

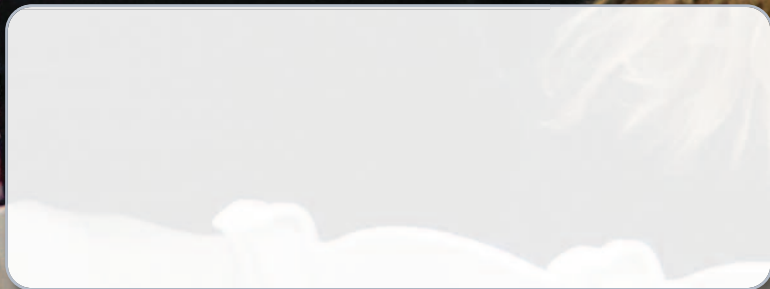
# TOASTMASTER®

November 2010

## Enthusiasm!

### The Cure for the Common Speech

### The Reluctant Competitor





† For Toastmasters, our building begins at the club level. I believe we all strive to be the builder of strong clubs and not their “wrecker.” Yet sometimes in Toastmasters, we find ourselves in the company of the wrecker – a bully or a bossy personality.

When clubs are having difficulty, the problem is often caused by one personality – a wrecker. The wrecker is not always someone else; it could be me – or you.

We must ask ourselves: Am I the “builder who works with care”? Or am I the wrecker, “content with the labor of tearing down”?

Most of us have experienced this team-building predicament. Clubs try a variety of things to alleviate the problem, such as changing their meeting times or venues, or altering the meeting format. None of these solve the problem of wreckers, and clubs continue to decline in membership and quality of service as a result.

When I see a club struggling, I ask first about the people. What are the club dynamics? Do members complete education goals? Are they being evaluated fairly and constructively? Is the club attracting a steady flow of new members? If not, why not?

Often, it appears easier to change the external problems rather than explore solutions to the human element creating the dissonance. After all, it is very challenging to address an offending personality. However, we are presented with opportunities each day to practice diplomacy, tact and bravery in our communication. Toastmasters teaches us to use these tools in all we say and do. Let us, together, build strong clubs with these tools of the trade.

I challenge you, as Toastmasters Achieving Greatness Together, to act as “builders who work with care” and to encourage the “wreckers” to build with us.

Pat Johnson, DTM  
International President

## Which Are You?

### Which Are You?

*Anonymous*

*I watched them tear a building down;  
A gang of men in a busy town.  
With a mighty heave and a lusty yell,  
They swung a beam and a side wall fell.*

*I said to the foreman, “Are these men skilled  
And the men you’d hire if you had to build?”  
He gave a laugh and said, “No indeed!  
Just a common laborer is all I need;  
I can easily wreck in a day or two  
What builders have taken a year to do.”*

*And I thought to myself as I went my way,  
“Just which of these roles have I tried to play?  
Am I a builder who works with care  
Measuring life by the rule and square?  
Or am I a wrecker who walks the town  
Content with the labor of tearing down?”*

# TOASTMASTER

**Publisher** Daniel Rex  
**Editor** Suzanne Frey  
**Associate Editors** Beth Black  
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### TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

P.O. Box 9052 • Mission Viejo, CA 92690 U.S.A.  
(949) 858-8255 • Fax:(949) 858-1207  
Voicemail: (949) 835-1300  
[members.toastmasters.org](http://members.toastmasters.org)

### CONTACTING WORLD HEADQUARTERS

For information on joining  
or building a club, visit: [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org)  
Article submission: [submissions@toastmasters.org](mailto:submissions@toastmasters.org)  
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### A Toastmaster's Promise

As a member of Toastmasters International and my club, I promise...

- To attend club meetings regularly;
- To prepare all of my speech and leadership projects to the best of my ability, basing them on projects in the *Competent Communication* manual, *Advanced Communication* manuals or *Competent Leadership* manual;
- To prepare for and fulfill meeting assignments;
- To provide fellow members with helpful, constructive evaluations;
- To help the club maintain the positive, friendly environment necessary for all members to learn and grow;
- To serve my club as an officer when called upon to do so;
- To treat my fellow club members and our guests with respect and courtesy;
- To bring guests to club meetings so they can see the benefits Toastmasters membership offers;
- To adhere to the guidelines and rules for all Toastmasters educational and recognition programs;
- To maintain honest and highly ethical standards during the conduct of all Toastmasters activities.

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

### **Paying Tribute to the New International President**

I was inspired by the first “Viewpoint” column from Toastmasters International President Pat Johnson (September). Quoting the ancient Indian sage Patanjali and writing about achieving greatness together was commendable. Patanjali was a great Indian guru who still inspires millions. Being an Indian and a member of a club in Saudi Arabia, I am impressed by our President’s ability to draw from such a wide range of knowledge.

Toastmasters’ growth in India and the Middle East is exploding. By the time I finish writing this letter, a seed will be planted somewhere for a new club to sprout! Pat Johnson’s message is that she genuinely understands her role as the head of this truly international organization.

Toastmasters’ sociocultural environment will be different from continent to continent, nation to nation and province to province, and so will be the needs of clubs, areas, divisions, districts and regions. Pat Johnson understands and accepts this pluralism as being crucial to Toastmasters’ success. With her as International President, I feel elated and proud. Toastmasters members are certainly destined to achieve greatness together.

**PJ J. Antony, ACS, CL** • Periyar Toastmasters club  
Jubail, Saudi Arabia

### **More Praise for Pat**

I received my New Member Kit a few weeks ago as well as my copy of the *Toastmaster* magazine. I am truly inspired by International President Pat Johnson’s message of achieving greatness together (September “Viewpoint”). I joined Toastmasters to brush up on my

speaking skills as I prepared for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and I achieved an almost perfect score. I realize that besides communication, Toastmasters can also enhance my leadership skills. Now I am excited to achieve more. I know that personal greatness can only be genuine if shared.

**Noel Navalta Oribio** • Lorma Toastmasters club  
San Fernando City, Philippines

### **Learning How to Listen**

I was impressed by the article “Become a Better Conversationalist” by Patricia Fry (August). I read it each and every day to remind myself to give my full attention to the person speaking. Some of us have a tendency to let our minds wander or to anticipate what the person is going to say next so that we will have a response ready. Reading this article every morning helps me be a better listener and conversationalist. Thanks! I needed that.

**Bob Mock, DTM** • Westside Toastmasters • Pooler, Georgia

### **Another Vote for “Thank You”**

I side with author Margaret Page’s position in “A Question of Manners” (September) that thanking one’s audience is an appreciative gesture that should not be explicitly prohibited. Thanking the audience goes beyond good manners and etiquette, though those are certainly valid reasons. Having fixed and rigid protocols that are meant to enhance performances and procedures has a way of backfiring. Too often, these rules are followed by rote and take on the form of dogma, which is antithetical to the concept of learning, which is what I understand the Toastmasters ethos to be all about.

**PC Leong** • Advanced Aurators club  
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

### **A Grad Speech With a Lot to Teach**

I read Rebecca George’s article “Commencement Speaker Gains An Education” (August), and to her I say, “Congratulations on your achievement!” I was privileged this past May to deliver the Southern Cross University graduation speech in Lismore, New South Wales, Australia. It was through my wonderful club that I gained quality guidance and the courage to present with confidence. This was the key to presenting my work and gaining recognition from the university business faculty.

I am so thankful for my Toastmasters club and the opportunity to give that graduation speech. Today, the world of presenting ourselves in a positive light is woven into every aspect of our lives – from using technology to choosing the correct words for our next speech. So no matter what your career goal is, I believe a Toastmasters membership is pivotal to unlocking a world of opportunity and ongoing success.

**Cheryl Pearson, CC** • Elanora Early Morning club  
Elanora, Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

### **Sharing Leadership Lessons**

I enjoyed reading the article “Three Keys to Effective Leadership” by Dee Dees, (August). The article was crisp, clear and to the point based on Ms. Dees experience as host district committee chair for the 2007 International Convention. Thank you, Ms. Dees, for sharing the three leadership keys – delegation, communication and appreciation. I found the article very useful.

**Leo Joseph, CC** • KCA Toastmasters club  
Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain



Why attending the International Convention was worth 70 hours of traveling.

## A World of Possibilities

✦ While deciding what to do, my mind raced: *I can't be too busy or too poor to attend the 79th annual Toastmasters International Convention. I need this!* So I decided to go. Despite the current global economic situation and my personal concerns, I knew attending would bring me more benefits, greater success, better business and a stronger network, as well as support, motivation and inspiration.

In early August, I flew from Istanbul to London, then London to Miami and then Miami to Los Angeles – a total of 35 travel hours from my home in Sisli, in Istanbul, Turkey, to Palm Desert, California, United States.

