

TOASTMASTER[®]

October 2008

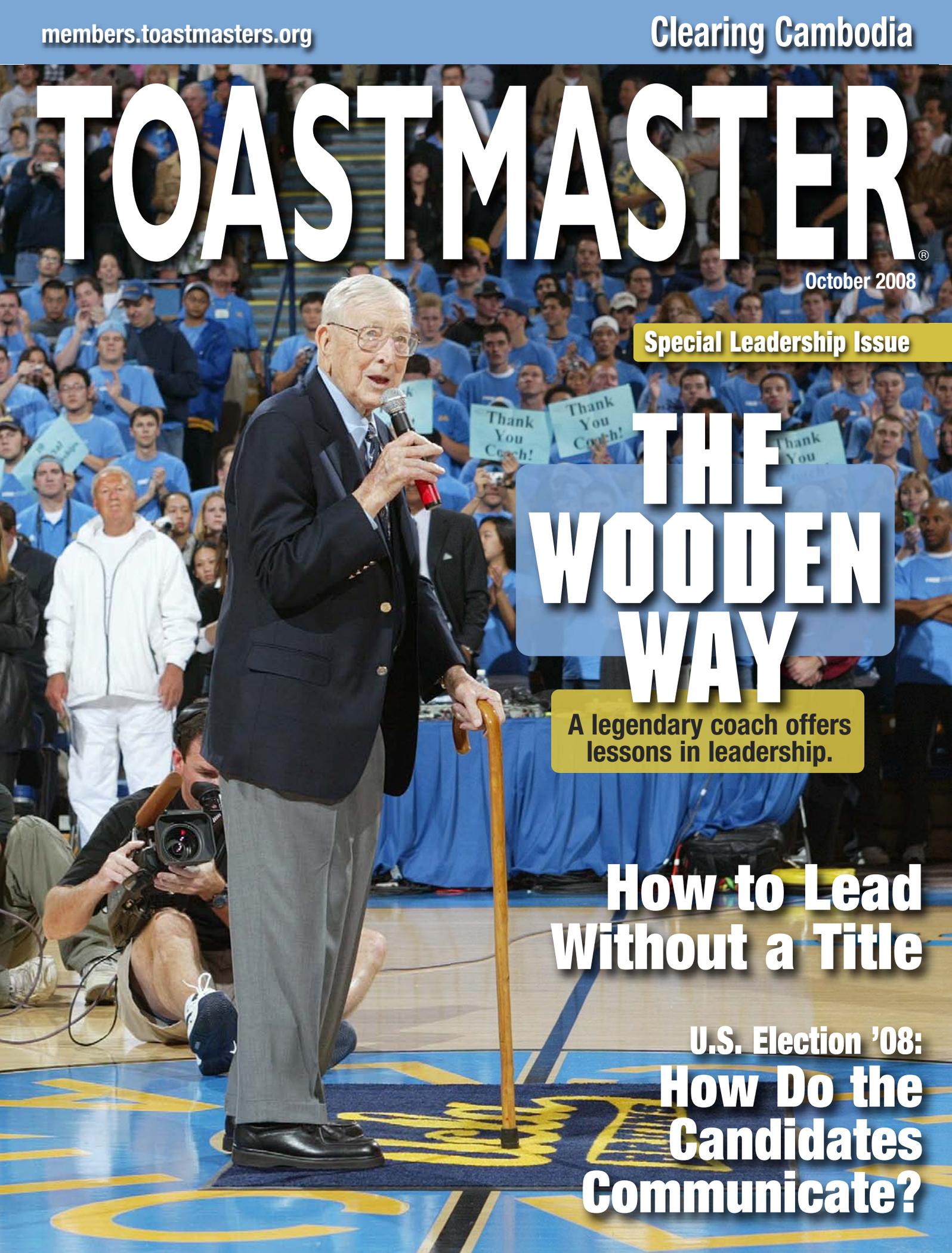
Special Leadership Issue

THE WOODEN WAY

A legendary coach offers lessons in leadership.

How to Lead Without a Title

U.S. Election '08:
How Do the Candidates Communicate?





The Courage to Conquer Greatness

† Many years ago I had the wonderful experience of visiting Hamburger University in Oak Brook, Illinois. Hamburger University is where all McDonald's franchise owners must go to learn the operations, standards and expectations of anyone who purchases a McDonald's restaurant. It was fascinating. As I walked down the halls, I looked at the signs on the doors: French Fry Lab, Milkshake Lab, Big Mac Lab. It was explained to us how every McDonald's restaurant is expected to maintain the highest of standards taught at the University. Failure to do so could result in loss of the franchise.

Whether or not you are a fan of the Big Mac, McDonald's sells more hamburgers than anyone in the world. They do so because they provide consistency. You know what to expect. And because of the company's standards, those expectations are met. It's their gauge of greatness.

What can Toastmasters learn from McDonald's? Over the last 20-plus years, I have visited Toastmasters clubs in locations ranging from Lubbock to London. I would love to say that every single club I visited was a great club that demonstrated the same consistency provided by McDonald's. Hmm...

Just as McDonald's has standards for individual restaurants, we have standards for our clubs. These standards are our gauge of greatness. It's called the Distinguished Club Plan. Clubs that follow this plan are providing their members with what they deserve – the highest quality meetings. And isn't that what members are paying for? If all our clubs were Distinguished, we would know that we were offering our members a level of consistency we can be proud of.

As an organization, we are only as strong as our weakest club. This past year roughly 38 percent of our clubs were Distinguished. Does this make you proud? Do you see room for improvement? I would hope so! But it will take courage: We'll need courage from our club officers to uphold their standards, as well as commit to their members that they will strive to provide a quality club. We'll need courage from our members to expect greatness from their club. And we'll need courage from our district officers to make Distinguished clubs a priority.

Fellow Toastmasters, I believe that this year we can reach a higher number of Distinguished Clubs than this organization has ever had. Together, let's have the courage to be proud! Together, let's have the Courage to Conquer greatness!

Jana Barnhill

Jana Barnhill, DTM, Accredited Speaker
International President

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Oh, Calgary!

Photos highlighting the recent 77th Annual International Convention in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

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The Toastmasters Vision:

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

The Toastmasters Mission:

Toastmasters International is the leading movement devoted to making effective oral communication a worldwide reality.

Through its member clubs, Toastmasters International helps men and women learn the arts of speaking, listening and thinking – vital skills that promote self-actualization, enhance leadership potential, foster human understanding, and contribute to the betterment of mankind.

It is basic to this mission that Toastmasters International continually expand its worldwide network of clubs thereby offering ever-greater numbers of people the opportunity to benefit from its programs.

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

Right Brain Activity=Toastmasters

I need to thank Jim Davis for his letter about how Toastmasters helped him recover from a traumatic brain injury (“Voicing Gratitude,” July). I am an RN Life Care Planner, which mean I make out the costs for future medical care and life needs for those who are catastrophically injured – many of whom have traumatic brain injuries. I have never even thought of including the cost of Toastmasters membership in these plans – even though I have been a member for over 10 years and know the benefits.

I had those benefits filed in the TM part of my brain, which is different from my RN brain part – thank you, Jim, for creating a bridge between the two. And my future Traumatic Brain Injuries patients will thank you too! Good luck with your continued recovery.

Jill Aggersbury ATMS, AL • Firetalkers Club • Novato, California

Build a Smart Chart

The informative article “Giving Effective Financial Presentations with PowerPoint” by Sally Herigstad (July) contains much useful advice.

However, the two charts accompanying this article illustrate some potential pitfalls. The bar chart confusingly includes a “total” column, the effect of which is to compress the other bars, resulting in a less readable chart. It is also unnecessarily cluttered by the inclusion of two decimal places on the vertical scale (a scale that increases in tens of thousands). The line chart shortens the vertical scale, rather than starting at zero, giving the misleading impression of large increases.

For Toastmasters wishing to present data with impact, go beyond

the software defaults to design your charts well – your audience will appreciate it.

Damien G. Raftery • Carlow Toastmasters • Carlow, Ireland

A Toastmasters Ear

Having arrived in the U.S. more than a year ago, I have been fortunate enough to witness the run up to the presidential elections. While the media makes much ado of the eloquence of candidates, little is done to analyze their “Table Topics” skills in, for example, question-and-answer sessions.

Listening, as a Toastmaster, reveals time fillers, ‘ahs’ and ‘ums’, limited use of metaphors, repetitious phrases and an inability to close the topic out (although this itself may be a skill!) which added together, for me, detract from the overall delivery. I assume the candidates receive training in impromptu speaking – but, by whom? Are they Toastmasters? It seems the [candidates] need assistance from TMI.

Darren Murphy, CL • Shell Toastmasters • New Orleans, Louisiana

Stop at the Summit Before You Plummet

While reading Paula Syptak Price’s article “Cut!” (July) about how to make speeches shorter, it finally dawned on me that the articles I’ve been reading in the *Toastmaster* magazine are actually speeches. The organization, flow, succinctness and content are all characteristic of good speeches.

Shortly after reading the article, I was approached by my local Kiwanis club and asked to speak about my mountain climbing experiences. The club said that I could speak for as long as I wished. Of course, I won’t talk forever – I’m a Toastmaster – but I will use the

information in Price’s article to help me stay focused and succinct. Most importantly, I will use a very limited number of examples or stories to make my selected points. The timing of this article was perfect for me. I suppose I’d better stop here; I’ve made my point.

Art Huseonica • Kritikos Club • Odenton, Maryland

Significance of the ‘Sergeant’

I can hardly explain how much I enjoyed reading the article “Sergeant at Arms: Leadership Through Service” by Ernest Ray Raynor III (June) on the importance of the Sergeant at Arms in a Toastmasters club.

I have never held the office, but I am sometimes shocked when people tell me they think it is a position of lesser importance. In fact, Raynor pointed out that the Sergeant at Arms has a great part of the club’s responsibilities. And for this I really thank him.

Valandie Kimberly, CTM, CL • Club Phare Nazon, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Tribute to Jo Anna McWilliams

Thank you for the lovely tribute to Past International President Jo Anna McWilliams (October). She was an intelligent and special lady filled with warmth, class, charisma, charm, eloquence, humor and grace. I will treasure our friendship and will remember her warm smile, inspiring leadership and how she lived her theme, “Friends Helping Friends Succeed.”

Her theme describes the essence of Toastmasters and helped me, in turn, to inspire our team to earn the Distinguished District award. She touched my life and many others. She will be greatly missed but never forgotten.

