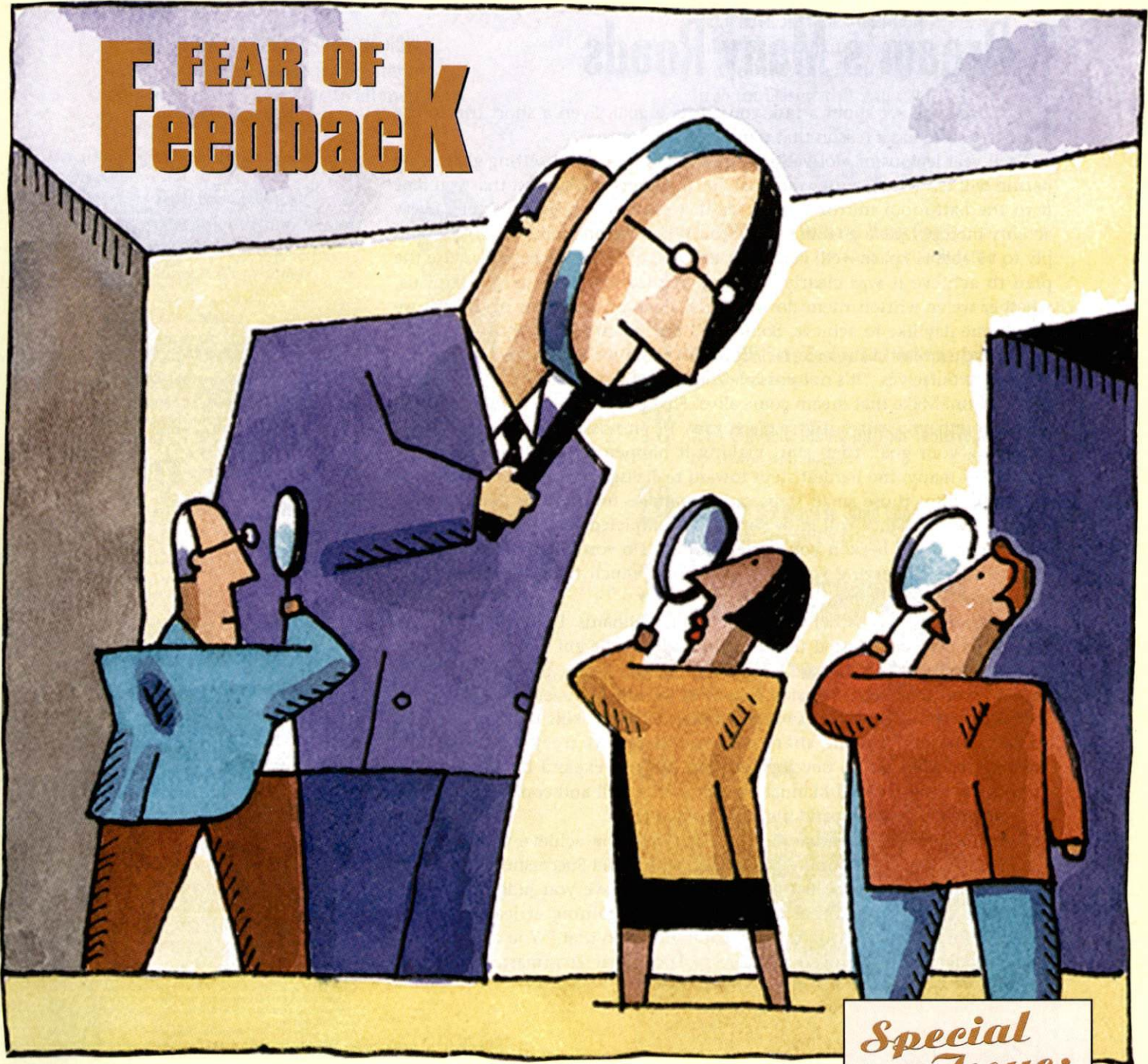


The TOASTMASTER

MARCH 1998

FEAR OF Feedback



The Invocation Should Inspire, Not Intimidate
Meet 1998 Golden Gavel Speaker Jeanne Robertson

*Special
Issue:*
A Toastmaster
Wears Many Hats



VIEWPOINT

A Dream's Many Roads

Every time you set about a task you create a goal. Even a short trip to the grocery store has a reason that translates into a goal.

