

# TOASTMASTER®

October 2009

## Toastmasters Then and Now

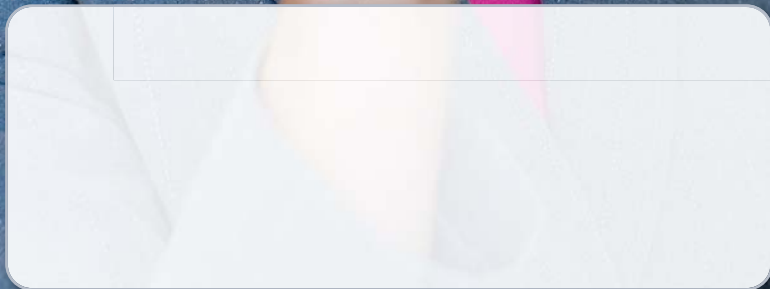
Celebrating TI's 85th Anniversary

## Breaking Down Stereotypes

Asian women speak  
out on "speaking up"

# Broadening Your Horizons

Visiting clubs in other countries sparks  
cultural and personal connections





## Facing the Future with Confidence

† It was 85 years ago this month that the first Toastmasters club was formed. That defining act by our organization's founder, Dr. Ralph Smedley, forged a path to the future that we all benefit from today. Here are other significant moments in our organization's history:

- **January 1933:** The first club outside California is established in Seattle, Washington.
- **October 1935:** The first club outside the United States is chartered in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.
- **July 1946:** Scotland becomes the first district organized outside the United States.
- **August 1973:** Membership opens to women.
- **October 1982:** Membership reaches 100,000.
- **June 2004:** Toastmasters charts its 10,000th club. Membership reaches 200,000.
- **June 2009:** Membership reaches 250,000. The most clubs and districts to date earn Distinguished or better status.
- **August 2009:** Members approve a bylaw amendment that improves global representation and support to every member and club across the globe.

In each of these examples, our organization took a leap forward to change, adapt and meet the evolving needs of our members. These changes were not easy, yet our volunteer leaders and professional staff blazed a path to a brighter future ahead. Despite the forward momentum of our organization, we can always improve on our successes. U.S. President Thomas Jefferson said: "I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past."

The next 85 years hold great promise for Toastmasters. We will continue to enhance and improve our educational programs, club and district officer training, and recognition programs. We will use emerging technologies to better deliver our programs to even more members. There will even be a day in the not-too-distant future when we'll celebrate having more than one million active members of Toastmasters!

As you contemplate your own achievements as a Toastmaster, acknowledge where you have been, where you are now, and what the future holds for you. Is it time for you to earn your next educational award? Serve in a leadership role outside your club? Help start a new club?

Have the confidence to face your future with excitement, engagement and energy. The best days for you and our organization are ahead, not behind. Let us work together to build our organization by building our members – with confidence, leadership and service. The future begins *now!*

Gary Schmidt, DTM  
International President

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**The Toastmasters Vision:**  
Toastmasters International empowers people to achieve their full potential and realize their dreams. Through our member clubs, people throughout the world can improve their communication and leadership skills, and find the courage to change.

**The Toastmasters Mission:**  
Toastmasters International is the leading movement devoted to making effective oral communication a worldwide reality.  
Through its member clubs, Toastmasters International helps men and women learn the arts of speaking, listening and thinking – vital skills that promote self-actualization, enhance leadership potential, foster human understanding, and contribute to the betterment of mankind.  
It is basic to this mission that Toastmasters International continually expand its worldwide network of clubs thereby offering ever-greater numbers of people the opportunity to benefit from its programs.



Do you have something to say? Write it in 200 words or less, sign it with your name, address and club affiliation and send it to [letters@toastmasters.org](mailto:letters@toastmasters.org).

### Don't Feel Small if You Drawl

In regards to the article "Turning Accents Into Assets" by Sher Hooker (June), I know what it is like to be criticized about my Southern accent. During my Navy and college careers, others teased me about my accent. I remember once overhearing a shipmate tell another shipmate in the chow line, "I hate Southerners; they are so uneducated."

I acted as if I took it all with a grain of salt, but below the surface, I developed a complex. There were times that I felt ashamed to be a Southerner. My advice to Toastmasters is: Do not evaluate speakers based on their accents or backgrounds.

Jerry Adams • Downtown Speakers • Knoxville, Tennessee

### Not Quiet on the Set

Kudos to the *Toastmaster* magazine for the June 2009 cover story "Be the Star of the Show." The practical advice offered in this issue is both timely and on the mark.

Our local TV-savvy members in District 27 have been experimenting with cable access television – as a means to both "Talk Up Toastmasters" and share their powerful stories – for nearly a decade. And with the advent of Web-based technologies we can archive shows and recycle their messages to others long after the play date has expired.

Do continue to feature articles on television, radio, the use of podcasts, YouTube and other social networks in future issues.

John Lesko, DTM • 1500 Speakers club • Arlington, Virginia

### Theme Esteem

Thank you for producing an excellent magazine. I have been reading it since I joined Toastmasters almost a decade ago and have long

admired the efforts taken by the editorial team to focus each issue around a specific theme. I imagine this takes considerable effort and I appreciate it.

It helps us to grow as members because it gives us an opportunity to explore several different perspectives on a specific area of communication and leadership. Whether the featured subject is persuasive speaking or presentation skills, speechwriting or storytelling, Table Topics or technology, we benefit as members from this detailed work. The fresh subject matter in each issue of the magazine challenges us to think about communication in new ways.

I make the effort to try to apply the best of what I have read in the *Toastmaster* to my communication for the month. Four weeks later, I get to explore a whole new aspect of communication. This sustains my personal growth and helps me continue to have fun with my Toastmasters experience. The *Toastmaster* magazine is a vital and necessary component of Toastmasters International. It is a powerful tool for professional development.

Angela Hatton, ATMS, CL • Eastside Toastmasters Brookings, South Dakota

### Hope Takes Root

I'm a member of the San Francisco Japanese-English Toastmasters. I just wanted to thank you for Victor Parachin's encouraging and beautiful article about "Cultivating Hope" (July). I can't tell you enough how much I was touched when I found this article on my way home the other day. June had been a tough month for me for many reasons; I was really tired and depressed, but this article saved me.

Mr. Parachin, thank you very much for reminding me about the importance of keeping hope. I'll keep this message with me and am going forward strongly in my life.

Mariko Foltz • SF Japanese-English Toastmasters San Francisco, California

### What a Wit!

John Cadley is without question one of the funniest, wittiest men on the planet! The best thing the magazine has done in the past 10 years is to get him to write a monthly column. I still have "A Disingenuous Discussion" (August, 2008) on my desk and read it at least once a month and say "Amen!" Apart from the humor, and the message that I subscribe to 100 percent, I find that article particularly poignant coming from someone deep within the advertising industry.

Keep up the great work!

Peter Temesvary, CC • Budapest club • Budapest, Hungary

### Net Gain From Networking

What a wonderful time to make full use of the article "Work a Room" by Lin Gensing-Pophal (June). In leading a PR campaign for my Toastmasters club, I stumbled across this article. I saw that the essential networking skills described will prove beneficial to my club members, as many of them are in the network marketing business. They can learn these different styles in the Toastmasters environment as well as anywhere else.

My club was founded 18 months ago. Luckily, this article came along when I planned for an aggressive PR campaign and was a true blessing in disguise. Many thanks to you, Lin. I too have learned something new to enhance my networking abilities.

Jason Wong, ACB, CL • Team Flantech Bukit Mertajam, Penang, Malaysia

# Reflecting on Ralph Smedley's Words

I attended my first Toastmasters meeting back in 1965, with the South Denver Toastmasters in Colorado. That night, we started the session with a few moments of silence in memory of Dr. Ralph C. Smedley, the founder of Toastmasters International, who had passed away the week before. The South Denver club was eventually renamed the Bob Ord Toastmasters in honor of longtime member Bob Ord, who often quoted Dr. Smedley when urging new members to take risks and try out ideas:

"Your Toastmasters club is your laboratory in which to try experiments in better communication," Smedley wrote in a 1955 issue of the *Toastmaster* magazine. "You can try anything once [in front of] this frank but sympathetic audience, and you can learn by listening to their comments."

When I served on the Toastmasters Board of Directors from 1970 to 1972, a fellow director, Al Burlingame, gave me the book *Personally Speaking*. Published by Toastmasters International the year after Smedley passed away, the 114-page volume is a collection of excerpts from Smedley's writings in the *Toastmaster* magazine over the years. Al had known Dr. Smedley personally and greatly admired him.

Although I never had the opportunity to meet Smedley, his words in this book have served as a great source of guidance and inspiration to me. I have belonged to nine clubs in three different cities, and my Toastmasters journey has been one of self-discovery, enjoyment and confidence-building.

The organization's 85th anniversary is a particularly fitting time to reflect on the principles, ideals and goals of Ralph Smedley. In that spirit, here are some of my favorite excerpts from *Personally Speaking*:

*"Let's 'keep it simple': Many...have written about public speaking in the intervening centuries, but they have not changed the simple basic principles, nor have they added very much to them."* (pg. 1)

*"Toastmasters is a 'do-it-yourself' activity...Don't be afraid to use your imagination and initiative...Listen to others and evaluate their thinking – then form your own conclusions and speak for yourself."* (pg. 1)

*"Toastmasters is based on belief in the individual...Many organizations ask the individual to subordinate himself to the group. Ours is the only organization I know that is dedicated to the individual."* (pg. 2)

*"The personal touch, in all levels of our work, is one of [Toastmasters'] distinguishing features. We are working together."* (pg. 6)

*"The simple fact is that we grow or learn or work better when we enjoy what we are doing, and this is essentially the secret of success in Toastmasters. Our meetings are made enjoyable by a fine, helpful fellowship, in a pleasant, social atmosphere, with activities carefully planned..."* (pg. 11)


*"The ability to approach an audience in [a] friendly style is partly a*



*gift of nature, and partly a cultivated art. It is worth cultivating if you want to be as effective as possible in your speech."* (pg. 78)

*"It is always the speaker's responsibility to make his speech effective. If he does that, applaud him, commend him, vote for him, even though he violated all the rules in the book... The test of the speech is not in following the textbook, but in making the sale."* (pg. 80)

*"The first result of speech training is self-discovery."* (pg. 109)

**Editor's Note:** The book *Personally Speaking* (Item B63) is offered by Toastmasters International at [www.toastmasters.org/shop](http://www.toastmasters.org/shop). 

