

TOASTMASTER[®]

JUNE 1996



**Replace that
Demo Team
with a Single
Toastmaster**

Why We Love To Hate P.C.

**Don't Make Your Speeches
Memorable for the Wrong Reason**



VIEWPOINT

Life Is a Table Topic

In 1897 Winston Churchill compiled a collection of notes on the art of public speaking which he titled, "The Scaffolding of Rhetoric." In the opening sentences he wrote: "Of all the talents bestowed upon men, none is so precious as the gift of oratory. He who enjoys it wields a power more durable than that of a king."

In Toastmasters we make a somewhat more modest claim, which we refer to as the "Toastmasters edge." In today's job market, when two candidates are equally qualified, the more effective communicator usually prevails. Of all the skills we learn in our Toastmasters club, surely the most valuable must be the art of impromptu speaking that we learn from Table Topics.

In the workplace we are confronted daily with what are in effect "Table Topics." When a manager or supervisor asks a question, how well do we gather our thoughts and present them in a concise, logical manner? It could be argued that "Life is a Table Topic." We all know of people whose careers have risen or fallen based on the spoken word: the employee who cannot communicate effectively fails to get a raise or promotion; the manager who cannot get his point across loses the cooperation of his employees; and the salesman who can't stop talking fails to complete the sale. They bore us in minutes when they could interest us in seconds.

Business communications consultant Milo Frank stresses the importance of the 30-second message for two reasons: (1) time constraints in today's society and (2) most people have a 30-second attention span. He explains that, because of our limited attention span, the average length of all television news stories is one and a half minutes. The reporter needs 30 seconds to set up the story, another 30 seconds for live footage, and then another 30 seconds to end the story. This is rather like the opening, body and conclusion of a Table Topic.

Let's view the club Table Topics as more than an exercise in mental agility. It is a vital life skill, because "Life is a Table Topic"!

When asked by a friend or associate to explain the Toastmasters program, are you ready to deliver a concise 30-second response? Here's an example of a Toastmasters public radio spot to give you an idea of how it can be done: "If you admire people who are able to express themselves effectively, then Toastmasters can help you. Millions of men and women have experienced the power of the Toastmasters Communication and Leadership program in the friendly 'learn-by-doing' atmosphere of a Toastmasters club. Call 1-800-9WE-SPEAK for more information."

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Ian Edwards, DTM
International President

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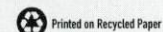
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Contents

June 1996
Volume 62, no. 6

features

8 Replace that Demo Team with a Single Toastmaster

Try this method, you'll like it –
and so will your prospective club.

By David W. McIlhenny, DTM

16 Memorable Speeches: Of Bats and Burgers

Don't make your speeches memorable
for the wrong reason.

By William H. Stevenson, III, CTM

20 Making the Most of the Grammarian

When words please the ear,
they enter the mind.

By Linda Burghardt, CTM

24 Why We Love to Hate P.C.

How far do we go in the
politics of language?

By Alan M. Perlman, Ph.D.



12 FOR THE NOVICE: Quotations, Spice For Speeches

By Mark Hammerton, CTM

14 LAUGH LINES: You Can Quote Me on This

By Gene Perret

19 CAN WE TALK?: Don't Tell... Show!

By Joanne Sherman

22 HOW TO: Easy Editing: Search and Destroy These Top 10 Trouble Spots

By Jane Hufford Downes

23 IDEA CORNER: Toastmasters Share Topical Tips

By Mark Majcher, ATM

28 YOUR 1996-97 OFFICER CANDIDATES

30 HALL OF FAME



departments

2 VIEWPOINT: Life Is a Table Topic

By International President Ian Edwards, DTM

4 LETTERS

5 MY TURN: The Power of a Titillating Title

By Cindy Chambers, CTM

6 MANNER OF SPEAKING: It's No Mystery

By Roger Martin, CTM

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, giving them 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.



LETTERS

MOTIVATION ISN'T THE CURE-ALL

I loved John Cadley's spoof on motivation programs, "Can Anybody Really Be That Happy?" (May). It was refreshing to have someone acknowledge that motivation is not the answer to all the world's ills.

What a great contest speech this topic would make: "How I Got Motivated – and Hated It!"

Classen Gramm, ATM
Harbor Court Club 1886-5
San Diego, California

GOOD ARTICLES AND SPEECHES HAVE A LOT IN COMMON

I enjoyed Mr. Holmes article, "Write Your Own Promotional Articles." Having written a few articles myself, I believe writers can learn from giving Toastmasters speeches.

A good promotional article should be organized according to the principles of a good speech. For example, Mr. Holmes has a clear introduction. In the main body of the article he uses four headings to make his points clear. His conclusion reiterates these points and ends on an encouraging, upbeat note. You can't ask for more in a speech or an article.

Edward X. Clinton, CTM
Citi-mouths Club 5752-30
Chicago, Illinois

OUR GLASS IS ALWAYS HALF FULL

I have noticed that *The Toastmaster* puts out unabashedly optimistic stories.

You always stress positive expectations – the enthusiasm on every page is contagious and helps us stay optimistic. So many times I've thought negatively of myself: "I'm not good at Table Topics" or "I don't feel comfortable evaluating experienced members," etc. But if

this were always the rule, the newborn calf would never walk, the bird would never build a nest. And why would an egg hatch?

No, it is not pessimism that is the foundation of life – it is optimism. And our magazine would not be what it is without all the magnificent people who produce and contribute to it. I look forward to reading every word of your "mind food" magazine every month. Hats off to a fine magazine staff. I honor all of you for contributing so much positive energy every month to our success in Toastmasters clubs all over the world.

Ursula Pilato, CTM
Mid-Det Club 2257-16
Midwest City, Oklahoma

YOURS TO SPEND, FOLD OR MUTILATE

I recently read in the "Letters" section of the April issue an item that required some clarification. Andy Jackson erroneously asserts that burning dollar bills is a federal crime. However, Toastmasters can rest easy on this one: burning, mutilating or destroying coins or currency in this country is perfectly legal. It only becomes illegal if an attempt is made to pass on this mutilated currency as legal afterward. So, if you want to burn a dollar bill at the start of a speech, go ahead – no treasury agent will come for you in the night. Do you want to cut a penny in half, or drill a hole in a silver dollar and string it on a necklace? Feel free to do so, but don't attempt to use the silver dollar from the necklace to pay your debts, or you will break the law.

Brian Bigley, CTM
Twilite Club 3480-3
Tempe, Arizona

A DREAM BOOK FOR YOUR DREAM TEAM

I particularly enjoyed the article, "Your Greatest Resource: The Toastmasters International Supply Catalog" (April). It reinforces many of my own ideas regarding the Supply Catalog, which I prefer to call "The Dream Book." I periodically page through "The Dream Book" and ask myself, "How can I, my club or my fellow member use this item?" It has helped me reach farther in Toastmasters than I otherwise thought possible. The authors' examples are only the tip of the iceberg. However, their conclusion captures the significance of this valuable resource – your imagination plus the Supply Catalog are an unbeatable combination!

Thanks to Steve Wicke and Janet Whitcomb for reminding us of the fantastic possibilities available to us through the materials in "The Dream Book," a.k.a. the Toastmasters International Supply Catalog.

Richard E. Dawes, ATM-B
Cherry Creek Club 2977-26
Denver, Colorado

A READER OF A DIFFERENT MIND

With reference to Steven Needler's letter concerning the publication of the article "Keeping Time (May)," I would like to cast my vote: Please keep publishing excellent articles such as "Keeping Time."

I am a seasoned magazine and newspaper reader; I read more than a dozen magazines regularly in two languages. I know that some articles I don't like will be treasured by other readers. So I say, "Leave it to the editor."

Parkman Joe
Oakland City Center Club 1250-57
Oakland, California

By Cindy Chambers, CTM



The Power of the Titillating Title

YOU CAN'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER — AND YOU CAN'T judge a speech by its title. But like a first impression, the title of a speech tells so much so quickly that it's important to treat it with all the respect it deserves.

When it comes time to name your speech, consider how you want listeners to respond. The title doesn't have to make the audience turn emotional handsprings, but it should be interesting enough to make them sit up and take notice.

You might want to tease with a title that only hints at the content. For instance, a speech on the pork industry might be called "Everything But the Oink." A speech about mountaineering with friends could be titled "Confessions of a Social Climber." Talking about cooking with whole grains? How about "Ryes to the Occasion"? Tricky titles like these make listeners pick up their ears before you open your mouth.

The title of your speech should match the tone of your speech. The editor of a large publishing company tells of a tender story that was once submitted to him for possible publication. The manuscript told the touching tale of a mother whose son had been hit by a car and had to have both arms amputated. The author titled it "Look Ma, No Hands" — an unfortunate mismatch if there ever was one.

If your speech is serious, give it a serious title. If it's humorous, give it a funny one. A well-known humor columnist recently addressed a group of aspiring authors. Her speech title, "How to Write Good," had listeners laughing even before she reached the podium. What a

great way to warm up an audience and set the tone for the rest of the speech!

If your speech is adversarial, give it a title to match. "The Public School System: You Get What You Pay For," allows listeners to understand your

point of view immediately, even if they don't agree with it. An interesting Ice breaker title such as, "How My Children Save My Life," lends your speech focus, piques listeners' interest and gives the audience insight into your perspective. A tedious title like "My Life Story" can cause even the most polite listener to gaze longingly at the exit sign.

The value of a speech title is never more apparent than when you're serving as the meeting's Toastmaster. Find out the name of each speech you'll be introducing well in advance of the program. Make sure you can pro-

nounce it smoothly and correctly. When it's time to call each speaker to the lectern, do so in official contest fashion: Give the speaker's name and the speech title, then repeat the title and the name of the speaker. Familiarizing members

with the formal style of introduction used in Toastmasters Interational contests is a great way to help prepare them for future competition.

It's our responsibility as Toastmasters — whether we're writing a speech or introducing one — to understand the power of a titillating title, and to give each speech title all the respect it deserves. **T**

"Tricky titles make listeners pick up their ears before you open your mouth."

Cindy Chambers, CTM, is a member of Heartline Club 7409-63 in Clarksville, Tennessee.



It's No Mystery

Good speeches have one thing in common:
They create pictures in the listener's mind.

Let's imagine you've been called on to speak about your favorite hero, Ted Trueheart. He's brave. He's exciting. You want to start with a story showing your hero in action – maybe something like this:

Ted Trueheart moved down the alley. He was scared. Somewhere in the alley, Freddy the Slime was hidden by shadows. The alley was carefully examined by Ted. Freddie was homicidal, and he had to be apprehended before too much time elapsed.

Exciting, isn't it? But if you expect to find your fellow Toastmasters trembling with anticipation, think again. Half of them are already asleep.

What's wrong? Why do some speeches hum with life while others play dead?

Good speeches have one thing in common: Their words create pictures in the listener's mind. Whether it's a lecture on rocket science or the latest antics of Ted Trueheart, a good

speech grabs your audience in the opening, hurls them through your points, and rockets them into your ending. How do you reform speeches gone bad? Return with me to the saga of Ted Trueheart and we'll start with...

THE CASE OF THE LAZY VERB

Ted Trueheart moved down the alley. This sentence doesn't work because the verb isn't doing its job. It's weak and general. In short, it's lazy.

All verbs describe action, but the action can be general or specific, depending on the verb. *Moved* is general. It gets our hero down the alley, but nothing more. The listeners have no clue *how* Ted got down the alley, so they can't make a mental image.

