

TOASTMASTER®

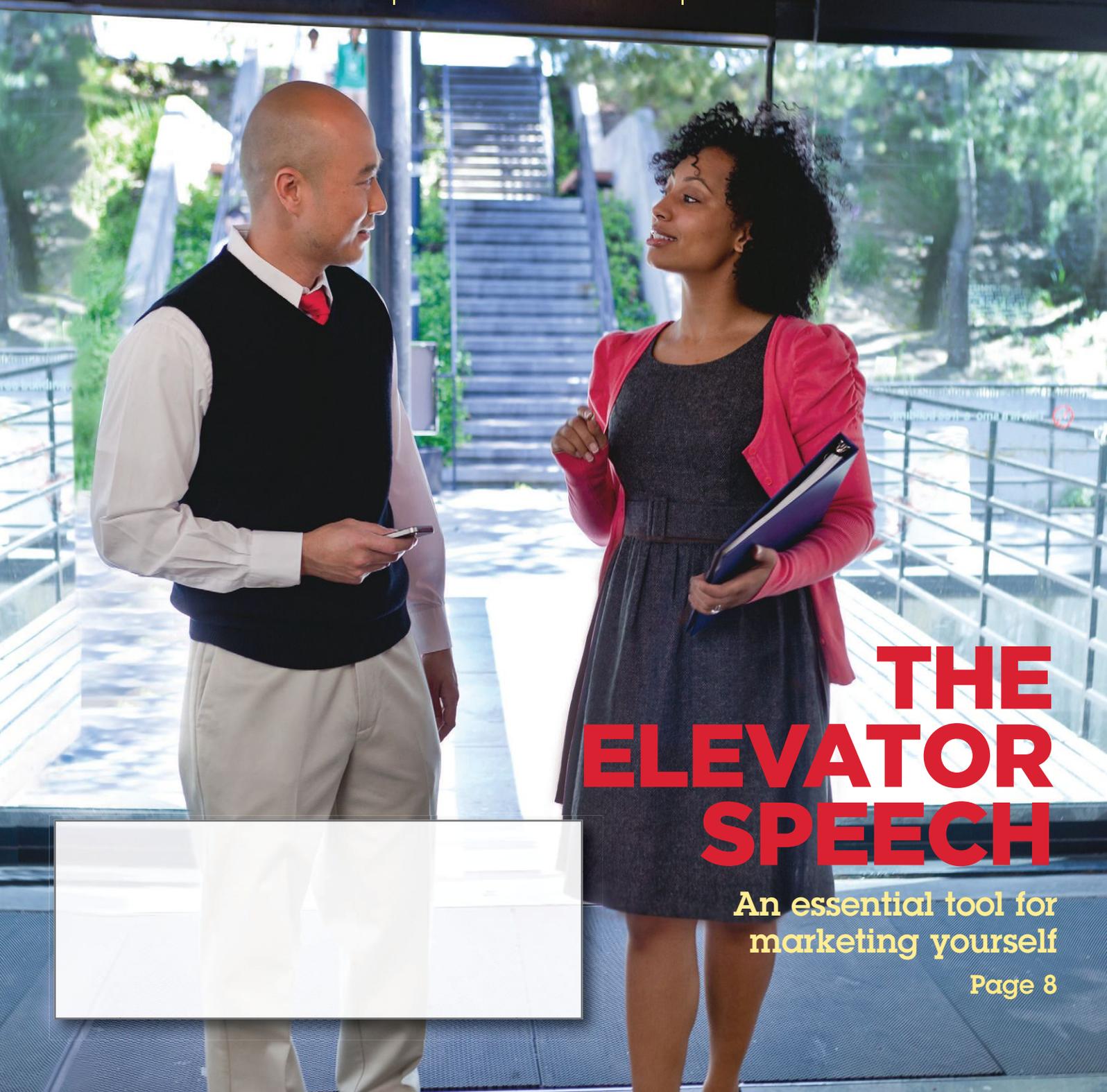
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OCTOBER 2011

**16 SURVIVAL
AT SEA**

**20 FROM PEN
TO PODIUM**

**24 STRATEGIES
OF SILENCE**



THE ELEVATOR SPEECH

An essential tool for
marketing yourself

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A GUEST IS SPECIAL



I recently traveled from my home in California to Greenwich, Connecticut, to attend the wedding of a grade-school friend whom I had not seen in more than a decade. I didn't know any of his current friends and at the wedding reception, when he was off getting his picture taken, I did not know a soul in the room.

After 15 minutes of standing alone, I decided I had done my "friendship duty" and planned to return to my hotel room to watch TV. As I walked toward the exit, a woman approached me, smiled from ear to ear and said, "Michael Notaro! Is that

you? Are you Michael Notaro?" She introduced herself and escorted me around the entire reception hall, introducing guests to the groom's "special childhood friend, Michael Notaro."

People began crowding around to talk with me. Suddenly, I felt like a celebrity! I had the time of my life and was the last one to leave the reception hall — well after midnight.

"Do you remember what it felt like to be a guest at a Toastmasters meeting?"

Do you remember what it felt like to be a guest at a Toastmasters meeting? You walk into a room filled with strangers, and there is the fear of meeting new people — combined with the fear of public speaking. Guests often feel alone and anxious. Some visitors make it as far as to the parking lot, but they are so frightened that they cannot get out of their car.

Hospitality is critical to creating a warm and inviting environment at your Toastmasters club. Greeting guests is not just the responsibility of the sergeant at arms and vice president membership — every club member should make visitors feel welcome.

Greet every guest as quickly as possible. Ask them to sign the club's guestbook and engage them in a friendly conversation. Take the lead in introducing them to other members. Never let a guest sit alone. After the meeting, answer their questions and concerns, and follow up with a thank-you email. Of course, don't forget to close the sale: Ask them to join.

Treat guests like royalty and watch your membership grow at Toastmasters — a place where leaders are made. **T**

MICHAEL NOTARO, DTM
International President

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WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE
www.toastmasters.org

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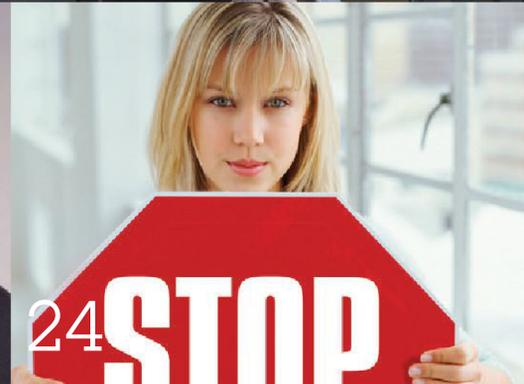
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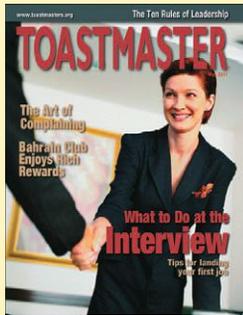
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BY LINDA E. ALLEN, ACB

Since 1924, Toastmasters International has been recognized as the leading organization dedicated to communication and leadership skill development. Through its worldwide network of clubs, each week Toastmasters helps more than a quarter million men and women of every ethnicity, education level and profession build their *competence* in communication so they can gain the *confidence* to lead others.

By regularly giving speeches, gaining feedback, leading teams and guiding others to achieve their goals, leaders emerge. They learn to tell their stories. They listen and answer. They plan and lead. They give feedback – and accept it. They find their path to leadership.

Toastmasters International. Where Leaders Are Made.



"The following week, an Open House for Toastmasters was held at my place of work, and when I read what the organization was about, I knew I was in the right place at the right time!"

Voicing **Self-Confidence**

I read the article "Have Faith in Your Voice" (April) with more than just a passing interest. I, too, share the stuttering impediment that King George VI possessed. My older friends say that he stuttered far worse than was portrayed in the movie *The King's Speech*, and in fact he never became a fluent speaker — he just had reasonable fluency in some situations.

In March 2000, I completed a speech program for people recovering from stuttering, and I was advised to join a Toastmasters club. I understand a growing number of recovering stutterers join Toastmasters. In 10 years as a Toastmaster, I have consistently represented my club at area, division and district speech contests, and I have achieved the Advanced Communicator Gold award.

Thanks to my fellow club members, I have gained the self-confidence to no longer fear that my voice will let me down.

Robert Carnes, ACG, CL
Elanora Early Morning Toastmasters
Elanora, Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

Better **Weddings**

As a wedding officiant myself, I like the way Jack Vincent described the potential consequences of messing up a wedding ceremony ("Mastering the Ceremony," May). I have been providing wedding services for

25 years and coincidence led me to Toastmasters. I performed at a wedding and while performing the ceremony from the bride's notes, I realized they didn't make sense and I had to improvise. A few months later, I received negative feedback from the bride's mother. The following week, an Open House for Toastmasters was held at my place of work, and when I read what the organization was about, I knew I was in the right place at the right time!

I am now a member of two clubs and my wife belongs to one of them. Delivering Toastmasters speeches and Table Topics has taught me to think on my feet, and now I realize the importance of body language, vocal variety and sincerity. Mr. Vincent's article offered a great point of view.

Mitch Cohen
NCCI Toastmasters
Boca Raton, Florida

Sounding Off

I was disappointed by "Speak and Be Heard" (June). The author didn't support his criticisms of headset microphones and failed to mention their value and advantages. He said they "can be distracting to your audience"; this is untrue, because they are, in fact, difficult to see. His criticism is more applicable to handheld microphones.

Mark McPherson, CC
Erskineville Toastmasters
Erskineville, New South Wales, Australia

John Cadley Praise

J-Cad, your July column [about teen lingo] was mad sick! Had me LOL-ing! You da bomb, bro! Seriously — great stuff, very funny.

Peace out, dude.

Mark Anderson, ACB, ALB
PPD Wilmington Toastmasters
Wilmington, North Carolina

Odd-Ball

When my *Toastmaster* magazine arrives, the first thing I do is read "Funny You Should Say That" by John Cadley. I find it at least witty and refreshing, and often actually funny. Yet it isn't just the giggle or the guffaw that I find attractive. John captures a feel and perspective that helps me see things in a new light or reaffirms my own "odd-ball" view of things. I hope you appreciate what an asset John Cadley is to the magazine and understand what pleasure he brings to this reader.