What drew me such a great distance? I wanted to enjoy the Toastmasters semifinal speech contests, the World Championship of Public Speaking, the keynote speeches and education sessions. But more than that, I wouldn't think of missing the free mentoring moments, caring friendships and other valuable experiences at the Convention.

I have a challenging business life. For two years I've run a training, coaching and consultancy company. I'm also completing master's-level studies in cognitive psychology. Still, I attended for the ideas and opportunities.

At last year's Convention I was a "First Timer," carrying this label under my name badge, which allowed others to know and help me feel welcome. This year I was again the only Turkish participant, so once more I carried our flag at

the Opening Ceremonies. I was proud to represent my country and happy to meet people from other countries. We shared our diverse experiences while getting ready for the ceremony. Imagine a group of 73 men and women holding their colorful flags and chatting about their connection to the country represented by their particular flag. This was a feast for my soul!

Toastmasters is a great place to develop exceptional leaders and communicators, and I believe people in my country would greatly benefit from the Toastmasters program. But we have only two clubs in all of Turkey. We are working very hard to build Toastmasters in my country, but it isn't always easy.

I first tried to found the Istanbul Toastmasters club in 2002. With a dedicated team we managed to charter it six years later, and during my presidency in 2009, we even became a Select Distinguished club. Now my goal is to grow a Toastmasters district in Turkey!

I found help with this dream at the Convention. I met a past international director who explained the Toastmasters development strategies of Asian countries – they hold the record for growth. Then I received some advice on the subject of growth from several past international presidents.

I also got help with my professional life: A DTM who runs a successful company gave me 15 minutes of her time, offering tips on running a business. She coached me with ideas based on her business experience and also promised to



Deniz Senelt carries the Turkish flag during the recent International Convention.

send me some resources. After this, I ran into a Toastmaster who has written books. I was able to get some tips on how to publish a book.

One of the best reasons for attending the Convention was to watch the organization's future unfold at the Board of Directors Briefing and Annual Business Meeting. I was able to witness, first-hand, the elections of our leaders, and I learned a great deal from their campaigns.

Whether you're a seasoned Toastmaster or a *neubie*, as we call it in our club, experiencing the International Convention makes a big difference in how you see yourself, the Toastmasters organization as a whole and all the possibilities. I will be at the 80th Annual Toastmasters International Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, next year, because I cannot miss seeing Tammy, Dale, Ted, Denise, Keith ... and all the rest! Wouldn't you like to join us for the friendship, learning and opportunities? Let's meet there! 📍

**Deniz Senelt, CC, ALB**, is the past president and founding secretary of the Istanbul Toastmasters. A corporate trainer, coach and consultant, she can be reached at [deniz@proakademi.com.tr](mailto:deniz@proakademi.com.tr).



## How David Henderson, Toastmasters' 2010 World Champion of Public Speaking, soared to the top.

# A Death-Defying Flight to Victory

**W**e all fall down. That's the bad news. No matter how far you fall, love will lift you up." With these words, attorney David Henderson, a Toastmaster from San Antonio, Texas, rose above 30,000 contestants from 113 countries to win the final round of the world's largest speech contest: the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking.

Henderson presented his winning speech, titled "The Aviators," to a rapt audience Aug. 14 in Palm Desert, California. Nine finalists delivered five- to seven-minute presentations on wide-ranging topics. A panel of 14 judges voted on the winner, using criteria that included content, organization and delivery.

Henderson's winning speech could have gone down in flames. Yet the one-year member of San Antonio's Sociable Toastmasters club managed to pull it off. From costume choice to emotional content to dangerous physical maneuvers, Henderson's speech presented challenges rivaled only by the feats of his opponents. This experienced trial lawyer steered his speech straight through all the calculated risks, proving that skill and talent mixed with courage can lead to success.

### When is a Costume a Good Idea?

The first risk Henderson faced was the costume he designed. In a field of conservatively dressed opponents, he wore an aviator helmet,

goggles, bomber jacket and a long "Snoopy" scarf.

"I didn't know if people were going to think coming out with the helmet and the goggles was ridiculous," he says. "I didn't know how people would feel about the bomber jacket... or the use of the scarf as a prop."

Leery of using props in competition, Henderson says, "I'm actually skeptical of people doing things that are gimmicky. I think there's a really fine line with props." Nevertheless, he decided to wear the costume, because it helped to delineate his characters and storyline.

### Memories in Minutes

Another challenge Henderson faced was in telling a world-class, memorable speech that would evoke the audience's sympathy in five to seven minutes. He chose a theme close to his heart – coping with loss – and fashioned a story about a childhood friend. Then, he had to describe losing her to sickle cell anemia – striking a delicate balance between coming across as maudlin by describing a child's death or failing to portray the full weight of the loss.

Henderson decided to devote the first half of the speech to showing the audience the little girl, "Jackie." He made sure to express her story fully to the audience, avoiding a common pitfall of speakers. "I think that the problem people often face

is we get so wrapped up in our own ideas that we just assume other people are going to get wrapped up in our ideas, too." says Henderson. "That's not necessarily the case."

### The Speech's Engine: A Powerful Story

To develop his theme, Henderson repeated one sentence three times during his speech: "Sooner or later, we all fall down." The story wove its way around this phrase, depicting three different stages of how people respond to loss. At first, he used the example of children, who have no understanding of "falling down," because they can't fully comprehend the permanence of loss. The second time Henderson delivered that line, it was to teach the audience how to recover from grief with an intact heart. And the last time he said it, Henderson explained how his love had helped the girl, Jackie, bravely face her own death.

With a tragic story to tell, Henderson managed to insert some well-placed humor. He felt jokes were needed to keep the audience from becoming overwhelmed. "If you make them hurt too much and don't provide some relief, they'll hold it against you," he notes.

Blending in humor appropriately was an important lesson he learned in Toastmasters. When Henderson first joined the organization, he did not use comedy at all. "Not a single joke in any of my speeches," he



says. His speeches were very serious and sometimes missed their opportunity to inspire or compel action. He eventually learned how to work with humor so that it helped with his delivery. While adding comic relief to his winning speech, for example, Henderson took care to balance the levity of humor with its heartrending message so that he could reach the audience – much like a plane carrying a heavy payload must achieve enough “lift” to fly so that it can reach its destination.

### Taking a Tumble

He knew he needed to find a way, in the light-hearted middle of the speech, to drop the audience down to a somber mood quickly. “By the time I got the audience to be invested in Jackie, I didn’t have time to trail it down slowly.”

Henderson was stumped by the problem. And so, the day before the championship round, he made the decision to add a physical maneuver to his speech – falling to the floor – to illustrate his key message that “We all fall down.”

He didn’t know what was going to happen when he performed it during the contest. “The problem is, if you don’t go all the way, it just looks like you did something really goofy. So you have to actually fall.”

It was a calculated risk. “There was a point where I was losing my balance, and I’m crashing onto the floor,” he says. “So I’m thinking, I may actually hurt myself... And I don’t know if the mike will come dislodged and there will be some kind of weird feedback. I made a sound after I fell to make sure the mike still worked before I stood back up.”

### Conquering Emotions

One of Henderson’s challenges came out of his original reason for joining Toastmasters: Crying. “I have a habit of tearing up when I’m giving



David Henderson

speeches,” he says. He actually joined to learn how to speak without tears – but found it difficult. Henderson took this as a new challenge. “I realized, if I can’t make myself stop crying, it’ll be okay if I can put into perspective why I’m crying.” True to form, he did have tears on his face at one point. The audience reacted with empathy – turning his challenge into a winning strategy.

### What He Gained From the Experience

With every win, Henderson’s main goal remains the same: *To learn*. As a child, he became curious how his mother’s friend developed her superb speaking skills. She advised him to join Toastmasters someday and enter the competitions.

It took him 15 years to finally follow her advice. “When you learn

a Toastmasters skill, you’re supposed to use that skill in your everyday speech.” Contest skills, he says, are no different. They should come out of Toastmasters skills that are applicable in everyday life. Henderson’s winning speech proved that Toastmasters skills can carry you through your everyday life, and they can also help you soar to new heights. **T**

**Note:** Recordings of Convention events, including the World Championship of Public Speaking, are available to order from [www.toastmasters.org/captureconvention](http://www.toastmasters.org/captureconvention).

**Beth Black, CC** is an associate editor of the *Toastmaster* magazine. Contact her at [bblack@toastmasters.org](mailto:bblack@toastmasters.org).

# Enthusiasm!

## The Cure for the Common Speech

By Colleen Plimpton, ACB

**Use these strategies to add pizzazz to your presentations.**

**T**he digital projector decided to sulk that warm evening last April at the Women's Club. My meticulously orchestrated PowerPoint presentation on garden ornaments could not be salvaged. I would have to punt. With a sigh, a gulp and a smile, I quickly revised my plan of attack and threw myself into the talk.