Specific verbs describe a particular type of action – the more specific the description, the stronger the verb and the sharper the picture inside your listener's head.

In the sentence above, *walked* would be stronger than *moved*, but *slunk*, *crept*, or *sneaked* are stronger still, and so are *staggered*, *limped* or *ambled*. Each conjures a different vision and says something distinctive about the action.

One more thing to remember: A verb may be general in one context and specific in another. This happens when a verb is taken out of its usual association and used in a novel way. For example:

Ted Trueheart moved down the alley is general, but the phrase, *Ted Trueheart flew down the alley, heels pounding the pavement with a staccato rap*, is easy to visualize.

"There is weird power in a spoken word," wrote Joseph Conrad in *Lord Jim*. That power comes from a verb – a precise, unique verb that exactly describes the action. Spend the time to look for it.

ADVERB OFFENDERS

As speakers, we're often aware that our verbs are weak, but we don't have a clear idea how to repair them. Instead of searching for a strong verb,

we reach for an adverb and say something like this: *Ted Trueheart moved slowly down the alley.*

As with verbs, there are general and specific adverbs. A general adverb like *slowly* can't invoke a mental image because too many actions can be described that way. *Slowly* can be clouds passing over the moon or a fighter pilot launching a missile a heart-beat too late.

Putting a general adverb with a general verb is like multiplying fractions: The product is less than the parts. Vague, general adverbs only weaken the verbs they modify.

Every time you plan to use an adverb ask yourself, "Does this really clarify the action I'm describing?" If it doesn't, leave it out. If you explore, you'll often find a specific verb to replace the verb/adverb combination. The result is a vivid phrase.

APPREHENDING PASSIVE VOICE

Passive voice sentences are the most common felons of weak communication. In these sentences, the subject of the verb receives the action rather than performing it. The person, animal, or object doing the action is either de-emphasized or not mentioned at all. *Freddy the Slime was hidden, The alley was carefully examined, and He had to be apprehended* are all passive phrases.

Passive voice robs a sentence of action. If the subject is being acted upon by some vague, outside force, the listener has trouble picturing the scene. But action builds images. Active voice sentences are direct and easy to visualize because the listener sees the subject doing the acting.

Not all sentences should be active voice. Sometimes you don't know (or don't want to reveal) who or what is doing the action. Other times the person or thing receiving action is more important than the one acting. If you want vibrant speeches, though, most of your sen-

tences should be told in the active voice.

DEAD MEN DON'T TELL

And neither do speakers who try to convey feelings or emotions. Also – while we're on the subject of the dead – the phrase *He was scared* has about as much life as a three-day-old cadaver.

Again, a weak, general word isn't doing its work. People can't make an image out of *scared*, just as they can't make a picture out of *happy, sad, ecstatic, frightened*, or any other emotion. They're abstract concepts. That's the reason effective speakers follow the writer's adage of "show, don't tell." What your audience *can* picture is a response to an emotion.

Take the concept of fear. What responses might you expect?

- Rapid heartbeat
- Sweaty palms
- Dry mouth

These are clichéd, but they'll do for what we want. If you describe a

reaction to an emotion, rather than just hanging a label on the emotion itself, your audience will envision the result.

SOLVING THE CASE

Let's return to our hero rearmed with an arsenal of strong verbs, no adverbs, and active voice sentences. Now Ted, and the story, has an attitude:

Ted Trueheart crept down the alley, his heart hammering under his ribs. Somewhere ahead, Freddy the Slime crouched in the shadows. Ted's eyes lanced the darkness for a stir, a flicker, anything. Freddie was a killer, and Ted had to catch him before it was too late.

Giving a clear, exciting speech is no mystery. You just have to unravel it one clue at a time. **T**

Roger Martin, CTM, is a professional writer and a member of Richmond Toastmasters Club 1297-66 in Richmond, Texas.



ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS MURPHY

Replace that Demo Team with a Single Toastmaster

By David W. McIlhenny, DTM

Try it, you'll like it – and so will your prospective club.

Have you ever been caught short when needing to stage a demonstration meeting for that hot new-club prospect? Made do with too-few Toastmasters on your demo team? Had a critical team speaker not show up? Even – horrors – had to cancel a demo because you couldn't scare up a team? This doesn't have to happen. In fact, there's an even better way to handle demonstrations that doesn't stretch your nerves to the breaking point. It even boasts several hidden advantages.

The traditional way to start a new Toastmasters club has been to organize a meeting of the prospects and conduct a demonstration Toastmasters meeting. The demo team consists of somewhere between four and 12 Toastmasters, depending on how many assignments you double up. But assembling and coordinating this many Toastmasters can be difficult, especially when the presentation is held during business hours.

In District 31 we have found that you can accomplish the same thing with one experienced Toastmaster and get even better results – the One-Toastmaster Walk-Through Demo (OTWTD). The secret? You conduct the demo by using the prospects themselves. In addition to not having to assemble a demo team, there are other significant advantages to this method. And it works – 90 percent of the groups who have witnessed OTWTDs this year are holding meetings, and some of them have chartered already.

HOW IT WORKS

An experienced Toastmaster can act as both Toastmaster and Narrator. Before the demo the Toastmaster either appoints prospects to roles or asks for volunteers, assuring them they will not have to say a word. During the demo, when the Toastmaster calls on someone, he or she comes to the lectern and is welcomed by the Toastmaster – to applause as usual. Then the Toastmaster steps to the side and, acting as Narrator, describes in 15 to 45 seconds what the speaker would have said (and done). In the hands of an experienced Toastmaster, the meeting takes on an astonishing life of its own as a real Toastmasters meeting.

THE ADVANTAGES?

- **Prospects relate to the demo better.** Psychologically the prospect group relates better to a OTWTD than a traditional demo. This is because their role is active, whereas in a conventional demo they just sit and watch. An OTWTD makes prospects feel like they actually participated in their own Toastmasters meeting





and that they actually did give the speech, even though they only stood by while it was being narrated. The group members approach the next meeting as if it were their second meeting. And we have found there is a high correlation between those who physically take on roles in the OTWTD and those who volunteer to be officers of the embryo club.

- **Saves work.** You don't have to chase down four to 12 Toastmasters, coordinate them, negotiate roles, give them directions, arrange for them to be admitted to the building, worry about parking, and then stew over whether they are going to show up on time or at all.

- **Better control of the demo.** We've all seen demos where a speaker is boring or preachy or inappropriate or goes way over time, losing the momentum built up to that point. With a OTWTD, this doesn't happen.
- **Quick response.** You can respond very quickly to requests for demo meetings, conducting them on a day's notice if necessary.
- **Takes less time.** A OTWTD takes about 12 minutes, compared to 40 or more minutes for a traditional demo. This means you get to the real business of the meeting quicker and have more time for it – helping the prospect group convince themselves that they want to start holding meetings, then organizing the club and the first meeting. Moreover, with a OTWTD you can complete all your business neatly in an hour, which is important for noontime meetings.

NOW, FOR A FEW VARIATIONS...

If you have trouble separating the Toastmaster role and the Narrator role, recruit another Toastmaster to be your partner; one acting as the Toastmaster and the other as Narrator. Or you can use a volunteer as a silent Toastmaster and narrate that person's part as well as those of the speakers. If you have a partial team, use actual Toastmasters for part of your demo and narrate the other roles using silent volunteers. (If you do this, have the real speakers go last.) We have used all three variations successfully.

WHAT A TRACK RECORD!

I gave the first OTWTD seven months ago when I had to give a demo on a day's notice. Now four different Toastmasters in our district are conducting OTWTDs, including the District Governor. We conducted OTWTDs with 11 prospect groups; of these, two have chartered, two are imminent, and six others are actively meeting. (The one group that did not continue had low attendance at the demo.) If success for a demo is measured by the prospect group agreeing to hold Toastmasters meetings, then the success rate of our OTWTDs to date is 91 percent.

THE SECRETS OF SUCCESS

The real secret of success is the quality of the narrative. It must be crisp, entertaining and fun. If you are a fast thinker, omit speech titles on the agenda, interview the volunteers before the meeting, then create speech titles representing their personal interests and do your narrative extemporaneously. If you are humorous by nature, go ahead, but make sure the final impression is professional and businesslike and be sure to clearly separate the Toastmaster and Narrator roles: It's important for the audience to know when you're wearing which hat.

Also, consider handing out an agenda minus pre-printed name assignments. You can use the same agenda

“An OTWTD makes prospects feel like they actually participated in their own Toastmasters meeting and that they actually did give the speech, even though they only stood by while it was being narrated.”

for all walk-through demo meetings, but it's a nice touch to print one for the occasion with the prospect group's name and the date. If possible, arrange your prospects in a semi-circle around the lectern or podium.

AN EXAMPLE

A typical OTWTD agenda is shown below. The names of volunteers are penciled in at the start of the meeting, as are any speech titles or other information that you create after interviewing volunteers.

Toastmaster	Dave McIlhenny *
Jokemaster: "The Farmer & the Snail"	Susan Murphy
Word of the Day: "Procrastination"	Sean Bixby
Topicmaster	Rich Hagopian
Table Topic #1: "Should judges let the TV media into the courtroom?"	Barbara Brown
Table Topic #2: "What would you do first if you woke up tomorrow and found yourself President?"	Ralph Greene
Speaker #1: "Liver and Onions and Me" (CTM Speech #1: The Icebreaker)	Dennis Hutchinson
Speaker #2: "Lessons From the Plains of the Serengheti" (CTM Speech #6: Work with Words) ..	Karol Maxwell
General Evaluator	Beth DiAngelo
Evaluator #1	Carolyn Baecher
Evaluator #2	Art Mercer
Timer	Cheryll Allen
Grammarian	Barry Gold

* TOASTMASTER/NARRATOR

Here's a sample narrative, this one for Jokemaster:

"And now, Fellow Toastmasters, to get our meeting started on a light note, please help me welcome today's Jokemaster, Susan Murphy." (Be sure to lead applause while Susan comes to the lectern.) "Susan tells a joke about a snail that knocks on a Maine farmer's door in the dead of winter and asks to sit by the fire. Susan has a talent for telling jokes, and she tells this one with such dry wit that she leaves the audience in stitches and gets the meeting off to a warm and friendly start. Thank you, Susan."

Then return to the lectern and lead the applause as Susan returns to her seat.

Make sure your descriptions are humorous but complimentary. Here's the narrative for the first speech:

"Dennis opens his Icebreaker by saying that all his life he hated liver and onions because his mother insisted on serving it every week. 'But it's good for you!' she would say. As a kid Dennis would go to any lengths to avoid eating liver – feed it to the dog under the table, hide it in his milk, put it under the cushion of his chair, or just stuff his cheeks like a chipmunk. Then, years later, as a break from his career, Dennis decided to take a night course in cooking. As it turned out, the specialty of the chef teaching the course was – you guessed it – liver and onions. Now Dennis' mother comes over to his house every Friday for liver and onions! Thank you, Dennis."


And this all takes about 45 seconds, compared to the six minutes it would take Dennis to actually give the speech.

When you describe evaluations, use the "cookie sandwich" formula – something good, something to be improved, something good. In the "something to be improved" category, use non-controversial subjects such as leaving hands in pockets, saying "Ah", or not making eye contact with the audience.

DON'T TRASH THE TRADITIONAL DEMO!