Joel E. Davis, CC
Hillsborough Toastmasters
Hillsborough, New Jersey

Refreshing Advice

The July *Toastmaster* is my favorite issue so far. I am the new treasurer of my club, and I have brainstormed with other new club officers about how to tackle the problem of member retention; in "Singing a Winning Tune!" (July "My Turn"), the Puerto Rico Toastmasters club's use of music and movies to retain their members serves as an inspiration. Also, I learned from "Say Goodbye to Your Script!" to use fewer speech notes and rely more on the structure to hone my future speaking skills.

Jinquan Liang
American Express Toastmasters
New York, New York

FROM CC TO TV

How Table Topics prepared me for my moment in the news.

By Linda Cohen, CC, CL



I couldn't believe I was going to be on television. I had just completed my *Competent Communication* manual a week earlier. The producer from a local morning show had heard about my story: After my father died two years ago, I decided to complete 1,000 acts of kindness — or *mitzvahs*, as such acts

should I wear? The answer: No stripes or busy patterns; make-up is good and bold colors work very well on TV.

On the morning of the interview, I arrived at the station promptly at 8:30. I started watching the show, went to the bathroom, checked my email and went to the bathroom

Just two hours after the show aired, the clip was available online. I got to watch myself on television for the first time! I soon received phone calls and emails from close friends and members of my Toastmasters club offering positive feedback. The entire experience was exhilarating.

I never thought about being on TV when I joined Toastmasters in 2007, but the skills I learned in my club gave me the confidence to take this wonderful opportunity. Table Topics, in particular, is an invaluable tool for learning how to think on your feet.

Each of us joins Toastmasters with different goals, but we all share the desire to improve. The Toastmasters experience has solidified my desire to become a public speaker and writer — and I am grateful for that. 

To view Linda's TV segment on "AM Northwest," go to katu.com and search "1000 mitzvahs."

Linda Cohen, CC, CL, is a member of the Noontime Nomads club in Tigard, Oregon, and the author of *1,000 Mitzvahs: How Small Acts of Kindness Can Heal, Inspire and Change Your Life*. The book is available on Amazon.com. Reach Linda at <http://1000mitzvahs.org/>.

"I never thought about being on TV when I joined Toastmasters in 2007, but the skills I learned in my club gave me the confidence to take this wonderful opportunity."

are known in the Jewish faith — in my father's memory.

I was both excited and nervous for this television opportunity. Fortunately, I was a Toastmaster, so I had some experience with speaking on the spot. After confirming my appearance on the show, "AM Northwest," I immediately emailed the good news to the members of my club, the Noontime Nomads in Tigard, Oregon.

When I spoke to the producer a few days before the show, she explained the program's format and mentioned some questions I might be asked. I wrote everything down for reference. She also answered my most burning question — what

again. My segment was going to be live at 9:40, and by 9:30 I was feeling very nervous. Finally, my time arrived and an intern came to get me. I took several deep breaths and remembered to look at the hosts directly and forget about the camera. We were on the air within a minute.

It was just like doing Table Topics: The hosts asked a question and I answered it. I did use a couple of "ums" and "ahs," but for the most part it was a fairly clean interview. I had planned and practiced a few stories at home and shared them during my segment. I answered each question as concisely as I would in a Toastmasters meeting. When the segment was over, the hosts thanked me and I was through.



Read it online @ www.toastmasters.org/magazine

AROUND THE GLOBE

▶ INTERNATIONAL INTERPRETATIONS

EXCHANGING BUSINESS CARDS INTERNATIONALLY



When networking, don't hand out your business card like you're playing poker. In Asian cultures, the business card is considered more than a list of contact information; it is an extension of oneself and is never to be bent or written on.

If someone asks for your business card, present it with your right hand or both hands. Never present it with your left hand — it is viewed as an insult in Muslim and other countries.

When receiving a card, accept it with the same hand(s) from which it was given to you. Never put the card away immediately. Study the card and comment to show interest. Finally, place the card in a card case and carry it safely with you.

▶ SNAPSHOT

Trevis McConaghy, ACS, from Saskatchewan, Canada, visits the penguins at the Antarctic Peninsula.



▶ WHAT DO YOU SAY WHEN...

YOU CATCH SOMEONE TALKING ABOUT YOU?

Members of the Oxford Speakers club in Oxford, England, respond:

“For a negative comment: I would make it clear that I heard the comment and then acknowledge my shortcomings. I would apologize for any potential offense I may have caused that led to the comment. Finally, I'd leave the conversation on a positive note and enjoy the satisfaction of flipping an awkward situation into one that I'll be respected for.” — **PAUL CHEETHAM**

“Are you talking about me? Aw, aren't I fabulous?” — **ERIKA HARRIS**

“I avoid this potentially embarrassing social situation entirely by wearing very loud, rattling jewelry or squeaky shoes. People can always hear me coming and can stop any conversations about me well before I get into hearing distance.”

— **MICHELLE REID, ACB, CL**

Congratulations to the Oxford Speakers club on its 50-year anniversary and President's Distinguished Club status!

BOTTOM LINE

New PSA

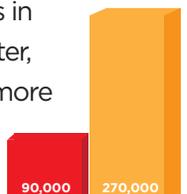
Watch U.S. TV news personality Chris Matthews explain why leaders must be good speakers. Visit www.toastmasters.org and search for “PSA.”

Looking Back

The first Toastmasters club met 87 years ago in October 1924. See the Toastmasters timeline at www.toastmasters.org/Timeline for milestones in the organization's history.

Always Growing

Toastmasters International had 90,000 members in 1981. Now, 30 years later, its size has tripled to more than **270,000** members.



▶ TECHNOLOGY TIP

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Optimize your personal and professional networking and embrace social media. Think about why you are networking, set goals for what you want to achieve, and be sure to keep your goals in mind while you follow these tips to engage online:

- **CREATE MEMBERSHIPS** to a few social networks.
- **CONNECT** with people striving toward similar goals.
- **INFORM** your contacts of other ways to connect with you.
- **COMMUNICATE** timely and applicable information to your audience.
- **BE CONCISE** and clearly represent who you are.
- **ENJOY** building relationships.



MEMBER MOMENT

LEADER FROM LEBANON

Rima Abou Mrad wants to make a difference in the world. She is currently finishing her third college degree, a master's in non-violent education, conflict resolution and mediation from Lebanon's Academic University for Non-Violence and Human Rights. She is a founding member of the Pro-Toast club in Beirut, one of only four Toastmasters clubs in Lebanon.

While attending Wayne State University in Michigan for her master's degree in law, Mrad was awarded the 2006–2007 Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship and gave more than 55 presentations about her home country.



Rima Abou Mrad

What do you like about living in Lebanon and which languages do you speak?

I love the rich cultural heritage, friendly people, delicious food and fun nightlife. I speak Lebanese, French and English fluently.

Why did you join Toastmasters?

Toastmasters is the ideal place to practice public speaking and train for TV interviews.

What are your career plans?

I plan to pursue a doctorate in international commercial law, work in a legal office and eventually start my own youth-education business.

You recently served as your club's vice president public relations. What is your advice on attracting new members?

Use social networks to reach your target audience and post interesting information and tips about public speaking and communication. Publish a club newsletter and share it with members. Hold introductory meetings at companies and explain the benefits of Toastmasters.

Learn more about Rima Abou Mrad at rimaaboumrad.com.

Mark Your Calendar

The Toastmasters Accredited Speakers Program can help you master your professional speaking techniques. Submit your application by November 1, 2011. For more information, go to www.toastmasters.org/AccreditedSpeakers.

Twettiquette

Think before you Tweet — your current or future employer may look at more than your resume. Follow Toastmasters International @[Toastmasters](https://twitter.com/Toastmasters) to see how it's done.

Strike a Pose

Would you or your club like to have your photo published in the new "Around the Globe" section of the *Toastmaster*? Email action shots (one megabyte or larger) to photos@toastmasters.org.



THE ELEVATOR SPEECH

Take advantage of this essential tool for marketing yourself.

By Christine Clapp, DTM

Perhaps you've heard that you should have a minute-long "elevator speech" ready in case you ever hop on an elevator and serendipitously need to introduce yourself. Maybe you're traveling up 30 floors with the CEO of a company for which you've always wanted to work, or with the key investor you've been pursuing for your new business venture. Have you considered how you'd introduce yourself if you ever have such a once-in-a-lifetime meeting? Or

Your elevator speech truly is an essential tool for marketing yourself.

Begin crafting your elevator speech as you would a formal speech. Prepare strategically, rehearse thoroughly, ask your Toastmasters mentor for feedback and rework material if it is not achieving the results you want. This doesn't mean your elevator speech should be scripted, stiff or unchanging. On the contrary, make sure it is conversational and can be adapted to fit the situation you're in. Bear the

"I now introduce myself as a person who provides solutions for individuals experiencing a variety of speech and language disorders," says Raleen A. Miller, a speech-language pathologist at Metropolitan Speech Pathology Group in Washington, D.C., and a member of The George Washington University Toastmasters club. When meeting prospective clients, Miller learned to talk about what problems she solves, rather than what she does. "Yes, I do provide direct therapy as a speech-language pathologist," she says, "but that's not the first thing I talk about."

When crafting the first line of your elevator speech, put yourself in your audience's shoes and answer the age-old question, "What's in it for me?" Get to the bottom line in plain terms to ensure listeners engage with you and that their eyes don't glaze over as you recite your official title, certifications or other jargon.

2. Tell an anecdote. After you describe how you solve a problem, tell a short story to explain your motivation for doing what you do. This anecdote should be a "signature story" — one that reveals the *Aha!* moment when you first realized you wanted to do what you do, or provides an example that shows how exceptional you are at your craft.

Santi Bhagat is the founder and president of Physician-Parent Caregivers (PPC), a nonprofit organization that advocates for quality healthcare for children and young adults with

"Remember, your entire elevator speech is just one to two minutes long, so your anecdote must be brief."

do you assume you'll never encounter that sort of situation, so you have no need for an elevator speech?

There's really no predicting whether you'll ever pitch yourself in an *elevator*, but you will undoubtedly need to introduce yourself at networking events, conferences, social functions and job interviews. When asked "Tell me about yourself," or "What do you do?" — it's best to introduce yourself strategically. If you don't, you're missing a chance to grow professionally and personally.