Each year legions of motivational speakers preach about setting goals. One person will tell you to write your goal down. Others will suggest that you tape it to the bathroom mirror so you see it every day. In Toastmasters, every activity incorporates a goal in some form. When we first join, the goal is simply to be able to speak well. For some, the goal of CTM was easy, because the plan to achieve it was clearly outlined in that first manual. Most of us, whether we've written them down or not, have certain goals or dreams we would one day like to achieve. Sometimes the dream is only that - a dream. We carry it around as a nice feeling about what we would love to do, but whisper to ourselves, "it's not possible" or "I couldn't do that."

Come on! Make that dream come alive. First of all, believe in your dream - even though you currently sense it may be impossible. Picture yourself achieving your goal, then start making it happen by outlining a plan of action. For many, the hardest steps toward realizing their dreams are the first small ones. But those small steps can illuminate future steps like a searchlight. Your confidence will grow with each completed step. Opportunities to use your skills will beckon you to step further. Do you follow these opportunities or does preserving your dream mean so much that you sidestep the path toward making it real?

As a youngster my father taught me to play billiards. Each time I took up the cue to play, he insisted that I explain three different ways to make my shot. My skills in billiards are long gone, but the lesson that there is more than one way to achieve a goal is as fresh in my mind as ever.

Toastmasters offers limitless opportunities to learn skills that are useful in all facets of life. Let me share with you a recent story from a fellow Toastmaster who had to develop his sales skills to expand his business. By completing his Advanced Manual, he gained the skill and confidence to capture enough clients to expand his business by a third.

Toastmasters offers so many activities to help you achieve your ultimate dream. Try giving a 15-minute presentation from the Successful Club Series, or give a speech from the Better Speaker series. Have you judged a speech contest or spoken at another club? What about gaining at least two new members for your club? Don't say, "I could never do that." You can! Start by taking small steps and you soon will say, "Look what Toastmasters has done for me!"


Len Jury DTM
International President

The TOASTMASTER

Publisher TERRENCE MCCANN

Editor SUZANNE FREY

Associate Editor MARY FRANCES CONLEY

Editorial Assistant PINKY FRIAS

Graphic Design SUSAN CAMPBELL

TI OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Founder DR. RALPH C. SMEDLEY

OFFICERS

International President LEN JURY, DTM
Box 4400
Auckland, New Zealand

Senior Vice President TERRY R. DAILY, DTM
2715 Garland Lane N.
Plymouth, MN 55447

Second Vice President TIM KECK, DTM
2333 Kapiolani Blvd., #2108
Honolulu, HI 96826

Third Vice President JOANNA MC WILLIAMS, DTM
17610 Midway #134-349
Dallas, TX 75287

Immediate Past President ROBERT E. BARNHILL, DTM
P.O. Box 2583
Lubbock, TX 79408-2583

Executive Director TERRENCE J. MC CANN
Toastmasters International
P.O. Box 9052
Mission Viejo, CA 92690

Secretary-Treasurer MARCIE POWERS
Toastmasters International
P.O. Box 9052
Mission Viejo, CA 92690