It took good humor, plenty of gestures, descriptive words and an exhortation for audience participation. With that approach, I delivered a knockout speech despite the lack of equipment. At the conclusion, the audience clapped loudly. And I was invited back for a subsequent booking.

What saved the day? My enthusiasm. I'm a professional horticulturalist, and I'm excited about the topic of ornamenting one's garden and teaching others how best to accomplish this. Though challenged by my equipment, I was able to paint word pictures through evocative phrasing, expressive body language and voice variation. In that way, my audience could see the statue of a little girl holding a bouquet of flowers, hear the breeze through the wind chimes, feel the texture of a wooden



bench under the sugar maple and taste the lemonade served on a hot day in the Victorian gazebo. They were right with me as my facial expressions reflected dismay when I spoke of clutter as opposed to well-thought-out beauty in the garden; showed disgust at the depredations of the noxious lily beetle and demonstrated anxiety at the unrelenting drought of the past year. My small props of a birdhouse, unique rock and statuette of a toad added to the ambience.

Would my speech have been better if the projector had behaved? Maybe not. That evening I learned about the power of enthusiasm. Projecting one's positive feelings can not only carry a speaker over those inevitable rough spots, but add dimension, depth and determina-





Branding expert Sasha Strauss spoke enthusiastically about his topic at the International Convention.

tion to any speaking engagement. A dollop of effervescence makes your talk memorable. Your zeal for your topic, properly conveyed to your audience, not only keeps them awake, but helps them retain the message you've so carefully crafted.

### **Inject Passion and Pizzazz.**

The ability to communicate delight and confidence in one's chosen topic is a hidden key to successful speaking. Of course, a Toastmaster must always pay attention to organization, vocal range, extraneous filler words and a host of other items. But if a speaker doesn't project pizzazz and show devotion to her topic, the speech may still fall flat on its well-prepared face.

Bill Sher, of the China Capitol Toastmasters club in Beijing, China, knows this well. A recent winner of a speech contest in Shanghai, China, he feels that the essential component of his speaking success is his enthusiasm. This quality comes through the moment he enters the room. He works the crowd prior to the speech, greeting guests with a firm handshake and a confident smile. His secrets, he explains, are his energy level and ability to exude self-assurance. As he puts it, he is totally "in my speech," conveying to the audience a strong dedication to his topic. "I pour my heart into my speeches," he says. "I want to share my thoughts with the audience and articulate my vision."



Whether you do motivational, educational, informative, public relations, entertainment or some other type of speaking, enthusiasm is vital, because it allows you to connect with your audience on an emotional level. But how can you increase the “zing” quotient in your speeches?

■ **Let your body reflect your words.** If you say “lean,” then sway to one side. Smile, not only at your audience but during the humorous parts of your presentation. What is your audience watching as you speak? Not your hands, not the lectern; they’re fixed on your face. So arch an eyebrow, shrug those shoulders. Nod or shake your head as the speech requires. Maintain eye contact. If possible, engage in friendly banter prior to being introduced; this helps warm up your audience and prepares them for the entertaining, informative speech to come. Stand with your head up and your shoulders squared, your body stance open to the audience. Let your guests see that you are receptive to them, eager to teach and to learn. No rounded shoulders or drooped chin!

And use your mouth to enunciate your words, allowing your voice to project your confidence and subject knowledge.

**“Enthusiasm is power, and any speech can be made more powerful if presented with gusto.”**

■ **Use descriptive words.** Your audience really wants to share an experience with you. Too often we speakers forget that we are performers as well as informers. So carry an audience into your speech by employing action verbs and colorful nouns. Use all five senses, just as actors do in theatrical productions. Toastmaster Martha Bishop of Barnum Square Toastmasters in Bethel, Connecticut, is active in local community theater and can engage any group with her use of dialects and accents. Try it yourself. You don’t have to be Meryl Streep, but such techniques can add sparkle to an ordinary talk.

■ **Don’t be on a constant high.** No one can be “up” all the time, even in a short speech. Constant, continuous cheerfulness seems forced and will make your listeners uncomfortable. They’ll react as if you’re selling snake oil. Instead, temper your talk with highs and lows. The highs should be at the points you particularly want your audience to retain. Intersperse these moments with quieter interludes. Don’t be bombastic, fanatical, sloppily sentimental or pushy. Be animated, but balance it with low-key moments.

■ **Be well-grounded in your topic.** Expertise is where confidence and enthusiasm intersect, and there’s nothing worse

than coming up blank on something you should know. Audiences are sharp, and they can sense when speakers are knowledgeable about and involved in their topics. When the speaker promotes new concepts and quickly offers knowledgeable answers to the group’s questions, the audience feels assured of the speaker’s competence.

■ **Use props.** Though my projector failed at the Women’s Club presentation, the small garden ornaments I’d carried in my canvas bag helped intrigue the audience. With a flourish, I pulled them out at suitable junctions, to the amusement and interest of the crowd.

I do this with most of my speeches. For instance, when I lecture on composting, I bring a bag of compostable materials and haul each item out to show my audience, producing facial expressions and comments in the process – “Oh, look, pine cones!” Or as I’m ripping a cereal box into shreds, I’ll ask, “Ever thought of putting this into the compost pile? Why not?”

When I show pretty garden pictures, my voice conveys how much I love the flowers, and that I know the bulbs are grateful to receive three helpings of fertilizer a year. When a listener asks a particularly relevant question, I ring a bell. “The winner!” I exclaim. “You’ve won the prize!” I then delve into my supplies, and extract either a compost bag or small potted flower and hand it over to the pleased and surprised individual. What have I done by my actions? I’ve dramatically engaged the participant and grabbed the attention of the entire room.

■ **Don’t use notes.** Guidance by paper is a crutch that prevents you from making the best emotional connection with your audience. If you’re reading from cards or notes, you won’t be consistently making eye contact and will thereby establish an automatic barrier between yourself and those you wish to inform, entertain or enlighten. Instead of a script, relax and let your speech tell a story. It will be easier to remember and audiences never outgrow their appreciation of good stories.

■ **The best speakers are also leaders.** District 53 governor Dave Wheeler is a good example of this. A 10-year Toastmaster and member of several clubs, he models leadership in his choice of subjects, poise, obvious pleasure in his topics and wise use of carefully timed pauses. Whether speaking about an upcoming Toastmasters conference, an aspect of his business or something else entirely, Dave’s eyes meet the audience head-on, showing that he enjoys being exactly where he is. An athletic individual, his clever sports anecdotes add to the drama and relevance of his speeches.

■ **Practice, practice, practice.** Record your speech in audio or video, if possible. Hearing your voice will help you determine where you need to add energy or where you might want to tone it down. Watching yourself on



video allows you to see what jumps out and what just lies there. You can then revise with better accuracy and assuredness that you're on the right track.

■ **Use your evaluations and evaluate others.** Let your evaluator know that you're working on increasing the amount of excitement in your work. You can also observe speakers who convey enthusiasm and learn from them. What is it that makes them interesting? Is it their words, the way they move or their props? Take notes, ask for pointers. Be sure to incorporate some of what you've learned into your next speech.

■ **Build a bridge to those who are less interested.** If, despite your best efforts, you sense your audience losing focus, it's time to shake things up. Move into the audience, ask a question. Shorten your sentences, use dynamic, action-oriented words. Be exuberant, but be sincere about it.

Remember, however much zest you exhibit, you still must present a coordinated, logical speech. Don't confuse your audience with a disorganized presentation. Apply the Toastmasters tenets in the *Competent Communication* manual, and have an opening, body and conclusion in your talk. Open with a bang; present points and subpoints in the main portion of the speech; use smooth transitions and loop your ending back to the beginning of your speech.

Go to the Toastmasters Web site for more advice and information: [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org). Research other sites as well; the Web offers a lot of information on presentations.

Enthusiasm is power, and any speech can be made more powerful if presented with gusto. In truth, a lively speech creates a circle. If you convey exuberance to

**“Too often we as speakers forget that we are performers as well as informers.”**

your audience, and it's received, you'll get it back in the way they respond with alert attention, smiles, attentive body language and focused presence.

It needn't take an equipment disaster like mine to ramp up the energy in your speeches. Try these tips to go forth and enthuse! □

**Colleen Plimpton, ACB**, is a member of the Barnum Square club in Bethel, Connecticut. A professional writer, coach and lecturer on gardening, her most recent book is *Mentors in the Garden of Life*. Reach her at [www.colleenplimpton.com](http://www.colleenplimpton.com).

# Wish You Were FUNNIER?

Dear Fellow Toastmaster:

Do you wish you were **funnier**? Do you believe that “funny people” **think differently**?