Just because you're introducing yourself in a conversational or small-group setting doesn't mean you should wing it. In fact, you should prepare and rehearse your brief elevator speech to an audience of *one* with as much care as you would a conference keynote to an audience of a *thousand*.

following three aspects in mind, and you'll always be prepared.

1. Describe yourself as a solution to a problem. The most important part of your elevator speech is the first sentence. When you don't have much time, use this sentence as a condensed version of your elevator speech. When you have a minute or two for your full-length version, the first sentence will determine if your audience will continue listening or tune you out.

For that important first sentence, make sure you describe yourself as a solution to a problem faced by your clients, customers or business associates. Listeners don't necessarily care what your job title is or how your industry describes the work you do. Listeners want to know *how you can help them*.

TRAITS VS. SKILLS

When pitching yourself, it is important to describe yourself effectively. Employers are most interested in a job candidate's transferable skills. Many people confuse "skills" with "traits" and this can pose a problem during an interview.

Traits are characteristic of one's personality.
Skills are developed abilities.

Traits, although important, do not represent what you can and cannot do on a day-to-day basis. They make you different from other people, but they do not set you apart during tests of aptitude. Traits can still be used to market oneself in an interview and are a positive thing to mention, but don't dwell on how punctual, energetic and honest you are. These are things to prove once you have the job.

Skills, on the other hand, help build a connection between what you have to offer and the employer's needs. Skills are developed with knowledge and experience, and are transferable to novel situations. In a short interview, you want to strengthen your message by focusing on your skills to describe how you can help accomplish goals.

While you sit down to create your elevator speech, take another moment and list your skills. Notice that the following skills all emphasize action toward a goal:

- ▶ Leading
- ▶ Presenting
- ▶ Training
- ▶ Creating
- ▶ Organizing
- ▶ Developing

chronic conditions and disabilities. Bhagat admits that "as a physician, my natural inclination is to speak in clinical mode, even when I'm talking about the experience of my daughter's chronic illness that spurred the creation of PPC.

"I now understand the power of storytelling and weave my daughter's story into my personal introduction and PPC's mission for change in health policy and medicine," Bhagat says. "Too often, we think numbers and data make the case for our listeners, but it's really the image of a real person that makes them care."

That personal story you share will help establish a connection and build rapport with listeners. People at networking events don't always remember a name, but they can usually recount

an interesting narrative. People enjoy listening to stories because they are entertaining and more memorable than highlights from a resume.

Remember, your *entire* elevator speech is just one to two minutes long, so your anecdote must be brief. Your story should have a few specific details to make it interesting and should include vivid language that piques your listener's curiosity.

3. Start a dialogue. Finally, conclude with an open-ended question — one that can't be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." You need to learn about the person you just met, because the ultimate goal of your elevator speech is to start a dialogue. Use this opportunity to let your ears do some of the work.

Carolyn Semedo is a communications and marketing professional who is actively seeking employment in the Washington, D.C. area. She understands the ultimate goal of an elevator speech: "Closing with a question draws the listener in, creating a dialogue that can serve as the foundation for a deeper conversation and, eventually, a relationship."

This is a realistic expectation for an elevator speech. Though you likely won't land a job or close a sale after giving your brief introduction, it is feasible to make a connection that leads to further conversation and collaboration.

The question you ask at the end of your introduction can be as simple as, "And what is it that you do?" Or, depending on the occasion, you can make it more specific to your field of work or the type of person you are networking with. Above all else, your question must show you are interested in learning more about the person you're meeting.

The content of a memorable elevator speech should be brief and should position you as a solution to a problem. It should share a personal anecdote that explains why you do what you do, and transform your introduction from a monologue to a dialogue. Make sure you prepare, rehearse and regularly revise your elevator speech to effectively market yourself and capitalize on opportunities that come your way — whether you're in an elevator, or not! **T**

Christine Clapp, DTM, is a member of the Toastmasters United States Senate club in Washington, D.C. As president of *Spoken with Authority*, she develops the voice of experts who want to broaden their impact. Her new iTunes app is called *Master Public Speaking for All Occasions*. Contact her at christine@spokenwithauthority.com.

MARKETING WITHOUT MONEY

Five public relations essentials that won't cost a dime.

By Jeff Crilley



Toastmasters International has been around for almost 90 years, yet some people still think the organization has something to do with bread toasters. To expand awareness, we as members can continue working to elevate the Toastmasters brand in our communities. The good news is, you can market your club without spending money.

After 25 years of beating the street as a television reporter, I have a scoop for you: The media needs good stories. Because most stories are poorly pitched to the press, they get lost in the blizzard of emails and faxes that blanket every newsroom, or they're quickly deleted for lack of clarity. Here are five *free* ways to raise your club's profile in the public eye:

Be Unusual

There is an old journalism adage: "man bites dog," which illustrates that members of the news media don't cover what's normal as much as what's *abnormal*. This still holds true today.

Public relations expert Carolyn Alvey knew this when she was trying to raise money for a charity several years ago. Instead of holding a garage sale, she sent out a news release announcing a "Celebrity Garage Sale." Everything from Bob Hope's old golf clubs to soccer star Lionel Messi's used shin guards were for sale. By making an ordinary garage sale extraordinary, she instantly sold the media on her story.

Choose the Right Reporter

Perhaps the most common mistake even some public relations pros make is trying to sell a good story to the wrong person. Most reporters have a specialty, like "crime" or "business."

Seek out the reporter who will have the most to benefit from your story. Start studying the news and become familiar with a reporter's work before you try to sell your story. Don't try and sell an investigative story to a reporter who covers entertainment.

Write Like a Reporter

Write the kind of headline a newspaper would run and make the rest of the release conversational so a television anchor could read it right on the air.

Why is this so important? A major market newsroom gets thousands of news releases every day. Often, the decision to cover another story over yours is made in a matter of seconds. That well-crafted sentence in the third paragraph of your release will never be read if you do not make it accessible.

Wait for a Slow News Day

The holidays are the slowest "news times" of the year. When government offices are closed, most news sources are not available. Take advantage of it.

In fact, take out your calendar and begin circling government holidays. If the government isn't making news, reporters are scrambling to find something to cover. Pitch even an average story on a day when the

media is starving for news, and you're much more likely to get coverage.

Use Social Media

You no longer need traditional media outlets such as newspapers, radio and television to deliver your message to the public. Thanks to social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, you can become your own media outlet — reaching countless potential members at the click of your mouse.

But there's etiquette to using social media. Some people call it "Twettiquette," but no matter what you call it, the secret is to *give value* to people instead of sounding like a commercial. In other words, use these platforms to educate people about better public speaking and leadership techniques instead of bragging about things going on in your club or sounding like a sales pitch for Toastmasters.

Now you're armed with knowledge that even some well-paid public relations professionals don't practice. Use social media to become an advocate for better speaking and leadership skills. Just remember: If your idea is unique and pitched to the right person at the right time, you're in! 

Jeff Crilley, a former Toastmaster, retired from TV news to start the first all-journalist PR firm in the U.S. For more information, visit RealNewsPR.com.

David Cruz: **BILINGUAL BROADCASTER LEND'S POWERFUL VOICE**

Toastmaster empowers the Latino community.

By Julie Bawden-Davis

When David Cruz was a child, his father played “radio show” with him, asking Cruz to reenact his day for a pretend listening audience.

“My father spoke into the microphone like he was at Carnegie Hall and asked me questions in English, such as, ‘Today we’re learning about sports. Tell me, Mr. Cruz, about your basketball game.’” Looking back on his career, Cruz recalls, “Years later, NBC sent me for training with well-known Broadway coach Lillian Wilder, and she used a similar method. I real-

He says his mission has always been to educate the Latino community and get their voices heard.

“My aim is to help people from different cultures unite, and use the best practices of both [the Latino and United States cultures] so there is a clear understanding of one another,” says the Toastmaster, a member of the Conejo Valley club in Thousand Oaks, California. “I try to impart the three E’s on my audience — engage, educate and empower.”

Becoming a voice of the Latino community was not easy for Cruz,

climbed into his beat-up Ford Falcon and drove from San Antonio to the University of Texas at Austin. He slept in his car that night and walked into the school’s Admissions Office the next morning, where he met his first obstacle.

“No one told me about transcripts,” says Cruz, who also struggled with stuttering. “A counselor took pity on me and introduced me to the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). The organization helped me get admitted to college and found me an inexpensive apartment.”

Cruz worked his way through college by selling shoes and painting houses, double-majoring in Communications and English. “Whenever I announced my plan to go into television,” recalls Cruz, “people looked at me sideways and said, ‘No Latino has done that; why do you want to?’”

After graduation, Cruz tried to find a job in television but instead had doors slammed in his face. “There was a clear racial divide at the time. One man said they weren’t hiring *meskins* [a derogatory term for Mexicans].”

He temporarily resorted to working as a plumber’s assistant. “If I hadn’t had a father who instilled confidence and total fearlessness in me, I’m sure I would still be in plumbing or a related field today,” says Cruz.

“When you look into a glass lens or speak into a microphone, you can become mechanical and disconnected. With Toastmasters, I’ve had the opportunity to connect with audiences.”

ized I already had one of the greatest instructors I could have wished for.”