The traditional demonstration team approach is still good, provided there is ample time for the organizational meeting and you have the time and energy to put together a demo team. It's easier, for example, to get a full team together for evening demos. Team demos are also a good way to introduce Toastmasters who will be sponsoring or mentoring the new club. In fact, participation in demo meetings is good training for any Toastmaster and can serve as a significant morale-booster. Remember: you can always combine real Toastmasters and narratives in the same demo.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

For a detailed 10-page plan of the OTWTD technique, including the full text of a dialogue transcribed from a successful demo, contact this author: Dave McIlhenny, c/o AZREX Inc., 3 Mountain Road, Burlington, MA, USA, 01803; or e-mail: dmcilh@aol.com. 

David W. McIlhenny, DTM, is a Past District 31 Governor from Massachusetts.

NOW AVAILABLE FROM WORLD HEADQUARTERS

Everybody's Talking About Toastmasters

Dynamic new video debuts, courtesy of The Ralph C. Smedley Fund

Looking for an innovative way to publicize Toastmasters? Be the first in your district to premiere Toastmasters International's exciting new video *Everybody's Talking About Toastmasters*.

This fast-paced 12-minute video is a tremendous publicity tool for Toastmasters wishing to:

- ▶ promote their own club
- ▶ build a new club
- ▶ orient new members
- ▶ energize current members.

Just as the name implies, *Everybody's Talking About Toastmasters* showcases enthusiastic testimonials – everyone from managers, engineers and other professional people like yourself, to Anita Perez Ferguson, President of the National Women's Political Caucus, to best selling authors Les Brown, Tom Peters and Harvey Mackay. The video also

features brief explanations of typical meeting activities, including:

- ▶ Table Topics
- ▶ Prepared speeches, and
- ▶ Evaluations

– making it perfect to show to prospective club charter members when it isn't possible to hold a demonstration meeting. And here's another idea: Sending a copy of *Everybody's Talking About Toastmasters*, along with some helpful Toastmasters literature, is a great way to reach busy personnel directors or other corporate leaders interested in starting a club within their company.

Since production costs for *Everybody's Talking About Toastmasters* have been covered by contributions to The Ralph C. Smedley Memorial Fund, the video is available for the highly affordable price of \$6. Contact the Orders Department at World Headquarters and ask for a copy today! **1**

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One of the most rewarding things you can do as a Toastmaster is to help form a new Toastmasters club. You might wonder if it's a difficult task. Yes, it takes time, energy and persistence, but it is worth it.

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EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT TOASTMASTERS VIDEO

(See the information printed in sidebar on this page.)

PUBLICITY PACK

A professional-looking folder that includes a fact sheet, press releases, brochures, a sample issue of *The Toastmaster*, and other promotional items. Great for impressing corporate decision makers!

Of course you'll need help – club building isn't usually done by just one person. Your first step, then, is telling World Headquarters you want to build a club. (Check the inside cover of *The Toastmaster* for contact information). They'll send a New Club Information Kit to you right away. They'll also help you get in touch with your local district officers for insight and assistance. After that you'll be on your way to bringing the benefits of Toastmasters to others – and enhancing your own communication and leadership skills as well!



Quotations: Spice for Speeches

Quotes in a speech are like ornaments on a Christmas tree.

To illustrate, suppose you're planning a talk on the virtues of volunteering time to charities. You could add credibility and eloquence (without sounding preachy) to your speech by using this quote by Emerson: "It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself."

Where in a speech can quotes be inserted? Anywhere. But they seem to work especially well at the beginning or end. Beginning with a thought-provoking quote can jump-start your speech. Concluding with one can be powerful, succinctly planting just the right thought for your audience to ponder during their drive home.

Great, you say, I'll use a quote or two in my next speech. But where can I find one? You can glean material from anything you read or hear. But the easiest way is to pick up a collection of quotations. (By the way, thumbing through these books is a great way to spark ideas for speech topics.) *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* is the Mercedes-Benz of the lot, with a venerable tradition among speakers and writers. The

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "Next to the originator of a good sentence is the first quoter of it." If you want your speeches to provoke and entertain, consider scanning the literary horizon for good sentences to quote.

There are at least four reasons a speaker should use quoted material:

1 When attempting to persuade, an appropriate quote can add an air of authority to your arguments. In effect, you're telling the audience, "Don't just take my word for it. Some smart people agree with this point of view."

2 Quotes add variety. A speech with good quoted material is not simply a monologue; it uses voices besides your own. Think

about how quotes breathe life into otherwise drab news stories. If news writers relied merely on who-what-when narrative, they would lose readers in droves.

3 A lot of wise and funny things have been said – why not use them? You can find quotes by every type of person on almost any subject. And the best quotes compress a dollar's worth of wit and wisdom into a 5-cent package. They are short and compelling, making for ideal speech material.

4 Some ideas come across better with a quote. A pithy quote immediately conveys strong emotions and convictions that might sound awkward or unnatural in your own words.

Oxford Dictionary of Quotations also is widely used.

These two collections each contain thousands of gems from hundreds of sources. Subject and author indexes speed things along. Both books should be in your local library. And while you're there, be sure to peek at the specialty collections. You'll discover volumes of humorous quotes, presidential quotes, dumb or unfortunate quotes – you name it.

Let's say you are giving a talk about education and want a catchy phrase that testifies to the power of an inspiring teacher. By locating "teacher" in the Bartlett's index, one finds this Henry Adams line: "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops."

This example demonstrates the qualities of the best quotes. They have profound meaning and are clever and economical. You'll likely want to pause after delivering a thought-provoking quote to allow the audience to absorb it.

None of this is to say that speakers should use quotes with machine-gun repetition. It is, after all, your speech and your ideas. Quotes in a speech are like the

ornaments on a Christmas tree. They can, if used with taste and moderation, provide color, variety and interest. Too many ornaments, however, and you can't see the tree.

A suggestion about technique: Many accomplished speakers like to put quoted material on an index card and plainly hold the card up

► "Nothing so needs reforming as other people's habits."

Twain had the gift for inducing delightful mental U-turns. This kind of agility makes for pleasing speeches. An audience will hang on each word of a clever speaker whose train of thought occasionally travels up

"A pithy quote immediately conveys strong emotions and convictions that might sound awkward or unnatural in your own words."

and read it. This shows the audience that you are reading the quote verbatim and allows you to quote accurately without tedious memorizing.

Some people apparently said something quotable nearly every time they spoke. Take Mark Twain, the master of storytellers. His wit appears in Bartlett's no less than 119 times! Consider:

- "Man is the only animal that blushes, or needs to."
- "It can probably be shown by facts and figures that there is no distinctively native American criminal class except Congress."

and down and all around. Worthy quotes, often brimming with irony and hyperbole, aid in winning your audience.

Quotable quotes often cause us to say to ourselves: "I hadn't really thought of it that way before, but it's true." According to G. K. Chesterton, "A yawn is a silent shout." Provocative quotes help yawn-proof a speech. Feel free to quote me on that. **T**

Mark Hammerton, CTM. is a member of Strictly Speaking Club 3025-62 in Kalamazoo, Michigan.



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You Can Quote Me On This

Want to be funny in your next speech? Call on the wittiest people in history to write for you.

I advocate using humor in all speeches. It not only gets an audience to listen more attentively, but it also provides a reward for their attention. However, people often ask me, "How can I be funny on the platform when I'm not naturally a funny person?"

Let me ask a question in return: "How can Frank Sinatra be a singer of such romantic ballads on stage when he's not a great lyricist?" The answer? Because he gets the most talented song writers in the world to work for him. Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin – they all write for Sinatra. "Old Blue Eyes" admits this himself. When he introduces a song from the stage, he

invariably mentions the people who wrote the words and the music along with the person who did the musical arrangement! He wants the world to know he's got the best in the business behind him.

Likewise, when you want to be funny as a speaker, you can call on the wittiest people in history to write for you simply by using their entertaining quotes. Quotes are an excellent source for speakers who are afraid of humor, because these lines have been proven. They're definitely quotable, otherwise you never would have come across them in your research. No one writes a book of unusable quotes. These authors collect only the best, the tried and true. Because these lines are the best, however, other speakers tend to use them as well, so watch out for quotes that are over-used and have acquired cliché status.

Another benefit of quoting someone else's quips is that they take the pressure off the speaker. You're not trying to be funny; Mark Twain or Woody Allen or Jerry Seinfeld is. You're simply telling your audience what these

people had to say that is appropriate to your message.

Use quotes that most people would find funny. I once wrote a joke for Bob Hope and he rejected it, saying it wasn't funny enough. I said, "But Bob, it may not be funny, but it will get applause." He said, "How long have you been writing philosophy?"

Use the quotes sparingly. You are the speaker, the message bearer. While a few funny sayings can brighten your speech, they shouldn't overpower it. You cover the pertinent points and let the occasional witty quote reinforce your message.

But be sure to give credit for your quotes. Sinatra adds a touch of class to his performance when he shares his applause with the song writers and musical arrangers. You can do the same.

Besides, it's dangerous not to mention your source. Some of these lines are well-known, which doesn't mean you shouldn't use them – but it does mean that not giving credit can label you somewhat deceptive. You don't want to claim as your own something that your audience may know is not.

"Another benefit of quoting someone else's quips is that they take the pressure off the speaker. You're not trying to be funny; Mark Twain or Woody Allen or Jerry Seinfeld is."

Part of Milton Berle's comedy persona is that he always has been a gag thief. He once was talking about sitting in an audience watching a bright, young comedian. Someone asked if he was funny. Berle said, "Funny? I thought I'd never stop writing."

I was with Bob Hope and Milton Berle on a flight to New York when Milton showed his new book, *Milton Berle's Joke File*, to Hope. Bob Hope read through a few pages, handed the book back to Milton, and said, "When do I get my royalties?"

This image worked well for a professional comedian like Milton Berle, but it won't work well for the average speaker. If you try to "borrow" a quote, the listeners may not only question your other witty remarks, but also your entire message.

Begin your research now. Keep an eye out for any quotable jokes in magazines, newspapers or books. Jot down any clever remarks you hear on radio, television or in conversations. Start assembling your repertoire of humor.

File these on index cards or in a journal. With today's technology you can assemble them in your computer and cross-index them by subject matter, key words and authors. Soon, you'll have enough material to illustrate and illuminate any point you'd like to make.

For example, if you want to urge your fellow employees or club members toward more effective teamwork, you can quote Will Rogers who said, "We can't all be heroes because somebody has to sit on the curb and clap as they go by."

To exhort your listeners to continue on despite previous mistakes, tell them that Abba Eban said, "History teaches us that men and nations behave wisely once they have exhausted all other alternatives."

For example, when I try to exhort young comedy writers not to give up despite career frustrations, I use Woody Allen's quote: "90 percent of success is just showing up."

Many quotes, you'll find, can be fairly flexible. You can apply them to many different topics. For instance, I once asked Bob Hope how his round of golf went. He said, "If it had been a flight, they would have stopped it."

That quote can apply to last year's business results, a meal you cooked that didn't turn out too well – almost anything.

So, you see, you can be funny even if you think you can't, because some very intelligent and clever people have been funny before you. Borrow their lines to entertain your listeners and enhance your message.

I think it's appropriate to end this article with a quote: In the 1950s, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen had a television show that was so successful it eventually dethroned the reigning king of television, Milton Berle. When reporters asked how he explained that phenomenon, Bishop Sheen said, "I had good writers working for me – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John."