Steve Kennedy, DTM, PDG • Leading Knights 3666 Burien, Washington

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Toastmaster really cooks in “Emeril” taping.

BAM!

Fighting Off the Fears

There are many words that one might associate with Emeril Lagasse: Celebrity chef, restaurateur, New Orleans and, of course, “BAM!” are a few that come to mind. But for me, I will always associate Emeril with one word before any: Toastmasters.

You see, it was during the taping of an Emeril television show that I realized I had finally and successfully managed to overcome my fears of public speaking, and all because of Toastmasters.

My experience with Emeril began when my wife, Debi, applied to be on the show “Cooking Green with Emeril” on Discovery’s new Planet Green network. The premise of her application was that with three boys and a husband, she didn’t have enough time to think about cooking green, so she needed Emeril’s help. After meeting with the producers and auditioning in person, she was selected to be on the show!

I was hugely excited when I learned that my wife would be cooking with Emeril and making her TV debut...until I learned that the producer wanted to feature a day in the life of the Palmer family, which meant a TV crew would be spending a day taping at our household – and interviewing me.

I had been attending Toastmasters for a while, but I wasn’t sure if I was ready for Emeril.

Facing Fears

Prior to joining Toastmasters, I had always had a fear of public speak-

ing, which at times was a big obstacle when it came to social engagements and business opportunities.

The straw that broke the proverbial camel’s back – and prompted me to join Toastmasters – was when I had actually declined to be the best man in my best friend’s wedding because I was afraid of giving the “Best Man’s Toast.”

Since joining Toastmasters in 2006, I have gradually become more confident and relaxed in front of an audience, and a few months ago I was put to my first test. I was a groomsman in a wedding party – not the Best Man – and then the unexpected happened at the rehearsal dinner: The groom’s mother asked me if I’d give a toast...in 15 minutes!

I was a little nervous, mainly because I didn’t have anything

prepared, but also because this was the first time outside of Toastmasters that I was asked to talk before a crowd. But I thought back to all those Table Topics sessions in my Toastmasters club and realized I’d had 15 seconds – as opposed to 15 minutes – to think of something to say. So I prepared the toast by creating an opening, body and conclusion, knowing that if I had a good opening I would be fine (just like in Toastmasters).

And that is precisely what happened. I had a good opening and kept the room engaged. In fact, the toast went much longer than the quick lines I’d planned, and I

▼ Doug Palmer and his family make their debut for the “Emeril” TV crew.



▶ Doug Palmer's appearance and interview on "Cooking Green with Emeril" aired on the Planet Green network in July 2008.

received lots of "good job" comments afterward.

Moment of Truth

I was proud of this personal accomplishment, demonstrating I could overcome my fears by applying my Toastmasters skills.

But was I ready for "Emeril"?

The answer was yes. I actually found that I was not nervous at all! In fact, I looked forward to the TV interview.

During the interview I felt confident and spoke with assurance. The producer asked me questions such as, "What is it like having your household become green?" and "What is your daily routine like?"

I was able to answer these questions without my voice cracking, and during the interview I didn't think about how scared I was – but



rather, I focused on saying the things I thought were important. And I did it all *without choking in fear*.

While I don't envision competing in speech competitions or traveling the country giving self-help seminars, I now am much more confident speaking in front of groups and presenting information. And though I am not

completely cured of my fear of public speaking, I'm extremely happy that I have *controlled* my fear – and for that I say: Thank you, Toastmasters! 📺

Doug Palmer, the CEO and founder of Palmer Financial, is a member of the Locke and Key Toastmasters club in Bethesda, Maryland.

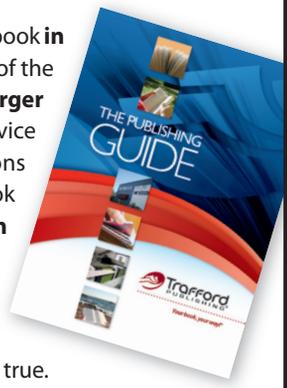


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Toastmaster speaks up for Cambodians injured by land mines.

Clearing Cambodia

The first time Gary Christ visited Cambodia was on a mission trip in 2001, to install septic systems at orphanages. And, indeed, he could see how badly clean water and sewage disposal was needed there. Yet Christ (whose name rhymes with “mist”) soon discovered an even greater threat to this Southeast Asian country still recovering from a war that ended more than 30 years ago.

“My second day in Cambodia I felt a tapping on my leg as I stood in the market,” he recalls. “I thought it was a child begging, but it was a full-grown man with no legs touching me with his hat. He had nothing to assist his movement; he was simply moving around on the dirt floor on his bare hands and stumps.”

The beggar was one of many victims of land mines – the all-too-common, deadly war remnants scattered throughout the country. Such mines injure or kill at least two Cambodians every day, according to statistics.

Christ would eventually feel compelled to take action, helping to remove land mines in the country and aid the victims of such explosions. That was in addition to installing numerous septic systems in his trips to Cambodia.

In fact, it was his humanitarian work that caused him to seek out



Toastmasters. “I wanted to do more for Cambodia, and I knew that meant learning how to effectively reach out to the public,” says Christ, who owned a septic system service for eight years back home in Illinois, USA. He is a member of Fox Valley Toastmasters in Illinois’ Lake in the Hills community.

Becoming a Toastmaster has helped him tremendously with presentation skills, he says, enabling him to speak without fear and to stay focused on his fund-raising goals on behalf of the citizens of Cambodia.

Christ has installed more than a dozen septic systems in Cambodia. It was when installing such a system in 2004 – for an orphanage in Kampong Chanaan – that an incident

▲ **Toastmaster Gary Christ, an inventor, modified an old family tractor to work as a demining device.**

again called his attention to the hazards of land mines.

“A trip wire that led to a land mine was discovered,” says Christ. “The mine was disarmed, but the experience greatly impacted my mission, and I soon felt compelled to help with the demining efforts.”

“Not only are individuals routinely killed or maimed by land mines,” Christ points out, “such accidents tend to impoverish an entire family, because they will sell everything they own to pay for the medical care of the individual who is injured.”



◀ Gary Christ and friend Sem Sovantha (in wheelchair) help land mine survivors find jobs and housing.

The threat of land mines also affects the well-being of Cambodians in general, because they're understandably afraid to farm untread areas, worried they might trigger an explosion. That's another reason demining efforts are so crucial, says Christ.

"Once an area is demined," he says, "farmers can use the land for producing badly needed food."

After that fateful 2004 incident, Christ, who is also an inventor, went home to Illinois and modified an old family tractor to work as a demining device. He shipped it to Cambodia. The 1947 Farmall Series H tractor uses hydraulics and a magnet to lift a steel-plated box weighing more than 10,000 pounds and drop it on mines. Christ successfully tested the modified tractor, a relic of his family's former farming operation, by detonating several mines in a subsequent trip to Cambodia.

The same year Christ began his demining efforts he also met and was inspired by land mine survivor and double amputee Sem Sovantha, project manager of the Angkor Association for the Disabled (AAD) in Cambodia. A former beggar, Sovantha has dedicated himself to helping other land mine survivors and their families find employment and housing.

"When I met Sovantha, my heart went out to him, and we became instant friends," says Christ. "At the time, Sovantha managed to get around with the aid of a three-wheeled bicycle. He took me to his house and offered to share everything he had, which by Western standards wasn't much."

Since meeting, the duo has set up a housing commune for homeless amputees in Cambodia.

Sovantha, who now moves about in a wheelchair, lauds the actions of his friend. "I met Gary when I was at the old market trying to sell books to make a living,"

"Once an area is demined, farmers can use the land for producing badly needed food."

he writes in an e-mail. "I saw him buy food and water for beggars who were living on the street, and I thought he was a very humanitarian man. He has helped the [AAD] by paying the center's rent fee and for labor for four years, and he always spends his free time to lobby for funding."

Christ says his Toastmasters experience has been crucial in helping him take a leadership role.

"The AAD in Cambodia performs regularly to raise funds, and I often

introduce them to the audience," Christ notes. "Toastmasters has helped me effectively engage the audience and explain [the group's] vision of creating a farm where disabled people can work and live."

"The skills I've mastered – such as effective hand gestures, eye contact and voice projection – have been invaluable," he says. "Most importantly, I now have the confidence to tell people what the AAD does and what our needs are."

"Toastmasters has really given me direction and the ability to focus on the mission with greater confidence."

He plans to further his work in Cambodia and eventually hopes to employ 50 people – including land mine survivors – in a demining operation. Christ is raising \$50,000 so he can return to the country.

"We plan to use half of the funds for demining, one quarter for installing new wells and another quarter for septic systems and housing," he says. "We can't just

remove land mines without cleaning up contamination and providing fresh water."

To learn more about Gary Christ's efforts in Cambodia, visit www.deminecambodia.org or e-mail him at helpgaryhelp@yahoo.com. 

Julie Bawden Davis is a freelance writer based in Southern California and a longtime contributor to the *Toastmaster*. You can reach her at Julie@JulieBawdenDavis.com.



Leading Without Authority

By Dave Zielinski

Consider the last time you were in a situation where you had to influence or lead someone who held a higher rank, a loftier title or had more experience than you did.

Chances are you shuddered at the thought, subconsciously devalued what you had to offer and, as a result, did little to persuade your team or audience to follow you.

But it didn't have to be that way. We all face situations where we're asked to speak to, or lead, others who are higher on the food chain or have more formal authority than we possess. Perhaps you're a project manager asked to lead a temporary project team of high-ranking technical experts – and work with an internal sponsor “in charge” of the initiative. Maybe you're a human resource manager trying to sell a stingy chief financial officer on a new

**How to
influence
others
when you
don't have
'position
power.'**

employee training program. Or it could be you're simply someone who regularly offers up ideas for improvement – only to see them go nowhere. The good news is there are proven ways to be more influential in situations when you don't have the "position power" to make people naturally pay attention or fall in line with your ideas.

Selling You, Not Your Title

When you don't have this kind of inherent authority, it becomes far more important to leverage who you are, says Kevin Cashman, founder and CEO of Leadersource, a Korn/Ferry company that specializes in leadership training. In other words, your ability to come across as authentic, knowledgeable and credible grows even more vital if you don't carry an impressive title or have vast experience. "The people who are studying you, those you are trying to influence, look more at who you are and where you're coming from if you don't have that built-in 'club' of positional power," says Cashman.