**Watt Pye, DTM**, is a member of the Timberline and Gates to Excellence Toastmasters clubs, both located in Denver, Colorado. The longtime journalist was a member of Toastmasters' Board of Directors from 1970-72. Reach him at [wattpye@aol.com](mailto:wattpye@aol.com).

**Don Enschede, DTM, shares prized memories from his 51 years in Toastmasters.**

# Staying With It

This is how long Don Enschede has been a Toastmaster: When he first joined the organization, its headquarters was a small wooden cottage, known simply as the “home office.” The cozy site wasn’t far from the YMCA in Santa Ana, California, where Dr. Ralph C. Smedley started the first Toastmasters club.

Enschede met Smedley for the first time in that small cottage – an encounter he still remembers vividly. The year was 1957, and Enschede was a new member with the Seal Beach Toastmasters, in Seal Beach, Calif. He was visiting the home office to pick up club supplies from Dr. Smedley. The Toastmasters founder, attired in a suit and buttoned-up coat, offered a friendly handshake, addressing Enschede by name though the two had never met before. Smedley’s office featured a few simple and sturdy items: a Navy surplus desk, Remington typewriter, rotary phone and four-drawer filing cabinet.

As the young Toastmaster left the office that day, Smedley offered him some words of encouragement: “Stay with it, young man. Don’t quit.”

Enschede says that message of support, coming as it did from the

man who created this very organization, made an indelible imprint – one still stamped on his mind all these years later.

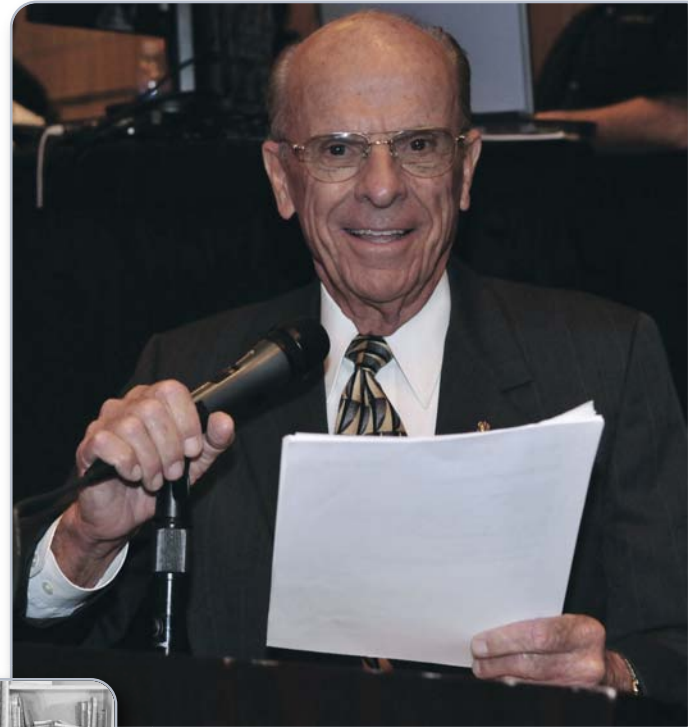
“‘Never quit’ rings in my ears,” he said in a speech earlier this year at the District 33 Spring



▲ Distinguished Toastmaster Don Enschede in action as announcer during the International Convention in Connecticut.  
 ◀ Dr. Ralph Smedley pictured in his office in the late 1950’s.

Conference in Bakersfield, California. “Those words come back to me every time it seems there is no way out.”

Enschede has been a Toastmaster for 51 years – and his father was a Toastmaster before him. He has served the organization in nearly every leadership role possible, from the club level to International Director (1981-’83). He has also achieved Distinguished Toastmaster and Accredited Speaker status, and for many years has lent his deep voice serving as announcer at



many Toastmasters events, including the annual International Convention.

“Don is a Toastmasters treasure,” says Herb Nowlin, a long-time friend and fellow member of the Sandpipers Toastmasters in Ventura, Calif. “What makes him a good Toastmaster is his dedication to the organization,” adds Nowlin. “His self-discipline is extremely important. He sets high standards for himself and for our club.”

For Enschede, it’s all part of the enduring passion he feels toward the organization.

“Dr. Rich Wilson, Santa Barbara’s [California] finest and most disciplined Toastmaster – and my mentor – proclaimed from every platform, ‘I hate to think what my life would be



without Toastmasters! I echo that sentiment 100 percent,” says Ensch.

### Following in Father’s Footsteps

Ensch’s father, Neil, was a Toastmaster in the 1940s and ’50s, and he encouraged his son to join. Despite the family history with the organization, Don says he was petrified to attend his first meeting. But the Seal Beach group was so supportive that he stuck with it. And he’s never looked back.

“Toastmasters has given me wonderful opportunities to grow in leadership roles and in my business career as well,” he says. “It has opened countless doors for me that would not have been opened otherwise.”

For example, notes Ensch, the self-confidence he’s gained from Toastmasters provided a big boost to his nearly 40-year career as a citrus grower in California, enabling him to deal effectively with the management of the Sunkist corporation. The communication skills he’s acquired also have led to broadcasting opportunities.

“For many years, I broadcast a daily farm program five days a week on [radio station] KOVA-FM covering Ventura and Santa Barbara counties,” says the Ventura resident in his trademark deep, rumbling voice. “I interviewed local agricultural leaders and politicians, and wrote my own conservative farm editorials that often provoked listener challenges.”

In addition to the farm program, Ensch broadcast the Sunday Mass from St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in Ojai, California, for many years for the benefit of shut-ins. “I would get letters and phone calls from the listeners that told me how much they appreciated having access to Mass from their homes,” he says.

### Starting the Sandpipers

In 1976, Ensch co-founded the Sandpipers Toastmasters with Herb

Nowlin and Jim Sullivan. All three still are members of the club, and between them they have an impressive 120 total years of Toastmasters membership!

“I would call Don a tough Toastmaster,” says Sullivan. “He still gets to meetings half an hour early. Toastmasters as an organization does not have a dress code, but the dress tradition for the Sandpipers is that ladies wear skirts or dresses, and men wear coats and ties. Don once gave us a speech demonstrating how to iron a white shirt! He says that each of us should be practiced and prepared for any job; to do everything with thorough preparation.”

Nowlin talks about the many Toastmasters road trips he and Ensch have taken in Don’s 1977 Ford Pinto – including one memorable excursion from California to the 1980 Toastmasters Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. “That car had no air conditioning!” says Nowlin, adding, “We have gone tens of thousands of miles together for Toastmasters in that orange Pinto.”

One of Nowlin’s favorite memories of Ensch occurred during his friend’s campaign for International Director. Nowlin served as his campaign manager. After the elections, “Don made a point of going over to his rival and congratulating him for a hard-fought campaign,” says Nowlin. “That really impressed me.”

Ensch says that Toastmasters principles – to do your very best, to be gracious, to help others – reflect the spirit of Smedley himself. “Dr. Smedley was a perfect gentleman in every way,” Ensch told the audience at the District 33 conference. “He could have been a Fortune 500 executive but he chose to work with people, helping them develop their God-given talents... His sincerity and genuine interest in helping people was ever-present.”

### Still Going Strong

Ensch gives after-dinner talks and presents workshops for many organizations. For his Toastmasters’ audiences, his favorite topics include effective speaking techniques, meeting-management skills and leadership formats; for non-Toastmasters groups, he speaks on political and naval history.

While sharing his memories of Dr. Smedley’s speeches, Ensch remembered one time when the Toastmasters leader stood at a lectern and drank two or three glasses of water before speaking. Smedley then explained, “Ladies and gentlemen, you can’t get up steam without water.” Noting that Smedley displayed “so much vigor and vitality in his senior years,” Ensch recalled him speaking at the 1961 Toastmasters Convention in Seattle, which he believes was Smedley’s last public presentation. The audience gave him a five-minute standing ovation.

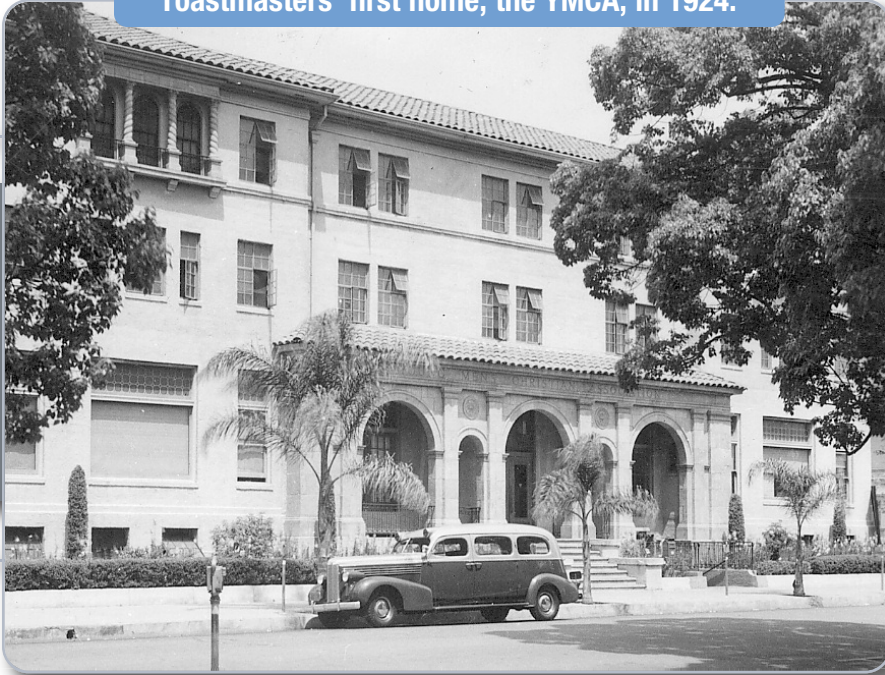
Members of the Sandpipers club applaud Ensch’s vitality and spirit as well. He is still a dapper dresser, still tools around in his orange Ford Pinto and still puts his all into every Toastmasters activity he engages in.