T

Gene Perret is a professional comedy writer and humorous speaker living in Westlake Village, California.

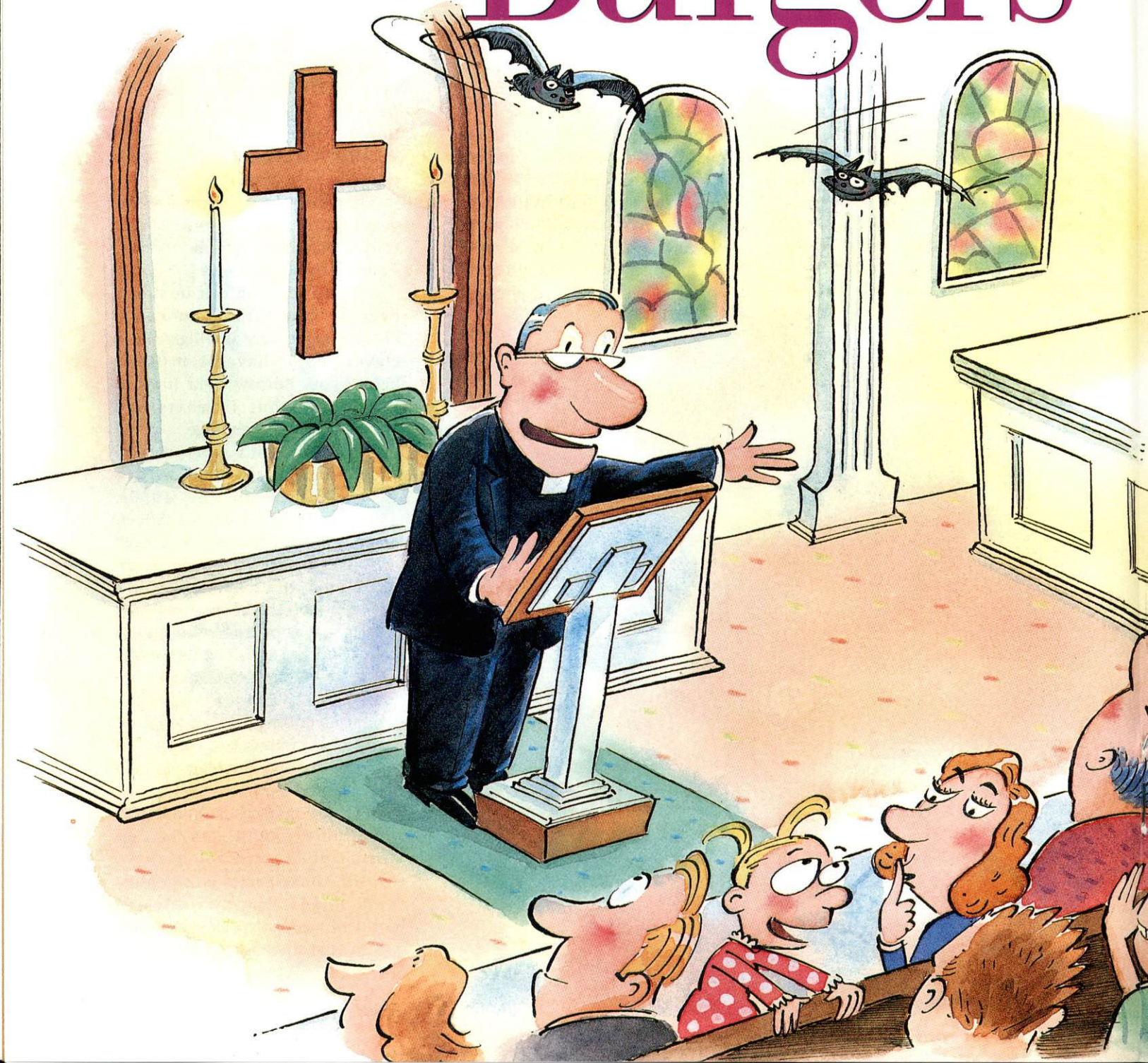
ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS MURPHY



Memorable Speeches:

Of Bats and Burgers

It's fine to dazzle your audience, but not if it blinds them to your message.



TOASTMASTERS ARE ALWAYS TRYING TO FIND ways to make their speeches vivid and memorable. This is really the name of the game in public speaking. It doesn't matter how important your message is if the audience falls asleep. If they don't remember what you said, why say it?

A trip to the library will reveal no shortage of advice on how to make a speech memorable. "Never be boring" is the cardinal rule. "Dazzle your audience" we are told, and there are plenty of ways to do it. Some authors recommend using stories and illustrations, drama and emotion, even "mini-plays." Others suggest humor. Still others mention the importance of gestures. Or movement. Or whatever. All of these techniques are tools for a speaker, and all of them can help make a speech stick in an audience's mind.

But be careful. A memorable speech is not necessarily a great one. Your listener may remember your speech for the wrong reason.

BATS IN THE BELFRY

A good example of this was a sermon a minister friend of mine told me about. It was given at a small Presbyterian church out in the country, one of those that didn't have air conditioning and left the windows open in the summer. The congregation filed in soberly, sat down somberly, listened to the minister's sermon seriously. Everyone was reaching the proper state of meditative drowsiness when – up in the rafters of the church – a bat flew out.

At first, everyone kept their expressions of dignified silence. Then a few minutes later, the bat came out again

and flitted all the way to the back of the church. Now the little girls were looking up with big eyes and their mothers were shushing them, and the little boys were pointing to the ceiling, prompting their fathers to yank their hands down. People were having a hard time keeping a straight face. Finally, for a third time the furry flyer swooped out of the rafters, made a circle around the church and then flitted around the minister

like some kind of black halo. I think it was a little girl who first started giggling, then a boy sung out, "Mommy, there's a bat in the church!"

Even Presbyterians can only take so much.

It was a most memorable occasion. Everyone who was there can recall it like it was yesterday. But what was the minister preaching about that day? Nobody can tell you – all they remember is the bat.

Public speaking "bats" come in all shapes and sizes, and they aren't always the furry kind. Moving from the sacred to the profane, consider television advertisements. These are really mini-speeches. Advertisers pay good money for 30 seconds of air time, and they want to make sure you remember what they're trying to tell you.

One of my favorite commercials was about the making of an ad. An actor dressed like an old-world Italian gentleman was sitting at a table while his wife brought him a plate of spaghetti. He was supposed to take a bite and say, "Mama mia, that's some spicy meatball!" but he got it wrong every time.

"Cut!" says the director.

"What's wrong with that one?"

"The accent."

"Take 25!"

The next time the actor playing the actor burns his mouth. "Ah, ah, ah!"

The next time he gets spaghetti all over his shirt.

The next time he babbles, "Meecy, micey, mosey, mossy."

The next time he doesn't do anything, just stares at the plate.

Finally, he gets it perfect. "Mamma Mia, that's some spicy meatball!" But the oven door behind him falls open with a bang.

"Cut! O.K. guys. Let's break for lunch."

This commercial won the Clio, the advertising version of an Oscar. It had everything – humor, characters, quotable lines. Advertising books use it as an example of a funny and memorable T.V. spot.

But what were they trying to sell?

A lot of viewers weren't too sure about that. Was it the meatballs? The spaghetti? The tomato sauce? Actually, they were trying to sell – Alka Seltzer. Unfortunately, those



comic bits turned out to be bats. The audience remembered them and forgot the point of the ad.

REMEMBERING THE BEEF

No matter what message a speaker is trying to sell, the speech can easily turn "batty" if the speaker's humor doesn't tie in to his central points. Many speakers feel obliged to start off with a joke. This is fine if the joke somehow relates to the message of the speech. Otherwise, it's just a filler. Harmless, perhaps – but oddly enough in the case of speechmaking, the better the joke the worse the joke. Like the meatballs in the Alka Seltzer ad, a really good joke in a speech may actually distract the audience by sticking in their minds and crowding out the important points the speaker wants them to take home. It's fine to dazzle your audience, but not if it blinds them to your message.

Not that there's anything wrong with a funny speech or a funny ad. One commercial showed a little old lady in a car tearing around town from one hamburger joint to another yelling out, "Where's the beef?!" Or she was with two friends at a restaurant who were gently commenting, "That's a nice bun," "Yes, it certainly is a big bun." Then our crusty heroine pipes up with, "Where's the beef?!" This commercial was just as talked about and laughed at as the one with the Italian meatballs, but with this difference: At the end of the commercial, the audience got the message that Wendy's had bigger burgers.

Gestures are rightly pointed out as a way to punctuate a speech. When a speaker comes to an important point in an emotional speech, he might pound the lectern to drive home his point. Logically, the harder he hits, the more attention he'll get. Right? But what if he pounds a gavel, slamming it on the lectern again and again to make absolutely sure that everyone gets his point. What then? Would the audience remember the point? Or the gavel?

THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOE BUSINESS

Bizarre as it sounds, former Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev once did this very same thing with his shoe during a speech at the United Nations. If he thought he was forever searing his point into the memory of the listeners, he was wrong. Everyone remembered the shoe instead. (There's that bat again!)

Shoes or no shoes, politicians want us to remember what they say. A much quoted rule for organizing an informative speech is, "Tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you told them." Unfortunately, some politicians seem to labor under the delusion that the more they tell us, the more we will remember. The opposite is nearer the truth – the more they tell us the less we remember.

A remarkable number of long speeches are remembered for reasons that are rather "batty." Bill Clinton once made a speech at the 1988 Democratic National Convention that

has since passed into folklore. He was nominating Michael Dukakis for U.S. President and told everyone what a great guy the Governor of Massachusetts was. Then Clinton told them again, and again, and again. After an hour or so, he finally said the magic words, so long awaited – "In conclusion." And as one, the delegates in the hall gave him a rousing round of applause. I've yet to meet anyone that can quote from Clinton's '88 speech, but do they ever remember that closing.

Clinton isn't alone. One of his predecessors, William Henry Harrison, is remembered for almost nothing except giving a long speech. President Harrison, in fact, had the dubious distinction of giving the longest inauguration address in American history. He spoke for two hours in pouring rain, caught pneumonia and died a month later. Today we remember him for having the longest speech and the shortest term of office of any president.

THE KEY TO KEYNOTES

While a long speech may be dull, brevity is no guarantee of vividness. In fact, there are times when a speaker's very conciseness can eclipse his message.

Then there's the case of a 1863 keynote address given by Edward Everett, one of the most famous speakers of the day. Oddly enough, we remember it today *because* nobody remembers anything about it. Everett labored mightily over his address and produced a two-hour masterpiece in the grand style of which he was a master – and the audience loved it. But as with so many florid speeches, as soon as the echoes of his ringing rhetoric had faded away, so too faded the memory of what he had said.

Once Everett sat down, the next speaker got up and quietly delivered "a few dedicatory remarks" that we now call the Gettysburg Address. Speech professors have long gloated over the fact that Everett's two hours were forgotten while Lincoln's two minutes were remembered; indeed, this has been harped on and enlarged upon so many times that one might almost wonder whether brevity was the most important feature of the Address. This really misses the point. There are plenty of two-minute speeches as forgettable as Everett's two hours. We don't remember the Gettysburg Address because it was short. We remember it because its few words were packed with the most vivid and meaningful imagery in the history of American oratory.

Lincoln compared the nation to a child: It was conceived in liberty and had dedicated its life to the principles of equality and freedom. Now the child had grown up and was locked in a death struggle, testing whether anyone with such high ideals could survive in the real world. This, said Lincoln, is what the Civil War is all about.