If persuasion is your end game, there is no substitute for mastering your subject matter or seeing a situation from your audience's eyes. But building up a storehouse of relational equity – feelings of goodwill with others – can also be a great aid to your cause, Cashman says.

He believes one of the best strategies for marshalling support when you lack position power is to gather independent research or use expert testimonials to bolster your ideas – and, if possible, to first get top management buy-in for such research. Relying only on your own opinion to persuade others makes you more vulnerable to skepticism when you have no formal authority.

"If top executives have a particular problem they'd like to solve, get their support for going out into the organization to speak to 10 people about how the problem is affecting them and what they might do to solve it," says Bellman. "Having given their support to that fact-finding exercise, executives will be more interested in the results."

How Do They Like to be Sold?

Allan Cohen, a professor at Babson College and co-author of the book *Influence Without Authority*, says it's more important than ever to speak your audience's language when trying to influence without position power. For example, he cites the experience of a training specialist who sought to purchase software that would allow his company's customer service representatives to learn new skills via desktop computers. When those controlling the

"Maybe you can't change the whole world, but you can change your corner of it. And when you change your corner, you actually change the world."

– Carl Duivenvoorden, DTM

Such equity comes from establishing strong company relationships and networks that make it easier to create alliances when the time comes to push new ideas or lead others.

If people believe your intent is to serve – be it other people, your own department or the organization as a whole – rather than advance your own career or agenda, they are more likely to trust you, believe in you and follow you, even if you don't have formal authority or a management title. An attitude of servant leadership gives you influence, says Cashman.

Geoff Bellman, a Seattle-based management consultant and author of the book *Getting Things Done When You're Not in Charge*, says good influence skills are also a function of being in tune with the world around you. "People need to believe that you're not just caught up in your own narrow cause and that you have their needs, or the organization's best interests, at heart," Bellman says.

purse strings resisted the idea, the specialist didn't give up. Instead he decided to temporarily hold off on filling an open job on his staff, using the money saved to hire a retired chief financial officer to counsel him on how to better sell the software investment to his bosses.

He learned that the way finance looked at training was on a cost-per-student basis, which varied from the specialist's approach. "With the help of that CFO's perspective, the trainer was able to modify his strategy and sell the company on the software purchase when virtually no funds were being freed up for new investment anywhere else in the organization," says Cohen.

Carl Duivenvoorden, DTM, a longtime Toastmaster and a speaker and writer who specializes in environmental issues, believes leading by example is among the best ways to influence others when you don't have a weighty title. He points to the late Terry Fox, the one-legged runner who ran across Canada to raise money for cancer research, as a shining example of this principle.

Delivering Bad News

By Dave Zielinski

It's not unusual for employees near the front lines to have to deliver bad news up the organizational chain of command. Doing this well is an art form, experts say. Step one is to understand the long-term damage that can result from covering up, rather than unearthing, problems. As the saying goes, if you can admit a mistake when it's the size of an acorn, it's easier to repair than when it becomes the size of a tree, with its deep, sprawling roots.

"Senior leaders, if they are healthy, want to hear what is really going on in the company, and they relish people who tell the truth, because they know that type of courage is rare in the organization," says Kevin Cashman, founder and CEO of Leadersource, which specializes in leadership training. "The worst thing you can do is try to spruce up bad news by making it look good. It may seem like the safe route in the short term, but in the long run it hurts everyone involved."

The key when reporting bad news is to make sure you propose a solution, if feasible, to the problem encountered. The last thing most executives want is someone who repeatedly points out problems or critiques management decisions yet offers little in the way of well-thought-through remedies.

Fox never let his disability get the better of him and constantly led by doing until he succumbed to cancer. "If you expect something of someone else, you need to be willing to do that thing yourself," Duivenvoorden says.

Managing volunteers is a situation where people are commonly faced with leading those over whom they have little direct authority. Bellman says such scenarios can be "both a blessing and a curse." The blessing comes in working with people who have great passion, are often selfless and bring considerable expertise from other areas of their lives to volunteer duties. The curse comes in trying to direct and manage people who are often independent and strong-willed and who know you don't control a paycheck or conduct their performance

appraisals. Volunteers have choices as to where they can spend their increasingly scarce time, and Bellman says if they feel that time – and their opinions – aren't adequately respected, they will look elsewhere to serve.

"You need to praise their presence over and over again in various ways," Bellman says. "Speak regularly to the difference they are making in the world, even if it's a seemingly small one, such as volunteering with you."

As a past District Governor in Toastmasters, Duivenvoorden knows well the challenge of leading volunteers. "It's a role where you have no real title authority, where you're not signing people's checks, but you still have to persuade people to work with you toward a common goal," he says.

Duivenvoorden proved successful in that task by using many of the strategies espoused in this article, leading his team to finish in the top third of all districts worldwide in 2004-2005. One of his main messages to his team was this maxim: Maybe you can't change the whole world, but you can change your corner of it. And when you change your corner, you actually change the world.

Presenting to the Powers That Be

If you haven't yet found yourself standing at a lectern or in an office conference room and looking out at nothing but people with larger titles or more experience than you, it's probably only a matter of time before it happens. How do you project authority and get such a tough audience on your side?

Bellman has been dealing with higher-echelon leaders for almost 40 years, first as a staff manager and later as an external consultant, and one thing he has learned is this: "Most people at this level really like to be dealt with on an equal basis." They are usually eager to learn from you, he says, and don't want you to hide your expertise under a barrel or pull any punches. Even if your title is front-line supervisor, C-level executives often want to pick your brain and interact with you as a peer.

"What people look for instinctively is a sense you know what you're talking about and you are convinced you are right," says Nick Morgan of the presentation-skill coaching firm Public Words in Boston, Massachusetts. "Knowledge, research and passion can go a long way even if your title is frontline supervisor, not CEO."

One key to success in these situations is emphasizing what your audience might not possess – your

“Leadership isn’t about a position, it’s about behavior. Doing something willingly because you respect and trust someone is different from doing something because they have the authority to give you an order.”

– Jim Kouzes, Ph.D., Toastmasters Golden Gavel recipient 2006

daily experience in the trenches. For example, a customer service manager trying to convince an executive team of the need for additional resources might focus on firsthand experiences with frustrated customers or illustrate how outdated technology is crimping productivity.

“That’s what most top managers no longer have and usually will respect – that daily rubber-meets-the-road experience,” says Morgan. “You want to use real-world examples that stick in people’s minds, or data they haven’t seen before, to tap into your own authority.”

David Greenberg, a speech coach with Simply Speaking Inc. in Atlanta, Georgia, says finding and addressing an audience’s “pain” is the key to persuasion, regardless of one’s titles and credentials. “If you want people to buy anything you are selling, you need to show you understand what keeps them up at night and

that you have a real solution to their pain.” And you do this, Greenberg says, through use of “testimonials, data and your own hard-won knowledge or experience.”

Although highlighting your in-the-trenches experience and know-how is a good idea, you want to avoid doing it in a way that makes audiences feel out of touch or defensive. In other words, don’t come on too strong in trying to prove yourself. “If you have some insecurity about not having a big title, it can be easy to push a little too hard on your field experience to influence others,” says Cashman.

In fact, experts say it’s smart to take the first step of acknowledging the expertise and experience of your audience; an early bow to their credentials makes them more open to your message.

“By honoring their experience in a genuine way, and being honest about the experience or knowledge you

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“You want to use real-world examples that stick in people’s minds, or data they haven’t seen before, to tap into your own authority.”

– Nick Morgan of coaching firm Public Words

don’t have as well as what you do have, it levels the playing field,” Cashman says.

Such an approach can, for example, grease the skids for selling them on new technology you think can help the company boost productivity or customer service, or convince higher-ups of the value of certain process changes or budget expansions.

As difficult as it can be to remember in these nerve-racking situations, it isn’t about you or the people you’re speaking to. It’s about why you are attempting to influence or educate your audience in the first place. “Stay focused on that instead of getting caught up in how powerful someone else might be and how ‘inconsequential’ you might be,” Bellman says. “Keep that larger purpose in mind and you’ll usually do well.”

So take heart, ye of lesser titles or credentials. It is possible to influence and lead as power brokers do by

remembering that authority and effective leadership are two different things.

“Leadership isn’t about a position, it’s about behavior,” says Jim Kouzes, author of *The Leadership Challenge* and a business professor at Santa Clara University who received Toastmasters’ Golden Gavel Award in 2006. “Doing something willingly because you respect and trust someone is different from doing something because they have the authority to give you an order.”

That, in a nutshell, captures the difference between commitment and compliance. And if your goal is to influence or lead a highly engaged and motivated group of associates that delivers better customer service, improved product quality or greater productivity, the former almost always wins the day. ■

Dave Zielinski is a freelance writer who divides his time between Wisconsin and South Carolina.



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– John R. Wooden,
Head Basketball Coach, Emeritus, University of California, Los Angeles

A legendary coach offers lessons in leadership.

THE WOODEN WAY

By Craig Harrison, DTM

When John Robert Wooden speaks, everyone listens – not only because he is considered the greatest college basketball coach of all time, but because his legacy as a leader extends far beyond the basketball court. Aside from having guided his University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) teams to an unprecedented 10 U.S. national championships, Wooden is a highly principled man and a master motivator who offers invaluable insights about people and how they can best work together.

Recently, I interviewed the 97-year old marvel on the topic of leadership. Coach Wooden shared his wisdom on team building, conflict resolution, giving credit, dealing with adversity and pursuing excellence. His teachings are directly applicable to Toastmasters everywhere, be they officers or future officers.

Leading and Motivating Teams

The *Toastmaster* magazine: *How can our leaders motivate people to do good work, and how can they motivate teams of people to work together toward a common goal?*

John Wooden: In my opinion, one of the greatest motivating tools we have is a pat on the back. It doesn't have to be a physical pat – it could be a smile, a nod. Everyone likes to be complimented in one way or another.



▲ A reporter interviews John Wooden at UCLA, where he coached from 1948 to 1975 and won an unprecedented 10 U.S. national championships.



▲ John Wooden speaks at UCLA in 2003, at a ceremony honoring him and his late wife, Nell. Earlier this year, the university's Anderson School of Management established the John Wooden Global Leadership Award.

Another technique is listening. A leader must listen to those under their supervision. I believe that has been overlooked a lot. We don't know a thing that we haven't learned from somebody else in one way or another. And one of the ways we do that is by listening.

Tips for New Leaders

TM: Many Toastmasters members step, or are thrust, into leadership positions for the first time. Do you have tips on how they can build a cohesive team?