DIRECTORS

ELIZABETH M. BOAZ, DTM
5025 E. 127th Way
Thornton, CO 80241

KATHY MC BRIDE, DTM
4024 E. 16 Avenue
Spokane, WA 99223-5253

GRACE E. BROWN, DTM
1401 Longstreet Lane
Suffolk, VA 23437

FRANCINE NARDOLILLO, DTM
15373 Auburn Center Road
Newbury, OH 44065

TED CORCORAN, DTM
124 Grange Road
Baldoyle, Dublin 13
Ireland

FRANK PAGANO JR., DTM
6757 W. 100 N
Greenfield, IN 46140

WENDY M. FARROW, DTM
2704 Galena Avenue
Simi Valley, CA 93065-1332

IRMA ORTEGA PERRY, DTM
4109 Dorman Drive
Nashville, TN 37215-4622

JOY M. PIRKL, DTM
12348 Lily Street, NW
Coon Rapids, MN 55433-1796

JEAN RIGGS, DTM
P.O. Box 33
Deer Park, TX 77536-0033

FEKRY H. ISMAIL, DTM
418 Woodland Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209

RICK SYDOR, DTM
1092 Salmon Drive
Roseville, CA 95661-4432

JOAN M. JOHANSON, DTM
P.O. Box 474
Gowrie, IA 50543-0474

BEVERLY F. WALL, DTM
3207 ShadySide NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

MARK LAVERGNE, DTM
35-17 Ditmars Blvd., Suite 150
Astoria, NY 11105

KATHERINE M. MASON, DTM
1096 Prevost Court
San Jose, CA 95125

To place advertising or submit articles, contact:

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT:
P.O. BOX 9052

MISSION VIEJO, CA 92690 USA

(714) 858-8255, 1-800-9WE-SPEAK, FAX: (714) 858-1207

email: sfrey@toastmasters.org

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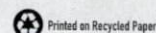
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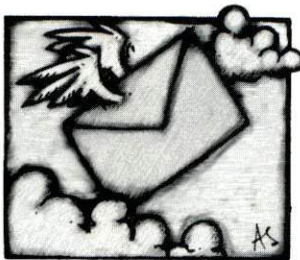
Toastmasters International empowers people to achieve their full potential and realize their dreams. Through our member clubs, people throughout the world can improve their communication and leadership skills, giving them the courage to change.

The Toastmasters Mission:

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

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

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



LETTERS

EMPOWERED TOASTMASTER

Thank you for publishing the article "Let's Empower One Another" by Cyndy Tyler (October '97). I was very moved by it, because her story is my story, although I have only been participating in Toastmasters meetings for a few years. Now I can see that shy people like me can become comfortable speaking with and to others.

I have been encouraged by experienced and novice Toastmasters alike, but I have never felt pushed. The empowerment I have received at my club has been a big part of my progress. I am grateful that an organization like Toastmasters International exists.

Rosemary Leslie
Orilla Sunshine Speakers Club
Orilla, Ontario, Canada

TABLE TOPICS TRAINING LEADS TO PROMOTION

Before joining Toastmasters, I was having trouble in my hunt for a new job - I kept stumbling during interviews. After joining Toastmasters and participating in Table Topics for several months, I landed three interviews in quick succession and received two job offers! And six months into the position I accepted, I received a great promotion. My boss later told me that part of the reason they hired me was that he felt I could handle the often contentious meetings that are part of the job.

Gennifer Gail Sigmon Chenault
Club 5154-27
Ashburn Virginia

PLEASED WITH PRINTING

I appreciate *The Toastmaster* and the interesting articles I find there. I occasionally speak to local service

clubs about Toastmasters, and the magazine is my first reference. I was delighted to see the Toastmasters Vision and Mission on the contents page and have incorporated them into my talks.

Babs Eggleston, ATM
Cereal City Toastmasters 3462-62
Battle Creek, Michigan

DISAPPOINTED WITH POINTERS

I was extremely disappointed with the November 1997 issue, which bore the slogan "All About Audio-visual Aids." How anybody can label two short articles as "all about" completely baffles me. There was not enough information to make any kind of worthwhile judgment concerning which particular aid to use.

In the article, "Presentations with Punch," author Patricia Fry in her comments about using an overhead projector says, "when the lights are off . . . the audience risks falling asleep." Why turn the lights off? One advantage of an overhead projector is that it will produce sufficient light for it to be used in daylight. I have successfully used an overhead projector in classrooms lit by tropical sunlight as well as in normally lit auditoria.