And this is how to make a memorable speech. Without bats. ①

William H. Stevenson, III, CTM, is a member of Toastmaster Singles Club 6201-48 in Huntsville, Alabama.



By Joanne Sherman

Want To Get Your Message Across?

Don't Tell... Show!

WHEN I WAS YOUNG, MY FAVORITE BOOKS HAD PICTURES IN THEM. I still like pictures. I don't know about you, but when I open this magazine, I look at the pictures and illustrations first, and after that, I settle down and read.

Maybe it's because I like pictures that my favorite writers and speakers are those who use the words that help me visualize what they are trying to tell me.

When my kids were in high school, we went to hear two young men discuss the problems that drug abuse had created in their lives. The first speaker stood up and said, "I'm here because I don't want you kids to go down the same road I did. It was horrible and I was miserable. I didn't turn my life around until I hit bottom."

He said more, and out of politeness all of us in the audience kept our faces turned in his direction. But the speaker's abstract phrases weren't very interesting and to be honest, his words had little impact.

The second speaker, a young man who looked uncomfortable in the spotlight, told basically the same story, but when he mentioned "hitting bottom" he didn't use abstract phrases and clichés; instead he chose words that helped us picture what "hitting bottom" actually meant.

"I always was desperate for money to buy drugs," he said. "I love my mother, but I stole money from her and then lied to her about it. I moved out of the house and every penny I found or stole went for drugs. I couldn't buy food, so I rummaged through trash cans at fast-food restaurants. I begged strangers for money. I ate garbage, slept in abandoned cars in my clothes and wore them until they were so dirty, they got stiff and stunk. I cried a lot."

I looked around the auditorium while he described what it was like to "hit bottom" and saw everyone in that audience, teenagers and adults, sitting on the edge of

their seats, mesmerized, their entire attention focused on that young man. Or rather, on the vivid images his words created.

Though he probably didn't know it, he was following one of the most basic rules of writing: "Don't tell, show!"

Think about it for a moment. Most often it's not the actual words we hear or read that stick in our memories, but the images those words created. The pictures.

I can still remember a wonderful speaker I heard three years ago who conducted a seminar on improving organizational skills. I have forgotten his exact words. I probably couldn't recall them the next day, but I sure can remember how he described the chaos of his office before he became "organized."

"I wasn't always organized," he confessed. "My office looked like a strong wind had swept through." Then he spent just a few moments describing the stacks of magazines on the floor in the corner, phone numbers scribbled on paper scraps, spread sheets stacked on the window sill, folders on top of the filing cabinet and the chaos inside.

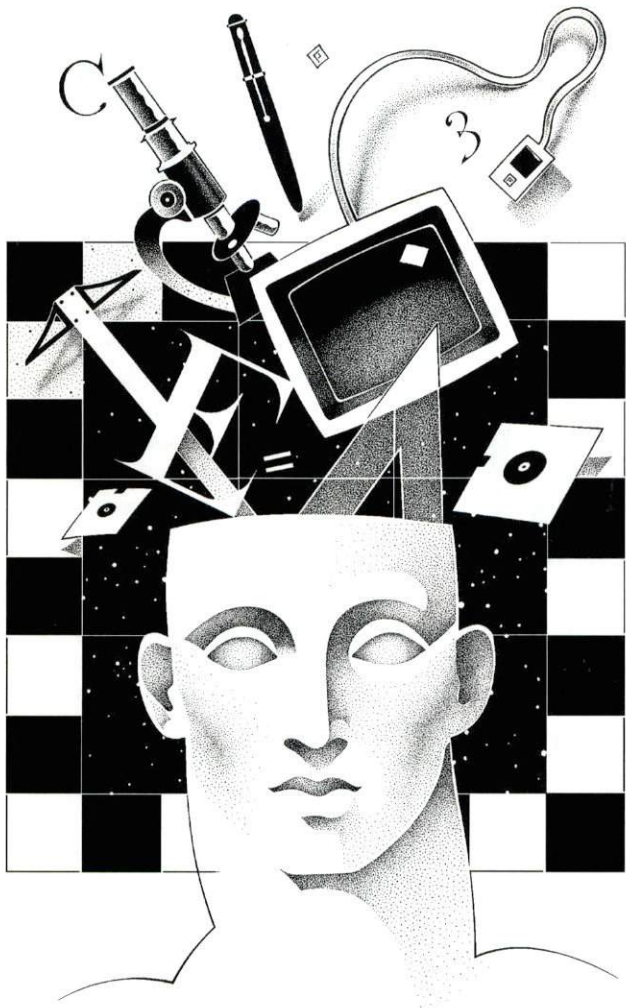
I could picture the mess he described, and then better understand how specific organizational skills promote a more productive work environment, which was the theme of his speech. Like the young man who talked about being addicted to drugs, his method of "Don't tell, show!" helped get that message across.

While the saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words" is true, it doesn't mean we should replace words with pictures – rather it refers to the advantage we have when we use words to create them.

Get the picture? ❶

"A picture is worth a thousand words."

Joanne Sherman is a freelance writer living in Shelter Island, New York.



When words please the ear, they enter the mind.

By Linda Burghardt, CTM

Word-Watching:

Making The Most of The Grammar

Mention the word “Grammarians” and what comes to mind? For many, it’s a little old lady with her hair in a bun who looks over your shoulder while you write a report and makes sure you aren’t having any fun. Miss Thistlebottom, as the late *New York Times* editor Theodore Bernstein calls her. A thorny description, to say the least.

Yet, given my choice of jobs at any Toastmasters meeting, I’m most likely to choose the role of Grammarian.

Why do I love being Grammarian, and what is this role really all about?

Let me tell you some things I discovered about the power of words. Words tell. Words touch. Words work. But only if you truly care about them – and know how to use them properly.

THANK YOU, MISS THISTLEBOTTOM!

I initially became interested in the role of Grammarian at my very first Toastmasters meeting about a year ago. I should tell you first that I’m a natural editor. When I read a menu, I look for typos. When I drive, I rewrite the road signs. When I read the newspaper, I edit half the headlines.

So, naturally, when I listened to the speeches on my first night at Toastmasters, my mind took off on its normal course. At the end of the meeting, imagine my joy to hear a Grammarian’s report – filled with the big and little changes I’d thought of myself, plus a few more.

For a long time – months – it was just too hard for me to get up and give a formal speech. But I could take on some of the club’s smaller roles, get some experience speaking,

and feel useful. My favorite role was, and still is, Grammarian.

There are two major parts to the job: one is listening, and the other is reporting. What are the qualifications? We all have them – a keen ear, a working knowledge of grammar, and a healthy respect for the power of words.

In many clubs, the Grammarian selects and defines a “Word of the Day” in the beginning of the meeting for the speakers to incorporate into their presentations. The idea is to help members increase their vocabulary. So pick a word that can easily be used in daily conversation but is different from the way we usually express ourselves. In letters large enough to be seen from the

Grammarian

back of the room, write your word on a piece of paper and show it to the members while you define it and give an example of how to use it correctly in a sentence.

Then sit down, relax and listen to every word that every speaker says. Notice how the words fit together, what sounds right, what doesn't. Listen for tenses that don't work, subjects and verbs that don't line up, and misplaced modifiers.

But pay attention to each speaker's use of grammar. And listen for sentences that change direction mid-stream, awkward language and incomplete thoughts. You'll be surprised at how much you remember from Miss Thistlebottom's class – even if you hated it. We seem to learn most of the rules and rhythms of language when we're not even paying attention.

You will hear a lot in the cadence of the speaker's words – more than

you expect. Good grammar is more than just the underpinning of good sentence structure; well-wrought sentences sound right because they have a rhythm and a wholeness to them. When they please the ear, they enter the mind, and the job of communicating is well-done.

***“Do not think of yourself as a critic,
and you will not be tempted to criticize.”***

Write down what sounds wrong and try to think of a way to say it right. If you can recall the grammatical rule it broke, write that down, too. It will help you later when you give your report. Remember it this way: wrong, right, rule.

GIVE THEM THEIR WORDS' WORTH

One more thing to listen for is really good usage of language, such as colorful expressions that make you visualize what the speaker is saying. Give both radishes and roses in your report; it is helpful to hear examples of colorful language to emulate. It's also a good feeling to know that we do things well, too – not just make mistakes.

When the general evaluator is called up, that's your cue that you'll soon be giving your report. Gather your notes and take a deep breath.

Don't mention names in your report. It is just as effective to preface each item with, “Tonight, I heard...” or “One speaker said...” Honor everyone's fragile feelings and avoid sarcasm. It is not a good idea to announce, “Tonight we added a new word to the English

language.” Though unnamed, the speaker knows who she or he is.

Do not think of yourself as a critic, and you will not be tempted to criticize. Think of yourself as a teacher; use words that empower. Tell what was said wrong, show how to say it right, and explain why. Report on creative language usage and announce who used the Word of the Day correctly.

If you don't know the grammatical rules, trust your ear. There is a cadence to correct language usage that is unmistakably right.

We make things happen when we speak well – we bring ourselves luck and opportunity. So choose your words with care. **T**

.....
Linda Burghardt, CTM, is a member of Freeport-Hamstead Club 1106-46 in Freeport, New York.

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Easy Editing:

Search and destroy these Top 10 trouble spots

YOUR MISSION AS A TOASTMASTER IS TO FIND AS MANY SLOPPY, LAZY and boring words as possible in your speech. After you find these trouble spots, eliminate them. Editing can transform a so-so speech into an effective, well-rounded presentation.

Think of editing as a challenge. Like a youngster playing with a video game, you can search and destroy with your red pen or pencil. If you've composed your speech on a word processor, try using your software's "find" feature to help locate trouble spots. Then zap them into oblivion with a touch of a key.

All of the following items contribute to poor communication and need to be destroyed. So grab those speeches and begin your mission!

1 Excessive use of punctuation. Sometimes the use of exclamation points, underlining, italics and the like create emotion that the words themselves lack. Try rewriting, using more powerful words to say what you mean.

2 The word "that." Read the sentence without it. Usually the meaning will not be changed. For example, replace "Zapping trouble spots means *that* you'll have a better speech" with "Zapping trouble spots means you'll have a better speech."

3 The overused "I." Beginning too many sentences with "I" bores an audience. Remember, people love to hear their own names or references to "you." As in, "You can master the universe if you follow this advice" – not "I have some advice I'd like to give."

4 Words that end in "-ly." It is wise to avoid adverbs, since they tend to make your speech bland. For a more vivid speech, describe the action. For example,

instead of "The alien quietly took over the world," try "The alien oozed into each computer, gaining control over the world one terminal at a time."

5 Connectors. "And," "but," "then," "furthermore," "perhaps," "however," "because" are often used unnecessarily in speeches. Eliminate the connecting words and you'll have two strong sentences instead of one weak one.

6 Pronouns, such as "he," "hers," "theirs." When you're talking about more than one person or thing, pronouns tend to confuse. You know "she" is your mother's dog and not your mother, but your audience probably doesn't.

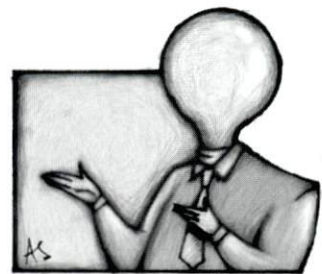
7 Overused, vague words like "rather," "thing," "lots," "quite a few," "stuff" and "some." These are often the sign of a lazy speech writer. Take the time to find more precise words. Get rid of the clutter.