JW: Again, the first thing is listening. Get ideas from them. Lead, don't drive. And give credit. Don't blame. If an officer on your team suggested something and it worked well, give them credit. If it doesn't work well, *you* take the blame because you made the decision. Lastly, criticism must always be given in a gentle way, never harshly.

[As a coach] I had three rules, as I progressed through the years, for my teams:

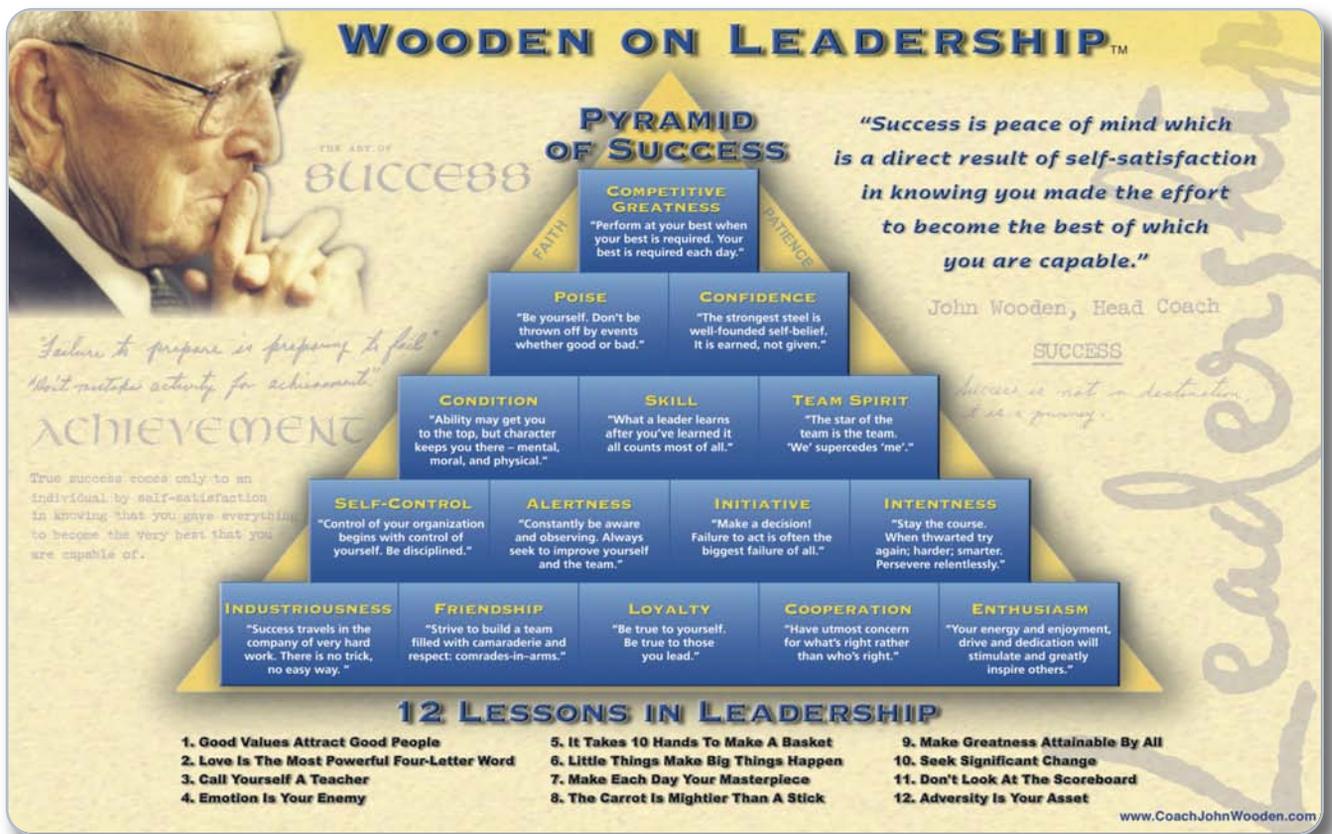
1. Never be late. Always be on time. It's very important. Whether to practice, to the table, to the bus, to your classes.
2. You must never criticize a teammate. That's the leader's job. It's never your job.
3. I would not tolerate profanity from anyone, anytime. I'd blow the whistle, pull you from the court, put you on the bench and talk to you before I would put you back in.

The Pursuit of Excellence

TM: Each year our districts strive to achieve and/or maintain levels of excellence. You coached for 16 years at UCLA before you won your first national championship. Which was harder: climbing the mountain to win your first national championship, or maintaining that level of excellence in subsequent years when you were the recognized king of the hill and expectations rose?

JW: I think it's far more difficult to get to the top. You learn so much along the way, not only with working with other people, but other little things that can help you.

TM: As someone who has won at every level and set records that likely will never be broken, what is your definition of success?



JW: Too many people look at outscoring someone as winning. I never tried to get that across to my players. My bench never heard me mention winning. My whole emphasis was for each one of my players to try to learn to execute the fundamentals to the best of their ability. Not to try to be better than somebody else, but to learn from others, and never cease trying to be the best they could be; that's what I emphasized more than anything else.

"A good banker isn't careless with pennies; a good leader isn't sloppy about details."

– John R. Wooden

Pyramid of Success

TM: Your Pyramid of Success is an inspiration to men and women around the world. How did you develop your model of excellence?

JW: When I was an English teacher, I found out some parents made their youngsters feel they had failed if they didn't get an A or a B. I never liked that way to judge. Nor do I like Mr. Webster's definition of success, which is more or less the accumulation of material possessions or the achievement of a position of power or prestige. I don't question the accomplishments, but I don't think they necessarily indicate success.

I wanted to come up with something that I hoped would make me a better teacher, and give those under my supervision something with which to aspire, other than just higher marks in the classroom or more points in athletic endeavors.

I coined my own definition of success. I used what my father said: "Never try to be better than someone else. Learn from others." I ran across a simple verse at that time that said:

"At God's footstool to confess, a poor soul knelt and bowed his head. 'I failed' he cried. The master said, 'Though didst thy best. That is success.'"

From those lines I coined my own definition of success in 1934:

"Success is peace of mind attained only through self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to become the best of which you are capable."

After a while I wasn't happy with this definition. My youngsters didn't seem to understand it very well. I felt I needed to come up with something you could see. So I started the Pyramid of Success, started it in 1934, completed it in 1948 when I was teaching at Indiana State University after being discharged from the U.S. Navy in 1946.

Any structure must have a strong foundation; the cornerstones anchor the foundation. For some reason the cornerstones that I chose to begin [the Pyramid] with I never changed. I had a lot of ideas during those years.

Changed some, dropped some, substituted something else, and other names could be used, but never changed the cornerstones.

I think anyone's success depends on working hard – industriousness and enthusiasm, enjoying what you are doing. You can't work your best if you're not enjoying what you are doing. Those were the first two [cornerstones].

And gradually I built the rest of the blocks. Between the cornerstones I had *friendship, loyalty and cooperation*. Then I went up to *self-control, alertness, initiative and intentness*. Then I went up to *condition, skill and team spirit*. And those led up to *poise and confidence*. And it all went up to *competitive greatness*.

And then with patience and faith you can get to the top of the pyramid, which is my definition of success.

On Resolving Conflict

TM: *What advice do you have in regards to resolving team conflict?*

JW: Certainly conflict will arise. I think you have to get both parties together and air everything out without trying to hold back anything – not be critical of either one, just try to listen to both sides and find out what might be the trouble. And sometimes you'll find out it wasn't too much at all. And it can be worked out without too much of a problem. Unless a problem is brought to the forefront, it will just continue to fester.

Cultivating Leadership in Others

TM: *What advice can you give today's leaders about cultivating leadership in others?*

JW: Make certain that you give those under your supervision credit. Make sure that they receive...very little criticism, but when there has to be some criticism, it must be done in a gentle way that will not be embarrassing, and definitely not in front of others. You may need to take them aside and talk it over, but never do so while you're mad. No yelling; it has to be done in a gentle fashion, and with a pat on the back is the best.

On Struggle and Difficulty

TM: *Any advice for leaders facing adversity or struggle of some kind on their teams or in their clubs?*

JW: Hardship brings people closer together if you share it. When I first came to UCLA, we had to have basketball practice for the first 17 years on the 3rd floor of the old gym, with the gymnastics team on one side and the wrestling squad on another most of the time. I grew

closer to those two coaches than the others because we shared adversity. It was tough for us all.

Club Presidents: Listen and Lead with Love

TM: *What advice can you provide our thousands of club presidents – essentially the team captains – around the world, in terms of leading their squads of officers and members?*

JW: I wanted mine to have a definite part. Your officers should never be afraid to make a suggestion, but they should never be upset if the leader does not accept it.

I also wanted my basketball players to know that I *really cared* about them. Forget basketball; as a *person*, I cared. I cared about their family. I want to know each

“Effective leaders are, first and foremost, good teachers. We're in the education business.”

– John R. Wooden

day: How's your mother? Did the job work out for your dad? Did your brother or sister get that position?

I think any leader should do this. You should really care. If you are fooling them, they will catch on.

On Patience

TM: *What else would you like Toastmasters leaders to know in order to succeed?*

JW: At the top of my pyramid: patience and faith! Leaders must have patience for those under their supervision. Don't expect too much too soon. Maybe it was easy for you, but that doesn't mean it's going to be easy for somebody else. Be sure you have patience.

And then, you must *believe* in what you're doing, that what you're doing is the proper thing, the right thing. And you must have faith that things will end up as they should, which doesn't mean as you want them to, but things will work out as they should. Providing, of course, that you do the things that you should do to help it become that reality.

I think we are all guilty at times of wanting things to happen a certain way but not doing everything we are capable of to help that become a reality. We just want it to. And that's not life. That shouldn't be life. **T**

Past District Governor **Craig Harrison, DTM**, is a member of Lakeview Toastmasters in Oakland, California. A former high school basketball coach, he is the author of *Cultivating the Leader in You* and runs the training firm Expressions of Excellence!™ Reach him at www.ExpressionsOfExcellence.com.



How Do the Candidates

Obama vs. McCain: Dramatically Different Styles

One has the appeal of a rock star and draws tens of thousands of fired-up fans to big arena rallies, giving speeches that have become instant classics and are compared to those of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and John F. Kennedy. The other is a confident debater who can answer just about any question tossed at him and has a knack for connecting with ordinary voters on his whistle-stop tours around the country.