Alan Cronan, ATM
Pioneer Valley Club 8730-69
Mackay, Queensland, Australia

TO PREACH . . .

I am a Priest of the Worldwide Anglican Church and, until I joined Toastmasters last June, I thought I was a cracker of a "preacher man." In fact, I thought I was pretty good all 'round.

For me the absolute delight of being a member is the nonstop level of encouragement I have

received so far. My mentor has been particularly helpful.

Now when I preach, I use my notes as a guide but I no longer read from them. My eye contact has improved 200 percent, my body language has improved 100 percent, and I am more relaxed and at ease. I am now disciplined enough to preach for a maximum length of seven minutes, much to the congregation's relief. And I am enjoying myself.

As President Len Jury said in his November magazine editorial, "one more step." How right he is.

Pat Gendall
International Club 3823-74
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

AND NOT TO PREACH

I would like to add another important point to Daniel O'Keefe's article "Afraid to Talk Religion?" (January): be sure to make your audience feel comfortable. This is of particular importance with respect to invocations. It is easy to give an invocation in a form that is familiar to the speaker. But that form may make a person from a different background feel uncomfortable.

Our club has hosted members and guests from all parts of the world with entirely different religious backgrounds. Most of those members and guests have given invocations, usually successfully, and all have invoked values to which any thinking human can subscribe.

If approached with the sensitivity that Mr. O'Keefe suggests, religion can be an appropriate and interesting subject for a meeting.

Matthew W. Slate, CTM
Raytheon Hager Club 7603-31
Marlborough, Massachusetts



By Norma Lewis

**Attacking someone's opinion
defeats the purpose of Toastmasters.**

Let's Evaluate to Motivate – Not Deflate

WHAT'S THE HARDEST THING ABOUT MAKING A BASIC MANUAL speech? Many say it's deciding what to talk about. Articulating a controversial opinion to a roomful of people can feel like undressing in public.

Whether we're giving formal evaluations or off-the-cuff feedback, we have a responsibility to respect the speaker's perspective even if – maybe especially if – it is at odds with our own. If we fail to show that respect, we betray the speaker. I know. I once experienced that betrayal.

If there's a typical Toastmaster, I don't fit the profile. I'm older, and I'm not climbing a corporate ladder. So why did I join? I sold a book of juvenile nonfiction to a small educational publisher. That meant I had to promote it — speak in schools and libraries, and do book-signings. Me speak? I once refused a leadership position in an organization because it meant regularly addressing the group.

Though desperation brought me to Toastmasters, I felt immediately at ease. My Ice Breaker was a breeze. Almost. My evaluator did say it would have been nice if I'd remained at the lectern a tad longer. Oops! I not only forgot to shake the Toastmaster's hand, the gremlin that commandeered my body whooshed me to my seat so fast I don't remember sitting down. Stay at the lectern? I'm happy I stayed in the building.

The second speech was harder. It required talking in earnest on a topic I felt strongly about. That smelled like controversy. Sharing opinions on hot topics with people outside my inner circle is as uncomfortable for me as telling them how to vote, or which church to attend.

So what could I talk about? My diverse club represents various races and nationalities; and in the Chicago area where I live, even suburbanites and city-dwellers often seem as far apart as Mars and Jupiter. Selecting a topic everyone relates to – and that offends no one – is difficult at best. With much trepidation, I decided to come out against television sex and violence. I relaxed when I looked at the audience – people challenging themselves

and cheering others for doing the same. They didn't care what I said, only how I said it. My speech's objectives were to convince the audience of my earnestness, sincerity and conviction, and to control my nervousness.

All that should have mattered was to achieve those goals to the best of my ability.

My evaluator treated me kindly. He told me what I did well, and offered suggestions for improvement. His critique was accurate, and he delivered it as a mentor, not a tormentor. Then fellow members passed me written words of advice and encouragement. One member's words stunned me: "You're talking censorship. That's bad." Just that. No hints on a better presentation, no tips on controlling my trembling knees, only repudiation of my speech's content.

