student
- District 5 Student
- District 7 Student
- District 9 Faculty
- District 9 Student
- District 10 Faculty
- District 10 Student

Whether these Districts held their meetings at NPDA is uncertain; but if they did, their information has never been reported to me. This reality severely constrain our ability to make appointments with an eye toward regional diversity as I look to the regional reps for help in filling committee positions.

On the Committee front we have two seats on the Finance Committee, one seat on the Topic Committee, two seats on the Site Committee, and three seats on the Professional Development and Outreach Committee in need of volunteers.

## **Other Appointments**

In the last six months I have made the following executive appointments.

- I have reappointed Michael Dreher to the position of Webmaster.
- I have appointed David Williams of Texas Tech to the position of Journal Editor.
- I have appointed Robert Margesson of Regis University to the office of Ombudsperson.

## **Other Business**

In the period since our last meeting the Executive Council has heard three or four requests for advisory opinions on student eligibility.

We have concluded contracts with two hotels for the NPDA Championships and are working with the Stockton Chamber of Commerce to secure a third fall-back option.