The communication styles of U.S. Senators Barack Obama and John McCain are worlds apart, and the media has been quick to crown Obama, with his ability to mesmerize crowds with inspirational speeches, the superior communicator. But the verdict is still out on whose ora-

tory skills will lead all the way to the White House when American voters elect the country's 44th president in November. One thing is certain – until Election Day, the two candidates' every move will be analyzed, and their message, choice of words, body language and cadence



Communicate?

By Linda McGurk

scrutinized. Here's a look at what we can learn from comparing the contenders' communication styles.

The Message

Obama, the Democratic senator from Illinois, early on opted for the overarching themes of “change” and “hope,” and that turned out to be an ingenious move. “These are two very broad, or what some would call vague, messages, but they clearly resonated with a large swath of the electorate,” says Ruth Sherman, a communication coach in Connecticut who blogged about the primary season for **FastCompany.com**. Initially criticized for lacking substance, Obama later added more details to his speeches.

McCain, on the other hand, started out focusing on what is considered his specialty – national security – bet-

ting that the Iraq war would be the defining issue of this election. The Arizona Republican has also emphasized his opposition to so-called “pork-barrel” programs, or wasteful government spending. “He’s trying to project reliability, competence, personal steadiness and that he’s a good manager, and he seems to be quite successful in communicating that,” says Bob Katz, an author and entrepreneur in the speaking industry.

Word Choice

One of Obama’s strengths is his conversational style, which he successfully molds to fit the audience. When speaking to college students, for example, Obama often uses slang and casual phrases. He also tends to use a lot of inclusive words, and that makes people respond positively.

“Obama uses a lot of words like *you, us, our troops*, and *all of us*, and that makes people identify with him,” says Kathleen K. Kendall, a research professor in the University of Maryland’s department of communication.

McCain uses more traditional language that’s less vivid and more formal than Obama’s. “You can tell he’s been influenced by his 20-plus years in the Senate. His language doesn’t have the fresh, impromptu quality of

“McCain’s longtime service in the Senate has made him a confident debater who is fluent on many of the issues.”

Obama’s, and it’s almost clichéd in its formality,” says Kendall. “McCain’s language is more general and he doesn’t have any slogans that he repeats. He’s not as strong in terms of being memorable.”

She adds, “Obama often quotes the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as President John F. Kennedy. Both were eloquent speakers, and these quotes add to Obama’s own eloquence.”

Delivery

The way Obama delivers a prepared speech is the reason communication experts are raving about him. “You get the feeling from Obama that he could read a recipe to you and you would feel inspired,” says Sherman, the communication coach. Or in the words of Republican media consultant Alex Castellanos on CNN’s *The Situation Room*: “He is the guy who can stand on top of the mountain top and say, ‘We’re going to go over here.’ And he lifts people that way.”

So what’s Obama’s secret? For starters, he’s mastered the teleprompter to the point where it takes a trained eye to realize he’s reading off a screen. Secondly, he effectively uses pauses to give people a chance to digest his message, applaud and sometimes passionately chant one of his slogans.

“That allows [the audience] to connect with him emotionally,” says Sherman. “Everybody feels like they’re very much a part of him. It’s masterful.”

His energy and friendly appearance also help explain why he’s been able to captivate followers by the thousands.

To say that McCain lacks many of Obama’s qualities when he delivers scripted speeches is an understatement. He’s notably uncomfortable, sounds like he’s reading the lines from a script, smiles at awkward times and doesn’t pause to let the audience applaud.

“Rallies are not his thing. He doesn’t seem to know where one sentence ends and another begins,” says Sherman.

Even Republican strategists admit speeches are not McCain’s strongest venue – but debates are a different

story. While Obama sometimes fumbles when he doesn’t have a teleprompter or the choice of questions and topics, McCain’s longtime service in the Senate has made him a confident debater who is fluent on many of the issues.

McCain’s experience also helps him at town-hall meetings and in question-and-answer sessions, where his style is more conversational than it is from behind a lectern.

“He can answer just about anything, even hostile questions,” says Kendall. “He actually encourages questions from people who disagree

with him and that’s courageous, since questions are always a potential threat. He knows how to deal with them.”

Voice

Partly because of the big age difference – Obama is 46 and McCain is 72 – Obama has the upper hand when it comes to voice. Not only is his voice more youthful and energetic, Obama also knows how to use it, which is crucial on the campaign trail. In contrast, McCain’s voice is thin and doesn’t project very well.

“Obama has a more enthusiastic voice and has more vocal variety, which is so important in keeping the attention of the audience,” says Kendall. “If you don’t provide variety, the audience will tune out. Obama’s pitch, tone and volume are varied, and those are all very important.”

Interpersonal Communication

Going on whistle-stop tours through small-town America and showing off your interpersonal communication skills is mandatory for anyone vying to become President of the United States. Whereas McCain seems comfortable making small talk with truck-stop owners and answering off-the-cuff questions from factory workers, Obama often looks ill at ease when he has to get off the campaign bus on his stump tours.

Several of these situations have come back to haunt Obama, including his abysmal performance in a Pennsylvania bowling alley, and his tendency to reject food offered to him on the road by well-meaning constituents. “He’s not comfortable in these settings and it’s hurting him with middle-class voters,” says Sherman. “It communicates a lack of understanding of how to connect with people on the ground, and it’s something he must overcome. It’s his biggest weakness.”

Non-verbal Communication

Looking presidential is one thing – looking too sophisticated another. The fact that Obama, in Sherman’s words, “doesn’t look comfortable when he doesn’t have a tie on” could work in McCain’s favor. McCain is older, heav-

ier and doesn't dress in fancy suits like Obama. "For certain constituencies a more casual appearance communicates that 'this guy knows what my life is like, he knows how hard it is to fill up my pick-up truck,'" says Sherman. "It doesn't matter whether [McCain] actually does, what matters is what he shows people."

Obama's upscale appearance may turn off some voters, but his body language is as smooth as his speeches. He moves with grace and has even showed off some dance moves on the campaign trail, sending the message that he's uninhibited and youthful.

"He seems really comfortable in his own skin, even when he puts his hands in his pockets, which is usually a no-no," says Sherman. She only has one complaint: "Obama points too much. He's either pointing with one hand or the other. His hands should be open and variably expressive when he's speaking."

McCain's ability to communicate through body language is limited due to injuries he sustained as a prisoner of war in Vietnam. He walks slowly and can't move his upper arms very well, and Sherman suspects a lot of voters may not realize why. "I think it's going to hurt McCain. Somebody will have to explain it."

So does a person's communication skills really tell us anything about his ability to lead the country? Yes and no, according to Katz. In a March 24 op-ed piece in *Newsday*, Katz argued that the spoken word remains the best opportunity voters have to get to know the candidates:

"The notion of the 'good talker' has long vexed us. Eloquent and slick are often perceived as two sides of

the same coin, and our history contains as many examples of being bamboozled by inspiring charlatans as being inspired by bona fide visionaries. Yet, most of us believe there's a correlation, and possibly a very strong one, between verbal skill and intellectual aptitude."

But since very few people will ever get a chance to see the candidates in situations that aren't carefully staged and scripted by their campaign staffs, voters need

"You get the feeling from Obama that he could read a recipe to you and you would feel inspired,"

to start thinking about the candidates' speaking styles on a deeper level, advises Katz. Rather than overplaying a person's ability to recite prepared lines, we should ask ourselves who is the better communicator overall, who has the most compelling message and who manages to keep the facts straight.

And it's the rare occasions when the candidates aren't in complete control that may tell us the most about them.

"Let's look at the press conferences and some of the really confrontational debates," Katz says. "Let's see how they respond to questions. My sense is that [McCain and Obama] are both quite capable that way." □

***Editor's Note:** This article is presented for nonpartisan educational purposes; the views expressed are not endorsed by Toastmasters International.*

Linda McGurk is a communications specialist and freelance writer based in Indiana. Reach her at www.mcgurkmedia.com.

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U.S. Election 2008: What to Look for in a Candidate's Speech

I recently watched a Hollywood movie that culminates in a gripping speech. The movie was *The Contender*, about the risky selection of a woman U.S. vice president – ring a bell? – that reaches a climax when the president delivers a passionate address before a joint session of Congress.

Jeff Bridges, playing the commander in chief, was all you could want in a speaker – graceful, persuasive, artfully attuned to the power of the moment. He was also, and this brings me to my point, a Hollywood actor. When it comes to oratorical glory, Hollywood cannot be beat.

With the American presidential election season now hitting the home stretch, we will be treated (I use the term cautiously) to a final barrage of speeches by the two presidential nominees and their picks for vice president. The importance of what they say is indisputable. But the standards we apply to their presentations cannot and should not be Hollywood standards. After all, “we-the-people” have a different agenda and, one would hope, far different needs than “we-the-viewing-audience.”

So what exactly are the qualities we seek from a candidate's speech, and what do we hope to find?

I offer here some suggested criteria based on what we heard in the the recent Democratic and Republican National Convention speeches by the nominees:

- **Do the thematic and narrative elements flow from the candidate's own personal experience and worldview?** Is the speech rooted in the particular

values and life experiences of the speaker? Would the speech be impossible for another candidate to deliver?

- **Does the speaker convince us that he or she is not on auto-pilot?** It's pretty hard to sound engaged when cruising through obligatory chunks of text transplanted from a shop-worn stump speech. Is there a flicker of life behind the teleprompter? Is there any innovation, embellishment, improvisation?

- **Does the speaker risk going deep?** Deep in what way? Deeper than safe. Deeper than predictable. Deeper than stock resumé and biographical detail. Deeper than rehash. How to discern this? The old-fashioned way, by trusting our intuition about the way humans communicate.

- **Did the speaker personally author at least some of the speech?** Of course professional speechwriters will be employed. But when stirring words are spoken, it behooves us to know if our future leaders wrote them or simply recited them. Savvy teachers develop methods and instincts for detecting inauthenticity. We could do the same.

With these criteria in mind, I offer the following snapshot evaluations of this year's candidates' recent convention speeches:

Joe Biden:

Biden may well have authored key portions of this speech, but it's pretty hard to count that as praise. Rubber chicken circuit fare replete with stale quips (acknowledging his wife as “the only one who leaves me breathless and speechless”) left the impres-

sion of a man who possibly cannot tell the difference between the sort of campaign trail speech he's given countless times and one that resonates in distinctive ways.

