

ISBN; CD; DVD; COPYRIGHT; LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; WWW; OR SHOULD WE JUST DO WHATEVER WE WANT IN INTERP?

by
Don Crabtree

Each year we face the question of where do we get material for duo, humorous and dramatic interp. Each year the council reviews and examines these rules and any input we have been given by coaches. Each year we still have protests at NFL district and nationals regarding our rules. This article is an attempt to discuss the various issues regarding material selection as they pertain to the interp events.

Due to an error an incorrect rule was recorded in the last published minutes of the NFL Executive council Meeting in Oklahoma City. The rule stated that this year one would have to send a copy of the interp script along with publisher and publisher's address and the ISBN number. (International Standard Book Number.) The correct rule is this year one would have to send a copy of the interp script along with publisher and publisher's address. With that in mind, I would like to explore several issues regarding copyrights, Library of Congress and the ISBN.

We want the interps to be from legitimate sources...published sources. However, the very word "Published" opens a pandora's box of problems. Our current rules reads: "*Selections used in these contests (dramatic, humorous and Duo interp) shall be cuttings from published, printed novels, short stories, plays or poetry. Recorded material that is not printed and published is unacceptable.*" (TN-7) This is the rule we are currently using and we must abide by it.

Copyright laws are not what most people think they are. It is not necessary to register a work with the copyright office to have it protected. Law protects a work at the moment it is created. Almost everyone can prove they created a work: friends, family, rejection slips, content...A whole myriad of evidence that can be established is readily available. The main reason for registering with the copyright office is that it may assist in establishing evidence of owner-

ship should a court case be invoked. In general, copyright registration is a legal formality intended to make a public record of the basic facts of a particular copyright. Registering itself for a copyright, does not establish ownership. It is possible for a person to steal another's original material...And submit it to the office for copyright approval. The issuance of a copyright document does not prove ownership. Such a document may be challenged in court. Thus, something being "copyrighted" does little to prove its existence as being "published."

Now to examine that pesky ISBN Number. The International Standard Book Numbering System in the United States has been assigned to the R. R. Bowker Company, 121 Chanion Road, New Providence, New Jersey. The Library of Congress does not assign ISBN Numbers.

To acquire ISBN Numbers, a publishing company contacts R. R. Bowker and requests an application form. The completed form and a filing fee are submitted to the Bowker Company and the publisher is sent an "ISBN Log." The log is simply a list of numbers (10). When the publisher prepares a book for distribution, a number is taken from the list and assigned to the book. This number is permanently assigned to the book for identification purpose since many books/plays have the same title.

The ISBN Number is used mainly for published books and mainly for bookstores and wholesalers of books who want to identify an exact publication. However, ISBN Numbers may be assigned to any media work including pamphlets, cassette tapes, plays, disks, and videos, etc. The material may be in any media form. Although the ISBN number is used as an identifying number for a broad range of media, the primary use is in the book selling business to search for and identify specific publications.

Please note: *The ISBN System is a voluntary system. It is not necessary that*

published works have an ISBN Number. Many plays and other published materials do not carry an ISBN Number because the publisher does not intend to sell the item through a bookseller, and, therefore, does not believe an ISBN number to be necessary. My original motion at the Oklahoma Executive Council Meeting was to only require the publisher and publisher's address. Because I did not read the "preview" of the Council Minutes, I did not catch the ISBN being required as well. When I noticed the error I called the office and with the help of Mr. Copeland and the Council, corrected this error.

Why not simply require a Library of Congress Catalogue Number and be done with it? The purpose of the Library of Congress Catalogue number is to identify works filed with the Library of Congress. All works filed for copyright have a mandatory filing requirement with the Library of Congress.

The catalog numbers, given upon application, are pre-assigned or assigned. The pre-assigned numbers are requested before a work is published so the number can be included with the printing to provide identification. Assigned numbers are provided after a work is published and usually do not appear on the work unless subsequently reprinted.

All filings are voluntary and there are many published works that are not filed for a Library of Congress Catalogue Number. Since filing for copyright is a voluntary act, it is not necessary that works without copyright be filed with the Library of Congress.

What about videos, CD's, records? Again, the issue centers on being published. The rule is very clear regarding "recorded" material. If the recorded material isn't published and isn't printed, it is unacceptable. Most movie scripts are fairly easy to obtain. *SCRIPT CITY* in California is a good source for most titles as is *STAGE AND SCREEN*. Just remember, that the selection must be published and printed in order to

be legitimate.

Finally, we need to examine the "Superhighway" or WWW land...or what I call..."Where did you get this material? Who wrote this material? And why can't I obtain it as well? Are their selections on the net? Of course. Are there good selections on the net? Probably. Then why can't we use the net?

This is a great question and one that has plagued most of the NFL Executive members as well as National Secretary, Mr. Copeland. One problem with the net is that web sites have a way of just disappearing. Here today....Gone tomorrow. The reliability of this source is hazy at best. Shouldn't we all have the same opportunity to find the same "great" material? I say yes! Using the net does not afford this.

Some have suggested that we simply throw away all the rules and just let students do whatever they want. Who cares where it came from. If the student wrote it, fine. If it is on the back of his Doc Marten shoe box, super! I have very strong feelings against this idea. Literature is and should be an art form. Do we sacrifice art for the sake of an easy to get, sometimes cheesy, cutting? I hope not. Part of the true educational value of the interp events is to explore a vast genre of authors, works and styles.

I think what is most needed is an addition to the "published/printed" rule that states *AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL*. By this I mean that we all should have the same ability to find this material. Granted, it may be a long, exhaustive, and frustrating search, but so be it, isn't this half the fun? Requiring the publisher and publisher's address is at least a start.

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