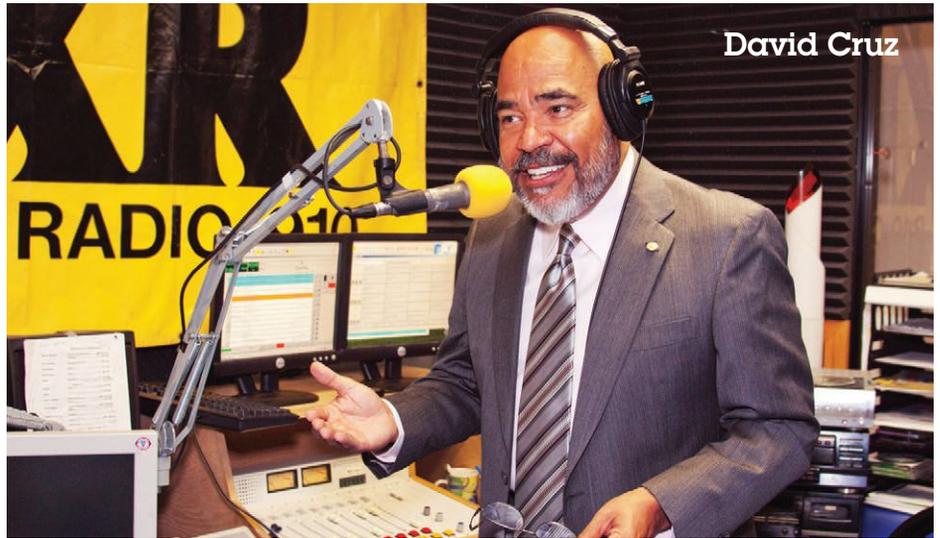
Cruz has forged an illustrious broadcasting career over the past 30 years, becoming one of the most prominent Latino figures in news media. He has won praise and honors for his investigative reporting on subjects such as immigration, consumer awareness and voting rights. Cruz won an Emmy Award in 2006 for his MSNBC report on Latino immigrants, titled “The New Americans.”

who initially encountered many of the locked doors he seeks to unlatch today. He was the first of his family to go to college — an idea planted by his father.

“My father understood the power of becoming bilingual and obtaining an education,” says Cruz. “Every night at dinner, he announced to me and my three brothers, ‘You are going to the university.’”

A New Start

After high school graduation, Cruz packed up one Sunday morning,



David Cruz

He persevered and eventually landed a position as a news anchor at KWEX-TV in San Antonio — the first commercially based Spanish-language TV station in the U.S.

Blazing More Trails

More breakthroughs soon came his way. In 1976, Cruz was hired at another San Antonio station — one that had initially turned him away — to anchor an English-language program, and by 1979, CBS hired him as its Central South America and Far East correspondent. Since then, he has worked for NBC and ABC affiliates, and his foreign assignments over the years have included stories on civil conflicts in Latin America and Asian-Hispanic economic partnerships in China and Japan.

“During my 40 years in television, David was the best reporter I encountered,” says Michael Dean, who was Cruz’s news photojournalist/videographer at NBC. “NBC sent us to Mexico to do investigative news stories. It was real cloak-and-dagger stuff — like working in a war zone —and David hit the ground running. He has done more than anyone I know to promote the Hispanic community.”

In the fall of 2010, Cruz attended his first Toastmasters meeting. “I went with my wife, Elena, to support

her, but the Toastmasters bug of storytelling infected me,” he says. Soon afterward, he joined the Conejo Valley club. Despite his media training, Cruz says he has benefited greatly from membership.

“When you look into a glass lens or speak into a microphone, you can become mechanical and disconnected. With Toastmasters, I’ve had the opportunity to connect with audiences.

Those connections have been powerful. In 1993, working at CNN Spanish Radio, he anchored and moderated the first nationally syndicated bilingual talk-radio program, “*La Voz de Texas*” (“The Voice of Texas”). These days he hosts a radio show in that same format, called “*David Cruz en Radio Lazer*,” airing from 7 to 9 every morning from Oxnard, California, on KOXR-AM 910. He also develops original content for Latino market programs, such as for Time Warner Cable’s Hispanic Outreach, covering topics like education and housing.

“I think David is the most articulate bilingual Spanish/English person in the media and has a great grasp of current issues,” says Hector Flores, past national LULAC president. “He is ... passionate about helping minorities get a fair shake in our country.”

Talking Toastmasters on the Radio

To spread the news about Toastmasters in the Latino community, Cruz hosted an episode on his radio show highlighting the Los Amigos Toastmasters. The Oxnard, California-based club holds alternating meetings in English and Spanish.

“David is a powerful and popular voice in the Latino community who makes people aware of the opportunities available to them,” says Gloria Davidson, a member of the Los Amigos club, who appeared on the radio show. “His inspiring messages reach field workers, elected officials and everyone in between, encouraging awareness and community involvement.”

Cruz plans to write about his experiences in television and radio, and will continue to encourage people to strive to improve, no matter where they are in life. “The only barriers we have are self-imposed,” he says. “We can all reach our goals and accomplish what we truly desire in life.” **T**

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.



THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING

Helping others in their careers can help you in yours.

By Bob Calandra

If the economic recession has taught us one thing, it's that a job, along with the financial security it provides, can disappear overnight. The good news is that you can help safeguard your job by paying attention to details, such as dressing appropriately or being punctual, and using your Toastmasters skills proactively. For example, be a mentor.

During a time when people are losing their jobs, becoming a mentor may improve your and your co-workers' job security. Extending yourself to assist someone less experienced shows your employer and co-workers that you are caring, generous and can see beyond the horizon.

Your managers will notice you going beyond your job responsibilities, which demonstrates that you are a self-confident leader. By helping another employee improve, you are the kind of employee a company wants to retain.

"Being viewed as someone who makes themselves available is very positive," says Michael J. Kitson, co-author of our book, *How To Keep Your Job In A Tough Competitive Market: 101 Strategies You Can Use Today*. "If people feel helped by your advice, they will tell the boss."

Why Me?

Being asked to be a mentor is, in many ways, the ultimate professional

acknowledgement. Moreover, as a mentor, you will receive personal satisfaction from helping someone advance, or at least improve, their career. And you can be a mentor at almost any level inside a company.

Of course, you can't just walk in one day and hang a "Mentor Available — Inquire Within" sign outside your office, or run a "Mentor for Hire" ad on the company's intranet. Qualifying as a mentor does have prerequisites: First, you must be demonstrably successful at your job and have a positive, can-do attitude. You must also be credible within your industry and possess business acumen.

In your personal and professional life you acquire many of these qualities through your actions. To be successful and respected within your industry you must allow your colleagues to see that you love your job. You can do that by actively participating in activities and treating people the way you want to be treated.

Get to know your colleagues. Participate in group activities such as work projects or the company soccer team, or just let loose by joining a rousing chorus of “Happy Birthday.” When people see you participating in a positive way, they will learn that you are approachable, accessible and trustworthy.

As for your manners, that’s easy. Say hello to people you meet in the hallway — even if you don’t know them. A smile helps relax people and lets them see that you’re a nice person who enjoys the work. When people feel at ease, they also feel respected and are more willing to share with you. Learning more about people and

“There is something powerful about being selfless,” says Kitson, who has spent 35 years as a business consultant. “When the team is successful, make sure that everyone gets the credit for what is going on. It builds your credibility and capital with the team members.”

As your reputation grows, people will begin asking to work with you. When they do, it won’t go unnoticed by your manager and their managers. In fact, a team project may include a few senior-level executives — and you can bet they will watch to see how generous you are when it comes to doling out credit for work, as well as how effective your leadership skills are. Their stamp of approval will go a long way toward establishing your credibility.

Where to Start

Let’s say you have all the qualifications to be a mentor. How do you find a mentee? You still can’t hang a shingle or run an ad. The answer:

“People respond to good leaders who bend over backward to give people their share of the credit.”

exposing yourself to new ways of thinking expands your experience and allows you to make more informed judgments and decisions. This makes you more deserving of respect.

Give Credit Where It is Due

Credibility is the result of being fair and honest with people. It leads to trust and, eventually, more respect. One of the easiest ways to build your credibility is to ensure that your colleagues receive the credit they deserve for their work. Recognizing each person’s contribution to a project or to the company is vital for several reasons. For the purpose of becoming a mentor, it adds to your credibility. People respond to good leaders who bend over backward to give people their share of the credit.

You don’t find them, they find you.

What you can do is position yourself. For instance, you might informally bump into someone you think could use your help, then strike up a conversation. At some point during your chit-chat, let it drop that you are available if he or she wants to talk or needs help with a work problem. That person may or may not take advantage of your offer. They may, however, mention your conversation to someone else. Mentoring is often a word-of-mouth business.

Another place to find someone to mentor is among your teammates or immediate colleagues. During a team meeting let it be known, tactfully, that you’re around if someone wants help or needs a sounding board to work out an idea. Follow up by

showing interest in your colleagues’ work. Drop by their desks. People are more likely to open up in a one-on-one situation.

Mentoring relationships bloom in different ways. Sometimes a smart, less-experienced employee will saunter up and simply ask for your help. Are they going to ask you to be their mentor? Probably not. Instead, they may ask how you would handle a specific situation. If the personalities match, more questions and more informal meetings will follow until the mentor/mentee bond has solidified.

That trust saved Joe, a business project director for a major insurance company, from making a bad decision. Joe was frustrated and tired of waiting for the job he wanted to open up in his division. During a conversation with his mentor, he said he was thinking about leaving the company. Joe’s mentor asked him if he was really serious and he said he was. She told Joe he might want to wait before making a final decision.

“She said she wasn’t at liberty to disclose details, but there might be changes in the near term that would give me the opportunity to get the job I wanted,” he said. “In a roundabout way she was telling me: Don’t make a rash decision. If you can delay it, delay it.”

He decided to delay and got his dream job. Becoming a mentor may allow you to help your own Joe keep his career on track.

So the next time a younger employee invites you to have a cup of coffee or is stumbling over to ask for your advice, feel flattered. Remember, we are never better as human beings than when we selflessly help someone else. 

Bob Calandra, co-author of *How To Keep Your Job in a Tough Competitive Market* (Avon, 2009), is a journalist and freelance writer. You can reach him through his website, bobcalandra.com.

▼ Emergency workers look for missing fishermen after the vacationing group's vessel sank off Mexico's coast July 3. Jesus Rodrigo Fernandez, one of the ship's crew members, helps Navy officials in the search-and-rescue efforts.



▼ Mexican navy personnel unload scuba-diving cylinders at the Punta Bufeo beach.



SURVIVAL AT SEA

Police chief draws strength from self-talk after fishing boat sinks.

By Paul Sterman



As Charles Gibson labored in the ocean, struggling to stay alive, a barrage of thoughts flooded his mind. He had been among a group of vacationing fishermen tossed into Mexico’s Sea of Cortez when their ship sank early on July 3.

Trying desperately to swim against a powerful current, Gibson thought of his wife and son back home in Northern California, his mother in New Orleans, and the fellow fishermen he was now separated from — 43 men in all were on the boat. He thought of

straight out of a Hemingway novel, this sea tale features twists and turns both excruciating and inspiring.

If Gibson does build a presentation around the experience, he will be well-equipped: A Toastmaster for nearly a decade, he has achieved his DTM and won three Toastmasters speech contests at the district level.