Most tellingly, when talking about himself, Biden failed to soar. The only time he managed to display anything approaching conviction was when relating his mother's wise counsel to go back outside and bloody the noses of neighborhood kids who'd taunted him. In the hands of a capable storyteller, this might – *might* – have proved an amusing little fable. Why, of all his possible childhood memories, Biden chose to recall this particular one at this time is anyone's guess.

Sarah Palin:

The cadences seemed a natural fit for Palin's folksy and high-spirited manner, and it might be possible to imagine this as a speech she helped author. Except it was difficult to ignore the likelihood that this speech was originally scripted for Mitt Romney or another of the leading contenders for vice president.

References to her small-town background had the potential to captivate and reveal, yet her presentation was cursory and utilitarian. Her career as Mayor of Wasilla seemed the perfect opportunity for her to talk about who she is and why she cares and what her rapid ascent means to her and should mean to us. But this was never fleshed out. Instead, we were treated to a dose of talk radio sarcasm and her enthusiastic rendition – shades of the lapsed sports reporter? – of McCain's plight as a POW. If she were auditioning

for a community theater production, Palin just might land a role but it wouldn't be the lead.

McCain:

The patchwork structure of this speech had the whiff of a text assembled by committee that's infatuated with the cut-and-paste feature of its word processing program. McCain brought little verve to this extensive checklist of bullet points. He appeared to have been thrown off his rhythm by the noisy intrusions of his enthusiastic supporters. "I know these are tough times for many of you," he asserted promisingly, only to be instantly overwhelmed by the loud, insistent chant, "USA, USA, USA."

Where McCain spoke most powerfully and had everyone's fullest attention was in recounting his brutal imprisonment in Vietnam. He described this experience simply and directly. This was a story no other candidate can tell (in the first person) and it was the emotional centerpiece. He has mastered the tricky art of relating the rigors he endured without seeming to boast. And the lesson that he drew from this horror resounded especially well in words: "I wasn't my own

man anymore; I was my country's."

Obama:

Despite significant evidence that Obama is a capable writer (exhibit A: his first book), this speech lacked vivid examples of uniquely personal insights. When he did make reference to himself ("Michelle and I are only here tonight because we were given an education"), it was mostly to punctuate a policy point. Allusions to intriguing aspects of his personal story ("I realize I am not the likeliest candidate for this office"), yielded little insight.

That said, Obama managed to invest the obligatory policy and issue portion of his speech with passion and a sense of purpose. He managed a masterful maneuver in referencing the 45th anniversary of the acclaimed "I Have a Dream" speech, channeling the oratorical force of Martin Luther King without overtly mentioning him by name. In my view, Obama was able, in rising to his conclusion, to reach a kind of musical crescendo that eluded the other candidates.

Beyond the slick TV ads and shifting policy statements, the medium through which our would-be

leaders are compelled to communicate is the spoken word. Yet it's folly to continue to apply Hollywood (or even Toastmasters) standards to candidates' speeches when what voters truly need, what citizens need, is to *understand* these politicians better, to *know* them better. Acting can't tell us that, nor can outsourced scripts or paying attention simply to performance.

Speeches can, however, provide an invaluable window into the character and capabilities of these men and women who would lead us. Unfortunately, that's not going to happen unless the voting public – you know who you are! – insists on more relevant standards, less show biz and more authenticity, and makes a point of holding politicians to them. **T**

Editor's Note: The views expressed in this article are the author's and are not endorsed by Toastmasters International.

Bob Katz is an author and consultant working on a book about public speaking in America. His most recent book is *Elaine's Circle: A Teacher, A Student, A Classroom, and One Unforgettable Year*. Reach him at **Bob-Bke@RCN.com**

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Even the most experienced speakers suffer from foot-in-mouth disease.

Campaign Miscommunication

There are certain things you always see in a presidential election: big-money fundraisers, TV attack ads, campaign promises....and an inevitable array of verbal blunders.

The American campaign season of 2008 has been no different. It's not just the presidential candidates who have made their share of speaking slip-ups. Their political posses (advisors, aides, spokespersons, spouses!) have also committed gaffes galore. And with so much at stake, these mistakes have been costly: Embarrassing apologies have been issued; aides have been fired; reputations have been damaged.

The ultimate price of this verbal fumbling could be determined when Americans go to the polls on Nov. 4.

For anyone who cares about communication, there are lessons to be learned in all this, say experts in the public speaking arena – lessons that can be translated to our own lives and careers. They include:

- It sounds simple, but be sure to think before you speak.
- Preparation and practice are always vital to good communication.
- Take care of yourself physically – rest and good health can play a key role in your ability to articulate effectively.

The verbal pratfalls of political leaders reveal the hazards of

speaking extemporaneously, in particular.

A small sampling of the year's biggest blunders:

- As Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton vied fiercely for the Democratic nomination, one of Obama's top advisers referred to Clinton as a "monster" in a newspaper article. After making the strikingly harsh comment, Samantha Power – a Harvard professor – was forced to resign from the campaign.
- During a week of epic financial upheaval on Wall Street – one that would end with President Bush proposing a \$700 billion plan to bail out U.S. financial institutions – John McCain made this statement in a speech: "The fundamentals of our economy are strong."
- Obama, speaking at a private fundraiser in San Francisco, uttered his now-notorious comments about the economic struggles of small-town Americans: "It's not surprising, then, [that] they get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them." The comments – at best a poor choice of words and at worst a condescending categorization of a whole group of people – sparked a media firestorm, dubbed "Bittergate."
- Not to be outdone, the co-chairman of John McCain's campaign managed to make his own insulting

remarks about America's economic woes. Amid skyrocketing gas prices and plummeting home sales, former Texas Senator Phil Gramm said in a newspaper interview that the U.S. has become "a nation of whiners." Gramm insisted that the constant complaining from Americans led the country into a "mental recession." Days later, he resigned from the campaign.

When public figures make verbal pratfalls, we wonder, "What were they *thinking?*" Veteran Toastmasters say the basic principles underlining Table Topics – learning to compose yourself, organize your thoughts and think before you speak – benefit anyone wanting to get a message across effectively, be it politicians, business people, teachers or residents speaking out at community events and council meetings.

Norm Wigington is one who knows. The longtime Toastmaster in Houston, Texas, worked for many years as a Public Information Officer for the Texas Department of Transportation – a job that required him to be interviewed regularly by the local media about traffic and safety issues. Wigington says Table Topics at his hometown club consistently helped him improve his ability to speak impromptu and deliver clear, concise messages.

"I felt Table Topics was the best thing in Toastmasters," he says.

Prepare to Be Spontaneous

Marilynn Mobley, a media consultant and public relations executive in Atlanta, has worked with many high-profile clients through the years, including politicians. She says preparation is key to impromptu speaking – in other words, the more you work on it beforehand, the better you'll seem on the spot.

When her clients are preparing for a situation where they'll answer questions – from reporters during an interview or business colleagues during a presentation – Mobley coaches them to have certain “talking points” ready that they can repeatedly refer to when answering such questions.

This applies to any “subject matter expert,” she notes. When you have “prepared” answers – phrases and comments you've practiced in advance and you know the subject matter well – you are more in control when speaking extemporaneously.

“I advise my clients, ‘Always have an answer on the tip of your tongue,’” says Mobley, a senior vice president and strategic counsel at Edelman, an international public relations firm. “I tell them they have to understand their topic in a way that they can get their sound bites in when the occasion arises to use them.”

What if someone *is* caught off-guard when asked a question by an interviewer, or a colleague, or a board member?

Think before you speak, says Mobley. Take time before you answer. “I always tell my clients, ‘If you are given 10 seconds to give an answer, take two of them to pause and gather your thoughts,’” she says.

“There is no rule

that says you have to immediately answer a question.”

Mistakes and Misstatements

The litany of verbal gaffes and goofs made by Obama and McCain – America's Democratic and Republican nominees for President, respectively – has ranged from tripping over their tongues to misstating their facts. In one stump speech, Obama talked about traveling around the U.S. and said he'd

now been “in 57 states.” Another time he claimed that Kansas tornadoes killed 10,000 people – when the actual death toll was 12.

For his part, McCain has mistakenly used the word “Czechoslovakia” – a former country that for the last 15 years has been divided into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. And earlier this year he said there were fewer troops in Iraq than before the U.S. started its surge policy – when, in fact, there were 20,000 more troops.

However, a little perspective is in order. Do all these errors mean the two candidates are poor communicators? On the contrary, both men have considerable strengths as speakers. (See Linda McGurk's article on Obama and

McCain on page 20 in this issue.)

The truth is, anyone who runs for

high political office makes so many speeches and talks to so many reporters and answers so many questions – all while subjected to intense scrutiny and microscopic media attention – that bungled comments are inevitable.

Moreover, the candidates' every word and movement are captured by recording devices and Internet technology, such as YouTube. You'd have to be a super-hero to avoid making the kind of verbal

“There is no rule that says you have to immediately answer a question.”

flubs that are fodder for the media as well as political opponents.

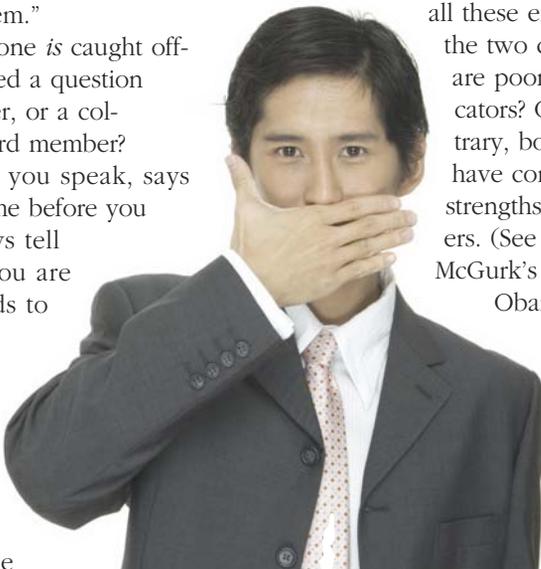
Mobley, an Atlanta resident and a past president of the Georgia chapter of the National Speakers Association, also makes this point: The presidential candidates are spinning around so fast, going from city to city and speaking day after day, that they're exhausted, making them more vulnerable to speaking errors.

“Physical condition does affect your mental condition,” she notes, “and that affects your ability to articulate in an effective manner.”

That's a universal truth for any communicator – whether it's a CEO trying to make a presentation on two hours' sleep, or an actress readying for opening night after getting no shut-eye the evening before. If you can, get lots of rest before big challenges that require communicating.