The truth is... funny people *do* think differently. Truer still; **you will never be funnier unless you change the way you think**. That is exactly what *Get More Laughs By Next Week™* will do for you. I Darrentee it.

Would a **step-by-step** process for getting laughs be helpful?

I never got laughs. I was quiet and shy and had severe stage fright. It was quite an epiphany for me when I discovered the simple exercises comedians use to develop material. A whole new world opened up for me when I was shown that humor was a *learned skill*, as opposed to a trait one must be born with.

Naturally, I did things the hard way, so it took me years of struggle and tens of thousands of dollars to uncover the steps that would take me from bumbling amateur to sought-after professional. This is a *proven* system. I've been teaching this process for more than ten years.

Stage time,

**Darren LaCroix**  
2001 World Champion of Public Speaking

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## What's it like to be a presenter at the International Convention?

By Paul Sterman



# Positive About Presenting

*This year's International Convention featured education sessions led by a range of experts on leadership and communication. Attendees reaped many benefits from their tips and insights. But the presenters say they, too, benefited from their Convention experiences.*

"All I can say is it was really a peak experience for me," says Connie Merritt, who led a session on time management.

She and other presenters enjoyed the rewards of speaking at such a large event with a diverse international audience. More than 1,600 people attended the 2010 Convention, held August 11-14 in Palm Desert, California.

"People came from South Africa, Indonesia, Europe," notes Merritt, a time management expert who has spoken at the Convention several times over the years. "To see people come from so far cements the fact that Toastmasters is important to people. This is their family, this is their community."

"The Convention is just a wonderful event. There's nothing else like it."

Sheryl Roush, a DTM and Accredited Speaker, explored the topic of creativity and charisma in her session. For her, the highlight of speaking at the International Convention was addressing such a culturally diverse audience. It's a challenge, she says, because "as a presenter, it's critical to remember that just because you're American, your audience is not – audience members come from all walks of life, all belief systems, and all cultures."

A Toastmaster for 23 years, she adds that if you're someone who wants to make a difference in the world – as she does – this is the kind of place you want to speak at. "It is

a huge reward – a challenge and a reward simultaneously," says Roush.

It's not just a pleasure to speak at the Convention, presenters say, it's an opportunity to attend the event and meet new people.

"I had a great time," says Todd Newton, a veteran television host who delivered the opening-night keynote speech. "From the moment I set foot in the resort, I saw people networking and introducing themselves to each other. It was a powerful experience."

"My living is made in television, performing in Las Vegas and through my personal coaching organization, so I certainly didn't consider the Convention work in any way," he adds. "It was an opportunity for me, like everybody else, to grow and to network."

### A Toastmasters Triumph

For Lynne Brasher, DTM, the 2010 Convention represented a personal triumph. A Toastmaster since 2001, she has served in many leadership



roles within her club and district. So when her application to speak at this year's Convention was accepted, she was thrilled with the opportunity and nervous at the same time.

Although an experienced presenter and expert on the topic of leadership, Brasher had never spoken to an audience as large as the one attending her Convention session. By the time she arrived at the hotel, the butterflies in her stomach were fluttering at full speed.

"I was so jittery, I couldn't sit still," says Brasher, a member of the Centurion Toastmasters at American Express in Phoenix, Arizona.

But when she delivered her presentation about particular leadership concepts, everything went very well, leaving the Toastmaster feeling exhilarated. "It was amazing," she says. "There was such a great crowd; everyone was interested and responsive."

The successful experience boosted her confidence as a speaker. "I felt after that session like I could conquer anything," says Brasher, a manager of business analytics for American Express Business Travel. "Now I'm ready to do this again and again."

### **Toastmasters Know How to Listen**

Like Brasher, the other presenters point out the high quality of Toastmasters audiences. Terri Langhans, whose session offered a host of strategies to improve one's marketing efforts, says she was curious about speaking in front of Toastmasters since she herself is not a member. She says she was impressed with how receptive the crowd was.

"People were so polite and genuine," says Langhans, a member of the National Speakers Association who has earned its designation of Certified Speaking Professional. "I know where to expect laughs in my presentation and I was getting great laughs where I was expecting them – and even some in spots where there typically might only be chuckles."

Roush also notes how appreciative and generous audience members are. "When people come up afterward and say 'thank you,' which people did to me the rest of the Convention, or they want their photo taken with you, it's truly an honor," she says. "They are saying in effect, 'You touched me so deeply, I want to cherish this memory.'"

In his opening-night speech, Newton spoke about how people

have enough help. They don't know what they don't know. But this Convention was the poster child for how events are supposed to be run.

"I've spoken at maybe 750, 800 conventions – a lot of annual conventions, a lot of meetings. And this one stands out."

In the end, says Newton, presenters and Convention audiences all shared a common aim. "We were all there essentially for the

**"The Convention was an opportunity for me, like everybody else, to grow and to network."**

**— Todd Newton,  
2010 Convention Keynote Speaker**

can reach their full potential and achieve more confidence, greater success and a healthier lifestyle. A personal development coach, he found it gratifying that so many people shared their own stories with him and also told him how his words had helped them.

"It really warmed my heart to hear of the individual choices people made in their relationships and in their lifestyles and careers," says Newton, a member of the Quincy Toastmasters in Quincy, Massachusetts. "One woman said that in the last 90 days she had completely walked away from an established career because it no longer brought her happiness. Even in this economy she had switched to a different career because it brought her greater fulfillment and happiness."

### **"Poster Child" for a Smooth Operation**

Merritt says she was impressed by how well-run the Convention was, which made things much easier for speakers. Every need was attended to, she says.

"When you're a speaker, you hope that meetings are run well, but many times it's a disappointment, because organizers don't

same reason – to be the best speaker we possibly can," he says. "I don't see how anyone could have left the desert not feeling more empowered, and without the burning desire to get up behind a lectern and speak." ■

**Paul Sterman** is an associate editor for the *Toastmaster* magazine and a member of Le Gourmet Toastmasters in Costa Mesa, California.

**T**oastmasters International is looking for experienced and dynamic speakers interested in presenting at the 2011 Convention, to be held August 17-20 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Speaking slots are available for the communication and leadership education sessions, as well as the keynote. To be considered, applicants must complete a Convention Speaker Submission form and provide a video sample. The application is posted at: <http://www.toastmasters.org/speakersubmission>. The deadline for applications is January 28, 2011.

If you know someone who is not a Toastmaster but would be a good fit, please let them know about the submission process.

Try these five key components for a successful competition.

# Planning a Speech Contest

Practiced and polished, contestants eagerly draw numbers for their position. The speech contest team is at the ready and the audience is abuzz with anticipation. Let the competition begin! But wait ... are *you* a part of the action?

Collectively, Toastmasters clubs worldwide run thousands of speech contests every year. Such events offer great benefits for everyone involved: speakers, audience

apply what I learned to real-life situations, such as setting up events and running meetings.

I used the area contest as a blueprint and dry run for chairing the larger, 29-club division contest, which was my High Performance Leadership project. In the process, I learned several key steps for planning successful speech contests at all levels. Before I reveal my “secrets,” let’s consider why we conduct our

thing a little more electric about doing it in a competition. The stakes are higher and the audience knows it, so they’re particularly interested and engaged.

Chairing or competing in a contest is a way for Toastmasters to stretch themselves. They inspire everyone, including the audience, and compel us to be better leaders and speakers.

Planning a successful contest involves five key components:

**1 Book a venue.** My first task was securing a suitable room. At the time, local library meeting rooms were booked far in advance and recreation centers charged a fee. So I got creative and asked a nearby retirement community if we could use its state-of-the-art meeting room with comfortable audience seating. They eagerly agreed and offered the room free of charge – for two contests!

Event space is a critical element that influences the contest’s outcome, says Rory Vaden, the second-place winner in Toastmasters’ 2007 World Championship of Public Speaking. “Ideal venues allow for the speaker’s best transference of energy from the stage,” he says. “This means low ceilings, clear stage view, close distance between the stage and the first row of chairs, close proximity of chairs, and space that is filled with an audience. A stage – at least 10 feet wide – is needed if there are more than 50 people. Microphones that work clearly and a well-lit stage also are important.”

**2 Handpick a team.** You’ve heard the expression, “It takes a village



From left: District 78 Governor Michele Blumhagen, District 70 Governor Philip Bendeich and former District 5 Area Governor Linda Kadushin work the lights at the 2009 World Championship of Public Speaking.

members *and* those who plan such programs. As an area governor last year, I put myself on the planning side, when I chaired two fall contests in Denver, Colorado. The experience was invaluable to me; it taught me how to orchestrate a high-level contest and lead a team in executing a big event. Now I can

Toastmasters contests (International Speech, Table Topics, Tall Tales, Humorous and Evaluation).