Lessons to be Learned

The ordeal in Mexico reveals lessons about survival skills, teamwork and communication — including the

resolve and spirit, is vital to helping people survive crises of all kinds.

“The ability to talk to ourselves — and encourage other people — goes a long way to surmounting the mental challenges that come with any survival situation,” says Gary Mull, DTM, a longtime Toastmaster from Dayton, Ohio, and an expert on survival skills.

Mull, who served on the Toastmasters Board of Directors from 2006 to 2008, has sailed boats most of his life. He speaks and writes regularly on the connection between sailing skills and life skills. Things can happen at sea that are out of your control, he notes, such as waves or weather becoming a physical threat. When such dangers arise, staying strong and optimistic is key.

“Self-talk at that point is crucial to keeping your own mind resourceful enough to take advantage of any opportunity,” says Mull. “You tell yourself, ‘It’s going be okay, people are looking for me – hang in there and survive. Put up with the pain, with the cold, with the threats. Keep your wits.’”

Police Chief and Club Mentor

Gibson, who has a rich baritone, is the police chief of the Contra Costa Community College District in Martinez, California. One of the district’s schools is Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill, where Gibson is a member of the Voice of the Vikings Toastmasters club, serving primarily in a mentoring role.

“You tell yourself, ‘It’s going to be okay, people are looking for me — hang in there and survive’.”

— Toastmaster and survival-skills expert Gary Mull

the island he spotted in the distance and how he could reach it.

Recalling this bone-chilling situation in a recent interview, the 57-year-old police chief says that at one point another thought briefly crossed his mind: *Boy, this is going to make a great Toastmasters speech.*

Indeed, it is hard to imagine many speeches being more dramatic than Gibson’s harrowing story of survival — a story he has since told on several U.S. national news broadcasts, including the *Today Show*. After the 105-foot vessel sank in a furious storm that triggered 15-foot waves, Gibson spent about 14 hours — most of it by himself — in the dark, shark-infested waters before making it to safety. Like something

ability to communicate with yourself. Faced with a dire situation, Gibson peppered himself with positive self-talk so that he wouldn’t give in to despair or exhaustion. He even started to sound like a coach as he willed himself to shore.

“All of a sudden the island was 50 yards away and these sports analogies popped into my head,” recalls the 6-foot-7-inch former college basketball player. “I said, ‘Come on now, you’ve got to seal the deal. Keep your swagger, keep stroking, keep stroking.’”

He was certain of one thing: “I did not want to spend another night in those waters.”

Experts say self-talk that is affirming and hopeful, that strengthens your

WHY CRIME FIGHTERS MUST COMMUNICATE



▲ Police Chief Charles Gibson speaks about his ordeal at sea during a press conference.

By Paul Sterman

Earlier this year, at a conference for college police chiefs, Charles Gibson led a training session. Not on the latest patrolling strategies or law-enforcement technology — but on public speaking.

“People automatically think of police chiefs as good speakers — but many are not,” says Gibson, himself the police chief of a college district in Northern California.

The 35-year police veteran believes strongly that such leaders — that all police officers, in fact — need more training in public speaking and communication. Gibson says the skills he has honed in Toastmasters have helped him immeasurably in his career, especially in learning to convey his message to both small and large groups.

This ability, he says, applies to situations like:

- ▶ Presenting issues to public officials at civic meetings
- ▶ Responding off-the-cuff to media questions
- ▶ Communicating clearly with a large staff
- ▶ Giving speeches to police organizations and college classes

“We give police officers training in shooting guns and hand-to-hand combat, but we don’t teach them how to speak in public or in front of the media,” says Gibson. “There needs to be training and classes dealing with public speaking. I think it should be taught in the police academy.”

When he became district police chief, Gibson urged his employees, including 25 police officers, to join Toastmasters. Lieutenant Chad Wehrmeister is among those who did.

“I reaped benefits from Toastmasters that I couldn’t even foresee,” says Wehrmeister. Police officers, he notes, have intense interactions with people every day, and in such situations, strong communication and leadership are vital.”

“It’s like you’re giving an impromptu speech,” he says. “You’ve got a person there who you’ve got to make your point to. Whether they’re a grieving mother or the victim of a crime, you have to be able to connect with that person.”

After he was rescued by local fishermen in Mexico, Gibson was eventually able to borrow a cell phone to contact his family. He reached his 26-year-old son, Adam, and was overwhelmed by emotion.

“It was hard, because I couldn’t get the words out. All I could say was, ‘Hey, the boat sank and I’m alright.’”

As grateful as Gibson is to be alive, his feelings are tempered by a great sense of loss: Friends of his on the fishing trip never made it back home. One man was found dead when he washed up ashore, and seven others who remain missing (as of press time) are presumed dead.

The fishing excursion off Mexico’s coast is an annual vacation for Gibson and most of the others, many of whom are friends from Northern California. When the heavy winds blasted the boat, a huge wave knocked Gibson into the water and he eventually found himself with six other men; some had life vests and some — like Gibson — did not. A few of them clung to coolers that they managed to tie together. The seven men became a team, working toward the common goal of survival.

“We were together for about the next four, four and a half hours,” says the police veteran. “We saw a light on the horizon and we kept kicking.

“That was good teamwork, and it was easy to show leadership. You’d say, ‘We’ve got to go left or we’ve got to go toward the light.’ We kept each other motivated.”

When the sun came up that morning, the men saw a couple of islands about three to four miles away. They decided to dump the coolers and swim for it. In the ultimate team gesture, Gibson’s friend Glenn Wong, who had both a life vest and a flotation device, gave Gibson his vest.

That piece of equipment proved essential as Gibson became separated from the group, in the water by himself for the next 10 hours or so. “He gave me the gift of life,” he says of Wong.

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DINING IN THE LAND DOWN UNDER

More than just a shrimp on the barbie

By Jenny Baranick

In 1984, two years before he starred in *Crocodile Dundee*, a golden-blond, tan, shirtless Paul Hogan invited me to visit Australia. He tried to entice me with images of the magnificent Outback, beautiful beaches and beautiful people. He even promised to “slip an extra shrimp on the barbie” for me. Okay, he didn’t invite *me* in particular. He invited all Americans via a commercial promoting Australian tourism; but 15 years later, I actually took Paul Hogan up on his offer. In fact, I moved to Australia for a few years. And he was right: The Australian Outback is incredible, the beaches are gorgeous and the people are so good-looking I even married one. The only thing missing: No one ever slipped a shrimp on the barbie for me.

My shrimp-less Australian experience wasn’t a consequence of poor hospitality or a shortage of barbecues. The reason I was never offered a shrimp from the barbie is because Australians don’t use the word *shrimp* to refer to small decapod crustaceans; they use the word *prawn*. So, yes, I did eat plenty of delicious barbecued *prawns* during my stay in Australia. Paul Hogan simply used the word *shrimp* in the advertisement because the Australian Tourism Commission worried that Americans might have not been familiar with the word *prawn*. But whatever you call them, they are delicious when grilled and might be

Australia’s most iconic dish. Australian cuisine, however, is actually wonderfully diverse. Because Australia is such a melting pot of cultures, it boasts delicious Mediterranean, Thai and Chinese cuisine in addition to more traditional Australian fare. (Yes, they serve kangaroo in some restaurants.) But before you take Paul Hogan up on his offer, there are a few things more you may want to know regarding the Australian dining experience.

Let’s start with the entrée. They do in Australia. People in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and France use the word *entrée* to refer to the starter course, while Americans use *entrée* to refer to their main course. The discrepancy is a result of different modifications to the traditional six-course meal inherited from the French. The entrée was originally the third of the starter courses, but was still a fairly substantial dish. In the early 1900s, some courses started to be placed on the chopping block. Because the entrée was substantial, the Americans retained the word *entrée* to refer to their main course. On the other hand, because *entrée* means *to enter*, Australia (as well as New Zealand, the United Kingdom and France) chose to use *entrée* to refer to the starter course: the *entrance* to the meal. Australians refer to the main course as the *main*. I’m just happy that everyone kept the dessert course.

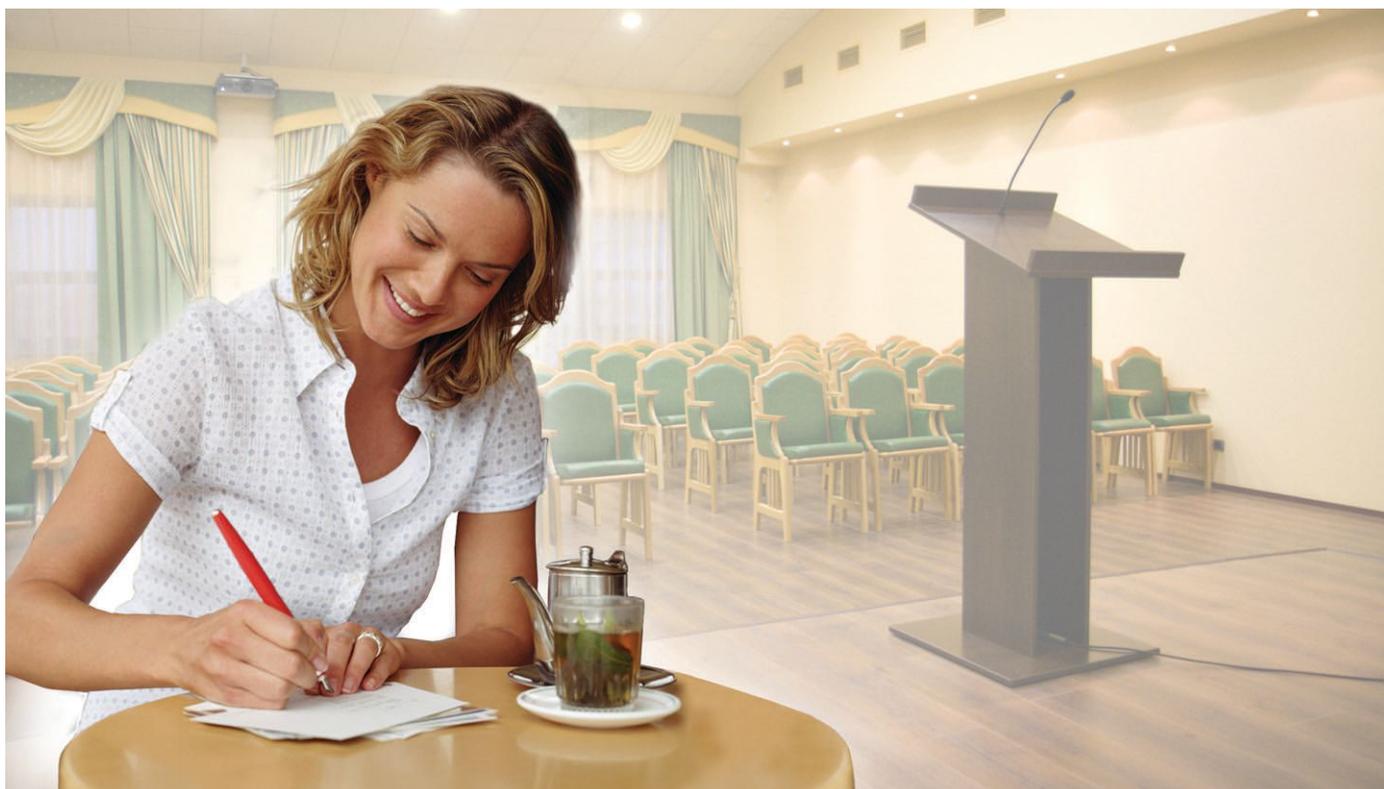
Speaking of dessert, does anyone want some coffee with theirs? If you’re in Australia, I recommend that you do. Australia has such a sophisticated coffee culture there are even espresso schools offering barista training. The job of a barista is prestigious; according to a Sydney newspaper, “A barista is the difference between a simple coffee and a sublime sip of aromatic heaven.” Consequently, Australian coffees are as rich and creamy as those you’d drink in Italy. And like Italy, the coffee comes strictly from an espresso machine. Therefore, your options include espressos, cappuccinos, café lattes and macchiatos — not filtered coffee. However, two options are unique to Australia and New Zealand: the flat white and the long black. A flat white is made up of espresso and steamed milk; however, unlike a café latte, there is no foam. A long black is hot water over espresso; it’s similar to an Americano but stronger.