I doubt a club exists with so homogenous a membership that no one ever disagrees. And most of us would find such a club unrelentingly boring. Fulfilling the Basic Manual's requirements sometimes means delving into provocative topics and attempting to persuade our audience to see things our way. But a Toastmaster's task isn't to debate issues or enlighten those with opposing views. Our mission is to coach fellow members as they strive to become the best speakers they can be. How dare one member call another member's opinion "bad"!

I'm evaluating at my next meeting. What if my speaker makes a rousing plea for decriminalizing spousal abuse? I'll try to treat it as a science fiction story – suspend my own opinion, and ask only that the speech be logical within its own context. Does it have a beginning, a middle and an end? Did the speaker make eye contact? Later I might tell my husband I think the speaker's speech was utterly outrageous and absurd, but at the meeting I'll try to remember that attacking someone's opinion defeats the purpose of Toastmasters. **T**

Norma Lewis is a member of Des Plaines Club 1645-30 in Des Plaines, Illinois.

By Michael Drake



A club must be a resource center of shared knowledge, available to all members.

duplicate a renowned magic trick without knowing the master magician's secret method.

In the learning process, it does no good to demonstrate expertise to others without revealing the tools and techniques behind the performance. For those just getting acquainted with the lectern, watching other expert speakers at work can be inspiring, but it also can be intimidating. If not offered a helping hand, struggling speakers can easily become discouraged.

Experienced Toastmasters sometimes seem to forget what it was like to sweat

over an upcoming speech. Having reached excellence, we tend to overlook the fact that we didn't arrive at our destination without first having been given both plenty of directions and plenty of time for travel.

It's exhilarating to be able to reside on the mountaintop of speaking success, but we must remember that our mission is to bring others up to the high peaks with us – to give others the same guiding wisdom we were given.

Rather than becoming a trophy case collection of well-polished egos, a club must always strive to be a valu-

Showing Off, Or Showing How

Imagine being a novice carpenter who is just getting comfortable with the grip and swing of the hammer. You arrive at the building site and there, in all its splendor, stands a masterfully built, absolutely elegant, four-story, 18-room, Victorian mansion. Next to it sits an empty lot and a note from the developer,

addressed to you, "I like the house next door – do mine like that."

Could an inexperienced person ever be expected to build such a home simply by observing another

builder's finished project? That would be like trying to recreate an artistic classic, such as Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa," just by taking a real long look at it, or attempting to

able resource center of shared knowledge, available for all members. A place of learning must be a place of teaching. In the club, that means showing how and never just showing off. Three simple formulas can ensure that you and your club are headed along the right road:

1 Passing the Torch: In the Olympic Games, the torch is passed from hand to hand on its journey, spreading the light of unity that is the hallmark of every Olympiad. The glory of the games is shared by all; everyone is enkindled to seek a personal best.

In the club, this same spirit of unified achievement works wonders. If the spotlight is shared by all, and not just enjoyed by "accomplished" speakers, then every member will find fulfillment.

The well-grounded Toastmaster can foster universal growth in a variety of ways. For example, as an officer, you can form a committee for your officership and work hand in hand with new members to instruct them and encourage them to take a more prominent role in club activities. If you're involved in the club newsletter, recruit beginning speakers as writers and assist them in developing their organizational thinking skills. Additionally, as a club member, you can always keep a close watch on the regular meeting roster to ensure that each individual is getting a chance to try on the Toastmaster's "many hats."

Remember, if you're the only one with the torch in hand, it may give you a rosy glow, but it leaves a lot of other folks in the dark.

2 Shared Success Means Shared Failure: Let's face it, we've all had our beginnings as speakers, and many times such starts were none too noble. While it's pleasing to enjoy current success, reviewing past failures and sharing how we overcame them can be of immense value to other speakers. Most times, our struggles were anything but

unique, and we can save other members much frustration by offering them our own trade secrets.

One of my problems was maniacal pacing. I used to burn off nervous energy by burning foot tracks in the floor. Each time I've shared my technique for correcting that behavior, it has proved to be highly beneficial for the listener.