Ensch says, “Early on in my Toastmasters career I asked myself, ‘What do I need to do to maximize the benefits of my membership?’” His answer was clear. “My formula for Toastmasters success, then as now, is: Do all that your membership requires. Do it when it is supposed to be done. And give it your best effort.” ■

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**Katherine Wertheim, CC, CL**, is a member of Ventura Toastmasters club in Ventura, California. She uses her Toastmasters training to conduct workshops on fund raising and board development for nonprofit staff and board members. You can reach her at [katherine@werth-it.com](mailto:katherine@werth-it.com).

Toastmasters' first home, the YMCA, in 1924.



Dedication of new W



# TOASTMASTERS.

## Then ...

*When people hear the word “basement,” they’re not likely to picture the home of a global communication and leadership development organization. But a basement in the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) in Santa Ana, California, is exactly where Ralph C. Smedley held the first meeting of what would eventually become Toastmasters International. The date was October 22, 1924.*

Smedley began working as director of education for the YMCA after he graduated from college. He observed that many of the young patrons needed “training in the art of public speaking and in presiding over meetings,” and decided to help them with a training format that was similar to a social club. During the early 1900s, the word “toastmaster” referred to a person who proposed the toasts and introduced the speakers at a banquet. Smedley named his group “The Toastmasters Club” because

he thought it suggested a pleasant, social atmosphere that would appeal to young men.

At that first Toastmasters meeting, members practiced speaking skills in a supportive, informal atmosphere. The seedling club blossomed. Then another sprung up in nearby Anaheim. Word spread about Smedley’s experiment and soon people in other communities, and even other states, began to request permission and help to start their own Toastmasters meetings.

As more clubs emerged, it was a time of firsts: Smedley created the first Toastmasters manual, and publication of *The Gavel* – the first Toastmasters newsletter – began in 1930. (The *Toastmaster* magazine made its debut three years later.)

In the 1930s, the organization grew to an international level by incorporating and chartering its first club outside the United States, in British Columbia, Canada.

Over the ensuing years, Toastmasters International laid the foundation for many of the activities and philosophies we know today: The first Inter-Club Speech Contest was held in 1938; District 18 of Scotland became the first district outside the United States in 1946; and in 1968, the first Competent Toastmaster



WHQ building in 1962.



The current WHQ building opened in 1990.



# ... THEN and NOW

(CTM) awards were issued for completing the manual, Basic Training for Toastmasters. Two years later, the first Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) awards were handed out.

Until 1962, a series of rented office spaces in Southern California served as Toastmasters International's "home office." That year, the staff moved into its first World Headquarters building. The Santa Ana facility wasn't far from the YMCA where the first Toastmasters club met.

In 1973, Toastmasters met an important milestone by opening membership to women. Twelve years later, Helen Blanchard became the organization's first president.

By 1982, membership reached 100,000. To better serve its growing worldwide membership, World Headquarters relocated in 1990 to its current building in Rancho Santa Margarita, California, 20 miles south of Santa Ana.

In July 1997, a bold new offering was developed for the educational program: An improved two-track educational recognition system that allowed members to pursue awards in both leadership and communication. In 1999, the 10-goal Distinguished Club Program was introduced.

## ... And Now

*As Toastmasters International celebrates its 85th anniversary, the organization stands at a historic high point. Program offerings have never been more expansive. Toastmasters leaders have developed innovative strategies to keep up with advances and shifting cultural dynamics of the global age. Indeed, while many organizations around the world are downsizing because of the*

economic climate, Toastmasters International is growing with thousands of people taking advantage of the organization's programs to enhance their communication skills. Membership is at an all-time high, with more than 250,000 members in 12,000 clubs in 106 countries. As of June 30, a record 1,073 new clubs were chartered, and 56 districts were recognized as Distinguished or better, a number surpassing all previous years.

"Toastmasters grew by nearly five percent in 2009," says Toastmasters Executive Director Daniel Rex. "Tens

## Smedley's Generous Gesture

**T**oastmasters International was formally incorporated in December 1932. Over the years Dr. Ralph Smedley took out copyrights in his own name for the many articles and manuals he had written for use by the membership. But he eventually assigned all his rights, claims and property interests in the name, plan and products to Toastmasters International. Some people said Smedley should have capitalized on his work and made a fortune. His reply? *"I would rather be rich in friendship than in money. It is a privilege to make a contribution to the welfare of my fellow man, and I have never regretted transferring all the controls to the corporation."*



tion with 14 regions and directors, and replaces The Nominating Committee with the International Leadership Committee (ILC). More information on the implementation of this proposal will be shared on the Toastmasters Web site and in the November issue of this magazine.

The organization's profile is about to grow even higher: A new film about

Toastmasters is scheduled for release this fall. *SpeakEasy*, a feature-length documentary produced by Tumbleweed Entertainment, explores the 2008 World Championship of Public Speaking and the larger Toastmasters world.

From a gathering in a YMCA basement in 1924 to the 12,000-plus clubs that meet in 106 countries today, the Toastmasters story is one of dramatic growth and success. And with accomplishments come opportunities. "As we meet our members' needs and greet thousands of club visitors, we offer the most valuable service imaginable: We help people improve their lives," says Rex. "That's what the Toastmasters mission is all about." **T**

of thousands of people have seen the value of the Toastmasters training in their personal lives and careers. They know the program can see them through a lot of challenges."

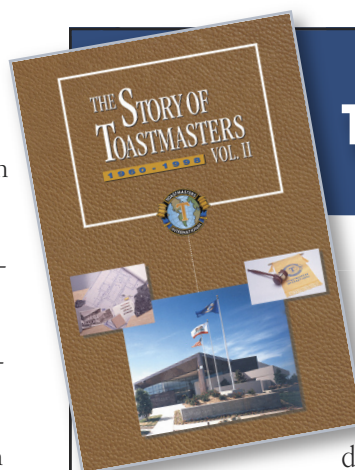
As Rex sees it, there is no limit to the growth potential of Toastmasters International, and he is making sure the World Headquarters staff is well positioned to serve its members as their needs change and the organization grows in existing and emerging markets.

"Our renewed emphasis is to provide optimal service and resources at each member development stage, beginning with the prospective member who is looking for a club on the Web site, applying for membership in the club, receiving a New Member Kit, and talking with a staff member on the phone," Rex explains.

One way to meet members' needs is through the Toastmasters Web site ([www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org)), which is continually expanded through new product and service offerings. An exciting and recent addition to the Web site is the organization's first e-learning tool, Toastmasters Learning Connection (TLC) for district officers. Blending education with the power of the Internet, TLC provides access to Toastmasters' officer training in a virtual learning environment. The distance-learning program is designed to complement face-to-face training and is not intended to replace it. This program still is in its infancy, but is expected to encompass training for a variety of officers.

Another recent change voted in by members at the annual International Convention on Aug. 14, 2009, is Global Representation and Support. It improves the organization's structure by enhancing global representa-

**Editor's Note:** For detailed information about Toastmasters' history, visit [toastmasters.org](http://toastmasters.org) and type "timeline" into the search box.



## The Story of Toastmasters, Vol. II

Volume II of *The Story of Toastmasters* recounts the history of the organization from 1960 to 1998. Complete with many photographs, this paperback book discusses TI's growth, leaders, and the evolution of the educational system. \$7.50 plus shipping.

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[www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org)



# A Few Words From FAMOUS TOASTMASTERS

## Debbi Fields Rose

*Founder – Mrs. Fields Cookies.  
Former member of Salt Lake  
City Toastmasters club in Salt  
Lake City, Utah*



“I’d never thought of myself as a great communicator, and that’s one of the reasons I got involved in Toastmasters. The idea of getting in front of a group, not as Mrs. Fields but really as Debbi, made my knees shake and I’d get all dry-mouthed. But the Toastmasters group understood. Here’s a place where you can learn, grow, develop – and where other people are doing and feeling the same thing.”

## Linda Lingle

*Governor of Hawaii since 2002 and  
former member of a club in Maui.*



“Toastmasters is the best and least expensive personal improvement class you can go to. Anybody who begins and sticks with it for any length of time will end up a better speaker. As a result, they build confidence and are able to do their jobs better.”

## Chris Matthews

*Host of MSNBC’s **Hardball with Chris Matthews** and  
**The Chris Matthews Show**.  
Former member of a Toastmasters  
club on Capitol Hill.*



“Toastmasters changed my life. They really did. Put me on the stage. I don’t know what I would have done without that positive boost.

“I learned that being supportive of other people is very important. As a speaker, you have to know that there are other people out there rooting for you – more than you might believe.”

## Harold McGraw, III

*Chairman, president and CEO of  
The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.,  
sponsor of eight Toastmasters clubs.*



“Having a strong culture that emphasizes effective communication is incredibly important to the success of any company... Results speak louder than words. All any leader has to do is look at the benefits individuals receive from their participation in Toastmasters and, more broadly, examine the results Toastmasters in general has achieved, to see the value the program adds.

“The Toastmasters program provides an important chance for employees to expand their peer network and collaborate with employees whose paths they may not otherwise cross.”

## Harvey Mackay

*Best-selling author, speaker and  
chairman of MackayMitchell  
Envelope Co., in Minneapolis,  
Minnesota. Former member of the  
King Boreas Toastmasters club in  
St. Paul, Minnesota.*



“I’ve never met anyone who didn’t think Toastmasters was super valuable to their career. We gain self-esteem, self-confidence, assertiveness. This makes us better salespeople, better managers, better leaders.