So if you are heading to “the land of wonder, the land down under,” as Paul Hogan proudly referred to Australia, you will surely enjoy the majestic Outback, incomparable beaches and lovely people. But while you’re there, why not also visit a gourmet Toastmasters club and experience the delicious entrées, mains and coffee? Tell them Paul sent you, and I’m sure they’ll slip an extra prawn on the barbie for you. **T**

Jenny Baranick is an English professor based in Southern California. Reach her at jennybaranick@gmail.com.



Read it online @ www.toastmasters.org/magazine



FROM PEN TO PODIUM

How a writer journeys into public speaking.

By Beth Black, CC

If you're a writer, or you're close to one, you know the drill. The writing life is a secluded endeavor. Hours spent alone, by choice, where the only speaking you do is in your head, and the only discussions you have are with the characters you've put down on the page. Phone calls, neighbors' visits, lunches with friends — all must be set aside to allow your brain the sanctuary it needs to manufacture a universe of possibilities.

Writer and editor Robert Yehling, of *Word Journeys* and numerous other projects, is familiar with this territory. "When writing alone, it is very solitary and insular, almost like being in another world," he says. "Especially when writing fiction, when we should be in another world, the world of our story and characters. Everything happens between the creative and thinking minds."

However long it takes, the next step in a writer's life often brings some culture shock: *Speaking. Aloud. To other people. Real people. Together in one room!*

Speeches and Conversations

Breaking the silence can be enough to send many writers into fits of fright. These days, publishing industry executives advise writers to use social networking and build a "platform" to connect with their audiences. But even that leads to readings, signings, interviews or other situations where you, the reticent writer, must give a presentation. With public readings, the speaking assignment is more than merely reading a portion of your work. You must also reveal your creative soul, describing your book, writing process, successes — and even failures. Then, after sharing all that's

noteworthy about the process, you're finally able to read a portion of the work aloud. And, of course, for some writers that can be a challenge in itself.

Charles Allen, a fiction writer and past member of ADP Toastmasters in Roseland, New Jersey, says, "Public speaking has always been my biggest fear. As an author, I knew it was something I had to conquer if I really wanted to sell books. Speaking in front of an audience just goes with the territory."

Toastmasters provided the help Allen needed. And here's good news for writers: You don't need to be in a specialty club to practice for these events. Table Topics in any club will prepare you for a radio interview, and several assignments in the advanced manuals can help with nailing down your performance technique for readings and book signings. "What I have learned

in my eight months of membership is priceless,” says Allen. “I feel like I am being transformed into a new person, empowered to take control of my future and give my books the exposure they deserve.”

The Writer’s Other Job: Teaching

Often, a writer’s life resembles that of a club mentor. Even the most successful writers frequently turn to public speaking to share what they have gleaned from years of putting words on a page. Some writers teach to boost their income, but others do it for the art, to make sure that new, emerging talents benefit from their experience.

Yehling has contributed significantly to the latter effort. He has spoken at nearly 200 workshops and events for writers and writing students. “We have to carry all this information out-

writers, especially the quiet ones. “I’ve learned not to underestimate anyone,” says Alessandra. “The most unassuming person might have an incredible story to tell.”

Alessandra’s original speaking style tended toward long lectures, but she has learned to apply some writing rules to teaching. “‘Less is more’ is a great lesson for any writer ... and an even better lesson for a public speaker,” she warns. “I try to keep my lessons to the point, backed up with examples and translated into useful writing tools that a writer can immediately apply to his or her own project.”

When Toastmasters Focus on the Writing

Rough Drafts Toastmasters in Irvine, California, is a specialty club “for people working to improve both writ-

too, meetings sometimes center around writing. Past District 52 Governor Gilstrap, a Distinguished Toastmaster and Executive Director of the Universal City North Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, mentors new members on success in today’s writing world. “Instead of traveling to promote a book, authors are interviewed in podcasts,” she says. “They need to know their books inside and out. The best way to do that is to present a speech on each chapter as you write it.”

This sound advice and other helpful activities attract members from all over. “The club is filled with district leaders,” says Gilstrap. “They come to visit and stay when they see our banner covered with President’s Distinguished ribbons.”

Finding the Way to Toastmasters

Robin Spano, a mystery writer from Richmond, British Columbia, Canada, found Toastmasters after her book sold to a publisher. “My agent was describing all the promotional work a writer needs to do to make their book visible, including readings, panels and other public speaking,” she says. “I must have looked as terrified as I felt, because in the next breath she suggested, strongly, that I join Toastmasters.” Spano joined and overcame her speaking hurdles. “Now I love the stage,” she notes. “I enjoy what butterflies I have left.”

If you’re embarking on a writer’s life, consider your membership a part of the necessary training. Then, when you possess the skill to communicate with words — on the page *and* on the stage — you’ll know you’ve finally arrived. 

Beth Black, CC, is an associate editor for the *Toastmaster* magazine. Contact her at bblack@toastmasters.org.

“Public speaking has always been my biggest fear. As an author, I knew it was something I had to conquer.” – Charles Allen

ward and be crisp and confident,” he says, “because attendees are seeking to apply your experience and knowledge to their work.”

For those who write film and TV scripts, the challenges remain the same. Pilar Alessandra, director of the Los Angeles writers’ studio On the Page, worked as senior story analyst for DreamWorks Studios and Radar Pictures, along with other major entertainment companies, before moving into roles at movie studios that required speaking to larger audiences. She has trained writers at the Disney/ABC Television Group, UCLA’s writing program, the National Screen Institute and the Los Angeles Film School.

Making the transition from analyzing scripts to analyzing student works has brought her a new perspective on

ten and communication skills,” according to its website. In one meeting, the club enjoyed a unique version of Table Topics where the Topicsmaster asked a question and gave members two minutes to *write* a response. The *verbal* portion? Participants took turns reading their responses aloud.

Another club, Toastmasters 4 Writers, meets in Burbank, California, where it is hosted by a screenwriting software company. Writers Michelle Gilstrap and Barbara Schiffman, both from Burbank, started the club to help screenwriters learn how to “pitch” their screenplays after noticing at one event how poorly other writers communicated with producers and agents. The club was a hit as soon as it was announced. Though it welcomes non-writers



THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF WEBSITES

Use your club site to set your group apart.

By Marcie Hill, CTM, CL

What is the best way to show how your Toastmasters club is different from the 13,000 other clubs around the world? By creating, developing and maintaining a website.

Your club website can serve as an educational, inspirational, marketing, media *and* conversational tool! Keep your site content current, and highlight what makes your club unique and desirable. Use these tips to learn how you can do that:

Tone

Tone is the first way to distinguish between clubs. Pay attention to your writing on the site. Make your language more professional, or less professional, depending on your intended audience. If you are in a corporate club, make sure your boss would be fine with what you write. If you are in a specialty club, appeal to your common interest — tell jokes on a humor club site or use culinary terms for a food lovers' site. The one thing that should stay constant no matter what tone you use is the

friendly spirit: You should always be welcoming to members and guests.

Content

Share your club's story and successes. Each club has history, trials and triumphs. A website is the perfect place to chronicle them all. Be sure to report each of your Distinguished designations, a new point toward your DCP plan and any other awards and acknowledgments your club earns. If you sponsor a Youth Leadership or other program, note those experiences, too.

Share members' stories and successes. All your club members joined Toastmasters for a reason. Some joined to conquer their fear of public speaking while others want to improve their presentation skills. Some members want to become better leaders. Use your site to share anecdotes — perhaps there is a story about how a Toastmasters speech contest winner almost fainted during his or her Ice Breaker speech, or one about how the current club president admitted he skirted leadership responsibilities until he joined Toastmasters. These stories can be encouraging to new and current

“If you find certain forms of media are preferred by your web audience, continue to use them and ditch the methods that aren't working.”

members who want to improve their speaking and leadership skills. Also, be sure to report each time a member completes a manual speech or earns a new designation. That's not only a reflection of their progress; it also makes the club look good.

Feedback

Get feedback from members and guests. Remember, evaluations are an essential part of the Toastmasters program, and you shouldn't treat feedback on your site any differently. Heed all feedback provided, even if it is negative, and make adjustments to your content, your meetings or your club practices, as needed. When you put feedback into action, members know they are being heard and will continue to be active participants on your website and in your club.