## Compete ... and Grow

Participating in contests is an exciting way to challenge yourself. While it’s always great to deliver a speech in front of your club, there’s some-



to ...” Well, it does take a village of Toastmasters to run a contest. That means delegating roles and recruiting volunteers. Select people who are dependable and experienced to fill key positions such as chief judge, sergeant at arms and timer. I was the Toastmaster for my division contest and asked each area governor to be a judge or to select one for balanced representation, which worked well.

Area Governor Carolina Moore from District 33 in Las Vegas, Nevada, advises, “Remember that your area is more than just *you*. It’s a group of clubs, each with members and leadership that you can – and should – draw from. Set your expectations up front, by e-mail or phone, and during your area governor club visits.

“Tell your clubs that you need their help to ensure that ‘*our* area has the *best* contest.’ Ask, ‘Who wants to be Toastmaster? Sergeant at arms?’ New members can staff the registration table; this is a great opportunity for them to meet lots of people.”

**3 Create an agenda.** Early on, design a contest agenda template and add the details as they become available: contestants (remember that their eligibility has to be confirmed), contest team, visiting officers, the program and timeline, sponsor and volunteer credits, and upcoming events. A timeline keeps your program on track from start to finish. I used my agenda as a script, much like I use an agenda at club meetings.

For interest, include inspiring or humorous quotes in your agenda, as well as graphics, sponsor logos and easy-to-read typefaces. Print plenty of copies and make sure everyone has one at the start. Use the agenda template for future contests.

**4 Communicate clearly and often.** A contest chair can never over-communicate with the contest team and contestants. Connecting with

members in your home club is easy. But communicating with multiple clubs for higher-level contests can be a bit more challenging. I chose club presidents and area governors as my liaisons for the information and contacts I needed.

Secure contacts’ e-mail addresses and group them for frequent and clear instructions about contest location, time, speech titles and team roles. Following the contest, send e-mails to the contest chair at the next level of the competition, with the winners’ complete contact information.

**5 Generate publicity.** It’s vital to let other clubs as well as the community at large know about an upcoming contest. For non-members, attending a contest can pique

their interest in Toastmasters, which can lead them to join the organization and reap the benefits. For members, participating in a contest is wonderful – but so is being in the audience. It’s a great way to learn techniques to improve your own speaking. And by seeing speeches that are more polished than the typical club speech, audience members gain a better idea of the skills they can aspire to.

Publicizing a contest is also important for the competitors themselves. “The speakers want to have an audience there,” notes Colin William, a finalist in the 2008 World Championship of Public Speaking from West Lafayette, Indiana, who once participated in a contest where he delivered his speech to fewer than 10 people. “It’s tough to give your best speech

when you have a small audience.”

To get the word out, take advantage of free social networking tools such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube. Generating publicity for contests has never been easier. Ban Seng Chew, DTM, a member of YMCA Toastmasters club in Singapore, says the Internet is best for generating free publicity. “Printed mass media are expensive and not easily accessible,” he says. “We use social networking, including the club, division and district Web sites, like <http://district80.org>.”

Remember to publicize the contest winners. I did this using a citizen journalism tool that my local newspaper, the *Denver Post*, features online. I submitted a photo of the contest winners with a detailed caption crediting the clubs involved.

**“Contests inspire everyone, including the audience, and compel us to be better leaders and speakers.”**

I listed our District 26 Web site for follow-up information. Voila! The picture appeared in the print version of **YourHub.com**, a community site for sharing news and photos.

Consider being a part of the exciting contest action during the next round of your club, area, division and district contests. When chairing a contest, remember these key components: book a venue, handpick a team, create an agenda, communicate clearly and often, and generate publicity. Your contest is sure to be a smashing success. **T**

**Janet Reese, DTM**, belongs to the Toast of Inverness and Liberty Toastmasters clubs in Denver, Colorado. She is a communications specialist, speaker, presentation coach and freelance writer. Reach her at [Janet@RinPR.com](mailto:Janet@RinPR.com).



# The Reluctant Competitor

By Edna Talboy

**How I stood up, spoke up and moved up the contest ladder.**

**E**ver found yourself doing “the last thing on earth I ever thought I’d do”?

Only half awake, I found myself driving to Topeka, Kansas, one drizzly early morning, where in a few hours I’d compete in the Toastmasters District Evaluation Contest. First, you need to understand that I am scared to death of public speaking. It is why I joined Toastmasters. Second, I have spent most of my life scrupulously avoiding anything that smacks of competition.



So why was I entering a Toastmasters contest? It started with our club competition. Apparently Jerry, one of my fellow club members, was the only person interested in representing our club at the area Humorous Speech and Evaluation contests. I had never paid attention to the Toastmasters competitions and had no idea how they worked. We were all fine with having Jerry win unopposed – everyone, that is, except Gary, who is my mentor and our club president.

“Won’t anyone help out so that Jerry isn’t the only contestant in our club contest?”

The other club members were already staring at the table or at the light bulbs, but I wasn’t fast enough. Gary caught my eye. I took a deep breath. “Oh, what the heck, I’ll do an evaluation.” I just wanted Jerry to feel he had won fair and square.

We listened to the seven-minute target speech, and I took notes. I giggled when our sergeant at arms escorted Jerry and me into another room, where we spent five minutes finishing our notes. Then he came back for Jerry, who was to go first, and he also took my notes. Alone in the “waiting room,” I twiddled my thumbs until I was escorted back into the meeting room. Given back my notes, I delivered my evaluation. Eventually, our club judges came back and informed me I had won in the evaluation category! I thought it was a joke. Then they informed me I now had to represent the club at the area competition.

“I didn’t say I was willing to go to any contest. I was just trying to help out!” My voice was shrill with panic.

My mentor frowned, looking somewhat hurt. “What can I say? You won! But if you aren’t willing to represent us, we can’t make you go.” Feeling ungrateful and petty, I sighed and agreed to go.

Our family had already made plans for the Saturday of the contest, but I managed to sneak away and even made it to the contest location on time. My hurry and the absurdity of my contestant status kept me from getting too nervous. I kept repeating a line from the old *Rocky* movie: “All I want to do is go the distance.”

I listened to the target speech, delivered my evaluation when it was my turn and left immediately to hurry back to my family gathering. I had done my duty by my club. I had gone the distance. It was over!

Later that evening I received an e-mail from my mentor. “You won! Now you get to represent us at

the division contest.” *Hub? What were these people thinking?*

### **A Speaking Triumph**

At the next meeting I was handed the trophy I’d failed to pick up at the area contest. It was the first trophy I had ever received. How ironic that it was for public speaking! But it made me reflect on why doing evaluations was not nearly as terrifying for me as giving a speech. Apparently I was fairly decent at this evaluation stuff. I decided it was because I could focus on helping the speaker improve; I could focus on *their* speech. I did not have to come up with a riveting topic. I did not have to create a speech. I did not have to engage and entertain the audience. I simply had to be useful – or so I thought.

The division contest was a bigger event, with more contestants and audience members. I had a few

**“The only competition that really matters is the one between who we are and who we want to become.”**

butterflies. Of course, it was all ridiculous; I was not contestant material. But then all I wanted to do was go the distance. And Gary had promised that evaluation contests went no further than this level. One way or the other, this crazy journey would be over.

Because I drew the high number, I was last to deliver my evaluation and did not get to hear my competitors. While the judges deliberated, each contestant was asked to respond to a question, a Table Topic of sorts. My question was “Why did you become a Toastmaster?”

As I stood in front of the audience again, I realized to my amazement that I was completely relaxed, as though I were back at our familiar club table. I told the roomful of strangers my story, how I’d decided I was tired of being afraid of speaking. I made them nod knowingly, I made them laugh, and for a few moments I felt an uncanny connection with them.

When the winners were announced, I felt calm, knowing I would not be called. I was wrong. I now had a second trophy for, of all things, public speaking. But that wasn’t the only surprise.

“What do you mean there’s another level? You said this was it!”

# Changes Are Coming to the 2011 Speech Contest Rulebook

The new-and-improved guide is on its way.  
Here's a look at the highlights.

For many years, Toastmasters who ran speech contests were required to consult two different guides: the *Speech Contest Rulebook* and the *Speech Contest Manual*. That's all about to change. Toastmasters International has combined the two booklets into one streamlined resource that delivers several improvements to help those involved in organizing, running and participating in Toastmasters speech contests.

"The new contest rulebook is easier to read, easier to understand and simpler for participants to follow," says International President Pat Johnson. For example, much of the repetition of previous versions has been removed. Now there is one section titled "General Rules for All Toastmasters Speech Contests" that states all the rules applicable to all contests. A member interested in participating in any of the Toastmasters speech contests can start with the basic contest rules in one easy-to-find section.

Next, participants in various contests, such as the Humorous Speech Contest, can flip to the appropriate section and read the rules designed precisely for their contest.

