

## AUSTIN RHETORIC CLUB MEMBER INFORMATION -Revised Sept. 2010

The Austin Rhetoric Club ([www.austinhretoricclub.org](http://www.austinhretoricclub.org)) is a Christian, home schooled family speech and debate club, where all members of a family are encouraged to join and actively participate. It is a parent-run, student-led family-friendly safe haven, whose purpose is to encourage our children (especially ages 8-18) to effectively share their faith in Jesus Christ. ARC is an affiliate of the National Christian Forensics Communication Association (NCFCA, [www.ncfca.org](http://www.ncfca.org)) and supports its mission statement and vision. Club meetings are usually held Fridays at Hope Chapel, 6701 Arroyo Seco, Austin, 78757, from 3:30 to 8:30 pm. Speech 3:30-5:50; announcements and dinner 5:50-6:40; Debate 6:40-8:30.

**Mission Statement:** We believe that formal speech and debate can provide a means for home schooled students to learn and exercise analytical and oratorical skills, addressing life issues from a Biblical world view in a manner that glorifies God.

**Statement of Faith:** The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He arose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy \*catholic church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

(\*the word "catholic" refers to the universal Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, not to the Roman Catholic Church. As Communicators for Christ puts it in their statement of faith: "We believe in the brotherhood of all believers who, through faith, have received the salvation provided by God's grace through the death of Jesus Christ.")

In order to be members of ARC, both parents are now required to attend a Member Orientation Meeting with a member of the ARC board. We want to clarify the goal of ARC, the benefits received and the responsibilities inherent in being active members of ARC. When parents have clear written information communicated at the beginning of the year, we believe this will go a long way in having a successful year in learning and growing together as a club in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Our Goal and Vision** is to have the students learn how to communicate from a Biblical world view in an articulate godly manner that glorifies God. This goal is achieved through parents encouraging active student leadership and student participation within the club meetings and tournaments.

**Our Dress Code** is one of modesty and professionalism with the intent to glorify Christ. The goal is to minimize the focus on the body or outward appearance and maximize the focus on the development of ideas and communication skills. For the ladies, modesty includes suits, dresses and skirts with hemlines to at least the bottom of the knee. Tight fitting/low-cut sweaters and slacks are inappropriate. Midriff must remain covered when gesturing in speeches. In professional settings (any competition, including a debate round at a weekly meeting), gentlemen should wear suits or sports coats, tie, dress shirt and shoes. Ladies should wear either dresses or suits with hemline to at least the bottom of the knees.

## **BENEFITS**

There are too many benefits to enumerate. But first and foremost our primary goal in ARC is to develop Christian Godly Character. What educational experience is more efficient and effective at knocking off our rough edges than for a teen-ager who thinks that he/she is pretty smart and gets respectfully out-debated by a much younger kid? Or when a young lady can explain with honor how her plan or philosophy ought to be preferred or is better supported than her opponent's and defend her plan with dignity and assertiveness in cross examination. Where can you get such an experience outside of competitive speech and debate? Here are just a few other benefits. ARC students will learn to:

1. speak confidently in front of others
2. write and deliver speeches
3. think quickly and critically
4. disagree with others without taking it personally and without attacking others
5. defend our faith
6. share the gospel boldly
7. hone research skills
8. make friends with opponents
9. win humbly and lose graciously
10. rely on our Lord Jesus Christ in everything
11. manage time wisely
12. be teachable and take criticism well
13. critique others honestly yet lovingly
14. make godly friends in ARC and throughout Texas
15. work together as a team
16. serve others
17. use their communication skills throughout life in whatever God calls them to.