Provide Tips

Speaking and leadership tips can be provided from Toastmasters material, or members can draw from their own experiences to offer advice and suggestions.

Create Media

Your Toastmasters website belongs to your club, so, after following Toastmasters brand guidelines, do what you want, when you want and how you want it. Bring a camera or recording device to your club meetings to capture what makes your club different from other clubs. Share stories using text, video, audio and images. Mix up the

use of the different multimedia tools to make your content more interesting and varied. If you find certain forms of media are preferred by your web audience, continue to use them and ditch the methods that aren't working.

Promote Club Activities and Events

There is always something going on at each level of Toastmasters. In addition to promoting your club's events and activities, use your website to feature district and division happenings. These activities could lead to new members and more member involvement. For maximum effectiveness, make announcements in advance and write follow-up stories after the event.

Build an Online Community

You want to build as many relationships as you can with

members and non-members alike. To capture prospects, you need to use traditional and new media tools. Traditional methods include email lists, press releases, announcements at clubs and word-of-mouth. New media options include social networking sites, podcasts and videos. Link to the *Toastmaster* digital magazine, the Toastmasters YouTube channel and @Toastmasters on Twitter. Your ultimate goal is to gain new club members and new website readers.

Reach Out to the World

Even though Toastmasters is an international organization, your club is locally based. A website will help make your club known around the globe. Depending on how active your website is, you may land on the first page of Google when people conduct a search on your club or a subject you posted.

In addition to highlighting the uniqueness of your club, your website will serve as a source of inspiration, marketing and encouragement to members and readers alike. The site will help your club grow, because you are sharing valuable content and tips that enables people to improve themselves, both personally and professionally. It will also help your group grow closer as you share the responsibility of developing and maintaining your club's website! **T**

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THE STRATEGIES OF SILENCE

How constructive quiet can deepen your understanding of yourself and others.

By Linda E. Allen, ACB

Have you ever been part of a conversation that ended in abrupt silence? As the seconds ticked by, you probably became increasingly uncomfortable and possibly even embarrassed. Such is the power of silence in an age where we almost never hear it. We live in a surround-sound world of cell phones, the Internet, and 24/7 television and news coverage. Noise

silence. Constructive silence moves a conversation or discussion forward. Destructive silence shuts down communication and creates barriers that discourage speakers from expressing their thoughts.

In controversial or conflict situations, silence “says” more than words and is more effective than a rush of emotion. In his book *How to Say It at Work: Putting Yourself*

and damaging words that can’t be taken back. Long before Toastmasters came into existence, Benjamin Franklin offered this advice: “Remember not only to say the right thing at the right place, but far more difficult still is to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.”

As simple and trite as it seems, counting to 10 combined with taking deep breaths before you respond or react is very effective. An apology for thoughtless words only softens the verbal injury; no matter how sincere, it doesn’t undo the damage.

Time-outs also work in tense situations. Often used with children, time-outs work equally well with adults by putting time and space between parties in conflict. Removing yourself from the situation helps you cool off and consider the possible consequences of your actions and words. After a time-out, parties are often able to return and resolve the conflict reasonably and respectfully.

Power Play

Destructive silence creates barriers and limits communication. If you’ve experienced “the silent treatment” from someone, you know the negative feelings of rejection and anxiety. When one person refuses to communicate with another, the silent treatment becomes a power game,

“Remember not only to say the right thing at the right place, but far more difficult still is to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.”

– Benjamin Franklin

is everywhere. In the occasional moments of quietness, the absence of sound can seem awkward, unsettling and uncomfortable, because we don’t know how to deal with it.

But silence is a powerful communication tool — a paradox to those who depend on words to share their message and feelings. Silence punctuates our words with emphasis, meaning and emotion. There’s a great wealth of information and wisdom in well-placed and well-timed pauses between words — if we listen for it. How to interpret the message of silence is the challenge.

The context of a situation defines the power and message of

Across with Power Words, Phrases, Body Language, and Communication Secrets, Jack Griffin advises letting the upset person vent. This allows that person to defuse some of his emotion and energy. By remaining calm and quiet, you stay in control of yourself and the situation. By focusing on the person’s message instead of his emotion, and choosing your words thoughtfully, you can respond with opportunities and possibilities for a resolution.

Remember the much-quoted advice, “If you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything”? It still holds true. This type of constructive, thoughtful silence prevents hurtful

which can destroy relationships and friendships. The silent treatment often becomes a stand-off, with the first party to speak being the one to concede power.

Pat Hoerth, co-owner of Turtle Rock Farm Retreat in Red Rock, Oklahoma, suggests using a talking stick to encourage communication in difficult situations. Talking sticks are important tools in her workshops on conflict, forgiveness, reconciliation and justice. She finds that many corporations and schools are incorporating this Native American tradition in conflict management.

“In our tech-connected world, the silence of unreturned phone calls, unanswered email and skipped text messages creates tension among people.”

The concept is simple: The group sits in a circle, and only the person holding the talking stick is allowed to speak. All others must remain silent. When the speaker has finished, he passes the stick to another person. The process continues until everyone has had an opportunity to speak.

The idea behind the talking stick is that a person cannot listen and argue a point at the same time. Such restraint is important: When we communicate in difficult situations, we need to truly listen — patiently and attentively — to the other person before we respond with our own message. The talking stick symbolizes respect and honor, and participants report that this activity provides a safe space, allows people to listen with full attention and to speak without fear of rejection or judgment.

In our tech-connected world, the silence of unreturned phone calls, unanswered email and skipped text messages creates tension among

people. Because you don't have the benefit of seeing the person who is not responding or reading his body language, this type of silence is difficult to interpret. If you know the other person well, you can probably guess his intentions. If not, much is left to personal interpretation — *your* interpretation — which may be incorrect.

Silence can send the message of avoidance, not wanting to do business or ignoring sensitive issues. In business, it is often interpreted as unprofessional and insulting. To avoid sending these kinds of signals,

a good solution is to set up out-of-office replies for emails and to use voicemail to screen calls until you have an appropriate response ready.

Negotiating with Silence

In negotiations, silence can be a golden asset. Whether finalizing a financial deal or asking for a raise or promotion, a good negotiator must be able not only to present her position, but also to listen and use the power of the pause. “Both parties want information the other has. How to gain that information becomes a type of competition between the two,” says Ed Hornback, president of American Expert Training Services in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He suggests using open-ended questions that require more than just a “yes” or “no” answer to gain information.

“Because many of us are accustomed to talking, we cannot tolerate lulls in a discussion,” adds Hornback. “Listening is a learned skill and must be a greater

percentage of negotiating time. Use silence to leverage your position by developing self-discipline to choose your words carefully.”

In many cultures, silence is an effective strategy in negotiations. Western cultures consider this silence stalling. Awkward silences make Westerners uncomfortable, causing them to fill the void with chatter, which weakens their message and position. In a rush to fill the silence, Western cultures often settle for less and compromise their bargaining position.

Body language or nonverbals create their own interpretation depending on the culture and the context of the conversation or discussion. Be aware of the messages your facial expressions and nervous habits convey during periods of silence. A good interpreter who understands the language and the cultural subtleties of body language can help clarify the cultural context of silence in negotiations.

The cultural code of silence can be difficult to interpret. Asian, Native American and some African cultures associate silence with wisdom and power. Cultures that value silence do not appreciate the act of thinking out loud and making excuses. In these cultures, one should think before speaking and only share one's thoughts after careful consideration.

Get Comfortable with Serenity

The Toastmasters experience offers opportunities for developing good listening skills in roles such as the evaluator, grammarian and Ah-Counter, and helps you incorporate pauses into speeches and presentations. To expand your comfort zone with silence, try disconnecting from technology for 15 minutes twice a day. Sit quietly with your eyes closed and focus on your breathing. This shuts

PAUSE-ITIVE ENCOURAGEMENT

By Dan Hebert, ATMB, CL

It is widely known that filler words detract from a speech, making the speaker seem unprepared, and lacking confidence and credibility. In contrast, pauses can add power to a speech. At Toastmasters we encourage people to replace filler words with pauses, but too often we tell people what *not* to do: Don't use "um," "ah" or other verbal crutches.

In mountain biking and downhill skiing, athletes are taught to look for the clearance, not the rocks or the trees. If you look at the rocks and trees, you're more likely to hit them. Where your mind goes, your body follows. Professional outdoor adventure racer and coach Dave Norona says of golf: "If you focus on not hitting [the ball] in the bunker or water feature, where inevitably do you hit it? In the water or sand bunker!"

In public speaking, filler words are the hazards — focus on them and you're more likely to say them. Pauses are the clearance — focus on them and you're more likely to get through your speech with lots of pauses. Keep your mind on pausing and your body will follow.

Our clubs' Ah-Counters have helped many people, but they will be even more effective if they tell people what to do instead of what not to do. The Ah-Counter role could be supplemented by someone who pays attention to pauses. This member can focus on, recognize and encourage people to pause.

The Central Park Presenters club in Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada, has been trying out this role in its meetings. A member reports the number of pauses each speaker uses and details when speakers use an effective pause, too short of a pause, or too many filler words when pauses could have been used. The word "pause" is used often — small pause, big pause, dramatic pause, good pause, more pauses. Now when a speaker doesn't know what to say, when they're stuck, what comes to mind? Pause!

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out all distractions. Try to clear your mind from internal chatter, racing thoughts and must-do lists. Listen to the quietness.

As you become comfortable with silence, begin to use it in interactions with others by focusing on the message of their words instead of mentally rehearsing your response. Use facial expressions and nods to indicate agreement and paraphrase what they said to acknowledge you are listening.

"Awkward silences make Westerners uncomfortable, causing them to fill the void with chatter, which weakens their message and position."

Silence deepens your understanding of others and yourself. Allow silence to become a larger part of your communication, from casual conversations to business negotiations and public presentations. Composer Claude Debussy once described music as the space between the notes. Likewise, our message is the silence between our words. 

Linda E. Allen, ACB, is club president of the Pacesetters Toastmasters in Stillwater, Oklahoma. She is a writer, speaker and trainer specializing in cultural awareness, professional and personal development, and leadership. Reach her at lindaeallen@sbcglobal.net.