The rulebook also includes a section on contest checklists that was formerly published in the *Speech Contest Manual*. These checklists help to improve the quality and consistency of speech contests throughout the world.

Another benefit is clarity: Any questions that past contest organizers might have had regarding the mandatory nature of recommendations in the old manual have been settled. All guidelines in the rulebook are required.

The new rulebook concludes with a section offering additional resources. Members viewing the free electronic version of the rulebook can click live links to these helpful resources. Easy, quick and simple!

With a wider format, the new rulebook might seem very different from past years; however, the contest rules remain essentially unchanged.

The rulebook is for contests culminating in the World Championship of Public Speaking in August 2011.

"You must have misunderstood," Gary assured me, eyes dancing. "It's the district level that is the final level for evaluation."

And so, on a drizzly morning in November, I found myself driving to the district contest.

If this were Hollywood, the end of this story would be that I had gotten on the stage and won yet again. But in real life, luck and whimsy only take you so far. The people at district level took this seriously. I began to get that spacey "alien" feeling. I had a hard time concentrating on the target speech. As I sat in the "waiting" room trying to decipher my scribbles, I realized that the young man next to me, feverishly rewriting his notes, was unknowingly panting and blowing as though in labor. It dawned on me how very serious he was about this. My fellow

competitors meant to get here. They really *wanted* to compete. They wanted to win. I was suddenly embarrassed by my attitude. I did not deserve to be in their midst.

I did go the distance that day, but barely. There was a bucket of sand in my mouth, a tornado in my stomach, and I could hardly put words together. But I got through it. Having spoken early, I had the chance to sit in the audience and listen to the competitors who followed. I marveled because they didn't deliver mere "evaluations"; these competitors had in fact developed an entire speech – complete with theme, snappy introduction, main and supporting points, humor, effective staging and gestures, reiteration of main points and a snazzy finish. They not only created their speech in five minutes, but



they delivered a *performance* with flair and without benefit of any rehearsal!

It was a revelation. Aha! So that's what an evaluation *could* sound like. I tried to soak up their ideas, their techniques, their tricks. It occurred to me that everything we learn from giving speeches at Toastmasters serves to make *anything* we say more interesting, more engaging.

At last I understood and appreciated what my mentor had been trying to do for me, why he had cajoled and tricked me into attending and competing. The real value of the contest lay not so much in competing but in witnessing ordinary people doing what I do, only extraordinarily well, much better than I do. These were not some far-away television personalities; not people completely out of my league. No, these were people I passed in traffic or sat next to at a restaurant. And that made it powerful and, well, yes, inspiring. I learned so much from watching and hearing them. I knew I could be better. I had ideas of

how I could be better. Suddenly, I *wanted* to be better. Not better than others, just better than I am now.

I learned that I didn't need to keep avoiding competition, because ultimately there is only one contest.

**“There was a bucket of sand in my mouth, a tornado in my stomach, and I could hardly put words together.”**

The only competition that really matters is the one between who we are and who we want to become. **■**

**Edna Talboy** has been a Toastmaster for two years and is a member of the Tiffany Springs Toastmasters club in Parkville, Missouri. An instructional designer and performance improvement consultant, she can be reached at [etalboy@kc.rr.com](mailto:etalboy@kc.rr.com).

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## A Call for Strong Leaders

*Serving on the Toastmasters International Board of Directors is an honor – and a responsibility – for those who are elected. I was fortunate to serve as an international director from 1996 to 1998 and as an international officer from 2000 to 2005, including a term as International President in 2003–2004.*

As our organization continues to expand rapidly in cultures worldwide, the need for Board members who are strong strategic thinkers becomes even more critical. Consider this: When my term as International President concluded in August 2004, Toastmasters had just over 200,000 members. By 2010, membership had grown to 262,000, a growth rate of 31 percent in just six years. Such growth must be carefully managed to ensure that members continue to receive high value and exceptional support.

Before the appointment of Toastmasters' region advisors, part of a Board member's responsibility was to provide operational support to district leaders. This is no longer the case. Operational support is now provided to district leaders through both the region advisors as well as the expanding District Services team at World Headquarters. This shift in support gives Board members the time required to focus on the organization's vital strategic direction.

### Role of the Board

Each year, Toastmasters International elects members to serve the organization on its Board. Collectively, the Board guides Toastmasters International and shapes its vision and policies. The directors' strategic role is to ensure the overall strength and growth of the organization. Specific areas for which the Board is responsible include:

- Upholding the mission, vision and values of Toastmasters International.
- Developing organizational strategy.
- Creating and revising organizational policies.
- Approving and overseeing budget and financial matters.
- Serving as ambassadors of Toastmasters International.
- Incorporating member needs into organizational decisions.

### Board Composition

The Board consists of 14 international directors, each elected to two-year

terms from the 14 global regions. In even-numbered years, directors from even-numbered regions are elected. In odd-numbered years, directors from odd-numbered regions are elected. In addition, five international officers also serve on the Board; they hold the offices of Second Vice President, First Vice President, International President-Elect, International President and Immediate Past International President. The Second Vice President, First Vice President and International President-Elect are chosen every August at the Annual Business Meeting, held during the Toastmasters International Convention.

### Candidates

Have you ever considered becoming a candidate for the Board of Directors? The first step is to become familiar with the qualifications. First, you must have served as a district governor and have the skills and experience to fill the role. Each August, soon after the Convention, individuals declare their candidacy for the following year and submit a document describing their relevant experience and skills that qualify them for the role. Both officer and director candidates send campaign mailings to district governors,



Past International President Ted Corcoran presents at the 2010 International Convention.



lieutenant governors and other Toastmasters leaders, stating their qualifications for service on the Board.

## Nomination

The International Leadership Committee (ILC) is responsible for nominating international officer and director candidates from the pool of applicants. This committee may also seek out qualified applicants and encourage them to be candidates. The ILC is tasked with nominating two or three candidates for Second Vice President and one, two or three candidates for international director for each region from which a director will be elected that year.

Each year, 17 people serve our organization on this very important committee. The Past International President of two years ago chairs the ILC, while the Past International President, whose term as Immediate Past International president just ended, serves as vice chair. One additional Past International President serves on the committee as well.

One representative from each of the 14 regions is also appointed by the International President. These appointees consist of past international presidents, past international directors and past district governors. Some of these appointees may have served with the candidates, either at the district or international level, and may have first-hand knowledge of their abilities, experience and leadership qualities.

How does the ILC arrive at its decisions regarding nominations? The approach is multifaceted:

The ILC members conduct interviews with each candidate to discuss his or her experience and qualifications for the office being sought. Nominees are asked questions about their experience on boards of other organizations, policy creation, strategic planning and financial oversight. The ILC looks for indications of strong strategic thinking, a vital ingredient for the future success of Toastmasters and a key to being a successful Board member.

Each November, a survey is sent to Toastmasters leaders worldwide, asking their preference of the declared officer candidates. Each December, a similar survey is sent to Toastmasters leaders regarding declared director candidates in regions where elections will occur. The results of these surveys are tabulated and provided to the ILC.


If you receive such a survey, please respond to it thoughtfully; it's your opportunity to do your part in shaping the future of the organization. As you make your choice, I encourage you to be mindful of the strategic nature of the Board's responsibilities. Things to consider are: Does the candidate demonstrate the ability to think and act strategically? Is it apparent that the candidate's focus is on the future of the organization rather than the day-to-day operations? You must have confidence that the candidate has the experience and ability to oversee a global organization. Your feedback is important, so please be sure that your opinion is expressed to the ILC.

Once the interviews and surveys are complete, the ILC reviews and discusses the information submitted by the candidates, the interview and survey results, and any ILC member's personal knowledge of or experience with the candidates. The ILC also reviews the results of a 360-degree leadership assessment for officer candidates. The ILC chair announces the candidates in February and the director announcement is made in April. Those who are not nominated, but have met eligibility requirements, may still be nominated by a member at the Annual Business Meeting and run from the floor if they choose to do so.

## Election

After the nominations occur, candidates may send another mailing to district governors, lieutenant governors and other Toastmasters leaders, stating their qualifications for service on the Board and asking for support. During the International Convention, candidates have an opportunity to

meet delegates and Toastmasters leaders at the Candidates Corner to talk about the future of Toastmasters, as well as discuss strategic issues that will bring even greater growth and success to the organization in the years to come. At the Candidates Showcases, members have the opportunity to hear candidates respond to questions about strategic topics that affect Toastmasters.

Toastmasters International needs strong leaders who can confidently and strategically guide the organization to greater heights. It's a weighty challenge, but from personal experience I can tell you that it is one of the most rewarding responsibilities you will ever accept. To learn more or to begin your journey as a candidate, visit <http://www.toastmasters.org/CandidateInfo>. 