Mobley offers another basic tip – and it's one any Toastmaster knows well: “The more that people speak, the more comfortable they are with speaking extemporaneously.”

Paul Serman is an associate editor for the *Toastmaster* magazine and a resident of Orange, California. Reach him at psterman@toastmasters.org.





Highlights from the 77th Annual International Convention in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, August 13-16, 2008.

Oh, Calgary!

*More than 1,600 Toastmasters from 34 countries met at Calgary's TELUS Convention Centre in August. Some came as seminar presenters, some came to campaign for a seat on Toastmasters' Board of Directors, some came as first-timers just to check it out. But most people came to the Convention knowing what to expect: a reunion with friends and fellow Toastmasters who share a common interest in becoming better speakers and leaders. The photos on these pages show some of the education and entertainment of the four-day event. But to truly understand what a Toastmasters International Convention is all about, you have to be there! We hope to see **you** there, at next year's convention at the MGM Grand at Foxwoods, Mashantucket, Connecticut, August 12-15, 2009. Once you come, you'll be hooked!*



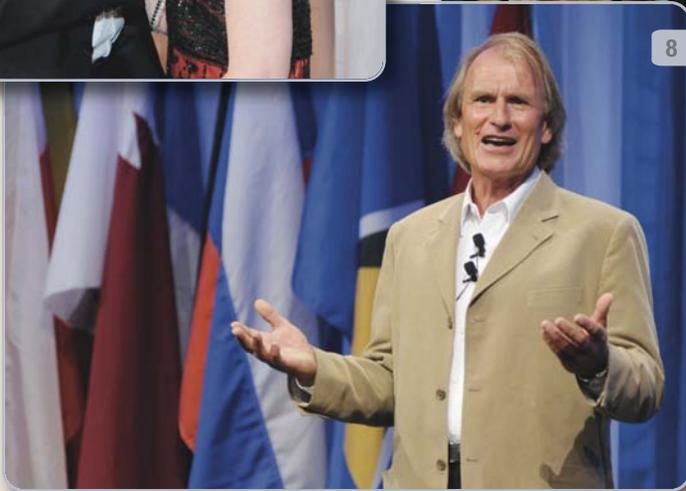


Photo Captions (pages 28 & 29)

1. Newly elected International President Jana Barnhill celebrates with her husband, Past International President Bob Barnhill, at the President's Dinner Dance.
2. 2007-2008 International President Chris Ford and his partner, Carole Campeau, at the President's Dinner Dance.
3. Delegate carries the Taiwan flag in the Opening Ceremonies.
4. International Speech Contest winner LaShunda Rundles receives the trophy from International President Jana Barnhill.
5. Canadian journalist Pamela Wallin wows the audience at the Golden Gavel Luncheon.
6. 2007-2008 President Chris Ford passes the presidential pin to his successor, Jana Barnhill.
7. A full house at the Golden Gavel Luncheon.
8. Laurie Skreslet shares his Mt. Everest climbing adventures at the Opening Ceremonies.
9. Toastmasters new Executive Director, Daniel Rex, speaks to district governors.
10. Friendly Convention attendees meet and greet between activities.
11. Michael Notaro accepts the nomination for Third Vice President.

Photo Captions (page 30)

1. Senior Vice President Gary Schmidt chairs the World Championship of Public Speaking.
2. The Board briefs attendees of important Toastmasters news.
3. Toastmaster Carolyn Kaldy makes memories with friends.
4. Accredited Speaker Sheryl Roush, DTM, shares public speaking tips.
5. Past International Director Danie Hardie offers friendly assistance at the Host District booth.
6. New Zealand Toastmasters support their contestant, Sanjiv Jetly.
7. An attentive audience.
8. Dave "the Shef" Sheffield offers tips for club and personal success.





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Photo Captions (page 31)

- 9. The three winners of the World Championship of Public Speaking from left: Loghandran Krishnasamy (second), LaShunda Rundles (first), and Katherine Morrison (third)
- 10. A hearty applause from the audience at one of the many Convention events.
- 11. A full ballroom at the Opening Ceremonies.
- 12. Host District 42 Chairwoman Jacquie Schneider is thanked by Past International President Johnny Uy
- 13. Past International Director Tammy Miller teaches "Beyond the Basics" to district officers.
- 14. Timers get ready for the Interdistrict Speech Contest.
- 15. Members from District 85 celebrate earning President's Distinguished District with International President Chris Ford at the Hall of Fame.



10



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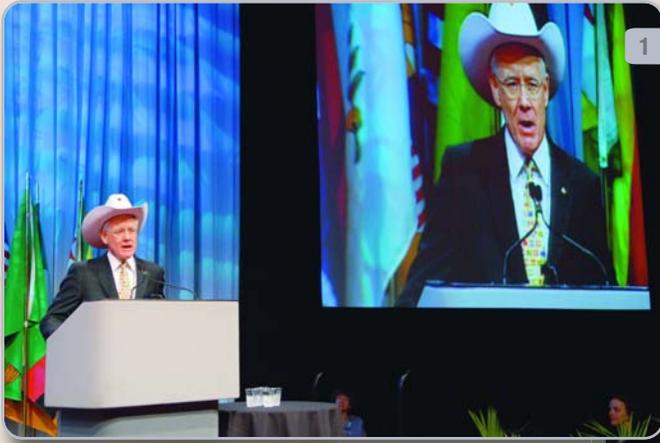
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6



7



8

Photo Captions (page 32 & 33)

1. International President Chris Ford gets ready for the famous Calgary White Hat Ceremony.
2. Paul Endress teaches session on how to master the art of persuasion.
3. Contestant Sammy Su performs at the Interdistrict Speech Contest.
4. Couple dancing at the President's Dinner Dance.
5. The President's Dinner Dance caps off the Convention.
6. Past District 34 Governor Gustavo Aragon with family.
7. Michelle Blumhagen of Region 4 enjoys a district officer session.
8. Presenter Jeffrey Washington shows attendees how to deal with difficult people.

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A Winner in Many Ways

As a girl growing up in a small Texas town, LaShunda Rundles regularly gave speeches and presentations – at events such as church programs, high school banquets and conventions. Not that she chose to do so – she was terrified at the prospect of facing audiences. It was Rundles' mother – a local educator – who steered her into such appearances, determined to provide her daughter with the poise, presence and communication skills she knew would benefit LaShunda in the long run.

Clearly, mother knew best. Rundles' early training paid off in a big way recently when she captured the 2008 World Championship of Public Speaking. Her triumph at the finals held during the Toastmasters International Convention – in Calgary, Canada – capped off the year-long competition where she advanced to increasingly higher levels. In front of nearly 2,000 fellow Toastmasters, Rundles defeated nine other finalists from different parts of the world.

"I didn't feel like I'd aced [my speech], because you never know what the judges are looking for," says Rundles, a motivational speaker and writer who lives in Dallas, Texas. "I did feel like I did the best...for me. I gave my all on the stage and left the stage feeling confident that I'd done my part."

Second- and third-place winners were Loghandran Krishnasamy of Puchong, Malaysia, with his speech "Finding the Rhythm," and Katherine

Morrison of West Roxbury, Massachusetts, with her speech "Baby, Don't Believe Them."

In the 70-year history of the contest, Rundles is the first African-American woman – and only the fourth woman ever – to win the prestigious event.

Hitting All the Right Notes

The 38-year-old displayed a wide array of talents in her championship-winning speech, titled "Speak!" She showed off a glorious singing voice, employed a sharp and lively sense of humor (at one point describing her intimidating mother as "Shaq in a wig"), and seamlessly wove several dramatic threads through her presentation, touching on the powerful influence of her mother; her own journey as a survivor of lupus; the importance of using one's voice to effect positive change in the world; and a theme familiar to most Toastmasters: how she overcame her fear of public speaking.

For Rundles, that epiphany occurred at age 8. Scheduled to talk at a high school sports banquet, she told her mother she didn't want to give the speech. This, apparently, was not an option. Mom pushed her daughter to go forward.

"I learned to speak through the fear that day," Rundles said in her speech.

A member of Town North Trendsetters Toastmasters in Dallas, Rundles was diagnosed with systemic lupus as a teenager. The disease affects the joints and other tissues. She has had six surgeries



and her struggles have been so severe that she once weighed a mere 90 pounds and was unable to eat or care for herself.

Besides enduring a couple of long hospital stays, she also had eight toes amputated just before the year-long speech contest season began. Rundles was so fatigued at times that she was barely able to hold up at the contests, including the final. But she overcame all – and emerged victorious.

Rundles wants to parlay her speaking success into an opportunity to help others. She hopes to become the national spokesperson for the Lupus Foundation of America; as a lupus survivor, she says she feels particularly qualified to speak on behalf of other patients.

"People tell me how their lives are better after hearing my speeches," says Rundles appreciatively. "There's nothing more rewarding than that. Most people go after money, but an investment in somebody's soul is priceless." ■

Paul Sterman and **Beth Black** are associate editors at the *Toastmaster* magazine.



District 82 leaders are recognized by President Chris Ford for outstanding performance as a President's Distinguished District in 2007-2008.

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- District 39**
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Bud Watkins, DTM
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- District 6**
Patricia A. Croal, DTM

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- District 67***
Jack Tsai, DTM
- District 81P**
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Keng Kok Chee, DTM

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- District 59***
Zuzana Grofova, DTM
- District 37**
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Kalyan K. Sen, DTM
- District 15***
Michael R. Rusnack, DTM

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- District 68**
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- District 76**
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Roy P. Crawford, DTM

District 66
Alice Blake, DTM

District 65
Robert G. Logan, ATMG, CL

District 26
Dana Morgan, DTM

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Richard Hopkins • Club 719-15

Region II
Robert Mackenzie • Club 638-1

Region III
LaShunda Rundles • Club 4533-50

Region IV
Martin Pressé • Club 1432-42

Region V
Colin William • Club 4358-11

Region VI
Charles J. Wilson • Club 7132-13

Region VII
Katherine Morrison • Club 7843-31

Region VIII
Henry Flowers • Club 2500-58

Districts Not Assigned to Regions

Jock Elliot
Club 2572 • District 69
Brisbane, QLD, Australia

Loghandran Krishnasamy
Club 220 • District 51
Puchong, SEL, Malaysia

International Taped Speech Contestants

1st Place
Dwight Cummings
Club 583498 • Kingston, Jamaica

2nd Place
Rajdeep Manwani
Club 9206 • Bangalore Karnataka, India

3rd Place
William Wang
Club 585 • Shanghai, China

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M. Venkat, CC, Governor

District 81P
Marlene Hall, ACB, CL, Governor

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Adele J. O'Neal, DTM
Newberg, Oregon

Mike Wilson, DTM
Las Vegas, Nevada

Wilma Springer, DTM
Long Beach, California

Joseph Madley, DTM
Redwood City, California

Roy Crawford, DTM
Albuquerque, New Mexico

JoAnn Edstrom, DTM
Rapid City, South Dakota

Carolyn Kaldy, DTM
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Hillsburgh, Ontario, Canada

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Marilyn S. Albee, DTM**
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Wallingsford, Connecticut

Dilip Abayasekara, DTM, AS
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

Gwendolyn May, DTM
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FUNNY YOU SHOULD SAY THAT!