“I wouldn’t be here today if it weren’t for my dad pushing me over the threshold, pushing me to join Toastmasters. I had no idea whatsoever that some day I’d speak to Fortune 500 companies every week. Had I not been a good speaker, there isn’t one chance in a hundred that I would have ever written a book. So it started with Toastmasters.”

## Peter H. Coors

*Chairman of the board of the Molson  
Coors Brewing Company in Denver,  
Colorado. Former member of a  
Toastmasters club at the Coors  
Brewing Company.*



“As my career grew with the company, I needed to develop my communication skills more and more...I’ve learned a great deal about speaking and listening and now realize the importance of the overall program. For me, it took getting into a formal organization – such as Toastmasters – to understand what total communication is all about.”



How they keep it fun, informative and fresh.

## Ventura Club #24: Going Strong Since 1934

✦ Ventura Toastmasters Club #24 is one of the oldest clubs in Toastmasters. We like to joke that we're so old; we just call ourselves by our number, not our name. "Club 24" will celebrate its 75th anniversary with a gala dinner in Ventura, California, on Saturday, November 14. What is this club's secret to success? Here's what members have to say about the club's enjoyable meetings and friendly atmosphere:

**Gordon Boggs, ATM,** has been a Toastmaster since the early 1960s and a member of Club 24 since 1969. He says, "Toastmasters clubs have ups and downs, and there were times when we were down in membership, but we always kept meeting. You have to keep meeting regardless of the hard times. Sometimes just a few people can make a difference."

**Dick Ellis, M.D., DTM,** joined Club 24 in 1982 and credits the influence of even just one motivated member to turn the club around. "We were really down in membership, and Bobby Williams came in and personally re-energized the club. Also, it's a place where people of diametrically opposing viewpoints can get together and actually like each other."

**Paul Leveille, ATMB, CL,** attended the 50th anniversary celebration in 1984 as a new member. He says, "We were actually down in membership at the 50th anniversary, so it was not a big celebration. Yet, some people at the 50th anniversary were founding members of our club!" Paul, Dick and Gordon are affectionately known by club members as "the three Musketeers" and they frequently travel together to the

International Convention and other meetings.

**Joyce Shaul, ATMB,** has been a club member for 10 years. She says, "Having a core group of loyal, long-time members really helps. In addition, we have interesting meetings. I think following the Toastmasters standards helps meetings stay on track and that's very helpful." Also, at each meeting, experienced members greet and speak to newer members and guests to make them feel welcome and included.

**Douglas Dewar, ACG, CL,** past club president and past area governor, believes that making the meetings enjoyable is the key: "This is a very informal, fun club. The meetings are fun; that's why I come."

As for me, I think that adhering to the Distinguished Club guidelines has really helped us. We are not simply a social club; we are here to help people achieve their personal and professional objectives. By using the Distinguished Club Program (we were President's Distinguished this year), we remember to push our members to achieve their goals. And, while it's nice to have a banner full of ribbons, it's what it takes to achieve those ribbons that makes for satisfied members who keep coming back.


It also helps to have a strong club Web site: By taking pictures of ribbon winners at each meeting and posting them online, we keep our Web site fresh. Every time we load a new picture, Google notices and pushes us to the top of the search



▲ Ventura Club #24 members, from left: Eugene Byrne, Douglas Dewar and Hildegard Harris.

list. Anyone who is looking for a Toastmasters club in Ventura will see us, and the nice Web site makes them more likely to come to our meeting. Thanks to our Web site alone, we easily add a new member a month. It was created by one member, Dave Strong, and we always seem to have one member willing to keep it going. That's another way that one person can make a difference.

As one of the oldest Toastmasters clubs, we embrace new technology but we also know that the future of communications will always include one person reaching out to others through speaking.

If you're near Ventura in November, please join Ventura Club #24 at our celebration or visit us at [www.venturatoastmasters.com](http://www.venturatoastmasters.com). 

**Katherine Wertheim, CC, CL,** is past president of Ventura Toastmasters Club #24 and current District 33 Public Relations Officer. She can be reached at [Katherine@werth-it.com](mailto:Katherine@werth-it.com).

## Toastmasters' Past International Presidents share highlights from their term in office.

# View from the Top

In honor of the organization's 85th anniversary, we asked Toastmasters' Past International Presidents to share the most noteworthy events during their tenure. Here are comments from those who responded:



**Robert W. Blakeley, DTM, 1976-77**

**Theme:** "Be Proud You Are a Toastmaster"

"With the help of Past International President George Scott (1975-76) and Toastmasters Executive Director Terry McCann, we took action to establish a reserve fund during a

difficult financial period. I made the first visit of a Toastmasters International President to South Africa; I went there to assess the potential for establishing a provisional district, which led to establishing a district there. Another highlight was presenting our Golden Gavel Award to Gordon Sinclair, one of the world's best-known broadcast journalists and communicators of the time. The award was in special recognition for a tribute Sinclair had written to America during a difficult period in United States history. That 1973 broadcast, 'The Americans (A Canadian's Opinion),' became a best-selling record in the U.S."



**Eddie Dunn, DTM, 1983-84**

**Theme:** "Experience the Power of Toastmasters"

"There were two highlights during my term in office: One was the creation of the 'critical success factors,' which changed the emphasis of the organization's strategic

plan from focusing on *activities* to focusing on *key results*. The revised plan also developed and aligned the critical success factors of districts (through the Distinguished District Program) with those of the clubs (through the Distinguished Club Plan). The second highlight was the development of the '20-Plus' program, which encourages clubs to maintain a membership level of at least 20 members.



**Helen M. Blanchard, DTM, 1985-86**

**Theme:** "Commit to Excellence"

"One of my goals as President was to break Toastmasters' 500 new-club barrier. For several years, we tried to break that barrier and had almost succeeded in 1982-83 with 498 new charters.

I was elated when dedicated Toastmasters made that goal a reality by forming 552 new clubs. Knowing that during that year over 9,000 people would experience the benefits our organization had to offer capped a successful year for me. Breaking the ice as the first woman serving in the office of International President was a delightful experience."

\* Blanchard's biography, titled *Breaking the Ice*, is available at [www.Toastmasters.org/store](http://www.Toastmasters.org/store). (Item B24)



**John Fauvel, DTM, 1987-88**

**Theme:** "We Are Achievers"

"The most important highlight for me was to chair the 1988 Annual Business Meeting that resulted in the approval of the name changes and duties of club and district officers. I was

particularly proud of chairing the entire Business Meeting under *Roberts Rules of Order* without once needing to refer to Past International President and legal counsel, Joseph Rinnert, for help on meeting procedure.

To have achieved this under the ever-watchful eye of Mr. Rinnert, the greatest Toastmaster in our 85 years and the then-expert on our legal issues and parliamentary procedure, was indeed my highlight."

(Continued on page 19)

## View From the Top

(Continued from page 13)

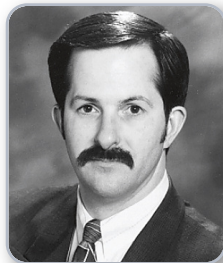


### **A. Edward Bick, DTM, 1990-91**

**Theme:** *"Pride and Purpose  
Inspire Performance"*

"Like all International Presidents, I hold a special place in my memories for the district visits and I have a special place in my heart for the people I met along the

way. I am proud to have led the 1990-91 Board as it created the Excellence in Marketing, Excellence in Education, and Excellence in Leadership recognition programs, designed to help motivate our districts to Distinguished status. As President, I was honored to preside over the dedication of the current World Headquarters building [in Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif.] and to preside over the first Board meeting held there. The dedication marked the culmination of four years of work that began when John Fauvel was International President and I was Third Vice President. I am proud to see that the building has served us well for the last 19 years."



### **Robert E. Barnhill, III, DTM, 1996-97**

**Theme:** *"A Passion  
for Eloquence"*

"The current version of the Distinguished Club Program (DCP) was launched during my presidential year. Further, the Board made the DCP the centerpiece of every

club recognition program within Toastmasters. When we encourage every club to be Distinguished, and stress how important it is, our members are truly empowered to achieve their full potential and realize their dreams, thereby having the courage to change."



### **Len Jury, DTM 1997-98**

**Theme:** *"The Thrill  
of Success"*

"One highlight of my tenure was the high number of clubs – more than 50 – formed by the so-called PANSEA district (encompassing Southeast Asia) that year.

The meaning of that started in 1990 when as a newly elected Board member, I visited Kuala Lumpur to meet with Toastmasters from Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand. As a result of that meeting in 1990, PANSEA grew from having only a scattered number of clubs to becoming a territorial council to a provisional district, and then to earning full District 51 status in 1997. It now has 348 clubs. Being involved in the formation of this successful district was rewarding to me personally, but most importantly, keeping Toastmasters International growing is paramount to the strength of our organization."



### **Ted Corcoran, DTM, 2003-04**

**Theme:** *"Your Dreams Are  
Your Possibilities"*

"The significant event in the year I served was the change to the modern technology we now can access from anywhere in the world. For Toastmasters who

have become members since that time, it's hard to imagine that, prior to this, dues, new-member registrations, educational completions, etc., all had to be sent on hard copy by post or fax to World Headquarters, where such materials then had to be entered by hand. No credit card transactions were possible! The transition from the old system to the new Web-enabled one was not an easy one. I am still very proud of how the staff met this challenge."



### **Johnny Uy, DTM, 2006-2007**

**Theme:** *"Toastmasters:  
Simply Amazing!"*

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step' is an old Chinese quote that defined the single most important action taken during my year in office.

After talking about the role of the International Director and the best way to service our members worldwide for a couple of years, we finally took that first step toward revamping our governance structure by forming a task force that began discussing, brainstorming and analyzing potential outcomes. That first step in August 2006 led to 'Proposal A,' which was passed decisively in August 2009. Indeed, those were exciting times. What we started then will change the way Toastmasters clubs around the world are served by the organization. ■





**“I have to work a lot harder to break down stereotypes and biases. Some presentations are like pulling a two-ton suitcase up a steep mountain.”**

**– Yoon Cannon**

**By Corin Ramos**

**Asian women speak out on “Speaking Up.”**

# Breaking Down Stereotypes

**B**orn and raised in China, Yun Li was only 25 years old when she came to America nearly 20 years ago. Like many immigrants, Li worked hard to achieve her American Dream. For Li this included learning English, earning a Ph.D. in physics and establishing a successful career in the high-tech industry.