Consider giving a speech on specific problems you've learned to solve, and what methods have brought you to triumph. Try revealing your winning techniques as part of your evaluations: "You know, I used to have the exact same difficulty. I found it helpful to . . ." Letting fellow members know

your former flaws may bring you down to earth a little, but it'll lift them to a whole new level of confidence. Another idea is to put together a "solutions workshop," a special meeting where proficient Toastmasters discuss personal championship strategies for speechmaking.

3 Sink-or-Swim versus Step-By-Step: As a young child, I had the unfortunate experience of being tossed into a lake in a supposed crash course in swimming. I nearly drowned and, to this day, I have a fear of deep water. Consequently, I seldom go swimming.

The fear of public speaking is equally real and not to be taken lightly. Putting an anxious, inexperienced speaker in front of an audience, only to have him or her freeze up, or totally lose face, can be devastating. It can end a speaker's progress before it begins.

In Toastmasters, no one should be left to conquer the podium alone. We ought to help new members along the road to confident accomplishment by showing what we know about creating and delivering the finished performance.

"Letting fellow members know your former flaws may bring you down to earth a little, but it'll lift them to a whole new level of confidence."

Too, we must constantly be aware that self-assuredness is critical for the tenderfoot Toastmaster.

Many graduated speaking opportunities can be created to boost member courage. Table Topics in tandem work especially well for the white-knuckled speaker. This is where the Topic-master holds an impromptu interview, asking friendly questions of the participant to generate an easy conversational flow. Personalized Table Topics also can be an asset, ensuring that nervous speakers don't draw a total blank. Other options include multi-speaker mini-plays, and pre-speech practice sessions.

Using such strategies will ensure that inexperienced speakers are given a step-by-step progression to being comfortable at center stage.

Obviously, every Toastmaster seeks self-development, but every Toastmaster also has taken a pledge to assist fellow members in achieving their goals. Just showing off talents and abilities uplifts only ourselves; sharing our talents and abilities uplifts everyone. Relish personal success, but go on to use it as a tool to help others grow. With each member gaining from the others, the strengths of every individual become the strengths of the entire club.

Remember the novice carpenter? That person *can* build a fine Victorian mansion, if taken slowly and carefully through the process by a veteran builder who can guide the way.

Whether as formal mentors, as members assisting members, or in club leadership roles, the practice of showing how, not showing off, is the path guaranteed to succeed. **1**

.....
Michael Drake is a member of Inspirational Club 9509-2 in Monroe, Washington.



I really enjoy giving a speech in front of my club members," a friend recently told me. "But what really bothers me is what comes afterward – comments on my performance. I just don't like to face a bunch of critics, even though I know they're just trying to help."

My friend is suffering from the fairly common malady called "fear of feedback." Whether on the job or in a friendly social meeting, we often invite some evaluation of our performance – then resent it when comments fall short of unqualified praise.

In some extreme cases, even praise is resented. People with really low self-esteem, for example, have a hard time accepting compliments. They often respond to praise with comments like "It was nothing," "No big deal," or "You're just saying that to make me feel good." As Dr. Philip G. Zimbardo, a specialist in shyness points out, in severe cases of low self-esteem the lauded individual thinks "If they really believe my performance was any good, I'll have to reevaluate what I think of *them*."

Fortunately, we can learn to accept frank evaluations of our efforts – and turn "feedback" to our advantage. Here are some tips:

1 **Remind yourself that you need to know if you are doing something wrong.** If you are willing to accept only positive feedback, that's all you'll get. Your club members will quickly sense that you want only compliments. Inevitably, some of the compliments you'll receive will be hollow.

Rather than dreading your next speech or performance evaluation, remind yourself that negative comments can be extremely useful.

2 **Choose the right goal.** We tend to think of giving a speech as a performance. Viewing it as such, we automatically hope for a positive evaluation from the audience – even if it's just applause.