8 Language that offends. Eliminate the obvious sexist or racist phrases, and choose words from your audience's point of view.

9 Long sentences. Short, descriptive sentences are more interesting for listeners than sentences that seem to run on forever, because those listening lose track of what you are saying before you get to the end of the sentence and therefore your point is lost somewhere among all those words. Simplify!

10 Sentences that begin with "there is" or "there are." Start speeches with an action verb and your listeners are more likely to pay attention. **1**

Jane Hufford Downes is a writer living in Toledo, Ohio.



By Mark Majcher, ATM

Toastmasters Share Their Lessons Learned

Topical Tips

WELCOME TO THE FIRST INSTALLMENT OF WHAT we hope will become (with your help) a continuing monthly column. It is intended to be an interactive exchange of ideas, with you, the Toastmasters who read this magazine.

The main educational concept in Toastmasters is to learn by doing. This includes the sharing of ideas and "lessons learned" with each other. Many of the most useful tips that we Toastmasters have received are via word of mouth from others. Many times we receive valuable information simply by being in the right place at the right time. I would like to take some of the randomness out of this information-sharing process by creating this forum for communicating and sharing ideas.

All tips published are designed to give specific, concrete examples of ideas we can all immediately put into practice. Since your ideas aren't in yet, here are some examples of tips submitted by fictitious Toastmasters:

■ *"I have saved each and every written evaluation I have ever received. I attach each meeting's evaluation slip to the appropriate page in the manual with a paper clip or staple. It serves as a historical record of my progress and is a good way to watch for trends."*

ANN ABILITY
ANYTOWN, ANYPROVINCE, CANADA

■ *"It's not a matter of 'if' but rather of 'when' you will lose your train of thought while giving a speech. It happens to all of us. What I do is to call on a member of the audience specifically by name and ask that person a question. This takes away the awkwardness of the silence, places the attention on someone else and gives me a few moments to recover my thoughts."*

JOE FRIENDLY
RICHPLACE, CALIFORNIA

■ *"Take it as a personal challenge to learn something from every Toastmaster you meet, regardless of their experience. Take the opportunity to look, listen and observe each individual's performance. You will be surprised at how much more fully aware you become of things going on around you."*

SARAH SMARTALKER
INTUITION POINT, NEW ZEALAND

■ *"Every so often, I will perform a manual assignment without the use of notes. For me, working without notes somehow seems to free up the channels of communication with the audience. I always have the speech notes written on index cards in my pocket as a backup. In case I lose my train of thought, I can pause, reach into my pocket and check those index cards. The audience is never aware of my intentions to work exclusively without notes, so doing so doesn't raise any eyebrows."*

JOHN COLDSPOT
WINTER PLACE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Now it's your turn to tell us your favorite tips, word of mouth strategies, or lessons learned. The more feedback we receive, the better this monthly column will be. Be sure your name and address are legible so you can receive full credit for your published Topical Tip. Entries may be edited for clarity and space limitations.

Take the time now to jot down your favorite Topical Tip in a letter or on a postcard and send to:

Mark Majcher, ATM
"Topical Tips"
1255 Walnut Court
Rockledge, Florida 32955

Why We Love to Hate P.C.

How far do we go
in the politics of language?



AS SPEECH WRITERS AND SPEECH MAKERS, WE WANT TO USE LANGUAGE THAT'S "correct" – which, in our complex society and culture, is defined as being appropriate to audience, subject and context. But in the last few years, a subject that's already complicated has become more so; correctness has acquired another dimension. Language can now be "politically (in)correct." ■ Politically-correct language – or, to use a more neutral term, "multi-group-sensitive language" – seems like a pretty good idea, on the face of it: Given that any language reflects the world view of its users, why should we continue to speak an English that has, deeply embedded – or entombed, if you will – in its vocabulary and, to a

slight degree, in its grammar, a bunch of obsolete assumptions about the inequality of the races, ethnicities and genders? Let's change the language; let's give people the means to speak an English that's more in line with the way we think today.

So if it's a neat idea, why is it such an inviting target for ridicule? Why, for example, would one cartoonist draw a Pearly Gates scene in which an Angel Gabriel-type is saying to his assistant, in the presence of a new arrival, that "Hell's overcrowded right now. Send him back to live with the politically correct liberals"? Or why would another assign "politically correct" names to the Seven Dwarfs (Dopey becomes "Differently Intellectually Aabled"; Grumpy, "Poor Anger Management Skills")?

My answers come from three different perspectives (speech writers always think in threes – it's a job requirement) that reflect my background and view of the world:

I was trained as a linguist. Linguists study the general principles of language, one of which is that language changes to meet the needs of its users. So, I can't help chuckling to myself when I hear linguistic purists and conservatives complaining about how the language is going to the dogs – because they do so in the very accent and idiom that their parents and grandparents condemned, for exactly the same reasons. Language changes, period. And while you could argue that some kinds of change seem to simplify the language system in a "macro" sense, other changes appear to make it more complicated. The only way it gets "better" is that it does a better job of serving its users' needs.

I'm also a writer. I bring to each writing task the relativism I learned in my linguistics studies. I don't think in terms of "good" or "bad," "correct" or "incorrect." What's correct in one context may be wrong in another. So for each situation, I want to know what's effective, what will respond to the audience's needs, what will help speakers achieve their goals.

I certainly want to know what will offend audiences. For example, I would have advised Ross

Perot when he was campaigning for U.S. President in 1992, that he would not score many points by referring to his NAACP listeners as "you people."

Finally, I believe strongly in mutual respect and good-natured tolerance (even – and especially – of people and behaviors I don't like). I believe in live and let live. I oppose, in any form, the coercion of people who are doing others no harm.

From these three perspectives come the reasons I (and perhaps you too) agree with the cartoonists and humorists who have been skewering politically correct language. All three have to do not with the principle of P.C., but with its practice:

1. Reason #1 is that **the politics of P.C. are coercive in nature.** I said that language changes spontaneously to meet its users' needs. Coercion is not – and should not be – part of the picture.

Language is a form of behavior. With all of us behaving together in slightly different ways, the day-to-day use of a language is like a linguistic free market in which different words, phrases, pronunciations, idioms, meanings, prefixes, suffixes, dialect variations and just plain mistakes all compete for primacy. And just as in the economic free market, there are differentiating values: In each particular context, which of two or more competing usages has the most prestige? Which is the most useful and effective?

P.C., as practiced, is typically accompanied by coercion: Say it this way or you will be guilty of offending an oppressed group. The enforcement of P.C. attempts to snuff out the free enterprises of language with a stultifying linguistic Marxism.

2. Another reason we don't like P.C., as typically practiced, is that **it feeds into the culture of grievance and victimology**, which, for many of us, is all too pervasive

By Alan M. Perlman, Ph.D. ■ Illustration by Anthony Strom

these days. P.C. is the linguistic manifestation of this culture; essentially, it's the victim's revenge. People who are offended by language they consider politically incorrect are flaunting their victimhood and playing "gotcha" games with the rest of us. Maybe not all of them – but a lot of them. And a lot of us, including the writers of those cartoons, resent it.

Am I saying that people should never feel offended? No, but I am saying that the amount and kind of offense is really up to the person who perceives it. It's pretty much a creation of his or her own mind.

I don't mean to discount the offensiveness of phrases like "Welsh on a bet" to a Welsh person, or "Dutch

"Concern with P.C. sharpens our awareness of our differences, which is exactly what we do not want, because we are all in this human race together."

treat" to someone from the Netherlands — just as I, being Jewish, don't want to hear that in negotiating over a price, one person was able to "Jew down" another. But if someone does use that phrase around me, I simply take note of the fact that I'm in the presence of a social retard. This person is engaging in inappropriate, out-of-date behavior, and I resolve to spend as little time in his (or her) presence as possible.

3. The third reason we don't like P.C. is that **it's an intellectual fraud.** P.C. purports to replace inequality with equality, whereas all it really does is install another linguistic orthodoxy – one which, I would maintain, is just as rigid and oppressive as the old, perhaps more so because it's coercive. It is thus antithetical to the true spirit of equality, which is rooted in humanism, in good-natured tolerance (even of what you disapprove of, remember), in live and let live.

Instead of promoting freedom and equality, P.C. encodes a rigid orthodoxy by redefining words, just as tyrants and other social planners have done for centuries. Consider these not-so-facetious examples of terms and their politically correct definitions and ask yourself how accurately they characterize the rhetoric of public officials:

Victims: Nearly all blacks and women, but essentially members of every group except white heterosexual males.

Minorities: Members of groups whose spokespeople are angry at America. Thus Cubans, Japanese, Korean and Jewish-Americans are rarely referred to as minorities.

Tolerance: Openness to all ideas on the left.

Rage: The excuse for violence committed against innocent people by members of an aggrieved minority.

Racist: A white who does not agree with a position held by the civil rights leadership.

Conservative: A person with selfish motives.

Liberal: A person with altruistic motives.

(From "Word Abuse – A Lexicon," by Dennis Prager, *Wall Street Journal*, January 21, 1994.)

So given all this, what should we do about P.C.?

As speech writers and speech makers, we should, of course, avoid offending our audiences. If you like, you can buy one of those dictionaries of P.C. language. They're supposed to guide you to the P. C. minefield, but since language is constantly changing, each one is probably out of date a year or two after it's been published. Besides, they're no substitute for common sense and sensitivity to your audience.

As speech writers, we also should seek eloquent and elegant solutions to linguistic problems. We should try to accomplish the higher goals of P.C. with language that is clear, that sounds good, and that does not interfere with or distract from the larger communicative task.

For example, I always try to make sure that the indefinite subject of a sentence is plural, so that I don't get into the "he/she" problem: Not "A doctor must treat his (or her) patients with sensitivity," but "Doctors must treat *their* patients..."

My personal view is that the use of she and her in predicates with indefinite subjects, e.g., "A doctor must treat her patients," is inelegant. It draws attention to itself; it says, "See how liberal I am?" It reeks of the sanctimoniousness that makes P.C. so offensive.

Now what about the non-writing 95 percent of our lives? I have a few simple rules that I would propose we try to adhere to:

■ **Lighten up out there!** Linguistic mores are changing to embody a new set of social assumptions, and not everyone will make changes at the same pace.

For those who are willing to make changes, we should be patient and keep our expectations realistic, which means low. If we encounter someone who is not willing to make changes, we should try a little good-natured tolerance – or if we can't manage that, we should try to find other people to associate with. In any event (and until we have evidence to the contrary) we should assume good will on the part of other people – and tolerate their lapses. We should give people credit for working their way through the changes they want to make.

■ **See the differences.** The following, in my view, are quite different from each other: (a) an ethnic slur; (b) calling a woman "honey," (c) using -man words, such as

policeman, firemen, freshman; (d) saying "Welsh on a bet" or "Dutch treat"; and (e) using words like history (which is most emphatically not "his story") or hurricane, in which the offense is fabricated through false etymology. These represent different kinds of intent and should be perceived as such. Which ones can't you, I, or person X tolerate? If the answer is "all," perhaps you, I, or Person X hasn't heeded Rule 2 or, for that matter, Rule 3, which is:

■ **Get a life.** Concern with P.C. sharpens our awareness of our differences, which is exactly what we do not want, because we are all in this human race together – the race for survival, security and a little dignity and peace of mind. P.C. and its concomitant "gotcha" games distract us from dwelling on what we have in common; they keep us from working together, as neighbors, as members of a community, to solve the problems that afflict us all. And by dividing us and distracting us in this way, they help (along with many other factors, of course) to keep us insecure and mistrustful of each other, and they thus encourage us to

look to the government to solve our problems – which, of course, the government is only too eager to do. But is that the kind of society we want to live in?