Despite her accomplishments, Li felt hindered by what she called “a language and speech handicap.” She also had been thinking about leaving her high-tech life to answer

her inner calling of helping people as a life and business coach, a vocation that required her to overcome her fears and anxieties about public speaking.

To improve her speaking skills, Li joined a local Toastmasters club in Albuquerque, New Mexico, four years ago. At the time, she was the club’s only Asian female member, and common misperceptions about Asian women quickly posed a challenge for the self-proclaimed “recovering physicist.”

For one thing, she felt insecure because of her accent, and members frequently corrected her grammar as well. “People thought I wasn’t smart or educated because I spoke differently,” she says.

Her friendly personality also seemed to work against her. “I smiled a lot, which made people think I was passive and not as serious or ambitious as other Western business women.”

Li’s experience is common for many Asian women, even those born and raised in the United States, according to Helen Hsu, a licensed clinical psychologist and international speaker on bicultural and Asian American issues.

“Asian women are stereotyped as being shy, passive and submissive; therefore, they may be seen as followers and not leaders,” explains Hsu. “Many Asian women also face assumptions that if they speak with an accent, then they must not be articulate.”

On the other side of the coin, even those without an “accent” are not immune to such remarks. Hsu, who was born in the U.S. and worked as an English writing tutor while acquiring advanced degrees, says she still is asked how it is that she speaks “without an accent.”

“The enduring popularity of these stereotypes does have a negative impact on young Asian girls and women,” says Hsu. “They tend to be treated as ‘outsiders,’ as if they are foreign workers or recent immigrants rather than authentic Americans.”

The public speaking arena, where Asian women still are a rarity, poses additional challenges. “Stereotypes can contribute to anxiety,” Hsu says, “and an Asian female speaker may find that she has to make an extra effort to establish credibility. First impressions do matter, and an Asian woman has more negative stereotypes to overcome or disprove when she speaks in public.”

That’s not news to Yoon Cannon, a 38-year-old, Korean-born business coach and speaker based in Philadelphia who often speaks in front of “older, male

Caucasian” business owners. “I have to work a lot harder to break down stereotypes and biases,” Cannon says. “Some presentations are like pulling a two-ton suitcase up a steep mountain.”

### **Establishing Credibility**

Michael Soon Lee, author of *Cross-Cultural Selling for Dummies*, and the first Asian American Certified Speaking Professional, advises Asian female speakers to establish their credibility “the moment you walk out on the platform.”

“Because of these stereotypes of Asian females, it’s important to overcome that stereotype and connect with the audience immediately, especially when speaking to predominantly male audiences,” Lee advises.

In one of her presentations, Yoon Cannon established that connection by telling her own story as a business owner. “Even if I’m Asian, female and at least 15 years younger than most of the audience members, we could all relate to the same struggles and challenges of

being passive and submissive, but it makes it difficult for audience members sitting in the back of the room to hear you!”

Cannon agrees. “Don’t be afraid to have strong stage presence. You don’t want to be perceived as a delicate mouse.”

### **Cultural Juggling Acts**

Despite these difficulties, Asian women are continuing to overcome these barriers and embrace public speaking. They also have learned to tailor their presentations when speaking before non-American audiences abroad, which can pose a whole new set of “rules” and challenges.

Based in Singapore, Bennett Porter is head of marketing for Yahoo! Emerging Markets. Half Caucasian and half Asian, she has been speaking in Asia since mid-2006 to seasoned, older executives (both male and female) as well as twentysomethings who are new to the industry.

“I love telling stories,” says Porter. Although she ends up taking most of the humor out of

**“The biggest difference between speaking in the U.S. and in China is ‘the confidence, passion and enthusiasm’ demonstrated by American speakers.”**

business ownership,” Cannon says. “Throughout the presentation, I could feel their interest and energy growing steadily.”

Clint Cora, an author and speaker who has coached many Asian females in speaking before Western audiences, has this advice: “Loosen up, speak up and don’t be so self-conscious when speaking.” She says female Asian speakers tend to have very soft voices. “This not only reinforces those negative stereotypes of

her presentations (“because of the language issue”), she says she can’t recall any negative experiences due to her gender or ethnicity. “Asians go out of their way to be nonconfrontational, so even Q&A can sometimes be light.”

A frequent speaker on cross-cultural leadership in China and other countries, Helen Zhang can relate to Porter’s experience when speaking to a more subdued Asian audience. Based in Beijing, China,

Zhang is the founder of China Time, Inc., which advises both Chinese and foreign corporate leaders on business strategies.

“When speaking in front of Chinese audiences in China, I adjust my own expectations and style of delivery,” says Zhang, author of the book *Think Like Chinese*. “Chinese audiences are often reserved, polite and would not ask many questions – if at all. They prefer to write down their questions, then pass them forward to remain anonymous. They don’t want to lose face or speak out in a crowd.”

Yao-Hui Huang also has a special perspective when it comes to speaking to Asian audiences versus those in America. Based in New York, Huang is founder of The Hatchery, a venture collaboration organization, and is a frequent flier to Asia, where she leverages business deals between companies there and in America.

“With American audiences I tend to be more dynamic,” says Huang. “With Asian audiences, I tend to emphasize a teaching persona because Asian audiences are more studious in their approach.

“Asian audiences are tougher audiences because they often have more perceived personal obstacles to overcome and may not accept the ease by which I offer advice and solutions to problems. I tend to begin my talks with humor, and carry the weight of the presentations with case studies.”

Yoon Cannon performs a similar cultural juggling act. When speaking to Asian audiences, especially women in their 20s to young 30s, Cannon says she has “a lot more fun with bringing out the bolder side” of her personality.

“However, if I am speaking to a more culturally traditional and older Asian audience, I am careful to present myself and my perspectives in a more conservative tone, and make

sure I cross all my t’s and dot all of my i’s in terms of Asian etiquette,” she says.

Yingdan Liu, who is this year’s District 85 Lt. Governor Education and Training from Shanghai, China, says the biggest difference between speaking in the U.S. and in China is “the confidence, passion and enthusiasm” demonstrated by American speakers.

“Americans are much more expressive than the Chinese,” she says. “When Americans use big facial expressions and exaggerated body language, it looks natural. But as an Asian woman, I don’t have much expression on my face, and I won’t use body language. Also an American audience will laugh very loudly, but I don’t want to laugh too loudly, to influence the people around me to – just chuckle, or use my hand to cover my mouth.”

### ‘Be Yourself’

Cultural juggling act aside, the speakers agree on one main point: “Be yourself.”

For Zhang, this means not making a major issue of gender or ethnicity. “It is who *you* are and what you are about to *say* that really matter.”

“Just be you,” echoes Yun Li. “When I pretend to be someone else, it’s a disaster.”

For Li, taking her own advice and sticking with her club has paid off.

In 2007, she gave in to her inner calling and founded Yunexis, which provides consulting, coaching and training services to organizations, businesses and individuals. She speaks in public regularly, and loves it.

Last year, she became club president, and often touts the benefits of joining Toastmasters. Despite the cultural barriers and off-base remarks of the past, Li said she was made welcome by club members. Most importantly, it gave her the opportunity to practice public

speaking, which she now describes as “fun and very interactive!”

Cannon says she is always aware of her gender and ethnicity, but it just makes her that much more motivated to deliver stronger content. The payoff? “It’s always a great feeling to know you made a positive impact on people and that they appreciated it.”

As with all public speaking, practice is key, regardless of gender or ethnicity of the speaker, says Helen Hsu, the clinical psychologist. Her advice to female Asian speakers can help anyone who wants to enjoy a more powerful speaking presence:

- Prepare well and practice aloud with someone who can give feedback.
- Learn to speak assertively.
- Take speech or media training classes.
- Use a strong voice, good data and some well-timed humor – these all can put the audience at ease and help dump the stereotyped baggage of the speaker.

Regardless of their experiences on the podium, the female members say their Toastmasters clubs give them a safe haven to improve and broaden their public speaking skills.

To attract other culturally diverse women, Yun Li has this advice: “Make them feel comfortable, and don’t be picky about their grammar or accent. Asians, especially, prefer that you build a relationship with them first; after that you can correct their grammar!” **T**

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**Corin Ramos**, is a member of the Yorba Linda-Placentia Toastmasters club in Yorba Linda, California. A first-generation Filipino American, Corin is president of Walson Communications, a multi-cultural public relations and marketing agency based in Orange County, California. Reach her at [corin@walsonpr.com](mailto:corin@walsonpr.com).





◀ Cory Aquino greets New York Stock Exchange VIPs at the historic 1989 launch of the First Philippine Fund. To her left stands Lilia Clemente, owner and manager of the fund.

By Corin Ramos

**Late Filipino president touched the hearts of her people.**

## Cory Aquino:

# The Philippines' Plain-Spoken Leader

As the first female president of the Philippines and first female head of state in Asia, Corazon “Cory” Aquino lacked the flamboyance and even bombastic style of most seasoned politicians when it came to public speaking, including her ousted predecessor, Ferdinand Marcos. However, it was exactly that low-key approach and authentic manner that explained much of her appeal.

“She wasn’t fake,” says Lilia Clemente, a close friend of Aquino’s and a highly successful New York City businesswoman who herself has given countless speeches during her 40-year career in finance. “She was herself, and if you’re being yourself – honest, sincere – then you come across that way.”

During his repressive 20-year regime, which began with his declaration of martial law in 1972, Marcos was known for his bellowing and fist-pounding, yet eloquent speeches. Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino, Cory’s husband and assassinated

opposition leader against Marcos’ authoritarian rule, also was a revered public speaker. The scion of a famous political family, Ninoy was an ambitious statesman who endeared himself to his constituents with speeches peppered with jokes and anecdotes of the plight of the common Filipino. Despite the two men’s different styles, both were regarded as captivating speakers.

