

Contesters' Holiday

Monday, Oct. 21, 1940

Into Manhattan last week trooped 221 delegates to the National Contesters' Association's fourth annual convention. This week, as a polite gesture to the assembled contesters, CBS's Professor Quiz will entertain on his program two hotshots of the organization: paper-thin, 28-year-old Everett Lane, founder and past president, and Joan Lambert, head of the All-American Contestar School of Willow Grove, Pa., which has about 2,000 students.

Founder Lane started National Contesters' Association to promote good will among the addicts of a pastime that offered in 1939 a potential take of \$54,000,000. A general storekeeper from Mine Run, Va., he made his first killing in 1935, when in the course of three weeks he won 150 pounds of chicken feed. Encouraged, he went into contesting seriously, soon collected a booty of bicycles, roller skates, shaving brushes, Indian suits, automobiles, cash. Described as a non-profit association, National Contesters charges members \$1 a year in dues, keeps them posted about what goes on in the contest world.

Prominent in National Contesters are faculty members from the half-dozen contest schools in the U. S. Conducting their classes by correspondence, the schools charge an average tuition of \$25, tip their members off to shrewd contest techniques, criticize contest entries. Typical suggestions: Mail early, keep simple, study your judges. The idiosyncrasies of the judges are much discussed in the forums of the National Contesters. Members often point out that veteran judge Professor Lloyd Dallas Herrold of Northwestern University has a weakness for coagulations like "Temptasty," that Procter & Gamble dislikes rhyming entries. Most National Contesters submit many entries to each contest through friends all over the country, give 10% of their winnings to the pal in whose territory and name the contest is won. Wise contestants usually send their entries in rather cheap envelopes, sometimes spill a bit of Crisco on the sheet to make the entry look homemade.

National Contesters includes housewives, doctors, lawyers, merchants and a great many printers. Printers have to watch their spelling, often consult dictionaries, which eventually leads them to try their hand at slogans. Peculiar is the caste system of the contest business. A crossword puzzler looks down on jinglers, but slogan-makers lord it over all.