

CONNECTICUT QUIZ BOWL ASSOCIATION

3/24 MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Julia Tong (Darien), Michael Borecki (Bowdoin, formerly of Darien), Nancy Manning (Woodland), Peter Vermilyea (Housatonic), Barbara Ivey (Middlesex MS), Ken Romeo (Middlesex MS)

Julia opened the meeting by explaining the goals of the meeting: why CTQBA exists and to hear what CTQBA needs to do for coaches. She covered the need for support and stability in the Connecticut Quiz Bowl circuit, one that an organization like CTQBA can fulfill. Michael added that the organization should be focusing on outreach towards new teams, as well as resources and publicity for Quiz Bowl in Connecticut. Julia and Michael then went over the structure of ctquizbowl.org, covering each tab of the website.

Mrs. Ivey pointed out the need for a stable coach for Quiz Bowl teams. Michael concurred, mentioning that a lot of purely student-run Quiz Bowl teams like Conard and Masuk end up dying once the leading senior of the team graduates.

Mr. Romeo added what he imagined should be the future of CTQBA: a strong state structure for Quiz Bowl like Texas Quiz Association, Ohio, Missouri, etc. Mr. Vermilyea then brought up the possibility of starting a league similar to the Shoreline league in Eastern Connecticut, to which Mrs. Manning and Mr. Romeo agreed.

Mr. Romeo then added that if the organization is established and has an income, stipends can be given to possible coaches that may make them more willing to commit to starting a team. If people are not being paid by their schools, there needs to be some sort of compensation, similar to History Bowl (where David Madden offers \$200 for Tournament Directing).

Mrs. Ivey then brought up the possibility of sponsorships- for example, like Google's sponsorship of the National Geographic Bee. Michael pointed out that first CTQBA must grow and be established- NAQT was only able to get its National tournament sponsored 20 years after they started.

Mr. Romeo then added that it's necessary to do more grassroot outreach. For instance, Mr. Romeo contacted middle schools in the region for years, calling them and attempting to get them to begin a team. (He estimated the success rate was around 5%).

Mr. Vermilyea pointed out that an issue is frequency of competition- his students have the opportunity to compete very seldomly. They do online competitions, geography challenges, and come to occasional events- but building regularity is a must. He proposed having a league style

system involving around a match a month, specifically in the Waterbury (and northwest) region-4 schools in region play together, and if 12 schools are willing to attend, it would give them more opportunities to compete. Mr. Romeo concurred, adding that this was especially more feasible at the high school level, where more sets of questions are being produced.

Michael added that involving more middle schools would also be better. Mrs. Ivey added that middle school quiz bowl is key to getting more students involved at later levels; Middlesex recruits students as early as in 5th grade (Middlesex hosts an event for 5th graders every year that helps attract students to Middlesex's club).

Michael agreed, saying that it's good to promote Quiz Bowl at the middle school level as there are not many other competition activities (Model UN, Debate are not as serious). Quiz Bowl can be one of the main options to do, like at Middlesex.

Mr. Romeo then added that he is willing to help any given Connecticut team run a tournament, but he will be focusing on teaching those teams how to host. Julia concurred, adding that she would be willing to offer personal support to teams in the form of mentorships, helping moderate tournaments, running practices, etc. Michael then proposed the possibility of having CT States at a college like Wesleyan, and added that he would be willing to staff that tournament.

Mr. Vermilyea asked how much it would cost to buy questions as he has a budget and a stipend and could potentially fund a league. Michael responded saying that the league should not be too hard to fund- for example, a NAQT A-Set, which has 12 packets, could be used for four afternoons of matches, and can last anywhere between 2-4 months. Low cost can still break even.

The typical model of paying dues for state organizations was then discussed. For many organizations, coaches would pay a due to become "members" of the organization, and then would be able to attend tournaments affiliated with the organization at either a small cost or no cost at all. Mr. Romeo then pointed out that costs and organizing tournaments would have to be done by a board- if CTQBA is serious about reaching that level of organization, the next step would have to be outreach.

Julia then asked who the ideal person to contact while doing outreach is. Mr. Romeo responded that when he was doing middle school outreach, he first contacted gifted/IDEA teachers or science bowl and other Quiz Bowl equivalents before contacting the principal.

Mr. Vermilyea then offered to help fund a league of 16 teams that would occur once a month for 5 months, leading to States. He pointed out that the biggest problem with the league would be transportation- buses in particular could be hard to organize. Mrs. Manning agreed, adding that it can also be difficult to get parents to drive students to matches, especially if the matches are far away. Mr. Koutsoukos added that some clubs are able to associate quiz bowl as athletic event at their school, so they can get buses and funding.

The meeting was then adjourned to allow the last rounds of the Connecticut State Tournament to start on time.