In contrast, the widowed Aquino was a self-proclaimed “simple homemaker” who had no formal training in public speaking. Toastmasters Past International President Johnny Uy, DTM, lives in Cebu City and remembers listening to Cory Aquino’s speeches. He notes that Aquino “did not have the oratorical flair of her late husband, Ninoy. But she spoke with honesty and sincerity, which touched the hearts of the Filipino people.”

Despite, or perhaps because of, her political inexperience, she became the unifying force of the nonviolent “People Power” revolu-

tion in 1986 that ended the Marcos regime and restored democracy in the Philippines with her as the country’s 11th president.

Catalina Garcia, a Winnipeg, Canada, resident who was living in the Philippines during the People Power revolution, heard Aquino speak at several rallies. “She had none of the traditional politician-style campaign speeches,” Garcia says. “No rhetoric, no fancy quotes or anything like that.”

### An Honest Voice

Cory’s simplicity and sincerity appealed to millions of her fellow countrymen. Eliseo Javier, a retired Brigadier General of the Filipino Army who was appointed to his position by Cory Aquino, says that after decades of listening to the rhetoric of corrupt politicians, he was more than ready to hear Aquino’s speeches. “Instead of fancy words or dramatic speeches, she just said what was true: that she had no experience in lying, cheating,

stealing and murder," he recalls. "She spoke to the hearts of Filipinos, and we could not help but respond to that."

"Cory had the ability to project herself as a peer, which played well to her strengths, particularly in a citizen-led revolt," says TJ Walker, a media expert who runs a broadband

called for her portrait to be printed on our currency."

He says Aquino's ability to connect with her people transcended her speaking skills. "Just as in Toastmasters, the goal is not to be as eloquent as the next guy. The goal is to communicate effectively and by just being ourselves, speak-

themselves and need only the help to preserve it."

Tip O'Neill, the U.S. Speaker of the House at the time, called it "the finest speech I've ever heard in my 34 years in Congress."

By that time, Aquino's growing ease on the world stage was evident, notes Walker. "She had all the hallmarks of a lot of good speakers: A natural smile, comfortable, exuding confidence and coming across in a conversational, fluid way," he says. "She was a happy, warm person, and people were very receptive to her message."

On August 1, 2009, Cory Aquino died after a long battle against colon cancer. She was 76. "I dearly loved her," says her friend, Lilia Clemente. "Her death reminds us all to not give up, to continue to make a difference." ■

**"Since her death, Aquino is being praised as a national hero and saint. The outpouring of grief and love is overwhelming."**

**- Past International President Johnny Uy, DTM**

TV Web site dedicated to public speaking, [www.speakingchannel.tv](http://www.speakingchannel.tv). "She never had soaring oratory and she wasn't theatrical. She had a plain, simple and focused everyday style."

Garcia agrees: "She spoke like she was just conversing with the crowd or telling them a story, like she was talking right to you, if you know what I mean."

Past International President Uy says since her death, Aquino "is being praised as a national hero and saint. The outpouring of grief and love is overwhelming... The president declared the day of her funeral a national holiday and

ing with sincerity and making the effort to improve every day, our goals can be achieved."

In September 1986, just seven months after she was swept to power by the popular revolt in the Philippines, Aquino made her famous address before the joint session of the United States Congress. Asking for more financial aid to rebuild the Philippines' shattered economy, she said to the American politicians, "You have spent many lives and much treasure to bring freedom to many lands that were reluctant to receive it. And here you have a people who won it by

**Corin Ramos** is a member of the Yorba Linda-Placentia Toastmasters club in Yorba Linda, California. A first-generation Filipino American, Corin is president of Walson Communications, a multi-cultural public relations and marketing agency based in Orange County, California. Reach her at [corin@walsonpr.com](mailto:corin@walsonpr.com).

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**“Culture hides much more than it reveals. And, strangely enough, what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants.”**

– Edward T. Hall

**Successful global speakers must understand the hidden dimensions of culture.**

By Florence Ferreira, ACB, CL



# KNOW THY CU

**I**n our era of globalization, few professionals still make the mistake of speaking abroad without researching the basic protocols and no-nos of their host culture – handing an object to someone with the left hand in a Muslim country, practicing intense eye contact with Easterners or using the thumbs-up “Okay” gesture in most parts of the world. But stories

abound of accomplished speakers who, even after performing this pre-departure homework, have encountered unexpected resistance when addressing a foreign or multicultural audience, ultimately failing at their intended mission. Skills, experience and success with home nationals often fail to reach their new audience, achieve persuasion and meet the objectives. Even worse, presenters often suffer a loss of confidence that took years to develop.

All intercultural experts agree that the observable and explicit cultural differences are just the tip of the iceberg. What contribute to most fruitless international/intercultural presentations are subtle clashes that take their roots

in the deepest layers of culture and are often imperceptible to either side. As anthropologist Edward T. Hall states, “Culture hides much more than it reveals and, strangely enough, what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants.”

To become successful global speakers, we need to acquire sensitivity toward these hidden dimensions of culture – values, beliefs and assumptions – starting with our own. And we must design and perform our deliveries accordingly. The only way to be aware of our own cultural patterns is to gain perspective, to see them from an outsider’s eyes. In *Riding*





# CULTURE

*the Waves of Culture*, Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner write, “Culture is like gravity: you do not experience it until you jump six feet into the air.”

Six feet into the air is the lowest I jumped, 13 years ago, when I attended my first professional presentation in the United States. Everything was so uniquely American that it made an indelible impression in my newcomer’s mind. Originally from France and raised in France, Peru and Venezuela, I had not been in the country six months when I found myself sitting in this large and crowded hotel auditorium at a business convention in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The keynote address was going to be a motivational speech, I was told, which already was an intriguing concept to me.

## **Building Credibility with Foreign Audiences**

The speaker’s entrance would not have been different if he had just won the lottery. I was captivated by his boisterous appearance on the stage, his excitement and his

self-confidence. And without warning, he shouted in my ears, “So, are you having fun?”

*Having fun?! Where are we, at Disney World?*, I wondered, feeling infantilized by his question and tone. But as if my fellow audience members also had won the lottery, they all rejoined with a roaring “Yes!” It was not loud enough, to all appearances, so the speaker uttered the question again with reinforced decibels. I just hoped the second time would do it, because this annoying hullabaloo made me want to leave the room.

Thirteen years later, I continue to marvel at the distinctively American contagious stage enthusiasm and poise, but I still feel bullied and irritated when a presenter tries to establish a connection by acting like a puppeteer in an auditorium of third-graders. I also have come to understand that this perception is profoundly influenced by the deep layers of my French culture.

The French tend to be a very independent-minded people and have an aversion to being patronized, especially by a stranger whose authority is not evident in their eyes. Authority, they believe, is first set by the speaker’s credits, and then develops gradually and primarily by intellectual rather than emotional means – from possessing knowledge and skill in the subject matter, essentially.

The French also make a clear distinction between work and “fun” – attending a presentation being considered work – and are used to being a rather passive audience, not expected to participate, even if by an approving smile. On the other hand, American speakers seek to establish rapport with audience members immediately and actively, much like members of an orchestra harmonizing their instruments with a tuning fork before the concert; let’s laugh together, weep about this touching story and feel inspired by those words of wisdom.

**“It is wise to initially tune one’s energy level to that of the audience members rather than pushing them to abruptly switch to ours.”**

It is a powerful technique, but only if used with intercultural sensitivity when addressing a foreign audience. Keep in mind that American culture is a distinctively time- and action-oriented one. It’s also informal. Speakers need to inquire about the usual rapport-building techniques of the host culture, which, like those of the French, may be more gradual, more on the intellectual or status level and less interactive with the audience.

As a general rule, it is wise to initially tune one’s energy level to that of the audience members rather than pushing them to abruptly switch to ours, and then to build momentum as one’s credibility develops.

### **The Dangers of Self-Disclosure in International Settings**

That morning in Fort Lauderdale, after the initial culture shock, I soon was beguiled again by the speaker’s ease, by his polished movements and by his simplicity of expression. As a former educator, I appreciated how he appealed to all our senses and learning styles, and I rejoiced at his humor and vivid illustrations. I felt I was in just the right country to learn skills from the masters, and one day, I dreamed, I would be the speaker on that stage.

But as I was building castles in my head, a new wave of discomfort knocked me over. To illustrate his self-made manhood, the motivational speaker engaged in generously detailed stories about his alcoholic mother, his violent father and his own inglorious beginnings. My French acute sense of privacy and my Latino-borrowed reverence of family fused with his depictions like a Molotov cocktail in my stomach. I glanced around to check if my fellow listeners were as embarrassed for him as I was, but all I could see in people’s faces were admi-

ration, sympathy and even teary eyes. Culture shock was striking again. (After hearing many other motivational speeches in the years to follow, I actually began to believe that I could never succeed as a speaker in the United States unless I could dig out some sordid personal or family story.)

In their book, *American Cultural Patterns*, authors Edward Stewart and Milton Bennett explain that the American emphasis on the individual self, in combination with direct and explicit styles of communication, “leads Americans to be extremely free in revealing much about themselves in virtually any situation... The American ease of self-revelation is shared by people of few, if any, other cultures.” I could not help but imagine the stupefaction, the loss of face and the speaker discredit that these accounts would have engendered in Asia or Latin America, for example, where family honor is so protected

and respectability so intertwined with a person’s background. It is advisable to stay away from such personal disclosure when performing abroad. If the stories are too meaningful to be removed, the alternative is to credit them to a fictitious subject other than the speaker.

### **Cultural Meaning of Words**

By the end of the Fort Lauderdale session, the presenter caught me off guard for the last time when he said, “Let me ask you a question. If I told you that I developed this fantastic program that will transform your life, that will change *you!* It’s completely free; all I ask is a daily 15-minute commitment... how many of you are willing to sign up and start changing *now?*” And while I still tried to figure out what he meant by “change,” I was taken aback by the large and vigorous show of hands. Did I miss something? Why would I want to change? Change into what? (A pumpkin?) I held my breath for further clues, but he proceeded by promoting additional materials – books, tapes, etc. – that guaranteed redoubled success in the promised change as it added significant costs to the initially free program. Those costs, however, did nothing to dissuade the increasing number of enthusiasts who rushed to the counters, credit cards in hand.