**AGREEMENT FOR ARC MEMBERSHIP  
PARENTS AND STUDENTS AGES 12-18**

1. Both parents must attend one Mandatory “Member Orientation” Parent Meeting or contact a board member (Umstattds, Morgans, or Hullums) and set up a separate time to meet with one couple on the board.
2. Both parents and participating student(s) must sign this membership agreement.
3. At least one parent agrees to be on Austin Yahoo Parent Group by Sep. 17, 2010. (see [groups.yahoo.com/group/austindebateparents](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/austindebateparents). Join the group and get Yahoo ID. Contact Brian Morgan [constitutionist@grandecom.net](mailto:constitutionist@grandecom.net) with questions.)  
Name of parent: \_\_\_\_\_
4. At least one parent agrees to read email at least every other day.  
Name of parent: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Student(s) agrees to be on Austin Yahoo ARC group by Sept. 17, 2010 (see [groups.yahoo.com/group/austindebate](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/austindebate). Join group and get Yahoo ID. Contact Brian Morgan [constitutionist@grandecom.net](mailto:constitutionist@grandecom.net) with questions.)
6. Student(s) agrees to read email once daily.
7. Brand new members (students ages 12-18) are encouraged to take ARC’s 2 day beginning Speech and Debate Workshop Sept. 10-11, 2010, and a speech/debate camp/class during the summer (summer camps waived for 2010-11 year).
8. Each student over age 12 agrees to participate in Apologetics regularly and compete in it at tournaments. This is the cornerstone of ARC.
9. This is a family club. If students participate in speech, one parent agrees to attend at least 2 speech meetings out of every 4.  
Name of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_
10. If student(s) participates in debate, one parent agrees to attend at least 2 meetings out of every 4.  
Name of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_  
The key to student success in debate is parental involvement. It is very difficult for a student to understand these concepts and progress in debate if the parent is absent. The more involved the parent is, the better the student excels! Plus, the coaches need the help!
11. Each student is required to attend two Qualifying tournaments per season. There are usually 5 (4 in Texas) options for Qualifying tournaments. See calendar section in <http://www.AustinRhetoricClub.org/whats-happening/arc-calendar/>
12. Families having children younger than age 12 must actively help with child care. Parents must see the Child Care Coordinator and help regularly, unless they are coaching.  
Children ages 8-12 should be in the Junior Track Speech class from around 4:30-6pm, or with their parent. Afterwards, they must continually be with the parent (or responsible adult) unless on a supervised playground after 5:50 pm. NO child should ever be on the playground unless a responsible adult is supervising.
13. The parents agree to take a rotating turn with facility care (set up/break down/cleanup/vacuum/inspect, etc.) under the guidance of the Facility Coordinator. It is the parents’ responsibility to seek out the coordinator.
14. The parents and student(s) agree to abide by the Dress Code of modesty at all times, and professionalism (suits, etc.) during any type of competition, including an inner club debate at a weekly meeting. See Member Info for details.

15. The parents and student(s) have read the entire member packet, including: Member Info; Family Responsibilities Financial Costs; Tournament Information; Speech/Debate Prerequisite for brand new members; and Other Rhetoric Opportunities.

16. We agree with the Statement of Faith on the ARC Member Info page.

17. We have both attended a Mandatory Parent "Member Orientation" meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ (date). If extraordinary circumstances have occurred where we were not both able to attend, we have personally met with the following Board members to discuss this packet: \_\_\_\_\_ on this date: \_\_\_\_\_

We have read and agree to comply with this ARC Agreement as well as the NCFCA (National Christian Forensics and Communication Association) policies.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

**AUSTIN RHETORIC MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Many rhetoric clubs charge a \$75 fee to join. Rhetoric classes often charge \$40/student/month for both speech and debate classes respectively. This would cost parents \$640/year (8 months x \$80/month/student). In order to encourage Home School families to participate in ARC, the founders have elected not to charge anything to join, nor is there a monthly fee to participate in ARC!

However, there are financial and commitment costs that a family needs to consider before they commit to joining ARC. There are other options available for rhetoric activities on the following page, if a family does not feel the Lord's leading to join ARC.

We need parent volunteers continually!!! This requires every family to commit to attending, volunteering, and participating in order for the club to be successful. ARC is a very unique volunteer family club, not a rhetoric class.

The key to a student's success is parental involvement!!! Come catch the vision!!! The best way for your child to enjoy, learn and improve is for the entire family to be involved. Be there weekly. Learn with your child. Read the speech and debate books together. Make time in your daily school schedule for your child to spend on speech and debate. Speech practice and homework may take 2-3 hours per week until pieces are selected and memorized. Debate research and homework could take 4-6 hours per week, or more, depending on commitment level. Include speech and debate on your student's transcript. At one point, all of us parents knew little about this either! But we jumped in with prayer and trepidation and have been wonderfully blessed with all of the benefits.

We need parents to facilitate and assist in coaching the different speech and debate events. We have found the input from fathers to be particularly invaluable in the debate topics that we discuss. Not only are coaches needed, we also need parents to help judge, critique, advise and brainstorm with us weekly. Brand new/inexperienced parents are encouraged to assist weekly just by learning and doing with us!

ARC has been unusually blessed for 6 years by having the privilege of using Hope Chapel. Our Facility Coordinator and Sergeants of Arms (teen-aged officers) will be in charge of organizing setup/break down/cleanup/inspection of the building weekly. Each family will be required to periodically participate in this responsibility.

We also have a Child Care Coordinator, who will be in charge of organizing child care on the playground and will be responsible for taking care of child care issues. Children younger than 7 will be expected to be with their parent or responsible person at all times. All parents with younger children are expected to regularly serve on the playground in a rotating schedule, unless coaching. Parents are greatly encouraged to attend speech and debate.