**Ted Corcoran, DTM**, is a 25-year member of Toastmasters and served as International President in 2003–2004. He belongs to several clubs, including the Fingal Toastmasters and the Sword Club, both in Dublin, Ireland, and is the author of the book, *The Leadership Bus: How to be a Truly Effective and Successful Leader*.

**A**t the Annual Business Meeting held in August, each Toastmasters club represented is eligible to cast two ballots in each election. Past and current Board members and district governors also carry a single vote.

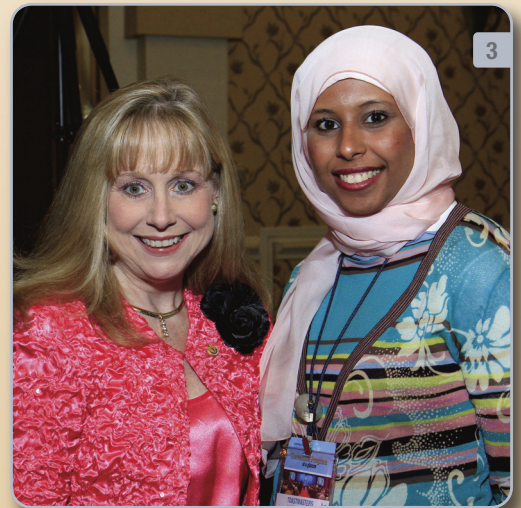
Whether you carry your club's vote, your individual vote or the votes of many clubs as a district governor, I encourage you to research and understand the role of the Board and what the Board expects of its directors and officers. Then review each candidate's background, experience and ability to effectively contribute as a Board member and cast your vote for the future of Toastmasters International.



## A PORTRAIT OF

# Palm Desert

**Highlights from the  
79th Annual International Convention  
in Palm Desert, California  
August 11–14, 2010.**



*Drawn by opportunities for education, training, inspiration and making new global connections, nearly 1,600 Toastmasters from around the world attended Toastmasters' annual International Convention August 11–14 at the J.W. Marriott Desert Springs Resort and Spa in Palm Desert, California. Featuring fanfare and fun, the program offered something for everyone. First-timers and veteran Convention-attendees alike enjoyed seminars on communication and leadership; they networked and watched talented contestants in the International Speech Contest. And for the first time, district leaders from all over the world were trained at one time by the newly installed 14 region advisors. Another first was the Semifinals Speech Contest, where 81 district speech contest winners competed for nine slots in the World Championship of Public Speaking. The photos on these pages highlight the four-day event. Make plans now to attend next year's Convention, at Bally's Las Vegas, in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17–20, 2011.*





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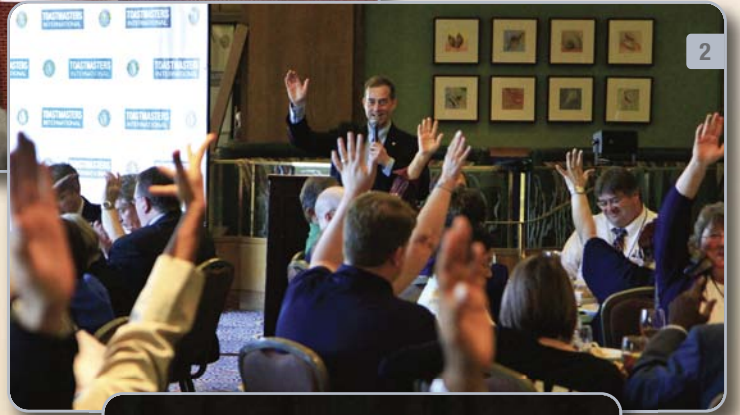


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**Photo Captions** (pages 22 and 23):

1. 2009-2010 International President Gary Schmidt, 2010-2011 International President Pat Johnson and International President-Elect Michael Notaro get ready for the President's Dinner Dance.
2. International President Gary Schmidt congratulates Golden Gavel Award recipient Carolyn Kepcher.
3. 2008-2009 International President Jana Barnhill visits with Nouf Al-Ammari from Faiha, Kuwait.
4. Keynote speaker Todd Newton inspires the audience during the Opening Ceremonies.
5. Newly elected Second Vice President George Yen (center) and his wife Jorie Wu from Taipei, Taiwan, celebrate with friends. From left: District 85 Governor Yingdan Liu from Shanghai, China; Ligo Yu Mei Wang from Guangdong, China; Rebecca Hong from Shanghai, China; and First Vice President John Lau and his wife, Rebecca Heng from Kuching, Malaysia.
6. They are champions: David Henderson (center) placed first in the World Championship of Public Speaking, Linus Chang (left) placed 3rd and Robert Mackenzie placed 2nd.
7. Region Advisor Lark Doley from Jonestown, Texas, leads a training session for district leaders.
8. District 34 Governor Virginia Rodriguez De Vasquez proudly carries the flag of Mexico during the traditional Parade of Flags.





### Photo Captions

1. Toastmasters directors and officers share their decisions during the Board Briefing.
2. 2009–2010 International President Gary Schmidt motivates the new district governors.
3. Torsten Martinsson, from Vastra Frolunda, Sweden, enjoys an education session.
4. Education session presenter Terri Langhans stands on one leg as she discusses how to stand out through effective marketing strategies.
5. The Toastmasters bookstore offered a wealth of educational materials and gift items.
6. Convention attendees share a happy moment.





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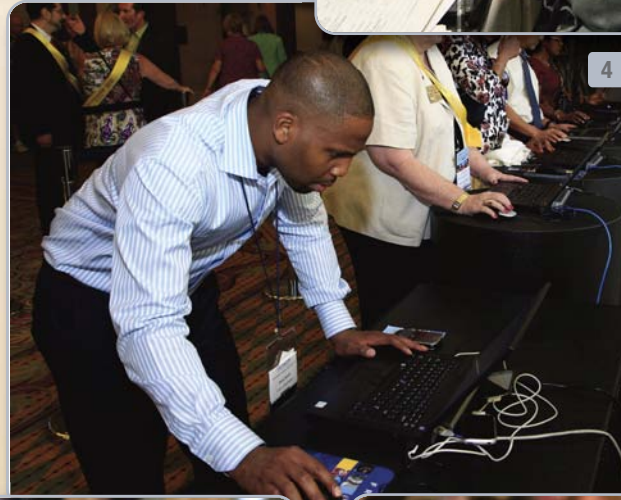
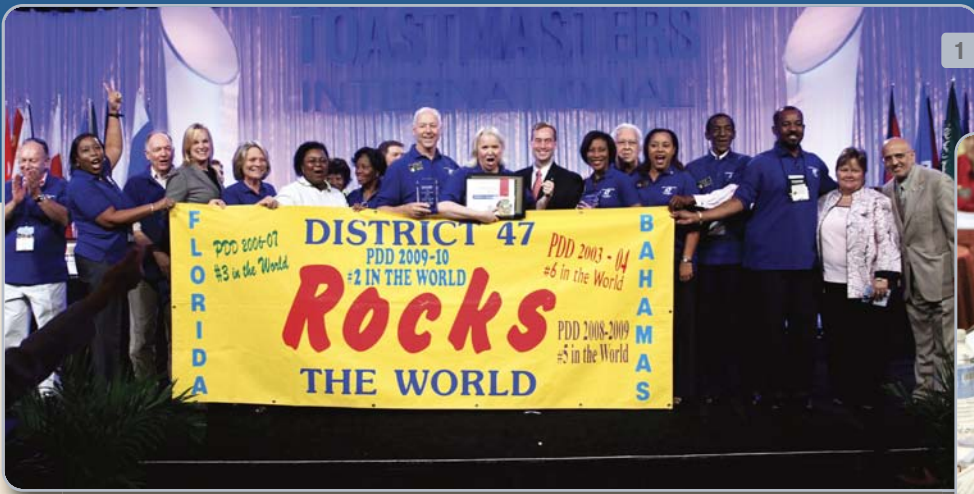


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### Photo Captions

7. Rory Vaden makes an emphatic point in his education session, titled "Great Speakers are Great Leaders."
8. Toastmasters' Past International Presidents in attendance gather for a group photo.
9. Past International Director Tammy Miller, left, who co-presented an education session, enjoys the festivities with her mother, Ruth.
10. Audience members savor their handout of marketing tips from Terri Langhans' education session.
11. District leaders enjoy their training prior to the start of the Convention.
12. Four Toastmasters from Japan give the Convention a positive review.