By John Cadley

A Jargon of Our Own

I think I know how jargon started. In prehistoric times, when humankind was still communicating through grunts, a tribe of hominids discovered that its particular form of grunting was not comprehensible to members outside the group. This seemed to give them an edge in the social circles of the day. They were treated with a certain deference and they rather reveled in it, sometimes even speaking nonsense on purpose just to see their neighbors' awed reaction.

Thus was born The First Law of Human Communication: If they don't understand you, they'll think you're smart.

Of course, soon *all* the tribes discovered the trick, and before long the entire known world was populated with individual groups trying to out-grunt each other in the most incomprehensible ways.

In fact, even as grunting evolved into real language, the concept of baffling outsiders with tribal lingo has survived. Today we know it as "jargon," the form of speech employed by competing tribes of doctors, lawyers, insurance salesmen, government workers, military personnel, architects, plumbers, musicians and so on to make them look smart and you look stupid. I've often thought it would be an interesting experiment to put, say, a doctor, a lawyer and an accountant in a room, have them speak jargon to each other, and see whose head explodes first.

Be that as it may, the point is this: Every profession – and I mean *every* profession, right down to the grocery store clerk who asks if your purchase is part of a BOGOF (Buy One, Get One Free) – has its jargon, its own special way of saying, "We

have a club and you're not a member." Every profession except one. Us! The communicators! The speakers! The language lovers! Everyone else gets to befuddle us, and we can only respond with clarity, eloquence and grammatical rectitude.

No more! To paraphrase Winston Churchill, this is a state of affairs up with which we will not put! If other professions can have their jargon, we can have ours – and we will, beginning right now.

For starters, we are no longer speakers, we are **oral verbalizers**. So when we give a speech, we are "*orally verbalizing wordage in an outward direction.*" We don't just communicate, either. From now on we "*impart, share, or otherwise disseminate information for the purpose of reciprocal cognition.*" When we write, we "*translate conceptual cerebrations into hard copy on a parallel plane in three-dimensional space,*" and when we take care to use proper grammar we are "*in compliance with the heretofore standard constructional norms of linguistic modalities.*"

A word will henceforth be referred to as a **CVU** (Consonant-Vowel Unit), a sentence is an **SLMC** (Sequential Linkage of Multiple CVUs), and a paragraph is a **MMCSHOSVOC** (Merged Matrix of Combined SLMCs in Hierarchical Order on the Subject-Verb-Object Continuum).

Oh, yeah – and it all ends with a Terminal Point Indicator (a period).

How would this work in real life? Let me give you an example. Your auto mechanic informs you that you need a new half shaft, and then waits to see your eyes glaze over with the look of the totally clueless. But you refuse to be shafted, as it

were. As he begins to prattle on about circlips, joint housings, retainer rings and transaxles, you interrupt.

"Excuse me, I missed a CVU.

Could you repeat it?"

"A what?"

"A CVU."

You act like he should know this – just like you're supposed to know what a half shaft is. There follows a moment of dead air in which the poor man realizes he's been out-jargoned. This has never happened to him before. He's stupefied. Now you go for the kill.

"You know – a CVU. It was in the middle of one of your SLMCs when you were orally verbalizing on the half shaft and you used a non-standard linguistic modality which resulted in a lack of reciprocal cognition on my part."

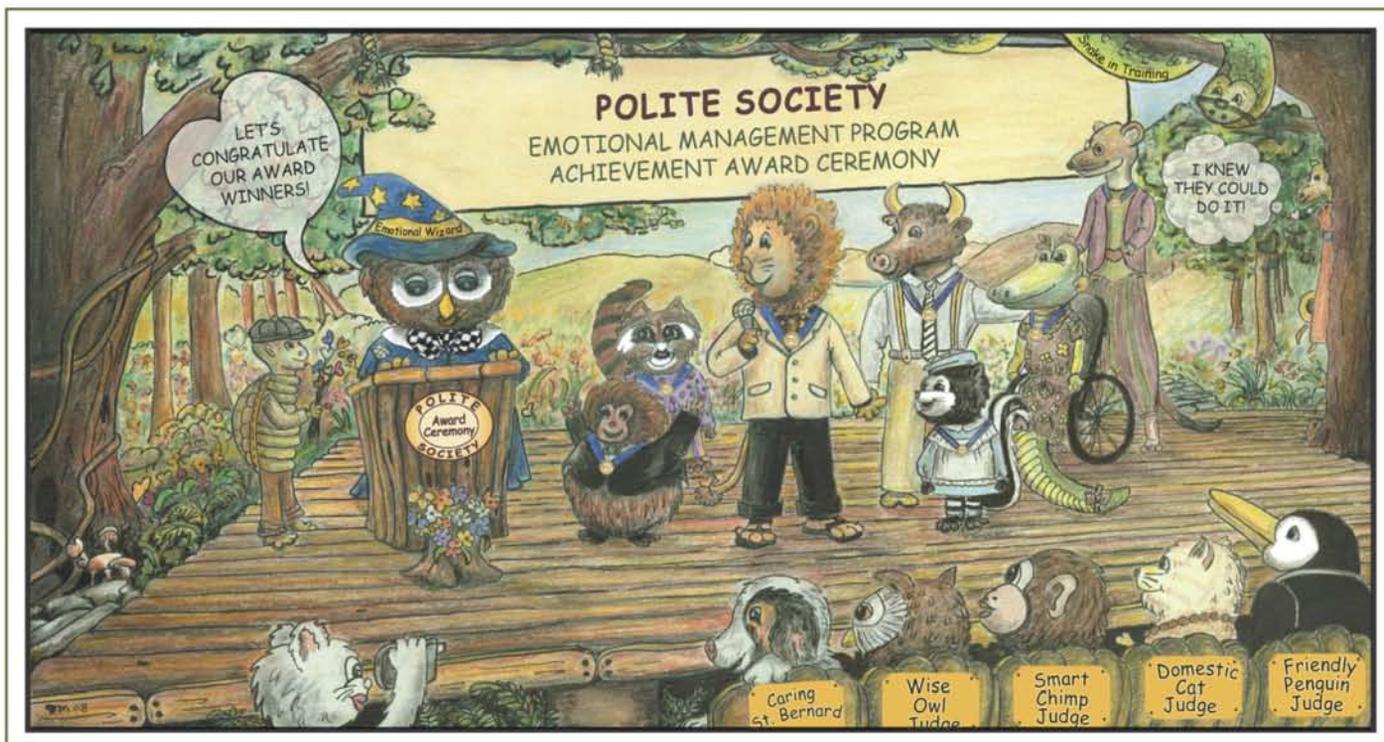
There is a silence seldom heard in an auto mechanic's shop. Wrenches have stopped wrenching, hoses have stopped hosing. The mechanic looks around at his employees, who are staring back as dumbfounded as he. It is a moment of truth that our automotive expert did not anticipate on this bright sunny morning with his cheese danish and coffee black.

"I'll tell you what," he says. "Why don't I just fix the darn thing? That would probably be the simplest thing."

As he bends to his task, you wave to the gawking lookers-on and leave the garage with a single thought swimming deliciously through your head: Revenge is sweet. ■

John Cadley is an advertising copywriter for an agency in Syracuse, New York. Reach him at [jcadley@mower.com](mailto:john@jcadley@mower.com).

Emotional Intelligence Awareness Month



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This imaginary award ceremony depicts wild creatures learning to be less aggressive, mischievous, and destructive. Although such intelligence is hardly imaginable in nature, emotional intelligence (EI) is helping us learn to monitor our minds and manage emotions, better—to think and act in healthier ways. Limited understanding about our minds, emotionally, causes many problems that disrupt the quality of our lives. When we know that what we're feeling, thinking, saying or doing is not healthy and we are able to stop ourselves, we're improving our EQ. EQ is a measurement of how well we are learning to manage our emotions.

By making healthy sense of our feelings inside, it helps improve how we structure our attitudes, motivate ourselves, and qualify healthy behavior. It empowers us in every realm of our lives! Better understanding can reduce everyday frustrations, depression, dysfunctions and half-hearted efforts. In society, we can reduce neglect, abuse, divorce, and other family problems as well as crime, unemployment, accidents, illness, wastefulness, and world-tension. By realizing that the number one consideration of a civilized society is the quality/credibility of behavior, it helps us recognize the importance of furthering such education. Learn more by searching for emotional intelligence on the Internet and at your local library/book store.

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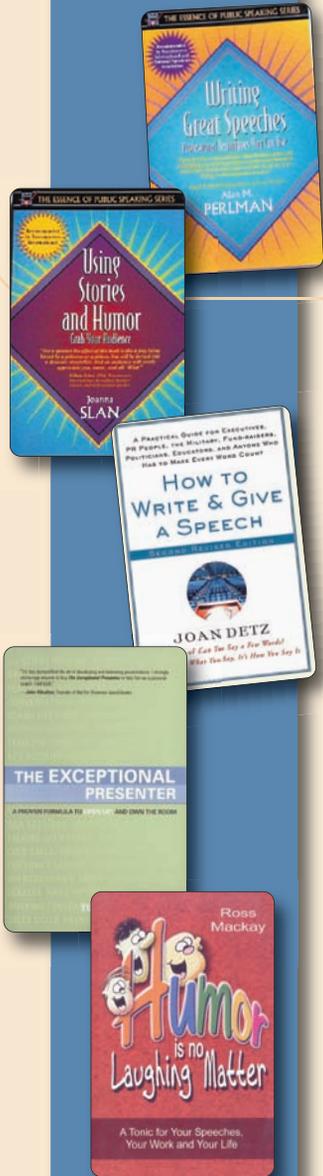
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