## APPROXIMATE FINANCIAL COSTS (as of 2010)

1. National Christian Forensics Communications Association (NCFCA) Affiliate Fee: Mandatory membership for each family - \$40/ (annual fee). Discounts are offered if you register before Sept. 15 and if you are a member of HSLDA.  
[www.ncfcaregistration.com/NCFCAWelcomPage.aspx](http://www.ncfcaregistration.com/NCFCAWelcomPage.aspx)
2. Debate attire: According to NCFCA rules, when debating, debaters must dress professionally, in a suit, shirt, tie, dress shoes for young men; and modest suit (skirt at least knee length) or pantsuit for young ladies. Students will be informed when to dress in debate attire.
3. Books: approximate cost: Christie Shipe's *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate* \$13; *Blue or Red Resource Book* –mandatory (Team Policy \$40 or Lincoln Douglas \$55); Thane Rehn's *As I Was Saying* – speech book \$19, file boxes; notebooks; ink and paper; debate supplies; \$40? Optional debate resource books: \$25, \$50, varies. Many optional resources are available.
4. Tournament fees: varies on student participation. Typical debate fee is \$25 - \$40, Speech fee is around \$25/2 events and \$10 each additional event. If student debates and does 3 speech events, it's around \$60 (fees vary).
5. Gas to and from tournament.
6. Food: varies. Lunch and dinners are offered at tournaments but must be prepaid. Banquet fee is about \$12 each. Costs may be lowered by bringing cooler with snacks, sandwiches, drinks, etc..
7. Motels: vary greatly, but can be found \$50/night in Houston at group discount with other debaters. Totals: \$175 for 3 nights with tax. One is always welcome to make their own arrangements and stay with friends or family.
8. Pre-requisite speech/debate class/camp for brand new students varies greatly. Approximately \$150 and up, except for our 2 day beginning speech and debate workshop on Sept. 10-11, 2010.

## TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

As fun as tournaments are, they are best enjoyed with proper expectations and preparation.

### **How many?**

There are two Qualifying tournaments required per school year in ARC. NCFCA plans on having 5 qualifying tournaments in our region, 4 in Texas. Attending a local Austin tournament is easily accomplished. This only requires families to travel to one out of town tournament per year. However, the more one competes, the more a student improves! It is greatly encouraged that students attend as many as possible. This is subject to change, but typically they run a tournament once a month starting with practice ones in November. Check the ARC calendar <http://www.AustinRhetoricClub.org/whats-happening/arc-calendar/> for dates.

### **Time involved?**

Usually the parent and the student leave Wed. afternoon and drive to Houston, DFW or Tulsa, OK. Usually check-in at tournaments is on Wed. evening, and sometimes certain events are held on Wednesday, before the rest of the tournament begins.

Tournaments begin at 8 am Thursday, Friday and Saturday and end late each evening (sometimes as late as 9 or 10pm). Friday evenings end after the banquet around 8-9 pm. The tournament ends Sat. evening after the awards ceremony, around 9 pm or later. Your child can give as many as 39 speeches and cross-examinations before the last day of a qualifying tournament. There is no more efficient way to give your child a positive speaking experience than with competitive speech and debate.

### **Where to stay?**

Typically, one stays at a nearby motel for 3-4 nights with a discounted price for group. Others have friends or family willing to house them.

**Costs?** See Family Responsibility Page

## **SPEECH/DEBATE PRE-REQUISITE FOR BRAND NEW MEMEBERS IN ARC**

In order to use the fall more productively for all the students, ARC has had a requirement for all brand new members (students) to have some preparation in speech and debate prior to joining. Since summer camps are now over, brand new members, ages 12-18 will be required to attend our 2 day beginning speech and debate workshop at Hope Chapel, 6701 Arroyo Seco, Austin, on Sept. 10-11, 2010. Here is how the camp breaks down; Friday, Sept. 10, is a Speech camp beginning at 3:30-8:30 pm. Bring your own potluck or dinner. Saturday, Sept. 11, is Debate camp and begins at 8am-4pm. Registration fee covers cost of lunch on Sat. You must register to attend. Register at <http://www.austinheticclub.org/debate-workshop/registration/>

### **Other Rhetoric Opportunities**

You may want to consider other rhetoric opportunities than ARC if:

1. One parent is not willing/able to be actively involved weekly.
2. Your student is not willing/able to be actively involved weekly.
3. Your student has no time at all on his/her schedule to do speech and debate homework (homework may take 2-3 hours/wk until pieces are selected and memorized; Team Policy debate research could take 3-6 hours/wk)
4. Your student will not attend 2 qualifying tournaments (see tournament info page)
5. You are not willing to agree to the terms in the ARC member agreement, to be signed by both parents and student participant(s) (see agreement).

### **Other possible rhetoric opportunities other than ARC are:**

1. Young Speakers of Austin (YSA): contact Joanne Louis [louis7@sbcglobal.net](mailto:louis7@sbcglobal.net)
2. Teen Court, Monday evenings at Judge Edna Staudt's court, 350 Discovery Blvd., Suite 204, Cedar Park, Tx 78613 [www.ymcateencourt.com](http://www.ymcateencourt.com)
3. Classical Enrichment Academy [www.ClassicalEnrichmentAcademy.com](http://www.ClassicalEnrichmentAcademy.com)  
Call 512-964-6394
4. Podium Power Speech and Debate Class, Call Marlene Yousef 512-280-5407  
[www.PodiumPower.net](http://www.PodiumPower.net)