As soon as I got home, I looked up the word “change” in the dictionary, assuming it carried a second, unfamiliar meaning. But I found no other than the one I knew, mainly “to make different,” a neutral concept such as “changing channels.” It took me a few years of living in the country, of actively immersing myself in the culture and in my intercultural studies, to be able to grasp the hidden connotation of the word.

There is, indeed, in the American culture, a second meaning to the word “change,” or I should say, a generalized cultural assumption. In this achievement – risk –and future-oriented culture, “change,” I discovered, is automatically associated with “positive move” and “successful outcome,” which explains its choice as a powerful campaign slogan in the 2008 race for the U.S. presidency. If we add to the mix the value of individualism and the belief that our environment is under our control – in opposition to tenets of fate in other cultures – we find that the stumbling block to success is rooted in our own selves. The solution, then, is to change our selves. *Elementary, my dear Watson!*

As with “change,” other common terms may lose their intended meaning when the receiver is from a different culture. The word “respect” is one of those. In the United States, addressing everyone in the same way, for example on a first-name basis, is in most situations a mark of “respect,” an expression of the American values of *informality, spontaneity* and *equality* in social relations. The problem is that these values are not shared by every culture, and if they are, they are not manifested in the same way. What is intended to be respectful here might be perceived as extremely disrespectful elsewhere. The same goes for “common sense”– which should be reframed as “cultural sense”– or “responsibility.”

In the pragmatic American culture, where self-pride is largely connected with personal achievements, “responsibility” is more often associated with work than with family and friends. Finishing a project on time or honoring an appointment against all odds is regarded as being “responsible.” In the Latino culture, where people take pride mostly in the quality of their relationships, if one’s

childhood friend’s grandmother died, the “responsibility” to attend the funeral and be there for the family may take priority over a previous commitment, even work related.

These words are what Edward Hall, the anthropologist, defined as “high context.” The cultural content is taken for granted by the members of the shared culture, and strangers must be “filled-in” to properly understand the intended meaning. Global presenters need to screen their words, and practice paraphrasing to ensure clarity. Otherwise, they’ll fall into author Robert McCloskey’s predicament: “I know that you believe that you understood what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant.”

Since our cultural assumptions are embedded in us – like a fish who doesn’t realize it lives in water until it is removed from it – it is only when we gain awareness of our own deep cultural patterns that we can succeed as international/intercultural presenters. Only by realizing what our deepest cultural motivations are in contrast with others’ will we be able to adjust our communication to build more persuasive and impactful presentations.

Thirteen years after my Fort Lauderdale experience, I decided to share one of my latest speeches – a motivational one – with my brother in Paris. His first remark was: “I’m not surprised it was successful. It is so American!”

Those French! 🇫🇷

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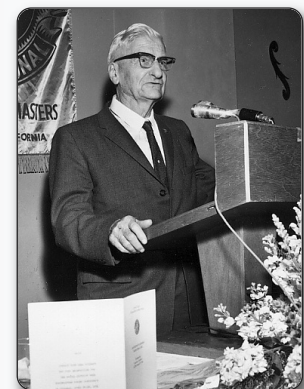
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Ralph C. Smedley





# Broadening Your Horizons

**W**hen Kim Allen took a vacation to China earlier this year, one of the things on her “to do” list was visiting a Toastmasters club. She found one in Beijing – and wasn’t disappointed. Allen, a Toastmaster from San Diego, California, was surprised and delighted by many things at the club meeting; for one, all of the 20-plus members delivered their speeches in English – and delivered them beautifully. A few members, she notes, were novice English speakers who struggled at times, but they stayed positive and persevered.

**Visiting clubs in other countries sparks cultural and personal connections.**

**By Paul Sterman**

Not only was Allen impressed with the quality of the presentations, she was also touched by the warm and enthusiastic welcome given to her by Angela Han, president of the club – which is called, appropriately enough, Global Communicators.

“It was a wonderful experience!” says Allen, who was also excited to tell her hometown club – the Great Communicators, in San Diego – about the meeting.

Her cross-cultural connection is typical of the bonds forged when members visit clubs in other countries. The great thing about Toastmasters is its global reach: Pretty much wherever you travel, there’s likely to be a club somewhere in the vicinity. After all, there are now Toastmasters clubs in 106 countries.

Members around the world speak a universal language – the vocabulary of Toastmasters. And when you visit a club in a different part of the world, you celebrate that spirit of international fellowship. I’ve experienced it myself. During my recent vacation in Hawaii. I basked in the sun, enjoyed the shimmering ocean views and took in a Toastmasters meeting. I visited the Toastmasters at Kapalua Resort, which met near our hotel. Club president Jennifer Villatora welcomed me with a brightly flowered Hawaiian lei, and introduced me to the members, who told me how the club offered them

teacher from San Francisco, Calif., has done a great deal of traveling over the years, to Australia, New Zealand, England, Egypt, Africa, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. And almost everywhere he goes, he seeks out local Toastmasters groups.

“It seems like a good connection for common ground,” says Davidson. “It’s a good way to meet people who have similar interests.”

Those shared connections transcend language and cultural differences, as evidenced by Reamick Lo’s Toastmasters experience in Scotland. Lo, a DTM from Canada, visited a club in Edinburgh during a two-week vacation.

Lo’s decision to visit the Edinburgh club was a spur-of-the-moment inspiration. She was on her flight from Canada to Scotland, getting ready for her backpacking trip across the country, when the thought hit her: “Wouldn’t it be fun to visit a Toastmasters club while I’m there?” When Lo attended the Capital Communicators meeting, in the heart of Edinburgh, the group was eager for an outsider’s perspective and requested that she serve as its General Evaluator.

That’s when the Canadian visitor got nervous. Concerned that she couldn’t do justice to the group, Lo worried about how she would understand the



◀ Canadian Toastmaster Reamick Lo snapped this photo of the Capital Communicators in Edinburgh, Scotland, while visiting their club.

communication skills and camaraderie. I saw both on display during this spirited meeting. Just beyond the window of the club’s meeting room were the gorgeous, sprawling grounds of the Kapalua Resort, bordered by a blue expanse of ocean. Not a bad place to hold a Toastmasters meeting! Jennifer even gave me a tip on where to go hiking afterward.

### Sharing Common Ground

Jay Davidson is another Toastmaster who knows the rewards of visiting clubs. The retired elementary school

members’ Scottish accents during their speeches. “I listened very hard at the beginning,” she says. “But as the meeting progressed, my nervousness was quickly relieved by the strong sense of support, camaraderie and growth the club had to offer. There was so much fun and laughter in the room!”

Instead of intently trying to hear every word and analyze every vocal nuance, she realized she could focus on the big picture: “All I had to do was open my heart and mind – which is another gateway for active listening and effective communication.”

# Traveling in Toastmasters Style

Are you planning on taking a trip? Here are some travel-related Toastmasters items that may interest you:

- Flip Luggage Tag (Item 6690)
- Wheeled Backpack (Item 6631)
- Leather Luggage Tag (Item 7007)
- Leather Travel Wallet (Item 7004)

To find these items, visit [www.toastmasters.org/shop](http://www.toastmasters.org/shop) and search for each by name or item number. Making a purchase is only a few clicks away.

“That evening, I learned as much from my fellow Toastmasters in Edinburgh as they learned from me,” writes Lo, a member of the Politically Speaking club in Vancouver, British Columbia. “I discovered that visiting a club outside my home country helps expand my comfort zone a great deal. It challenges me to speak and build an immediate connection with a new audience.”

Since her Edinburgh adventure, Lo has visited Toastmasters clubs in Japan, Hong Kong and the United States.

## A Sentimental Journey

Vimal Goyle grew up in India and moved to the United States with her husband in 1970. Nearly 40 years later, she had the opportunity to visit a Toastmasters club in her native land. “I was very excited,” says Goyle, who attended a meeting of the Chandigarh Toastmasters this past January.

A physician in Topeka, Kansas, Goyle traveled to India to attend the Indo-U.S. Healthcare Summit in New Delhi. She was in the country for two weeks and went to three different cities, including Chandigarh. The Toastmasters club there typically meets on Saturday afternoons, but when Goyle told club leaders she wouldn’t arrive in the city until Sunday afternoon, they graciously rescheduled the meeting for Sunday evening so she could attend.

The club – which was less than a year old – held an installation ceremony for its seven new officers. Held in a restaurant, it was an elaborate and lengthy affair – a sign of how seriously the members take their Toastmasters experience, says Goyle. The district governor drove 200 miles to attend the event, she notes, and the officers’ friends and families were present – even their children. Afterward, a lavish buffet of Indian food was served.

The club designated Goyle as its “chief guest” and presented her with a bouquet of flowers and a gift. “It was very nice,” she says. “I was treated with such

hospitality.” A member of the Via Christi Toastmasters club in Topeka, Goyle says it was a moving experience to see this new, flourishing Toastmasters club in the land where she grew up.

“I was amazed and happy to know that all these members were so excited and working very diligently on behalf of the club,” she says, adding that she made several friends with whom she plans to keep in touch. “I had never known how Toastmasters exists on such an international level. These club members in Chandigarh have the opportunity to learn and to improve. I’m 67 – I wish I had had that opportunity when I was growing up.”

Goyle, a Toastmaster since 1998, took two guests to the meeting in Chandigarh – a family member and a friend. After the meeting, she says, both were interested in joining a club in their home communities.

## Think About Logistics

These traveling Toastmasters recommend consulting the Toastmasters Web site in advance of your trip. Look up clubs located in the areas where you’re traveling for contact information, addresses and more. Try to pre-arrange a club visit if possible.