The bottom line here is that P.C. makes social relations and social coherence more difficult, no doubt about it. Our challenge, then, is to carry out its best impulses – the mitigation of offensive bias in language – while resisting its worst ones: Its coercion, its victimology, its doctrinaire rigidity. But if everyone, including the P.C.-mongers themselves, would abide by the principles I just sketched out – lighten up, see the difference and get a life – we might actually have a chance to pull it off. ①

Based on a speech given to the Public Relations Society of America, Greater O'Hare Chapter in Rosemont, Illinois; February, 1994. Material reprinted with permission of Ragan Communications.

Alan M. Perlman, Ph.D., a professional speechwriter and linguist, is Director of Executive Communications for Kraft Foods in Northfield, Illinois.

One of the best ways to build your Club's membership is through a Speechcraft Program. This eight-session program teaches potential members the basics of public speaking and is a great introduction to the Toastmasters Communication and Leadership Program. In fact, many members begin their Toastmasters "career" as a Speechcraft participant. These materials will help you get started:



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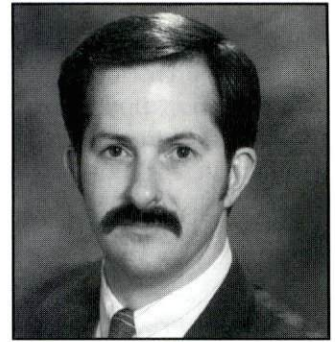
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for President

Robert E. Barnhill, DTM – Senior Vice President, Second Vice President, Third Vice President, International Director during 1989-91, and District 44 Governor from 1986-87. A Toastmaster for 13 years, Mr. Barnhill is a member of the Lubbock Club 884-44, the Articulate Club 6145-44 and the Lubbock Professional Club 5011-44. As Governor of District 44, he led the District to President's Distinguished District. He was named District 44 Outstanding Toastmaster of the Year in 1988 and received the Accredited Speaker designation in 1992. He was named the AICPA Outstanding Discussion Leader in 1991-92 and is a member of the Order of the Coif. Mr. Barnhill is a self-employed attorney, estate planner, Certified Public Accountant and Certified Financial Planner. He is a member of the State Bar of Texas, Texas Society of CPAs, International Association for Financial Planning, the American Bar Association and the National Speakers Association. He and his wife, Jana, who also has received a DTM designation, reside in Lubbock, Texas.

YOUR 1996-97 Officer Candidates

Official Notice

The 1996 Annual Business Meeting will be held on Friday, August 23, at 8:00 a.m., during the International Convention, August 21-24, 1996, being held at The Adam's Mark Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A.

Nominating Committee:

Bennie E. Bough, DTM, Chairman; Neil R. Wilkinson, DTM; Eddie V. Dunn, DTM; Marcia Sydor, DTM; H. Al Richardson, DTM; Arthur F. Nieto, DTM; Jeannine Windels, DTM; Richard F. Benson, DTM; Ralph H. Williamson, DTM; Raymond M. Johnson, DTM; Fekry H. Ismail, DTM; Charles William Harrison, ATM

Here's your introduction to Toastmasters International's 1996-97 Officer Candidates. On Friday, August 23, you'll have the opportunity to vote for the candidate of your choice while attending the International Convention in St. Louis, Missouri.

Candidates were nominated for the positions of President, Senior Vice President, Second Vice President and Third Vice President by the International Nominating Committee. The Committee's selection is presented here in accordance with Article VIII, Section 1, of the Bylaws of Toastmasters International.

It is the right and duty of all Clubs to participate in the vote, either through their representatives at the Convention or by proxy. All members are urged to give careful consideration to the qualifications of each candidate.

(Additional nomination for International Officers may be made from the floor at the Annual Business Meeting. International Director candidates will be nominated at the eight Regional Conferences to be held this month.)



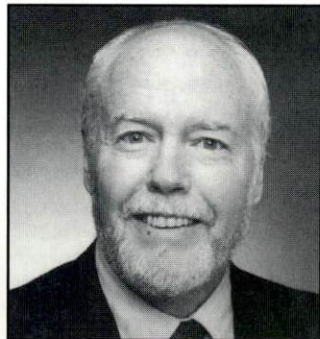
for Senior Vice President

Len Jury, DTM - Second Vice President, Third Vice President, International Director during 1990-92, and District 72 Governor 1989-90. A Toastmaster for 20 years, Mr. Jury is a member of Auckland Club 3593-72, Illuminati Club 8929-72, and a charter member of City of Sails Club 6475-72. As Governor of District 72, he led the District to President's Distinguished District, President's Extension Award and President's 20 Plus Award. He received the District Outstanding Lt. Governor Award in 1987, the District Professionalism Award in 1988 and the Auckland Club Outstanding Toastmaster Award in 1992. Mr. Jury is CEO/Owner of Len Jury, Ltd., an internationally known stamp dealing firm. He has been a consultant for New Zealand Post Stamp Design Council and a Past President of the New Zealand Stamp Dealers Association. He also owns and runs a 300-acre town-milk supply dairy. Len and his wife, Heather, who has received a CTM designation, reside in Auckland, New Zealand. They have two adult children, Sheryl and Ian.



for Second Vice President

Terry R. Daily, DTM - Third Vice President, International Director 1991-93, and District 64 Governor 1988-89. A Toastmaster for 13 years, Mr. Daily is a member of Cargill Trade Masters Club 5913-6, the Crosstalkers Club 5211-6, and the Skyliners Club 831-64. As Governor, he led the District to Distinguished District. In 1995-96 he served on the District 6 New Club Demo Team. He is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba, and served a one year term on the Board of Directors as Chairman of the Professional Development Committee. Mr. Daily obtained a Bachelor of Business Administration (Honors) Degree, majoring in Marketing and Human Resources, from the University of Manitoba in 1979. A Chartered Accountant and Controller for Cargill Incorporated, his job responsibilities have included human resources, training, negotiation, labor relations, information technology, accounting, finance and new acquisition management. He and his wife, Judy, who is an ATM, reside in Plymouth, Minnesota, with their son, Taylor.



for Third Vice President

Timothy R. Keck, DTM - An International Director 1992-94 and District 49 Governor 1989-90. A Toastmaster for 16 years, Mr. Keck is a member of Pearl City Club 2805-49, Hickam Club 520-49, and Aloha Speakers Club 5190-49. As Governor, he led the District to Distinguished District. He received the District 49 Silver Gavel Award in 1994 and the Leadership Excellence Award in 1992. He has a Ph.D. in history from the University of Wisconsin, is a summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa graduate, and was a Fulbright Fellow to the University of Marburg in Germany. From 1993-1995, he served as Board President for Hawaii Habitat for Humanity. He is a founding member of the Aloha Speakers Bureau and is a member of the Honolulu Chapter of the Alzheimers Association. Mr. Keck is head of the Air Force history program in the Pacific. He has won numerous awards as a program manager, a military historian, and human resources development specialist with the U.S. Air Force over the past 20 years. He and his wife, Laura Crites, reside in Honolulu, Hawaii. They have one adult child, Krista.



for Third Vice President

Jo Anna McWilliams, DTM - An International Director 1992-94 and District 25 Governor 1988-89. A Toastmaster for 14 years, Ms. McWilliams is a member of Roving 49ers Club 6590-50, TNT Club 4533-50, and Advancing Speakers Club 4109-25. As Governor of District 25, she led the District to President's Distinguished District, and the District received the President's Extension Award during her term. She was named the District 25 Toastmaster of the Year and the District 25 Lt. Governor of the Year. She is a Certified Public Accountant. She has been recognized for Academic Excellence by the University of North Texas. She is a member of the American Society of CPA's, Texas Society of CPA's, and Dallas Chapter of CPA's. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Addison Place Homeowners Association and is a member of the Speakers Bureau for the United Way. Ms. McWilliams is Principal Consultant for Oracle Corporation. She and her husband, Bruce, who is also a Toastmaster, reside in Addison, Texas.



HALL OF FAME

The following listings are arranged in numerical order by district and club number.

DTM

Congratulations to these Toastmasters who have received the Distinguished Toastmaster certificate, Toastmasters International's highest recognition.

Brian Thomas Branagan, 1531-2
Donald E. Collins, 1715-3
Sudhir Shah, 1914-18
Keith R. Carson, 1603-60

ATM Silver

Congratulations to these Toastmasters who have received the Able Toastmaster Silver certificate of achievement.

Jay Fischer, 7137-2
Susan Lackey, 241-37
Koni Thompson, 1849-46
Jo-Anne McDowall, 1419-64

ATM Bronze

Congratulations to these Toastmasters who have received the Able Toastmaster Bronze certificate of achievement.

Lorie Mendoza, 2-F
Sherry Metcalfe, 5639-F
Jay Fischer, 7137-2
Joan Clout-Kruse, 949-4
Nathaniel H. Randall, 51-8
Roderick C. Stoneburner, 3725-12
Robin Ruth O'Hagan, 3412-14
Darrell J. Zeller, 4039-12
Carol Jean Walker, 121-28
Barney J. Thornton, 1111-50

Corbett L. Ourso, 3386-66
Terry Austin, 3703-70

ATM

Congratulations to these Toastmasters who have received the Able Toastmaster certificate of achievement.

Catherine A. Gitkov, 724-U
Kenneth D. Sisco, 602-F
Lisa Covi, 1300-F
Donald L. DeFraime, 9603-F
Molly Barnes, 328-1
Jan Hesness, 4741-2
Joanne Davis, 6949-2
Jay Fischer, 7137-2
Anita Westrum-Grumer, 9647-2
Dean Hinshaw, 104-3
Dan Merritt, 365-3
Barbara Kellogg, 801-3
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James T. Wilrich, Jr., 1771-4
Anne Marie Nowak, 5430-4
Harriet Lisak, 623-5
Lani M. Beltrano, 5553-5
Sophia Clendening, 8209-5
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Wendy Russell, 9648-6
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Alexander H.S. Soetjijpto, 1229-8
Mike Sutherland, 1354-8
Frida Gutnecht, 1957-8
Michael A. McDermott, 1957-8
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William S. Wagoner, 4968-9
Abel Terrazas, 7564-9
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Frank Drzymkowski, 7566-11
Debra Renee Jeter, 797-12
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James Merrylees, 7213-12
Pamela Lee Henry, 8691-12
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Cammie L. Brye, 1613-14
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Gloria F. Barnes, 3133-14