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11

**Photo Captions** (pages 26 and 27):

1. District 47 is recognized as a President's Distinguished District during the Hall of Fame ceremony.
2. District 79 Governor Uma Radhakrishnan from Dubai, United Arab Emirates, attends training with her team.
3. District 70 Governor Philip Bendeich from New South Wales, Australia, proudly carries his country's flag during the Opening Ceremonies.
4. Bode Osenie from London, England, evaluates a session.
- 5-6. Audience members have fun!
7. District 81 Governor Shirley Daley, from Kingston, Jamaica (front left), and District 14 Governor Roy Ganga pose with Antoinette Fox and Pamela Rolle from Nassau, Bahamas.
8. Delegates show off their moves during the President's Dinner Dance.
9. District leaders share insights during the District Leader Training.
10. President Gary Schmidt congratulates past District 85 Governor Rebecca Hong, past District 47 Governor Kristina Kihlberg and past District 82 Governor Deepak Menon for their districts' club-building success.
11. Delegates cast their votes during the Annual Business Meeting.

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District 82, led by District Governor Deepak Menon, DTM (second from left), is recognized by President Gary Schmidt for being the top district in the Distinguished District Program in 2009–2010.

# International Hall of Fame

These awards are for the 2009–2010 program year.

## President's Distinguished Districts

- District 82**  
Deepak Menon, DTM
- District 47**  
Kristina Kihlberg, DTM
- District 85**  
Rebecca Hong, DTM
- District 25**  
David E. McCallister, DTM
- District 79**  
George Thomas, DTM
- District 59**  
Ellen Hermens, DTM

## Select Distinguished Districts

- District 43**  
James Mayhan, DTM
- District 46**  
Mary S. Neff, DTM
- District 37**  
Deborah R. Lee, DTM

- District 57**  
Gary Charles Wong, ATMS, ALB
- District 8**  
Dori J. Drummond, DTM
- District 80**  
Edward Ma Sze Lim, DTM

## Distinguished Districts

- District 1**  
Sandy P. Dunning, DTM
- District 51**  
Richard (Ritchie) Chong, DTM
- District 55**  
Margaret A. Cathey, DTM
- District 71**  
Joe P. Gibbs, AL
- District 33**  
Sherrie V. Parker, DTM
- District 30**  
Michael A. Gougis, DTM
- District 3**  
Trish Blackwelder, DTM
- District 61**  
Leona Hamel, DTM

- District 2**  
James L. Sultan, DTM
- District 70**  
Ian R. Chick, DTM
- District 76**  
Minoru Tamura, DTM
- District 69**  
Coral L. McVean, DTM
- District 21**  
Douglas Michael Thiessen, DTM
- District 73**  
Damian F. Chong, DTM
- District 23**  
Donald J. Keime, DTM
- District 60**  
Michelle L. Rich, DTM
- District 56**  
Charlie E. Pitts, DTM
- District 68**  
Darryl Hall, ACG, CL
- District 24**  
Elden A. Plettner, Jr., DTM
- District 5**  
Charley Patton, ACS, ALS
- District 86**  
Doreen L. Hillier, DTM
- District 31**  
Sherri Raftery, DTM



**District 83**  
**Brian B. Lin, DTM**

**District 64**  
**Raymond Joseph MacIsaac, DTM**

**District 4**  
**Henry O. Miller, DTM**

**District 35**  
**Kathleen M. Wesselink, DTM**

**District 18**  
**John M. Wilsford, ACS, CL**

**District 38**  
**Lauren Kuik, DTM**

**District 63**  
**Allan J. Daniels, DTM**

**District 53**  
**Marsha P. Kiley, ACS, CL**

**District 65**  
**Dennis E. Gauda, ACS**

### International Speech Contestants

**Semifinal Speech Contest 1**  
**Ian J. Humphrey • District 26**

**Semifinal Speech Contest 2**  
**Joseph Grondin • District 45**

**Semifinal Speech Contest 3**  
**David Henderson • District 55**

**Semifinal Speech Contest 4**  
**Linus Chang • District 73**

**Semifinal Speech Contest 5**  
**Lisa Panarello • District 83**

**Semifinal Speech Contest 6**  
**Jamie MacDonald • District 21**

**Semifinal Speech Contest 7**  
**Robin Grieve • District 72**

**Semifinal Speech Contest 8**  
**Kevin McCue • District 65**

**Semifinal Speech Contest 9**  
**Robert Mackenzie • District 1**

### International Taped Speech Contestants

**1st Place**  
**David Muiga**  
Club 4863 • Nairobi, Kenya

**2nd Place**  
**Kari Mutu**  
Club 689391 • Nairobi, Kenya

**3rd Place**  
**Keun-Ho Bae Mannyeon-dong Seo-gu**  
Club 583329 • Daejeon, South Korea

### President's 20+ Award

**District 71**  
**Joe P. Gibbs, AL**

**District 85**  
**Rebecca Hong, DTM**

**District 46**  
**Mary S. Neff, DTM**

### President's Extension Awards

**District 82**  
**Deepak Menon, DTM**

**District 47**  
**Kristina Kihlberg, DTM**

**District 85**  
**Rebecca Hong, DTM**

### 2010 Presidential Citations

**George C. Scott, DTM**  
Portland, Oregon

**Cleon Cox, DTM**  
Tigard, Oregon

**Ann Hastings, DTM**  
Santa Monica, California

**Jana Barnhill, DTM, AS**  
Lubbock, Texas

**Justin Gottfreid, DTM**  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

**Michael Smith, DTM**  
Bloomington, Illinois

**Carlos Tijerina Gutierrez, DTM**  
Monterrey, Mexico

**A. N. Arulnathan, DTM**  
Petaling Jaya, Malaysia

**Barrie Fuller, DTM**  
Queensland, Australia

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**Build friendships and your reputation on Facebook.**

# Face-to-Face With Facebook

**D**o you use Facebook? I do. I use it to stay in touch with family and friends, and I can honestly say it has brought me an incredible amount of pleasure. There is nothing like reconnecting with old friends – and your chances of bumping into one on Facebook are pretty good. More than 500 million people use the social-networking Web site, each with an average of 130 friends. Seventy percent – or 350 million – of these users are located outside the United States.

Facebook and other social media are changing society in dramatic ways. My daughter recently graduated from high school and on the way home from the ceremony her grandfather smugly pointed out that in 10 years, she would not remember her high school friends. She disagreed, saying, “Yes, I will. We have Facebook!” You know what? She’s right. There is a good chance that she and her friends will stay in touch forever.

On the other hand, many people are afraid to use social networks for one reason: *privacy*. That single word keeps them from joining and enjoying a whole new world. Facebook seems to be especially hard-hit by privacy concerns. This site changes its privacy policies so often, it’s difficult to stay up to date. Many people are anxious about their ability to effectively manage privacy settings – the controls determining who can see your personal information. In response, the social networking site strengthened and simplified its privacy protections for users. Today, it’s fairly safe to

visit and establish a presence on Facebook. The trick is to recognize that this is a public forum, which will help you know what to write and what to leave out.

Also, Facebook has massive databases that store the information you enter into its systems. Some fear that the company, and others like it, can mine this data and learn more about you than you want them to know.


I really enjoy using Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and other forms of social networking and don’t plan to close my accounts any time soon. You shouldn’t, either. Follow these three guidelines to protect yourself:

**1 Make sure you understand and control your Facebook privacy settings.** People who use Twitter understand that anyone can read what they are saying; there is little expectation of privacy. With Facebook, you might assume that there is privacy. Assuming is dangerous. Read Facebook’s Privacy Policy and then check your own privacy settings. To do the latter, open the “Account” menu on the upper right-hand side of your home page and select the “Privacy Settings” menu item.

**2 Assume that everyone can see what you put on Facebook.** Even though you have checked your security settings, it pays to plan what goes online. Never post anything you wouldn’t want the world to see (including employers). Be smart! Don’t include any information or photos that could embarrass you.

On the other hand, it’s also an opportunity to put your best face forward. Post a profile that shows off your social and intellectual skills in a positive light. In this way, you can impress employers and potential employers with your polished writing and professional demeanor.

**3 Think before you click – especially in allowing requests that seem unusual.** From time to time, rogue computer programs pose a threat. The Web-based service bit.ly shortens universal resource locators (URL). The URL is made of letters, numbers and other characters that you type into your browser. URL shorteners were developed so that Twitter users wouldn’t have to waste their 140 characters on a long URL. One problem with these shortened URLs is that you cannot tell where they will take you. One rogue application that made the rounds took its victims to a Facebook page that prompted them to allow access to their profiles. Never allow anything like this to access your profile. If you stay with the basics and click URLs that show where they lead, you’ll find plenty of fun activities to keep you busy.

Now that you know how to stay safe, go out there and have fun! 

**Jeff Bailey** is a computer consultant and trainer in Cary, North Carolina. He writes about presentation skills on his blog, *Wired Presentations*. Reach him at [wiredpresentations.com](http://wiredpresentations.com) or on Twitter at [twitter.com/Jeff\\_Bailey](https://twitter.com/Jeff_Bailey).