Davidson, who has ventured to clubs in Istanbul, Cairo, Buenos Aires and Sydney, suggests that you call the club’s contact person a few days before the meeting to confirm the time and location.

**“Consult the Toastmasters Web site in advance of your trip and look up clubs in the areas where you are traveling.”**

Allen, the San Diego resident, checked the Toastmasters Web site before her trip to China this past March. She found several clubs in Beijing and Shanghai, the two cities she would visit. As it turned out, the Global Communicators club was less than a five-minute cab ride from her hotel in Beijing. (And just to make sure she didn’t get lost, Angela Han, the club president, spoke to her guest over the phone before she rode over, describing some landmarks she could note along the way.)

An assistant recruitment coordinator for the District Attorney’s Office in San Diego County, Allen still gushes with enthusiasm when she recalls her visit to the Beijing club. Making an international connection with fellow Toastmasters was a special experience, she says.

“I’m an avid traveler,” says Allen, “and I will continue to seek out Toastmasters clubs around the world.” ■

**Paul Sterman** is an associate editor for the *Toastmaster* magazine.



**Entrepreneurs know the value of effective communication.**

# Speaking of Business

Public speaking isn't a requirement for all fields and professions. However, entrepreneurs don't have a choice in the matter: A vital part of business development is the ability to speak to others about your products and services. Obtaining this skill early can make the difference between growing your business from the start and struggling to get the venture off the ground.

When Khamil L. Ojoyo joined Toastmasters in Jacksonville, Florida, learning how to build his brand-new contracting business wasn't his primary concern. What he really wanted was to conquer his tremen-

dous fear of public speaking. When he did so, Ojoyo quickly noticed the positive effect it had on his efforts to obtain clients.

"I remember overcoming the fear of standing before civic groups, churches and professional businesses and boldly introducing my business to the public," he says. "Each time I stood and introduced my business, I noticed that my confidence increased and my customer base broadened."

The bigger your business, the more you will have to talk to your employees, address other executives, give presentations and persuade people to do business with your

company. If you can't do that when starting out, you'll never be able to convince potential clients that you can do the job.

"You may be the best at what you do, but if no one has the opportunity to hear you, they may never know [your expertise], and will fail to consider you for opportunities," says Jennifer Springer, owner of Insight Consulting LLC in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Springer says when you improve your public speaking, it allows people to get to know you and seek you out for opinions and consultation. Her assessment comes from 15 years of organizing and leading vendors in best business practices and negotiating multi-million-dollar merchandise agreements. Unfortunately, the social aspect of corporate America is rarely discussed before one enters an industry. The ability to network appears to be an inherent skill, but it shouldn't be taken for granted: Business owners often find clients through their relationships. Thus, the ability to relate and interact with others can prove vital to successfully navigating the business world.

When Ted Liu migrated to the United States nearly two years ago, public speaking was not his only hurdle. He lacked confidence in his overall communication skills. So one of the first things he did was look for ways to improve them. The University of California, Irvine, student found the help he needed through Toastmasters.



“English is not my native language,” says the Taiwan native. “To increase my command of English, I was looking for educational opportunities. Upon first visiting a Toastmasters club, I knew this organization was a perfect fit for me.”

Liu, who plans to become an accountant, quickly learned that improving his public speaking skills had an immediate and direct effect on his interpersonal skills. As a result of Toastmasters’ organized structure and opportunity for continual practice, he says he’s now much more secure in his ability to relate to others and reach his professional dreams. “Toastmasters has taught me that people are not born with great communication skills – some people might be better at it than others, but to really become good at it, one needs to practice, practice and practice.”

There’s a direct correlation between public speaking and leadership skills. “If you present yourself well during a public speaking engagement, you will increase your trust factor with others,” says Springer. “Effective leadership requires a lot of trust from the people you are guiding – it’s hard for people to trust you if you have difficulty communicating.”

Once people trust you, it’s easier to establish credibility through communicating your expertise. It’s not always possible to find people who will help you toot your own horn, so learning how to speak gracefully of your own abilities and accomplishments is crucial when convincing people to have faith in your leadership.

Ted Liu and Khamil Ojoyo credit their success to improving their speaking skills. “I am proud

to say that I have been in business for 28 wonderful years,” says Ojoyo. “My Toastmasters training has afforded me the skills of listening, speaking and thinking effectively. The speaking skills that I have learned have contributed greatly to my longevity as an entrepreneur.”

Adds Liu: “Being able to communicate my ideas effectively and confidently to other people is one of the most joyful things in life, and thanks to Toastmasters, I know that there is always room to still improve my communication skills.”

**Janelle Thomas, CC**, is a member of the Lillian R. Bradley Toastmasters club in Jacksonville, Florida. She is the editor and publisher of *Entertainment Wire*, an online entertainment media site. Reach her at [editor@etwireonline.com](mailto:editor@etwireonline.com).

## Wit & Wisdom

By Fred Shapiro

Here are some quotes on the subjects of motivation and teamwork, as verified by Yale University quotations expert Fred Shapiro.

*“Employee motivation is a complex science, but its foundations rest on the simple recognition that we all need to feel important in some phase of our lives.”*

– TERRENCE E. DEAL and ALLEN A. KENNEDY, *Corporate Cultures* (1982)

*“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.”*

– RALPH WALDO EMERSON, “Circles” (1841)

*“The conventional definition of management is getting work done through people, but real management is developing people through work.”*

– AGHA HASAN ABEDI, *Leaders* magazine (July, 1984)

*“Those who aim low usually hit their target.”*

– DENIS WAITLEY and REMI L. WITT, *The Joy of Working* (1985)

*“Teams are now the primary force of organizations.*

*They are worth cultivating at their core. Their core is the ‘mind’ of each team member.”*

– NANCY KLINE, *Time to Think* (1999)

*“When was ever honey made/With one bee in a hive?”*

– Thomas Hood, “The Last Man” (1651)

*“Teamwork is a constant balancing act between self-interest and group interest.”*

– Susan M. Campbell, *From Chaos to Confidence* (1995)

*“If a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.”*

– Mark 3:25

*“Many hands make light work.”*

– Proverb

**Fred Shapiro** is a world-recognized authority on quotations and on reference in general. He edited the award-winning Oxford Dictionary of American Legal Quotations, and his research has been the subject of numerous articles. Shapiro has also edited four other books, and he serves as associate librarian and lecturer in legal research at Yale Law School. He can be reached at [fred.shapiro@yale.edu](mailto:fred.shapiro@yale.edu).



## FUNNY YOU SHOULD SAY THAT!

By John Cadley

When pain is wry *and* rye!

# Enjoy a Refreshing Wax Tadpole

Now that business has gone global, advertising people have to be careful what they say. Given the differences in languages across countries and cultures, you might have a billboard that says, “Taste Our Delicious Fruit Cereal” in English but means, “Go Eat a Banyan Tree” in Nigerian. In fact, many such gaffes already have become the stuff of marketing lore.

There was the sporting goods company that created an ad in which a celebrity athlete slayed a dragon to demonstrate the strength of the product he was endorsing. This played well in countries where the dragon is a figure to be feared; not so well in China, where the dragon is a symbol of power and wisdom. I may be going out on a limb here, but trying to make friends with the world’s largest emerging market by punching the symbol of its history, culture and religion in the nose doesn’t strike me as the best way to go.

Then there was the classic case of the Chevy Nova, so named to evoke the transcendent image of a bright, shining star. Wonderful idea, unless you happen to live in Spain, where nova means “won’t go.” I can only imagine the guy in a Barcelona café having a few pops and reading advertising copy that says:

“You’ll go everywhere in the Chevy Won’t Go. Take the kids to school, pick up the groceries, head off to the beach – wherever you’re going, you can rely on the Won’t Go to go, go, go!” At this point I’m thinking he puts the paper down and decides to lay off the hard stuff for a while.

In French, the English word “pet” means flatulence, so we wouldn’t want to talk about any animal food products that make your pet healthier than it’s ever been. And just to show you how truly contrarian the French can be, our word for pain is their word for bread. Pity the poor Parisian who reads an American advertisement for hair-replacement treatments with “minimal pain” and wonders if the treatment includes strapping a small loaf of sourdough to his head.

Traveling eastward, we come to the teeming markets of Japan, where our phonetic word for laughter – “ha-ha” – is their word for “mother.” I can imagine an American TV spot where someone erupts into a series of ha-ha’s and the Japanese sit and wonder why this guy thinks his mother is so funny.


Then it’s over to the British Isles, where their word for underwear is the American word “pants.” Not knowing this, a fashion writer on Madison Avenue may talk about cargo pants and leave the Brits wondering just what cargo he’s referring to. Other no-no’s include snow pants (Brrrr!, work pants (And exactly what kind of work do you do, Mr. Hawthorne?), and vintage pants (Thanks, old chap, but I prefer underwear that hasn’t been passed down through the generations).

Down in Mexico, we find that the famous “Got Milk?” slogan for the American Dairy Association (ADA) translates into “Are You Lactating?” Although the ADA was less than pleased, it did explain

why they were getting so many congratulatory e-mails from the La Leche League. And in Spain, the Coors beer slogan “Turn It Loose,” made people stop and wonder why a great beer company would be asking them to “Suffer from Diarrhea.” Perhaps it had something to do with the morning-after effects of over-consumption.

Wending our way to the southern climes, we hear about the cosmetics company that touted the beautiful camellia scent of its new perfume, only to find that in Latin America, the camellia is the traditional flower for funerals. Nothing like encouraging warm feelings with the intoxicating aroma of mortality.

And let’s not forget nonverbal communication. In the Middle East, some diners emit a loud burp to compliment the cook for a fine meal. In America, any such gastrointestinal outburst would be considered the height of bad manners (unless you’re 85 or older, in which case you get a free pass).

So advertisers, beware. Before you peddle your wares to the far-flung corners of the world, heed the case of the world-famous brand, Coca-Cola. One morning, its executives awoke to discover that the thousands of signs they had printed telling the Chinese people to “Drink Ke-Ke-Ken-La” were in fact urging them to “bite the wax tadpole.” Ouch. 

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