Koni Thompson, 4212-14
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John William Mannone, 535-29
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Dianne Morr, 2051-30
Margaret L. Kelly, 333-32
Edward Daube, 1900-33
Opie Perrier, 2462-33
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Bethanie-Cascone Gist, 4670-33
Marcus Erich Gordon, 4736-33
John F. Bialecki, 7634-33
Donna M. Johansson, 9324-33
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Hugo E. Parada-Martinez, 8037-34
Luis Carlos Ochoa, 8037-34
Cirino Camacho Mateo, 8191-34
Hector Leal Flores, 8191-34
Francisco Pesqueira C., 9684-34
Christopher J. Albrecht, 189-35
Caryl A. Niebler, 466-35
Patricia Akey, 1438-35
Carolyn Weaver, 77-36
Howard 'Bob' Adams, 176-36
Ram Kishan Singhal, 176-36
Kenneth S. Krupa, 6687-36
Mark A. Morris, 7807-36
Elizabeth T. Tsai, 9461-36
Douglas McLamb, 661-37
Bettie Cavanaugh, 3603-37
Michael F. Weatherby, 6429-37
Donald B. Reece, 9063-37
John A. Jaminet, 227-38
Kenneth M. Krause, 1723-38
Rosemary O. Robinson, 4479-38
Nanette K. Lamb, 7606-38
Celestine Favinger, 7621-38
Gene M. Gordon, 9226-38
William H. Doughty, 64-39
Michael Froehlich, 985-39
May West, 1571-39
Anthony Frontino, 1735-39
Mary Well, 1735-39
Olive Prunty, 2073-39
Karyn Chin, 2134-39
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Dorothy Ann Jones, 1448-42
Cornelius King, 3650-42
Jan Fraser, 3684-42
Ruth Schnell, 5330-42
Cynthia Mapplebeck, 5374-42
Barbara Love-Gleissner, 5824-42
Donna Hickie, 7445-42
Gerhard Schwarz, 8896-42
Greg Alcorn, 9227-42
Alan Dale Williams, 648-43
Debbie McDaniel, 1142-43
Sherry L. Embry, 3702-43

Richard M. Johnson, 5632-43
 Joe Waldin, 7968-43
 Timothy T. Thompson, 7968-43
 Tom Hill, 8943-43
 Jeri LaVerne Hyde, 763-44
 Roy Alexander, 5011-44
 Jerry L. Freeze, 5428-44
 Eddie Payne, 7432-44
 Bart Arbuthnot, 8450-44
 Jim Taggart, 2204-45
 Richard A. Magoon, 2440-45
 Roger N. Davies, 4227-45
 Dorothy Kingsbury, 6487-45
 Margaret Naus, 7669-45
 Gregory M. Gurican, 1022-46
 Morlino F. Morris, 2567-46
 Clarence Dean Bright, 129-47
 Monica M. Bright, 129-47
 Darleen Ellen Hutto, 892-47
 Barbara R. Rommer, 952-47
 Thomas M. Evans, 1810-47
 Gwendolyn R. Leno, 2423-47
 Sandy Thomas, 2423-47
 Louise A. Armstrong, 2537-47
 Paul Bertolino, 2537-47
 Susan Rogers, 2821-47
 James A. Horning, 2862-47
 William Tom Newbery, 3299-47
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 John J. Berry, 4541-47
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 Fay Murphy, 8303-47
 David A. Jordan, 8345-47
 Sandra Lynn Turner, 8437-47
 Hector L. Mills, 9443-47
 Heidi W. H. Rossiter, 9443-47
 Sonia G. Rodriguez, 9483-47
 Alice W. Steely, 4712-50
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 Thomas L. Carlson, 7388-50
 Lucila Ang-Abey, 2936-51
 Brett Yollis, 172-52
 Norman F. Secker, 172-52
 Arnie Garfinkel, 914-52
 Alpheus R. Johnson, 2692-52
 Millicent Blum, 3853-53
 Nancy Moradian, 5908-53
 Robert H. Ballard, 1196-54
 Meta Mickens-Baker, 3228-54
 Dennis Tomkinson, 7060-54
 David E. Kohlwey, 3373-56
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 Don A. Turkleson, 6918-56
 Diane Hadley, 7774-56
 Joyce Rohan, 5067-57
 Storm C. Goranson, 5708-57
 Thomas Jon Huggett, 6061-57
 Jeff Zorn, 7261-57
 Mark Kinsey, 8886-57
 Marjorie L. Youngblood, 2091-58
 John Andrew Mallon, 6299-58
 Karen Alexander, 7017-58
 Shirley M. Washington, 8351-58
 Victoria MacDonald, 1586-60
 Susan Tasker Stephens, 2729-60
 Beryl J. Lewis, 4782-60
 Walter T. Lemiski, 5961-60
 Jacques Lamontagne, 606-61
 Michael B. Telesford, 2827-61
 Sylvie Houde, 5097-61
 Georgia Remond, 5310-61

Dalma Hunyadi Brunauer, 5924-61
 Denise Day, 7848-62
 Sharyl Ann Beal, 7848-62
 Russell J. Ponivas, 506-65
 Kathleen A. Nash, 3431-66
 John G. Harman, 5037-66
 David Levine, 8755-66
 Yvonne Maples, 2306-68
 Sherry L. Bourne, 4466-68
 Jacqueline Renee Scott, 6856-68
 Martin Abbey, 669-69
 John Andersen, 1794-69
 John Darlington, 6311-69
 Joyce Brenda Evans, 6779-69
 David Panter, 7645-69
 John Davis, 9471-69
 Ruth Mary Steenson, 1218-70
 Peggy Yvonne Ibbotson, 1541-70
 Margaret Ailsa Standaloft, 1921-70
 Parry Jones, 2130-70
 Andrew Leigh, 2178-70
 Timir Kumar Basu, 2274-70
 Zeta Eileen Bishkov, 2776-70
 Alan Potts, 5974-70
 Jennifer Morrison, 7123-70
 Raymond Edward Collins, 8856-70
 Dianne Vecchiet, 9627-70
 James Kevin Hands, 9636-70
 Carl Francis Bliim, 9638-70
 Mary Dowling, 3599-71
 Mary Murtagh, 5342-71
 Sean Lyons, 9326-71
 Vivianne Stephenson, 1923-72
 Leo Baxendale, 2176-72
 Ian Alexander Mandeno, 2506-72
 Keith Bishopp, 3473-72
 Peter R. Scott, 5693-72
 Marilyn Glen, 6480-72
 Neville Robinson, 8344-72
 Colleen Elizabeth Mills, 8922-72
 R. Daniel Iglesias, 1060-73
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60 years

Bellingham, 60-2
 Boise, 61-15
 Vancouver, 59-21

55 years

Irvington, 199-11
 Redding, 197-39
 Champaign-Urbana, 195-54

50 years

Midway, 383-6
 Lakers, 388-6
 Oregon City, 390-7
 Shibboleth, 386-19
 Lincoln Toastmasters, 403-24

45 years

West Valley Orators, 107-4
 Achievers, 902-13
 Early Risers, 784-26
 Scottsbluff, 944-26
 Maui, 910-49

40 years

S M Chanticleers, 622-7
 Lake, 2093-10
 High Desert, 1043-12
 Minot, 636-20
 Naperville, 2051-30
 Santa Maria, 89-33
 Sterling-Rock Falls, 2125-54
 Palmetto, 2070-58

35 years

Sundial, 2586-7
 Early Bird, 3293-11
 Calumet, 3313-11
 USDA Toastmasters, 3294-27
 Southshore, 3281-35
 Columbians, 3263-36
 Timberline, 2496-39
 Ishi, 3316-39
 Seven Seas, 3296-42
 Park, 3041-46
 Murray Hill Spkrs Club, 3260-46
 Carlingwood, 3319-61
 Bellwood, 3282-66

30 years

Irving, 3365-25
 Mid-Day, 2112-33
 Sunrise, 3035-43
 Cebu, 35-75

25 years

Centre City, 643-5

20 years

Indian Meridian, 2361-16
 Vigilante, 2699-17
 Town Criers, 1743-30
 Northwest Suburban, 2860-30
 Dot, 1167-31
 Boulder City, 2355-33
 University, 680-44
 Twilite, 1669-47
 Elizabeth River, 1801-66
 Garden City, 3899-69
 Mentone, 1634-73
 Forum, 1072-74

15 years

Garden Variety, 4547-4
 Felicitia Humor, 4556-5
 Pine Island, 4535-6
 Speak Up & Speak Out, 2111-10
 Blue Ribbon, 4563-11
 St. Elizabeth Hospital, 4564-11
 Loveland, 4553-26
 Franconia Orators, 4566-27
 Paul Robeson, 4540-28
 Texasgulf-Lee Creek, 4523-37
 Fairfield, 4527-39
 Wright-Flyers, 4532-40
 Lake, 4541-47
 Communicators, 4562-48
 TNT Toastmasters, 4533-50
 Collingwood, 4537-60

Sperry Speak Easy, 4559-63
 River City, 4524-65
 Twin Cities, 4528-68
 Quirindi, 4531-70
 Blenheim, 4518-72

10 years

Cypress Communicators, 6245-F
 System Masters, 4554-6
 Ordway Orators, 4709-6
 Uplifters, 3974-7
 Golden Orators, 6224-9
 Gilbert W. Smith, 6222-11
 D & T, 4931-21
 Speakers of the House, 6218-21
 Comp-Talk, 6246-21
 Midday Madness, 6220-23
 Lunch Bunch, 4774-25
 Toastmasters In Common, 6250-30
 Sandoz, 6249-37
 S.A.R., 6248-39
 Shh, 6217-41
 Esso, 6233-42
 TBE Nooners, 6221-48
 Synergy Park, 6229-50
 Ace, 6216-57
 Rossmoor, 6216-57
 Cumberland, 3916-63
 Warwick, 6228-69
 North Sydney Achievers, 6215-70
 Talk of the Town, 6225-70
 Kiama, 6238-70
 Parrachievers, 6239-70
 Hobart, 6247-73

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 Schindler, 5255-46
 Morristown, New Jersey
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 Pompano Beach, Florida
 Cairnhill, 1759-51
 Singapore
 NIUC Income Mandarin, 1968-51
 Singapore
 John Brown Toasters, 6526-56
 Houston, Texas
 Bayer, 2238-57
 Berkeley, California
 CEO, 6660-58
 North Charleston, South Carolina
 Capital, 1902-60
 Mississauga, Ontario, Canada
 HCPMT, 2422-60
 North York, Ontario, Canada
 Listen to the Blues, 7775-65
 Binghamton, New York
 RMG, 6693-66
 Richmond, Virginia
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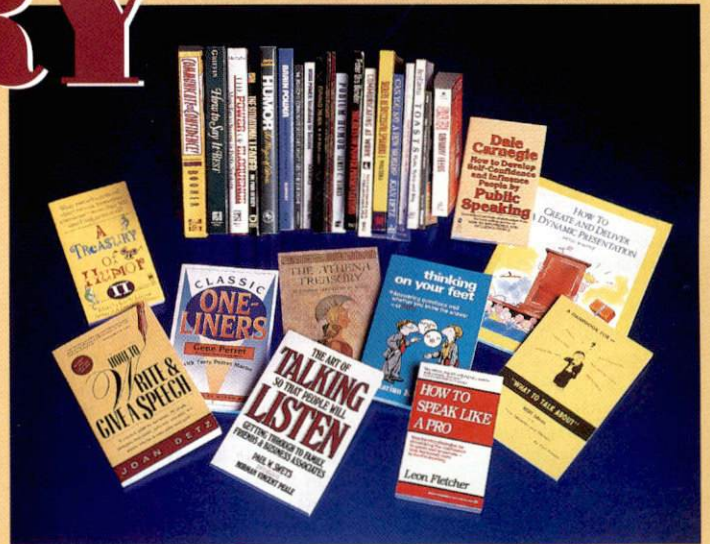
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