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MAXIMIZE YOUR MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Farmers Insurance corporate club shares recruitment tips.

By Jacqueline Williams, ACB, CL
and Danielle Smalley, ACS, CL

Whether yours is a corporate or community Toastmasters club, you have probably noticed the membership numbers ebb and flow. Occasionally you have a full club with plenty of willing speakers; at other times, the club membership wanes, and finding enough members to take on all the assigned duties can be a chore.

bers attending. At the second meeting, nine of those 22 guests returned and three new guests attended. Within one week after that second meeting, we had 15 new members! And several more are considering joining.

Based on strategies that helped us flourish, here are some suggestions for achieving success in a membership-building campaign.

March meeting, and then we followed through with this commitment.

Saturate the building with posters and fliers. A club leader created some bright, eye-catching posters with clever sayings such as, “Freaking about Public Speaking? Toastmasters can Help.” These were posted all over the office. It was exciting to see people standing by the posters and discussing them. It gave members a chance to stop and chat about Toastmasters with co-workers they might not have connected with before.

Send an all-employee email. It’s simple but powerful. We sent an all-employee email that started out, “If you’d rather have a root canal than get up and speak in public, you are not alone!” The email gave the particulars about our club and the membership-drive meetings.

Provide a few extra incentives. We are fortunate that our company already provides some nice perks, including free lunch at the company café on meeting days and subsidizing half our membership fees. We made sure to tout these benefits in all our public relations materials.

In addition, we provided “jeans day” coupons to meeting guests and had a raffle drawing for nice prizes. Members also received a coffee gift card if a guest they invited joined the club.

“Knowing how to communicate clearly and calmly is an essential skill for Farmers New World employees.”

Now, imagine having more members in your club than you have room for. Sounds pretty wonderful, doesn’t it?

Our corporate club, Farmers New World Life Insurance (FNWL) club in Mercer Island, Washington, has remained active and successful since it was founded more than 17 years ago. Recently, however, our group started to see one of those ebbing membership tides. So to remain strong, and to support our company’s goals of employee development, we decided to go all out in our March 2011 membership drive.

Just how well did our effort succeed? It was our biggest membership drive since the club’s founding. At the first March meeting, we had 22 *first-time guests* — more guests than mem-

Before the Membership-drive Meetings

Take the time to plan. When both speakers at one of our meetings had to cancel at the last minute, instead of calling off the meeting we put that extra time to good use by having a brainstorming session about our upcoming membership drive.

Commit to personal invitations.

One simple idea we implemented right away was to gain a commitment from the group to personally invite specific guests. We all had fellow employees in mind whom we had wanted to invite but, for whatever reason, never had. Each of us wrote down the names of several people we would invite to a

► From left to right: Diane Droubay, Danielle Smalley and Becky O'Dell put up a poster to draw new members to the Farmers New World Life Insurance club.



Present Toastmasters information at staff meetings. Speaking at departmental staff meetings was a wonderful opportunity to provide management with more information about Toastmasters. Since our drive happened to fall during the company's annual review and goal-setting period, we made sure to explain how club involvement can provide employees with improved communication and presentation skills. Knowing how to communicate clearly and calmly is an essential skill for Farmers New World employees.

Beth Carrol, one of our newer employees and a supervisor at a call center, had not heard about Toastmasters prior to a staff meeting presentation. She attended a membership meeting and encouraged her employees to also check out Toastmasters.

"Public speaking is good for every employee, regardless of the position held," notes Carrol. "Even outside of work, public speaking is advantageous."

During the Membership-drive Meetings

Assign people to greet guests. Because guests often feel intimidated by how club meetings work — and there were many guests at our meetings — it was vital that we had a member at the door to direct them and offer a friendly "hello." Other members chatted

with visitors and answered questions. Guests were also given a slip entitling them to lunch at the company café.

Take a little more time to explain the process. With 22 visitors at the first meeting in our campaign, it took some time just to introduce all the guests. Our Toastmaster patiently and clearly explained the process as we went from one portion of the meeting to the next.

Make sure you have great speeches. For both of our membership meetings, we were very fortunate to have wonderful, diverse speeches, including hilarious presentations on water skiing and low-flow toilets, respectively, as well as a speech about the inventor Nikola Tesla.

Have a stockpile of membership packets on hand. If you are as lucky as we were, you could be surprised by the turnout. Although we ran out of packets at the end of the meeting, we still made sure all guests received a packet by the end of the day.

Make sure your meeting room is big enough. At the first meeting of our membership drive, we had reserved a larger room, just in case — and we ended up needing it. We would have been extremely cramped

in our regular meeting room, and would certainly have left our guests less impressed.

Positive Attention Produces Results

We've done most of the things on this list in past membership drives, so what made this one so successful? Ursula Glancy, a Policy Issue Analyst, says, "I always wanted to check out Toastmasters but never had the nerve. With all of the membership posters, emails and great enticements (like jeans day coupons and free lunch), I finally decided to try it out." And once she did, she joined!

Try using these methods in your club's next membership drive — and you might achieve a big "flow" of new members, too. 

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WHO HAS THE ENERGY FOR THIS?

Headaches, heat and the balance sheet

By John Cadley

I live in a cold part of the United States where snowfall typically exceeds 120 inches (more than three meters) a year. By February, cabin fever is running high and, come March, people keep the Golf Channel on all day just to see someplace green.

We need heat around here, and we either pay the asking price or start chopping up the furniture for firewood. However, thanks to deregulation, we have a choice of energy suppliers who send us letters explaining why they can give us the best price. Considering what I know about energy prices, they could tell me anything. And they do. From America to Russia to France to Outer Mongolia, these companies seem to think that the more confusing the language, the more attractive the offer. To wit: “We’re currently offering a low fixed rate of 69 cents per therm.” (Great — what’s a therm?) “The rate you’re paying now is a variable rate that changes monthly and may be higher or lower than 69 cents. However, our price is lower than the average price you’ve been getting over the last three years as shown in the graph below.”

They always use graphs. It’s like they’re saying, “Here, dummy, let me draw you a picture.” Graphs don’t help me. When I look at all those numbers, wavy curves, shaded areas and intersecting lines, I am reminded of math class, which is even worse than being reminded of winter.

They tell me I won’t pay more than 69 cents for my therms even if the price of natural gas goes up. Okay, I *do* understand that. But now I have more work to do. If gas prices go *down*, then I “*have the ability to switch to any of our other fixed-rate plans at any time.*” In other words, I have to keep watching the price of natural gas to make sure my low, locked-in, fixed rate of 69 cents per therm doesn’t lock me into paying *more* than everybody else who didn’t take this great offer. And I doubt if I’m going to get that information from my new best friends at the energy company. So if I sign up for the fixed-rate plan, I am required to be aware of the price of natural gas at any given point in time — then call the energy company when the price drops, fill out all the paperwork to enroll in a new plan, and get ready to switch back to my earlier plan if the price goes up again. If I’m going to do that, I might as well get a job in the commodities market — and that’s not likely since I don’t know what a commodity is.

Furthermore, in the interests of full disclosure, the energy suppliers feel compelled to tell me how my bills will be determined: “*Beginning with your October 2011 billing cycle your price will automatically continue on a month-to-month variable rate that will be created by*

taking the applicable monthly closing NYMEX settlement price and adding an amount not to exceed \$0.590 per therm, plus applicable taxes at the delivery point.”

Could someone pass me a headache pain reliever? But wait, there’s more. “*The company reserves the right to lower the price at any time and return it to the previously noticed price, without notice to the customer. The company will invoice through the utility, pursuant to the utility meter-reading and billing schedule for volumes as measured by the utility.*”

Make that two pain relievers. And finally, this wonderful chance for cheap heat can actually leave me in the freezing cold: “*In the event of failure to remit payment including commodity charges, the utility will have the right to terminate commodity service and to seek suspension of distribution service in conformance with the Home Energy Fair Practices Act. If you disagree with disconnection you can contact the New York State Department of Public Service.*” In other words, if I disagree with a giant, monolithic energy conglomerate I can try to get help from a giant, monolithic government bureaucracy.

You know what? Forget the pain relievers. Throw another log on the fire. **T**

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Pushing Forward

Without the support of others and fighting a relentless current, Gibson summoned strength any way he could. His aunt Cora Lee had recently suffered a heart attack and was near death, but she survived — now he drew inspiration from that.

“I said to myself, ‘If she can pull out of that, I can certainly pull out of this. I can certainly pull myself out of the water.’”

It’s this kind of spirit — and self-talk — that Mull says is so important in times of adversity. He refers to it as “learned optimism,” noting that if we make positive self-talk a regular habit — motivating yourself rather than adopting a resigned, defeatist tone — then we are more likely to take that approach in times of crisis.

Fellow Toastmasters say Gibson is indeed someone who has an extremely positive attitude. Lynn Kisielewski first met him when she joined the

Oakland City Center Toastmasters and Gibson offered to mentor her as she prepared for a speech contest.

“It doesn’t surprise me that he was able to live to tell about [this experience], just because his spirit is so strong, his will to go on, to really fight for something,” says Kisielewski, now president of the Oakland club. “He’s the kind of person you instantly know is special.”

One of Gibson’s district-winning speeches was called “Sharpening the Saw.” Drawing from Stephen Covey’s book *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, the speech stressed that people always need to do things to keep themselves sharp — mentally, spiritually and physically. For Gibson, that means attending police-related conferences, Toastmasters events and other programs. He also exercises four days a week at his local YMCA, which he says served him well when he was forced to swim and tread water in the ocean for so many hours.

“If you were to ask me what lessons did I learn from this [survival] experience,” says Gibson, “one is to continue to sharpen that saw — to work out and be prepared, because you never know what will happen in life.”

Along those same lines, he says his Toastmasters experience came into play when he dealt with a blitz of media interviews and press conferences in the aftermath of the disaster, which drew widespread news coverage. “When you’re crafting a message [for the media], it’s like: You want to get your three points in and you want to have an opening and closing.”

Reflecting once more on the calamity at sea, Gibson says when you come that close to losing what you most treasure — your family — then you appreciate what you have more than ever.

“Life is good,” he says. “Enjoy it.” 

Paul Sterman is an associate editor for the *Toastmaster* magazine. Reach him at psterman@toastmasters.org.

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