A focus on evaluation is bound to produce anxiety. To get around it, concentrate on different goals. For example: "My goal is to get across a single idea." Or "The purpose is to entertain the audience." In the latter case, the audience is likely to have fun once you stop worrying about performance. And so will you.

It's worth remembering, too, that while evaluations at Toastmasters meetings are important, most of your listeners are more interested in hearing what you have to say than in sizing up your delivery skills.

3 **Take all comments seriously.** Some comments your evaluators make will seem extremely trivial. ("You used the word 'focus' too many times"; "Your speech was two minutes too long.") Avoid the temptation to brush

off such comments or to make a flip remark. No matter how insignificant a comment may seem to you, it's important to the person making it.

So take these criticisms seriously, even if they sound annoyingly close to nit-picking. "Thanks

for pointing that out; I'll try to be more careful next time."

4 **Ask for specifics.** If the feedback is vague, ask for details. For example, a club member might comment that "Your ideas were too hard to understand," or "I couldn't tell where your speech was headed."

If you can avoid a defensive reaction on your own part, it will be productive to press the commentator for details. "Can you tell me which ideas I should have made clearer?" Or, "Was there a particular point in the speech where you thought I was going off track?"

You still might get a vague response. Your critic may have sounded off without thinking through his or her comment. In that case, suggest some specific alternatives. "When talking about new concepts of company loyalty, I'll try mentioning some examples to show what I mean." Or, "I prepared my talk from an outline; I'll go back to that and see where I went astray."

5 **Decide what you'll accept and what you'll reject.** You'll handle evaluations more confidently if you keep in mind which comments you'll take to heart, and which you'll ignore.

FEAR OF Feedback

How to accept frank evaluations and turn them to your advantage.

Two areas of feedback should be of particular importance to you: (1) Was I clear? Did the audience know what I was talking about? (2) Was the audience comfortable listening to me – did I speak too fast or display any annoying mannerisms?

If listeners indicate that you were not clear, try to determine the problem. Examine the structure of your speech; check your thesis, look at your points. If your listeners indicate that they were uncomfortable – because you rushed, used nervous gestures or otherwise distracted them with your mannerisms – take such feedback seriously and work on correcting the problem.

What to ignore? Suggestions about what you might have said, arguments over a small point, and challenges to your political point of view are all irrelevant. Acknowledge that you've heard and understood such comments, of course, but don't let yourself get caught up in a debate.

6 Deflect untrue criticism. Your evaluator may make a statement that strikes you as unfair or even false. Perhaps he said "You should quote different authorities," or "The figures you cited are wrong." You are satisfied with the authorities you quoted, and you know the figures are current.

Instead of starting an argument, deflect the criticism by responding in a way that shows you're not defensive or anxious. Your response might be: "You could be right about that . . ." or "What you say makes sense . . ." The person will stop making such comments because it's no fun throwing words if you don't react.

7 Don't make people defend their comments. When someone evaluates you, there's always the temptation to maneuver the person into admitting the complaint was unfounded. Such a dialogue might go this way:

Evaluator: "I thought your speech was a little long."

Speaker: "How long was it?"

Evaluator: "I didn't really time it, but it seemed long to me."

Speaker: "Well, it was supposed to be a 10-minute talk, and it was 10 minutes on the dot when I practiced it."

In such a scenario, it is better to concede the point and move on to another comment.

"No matter how insignificant a comment may seem to you, it's important to the person making it."

8 Take an objective view of your performance. Try this simple trick: Imagine yourself stepping out of the role of speaker and joining the group giving you advice and criticism. The speaker is now (in your imagination) a different person. Evaluating the performance of that person now becomes a group effort in which you, yourself, play a significant part.

If you can pull this off – and it gets easier with practice – you'll find yourself handling criticism with a lot more confidence. Suddenly, "fear of feedback" is no longer your problem. It's something for that other guy up there at the podium to worry about. **1**

William L. Hennefrund counsels corporate executives on their speech presentations. He lives in Woodbury, Connecticut.

WHAT MAKES IT SO Difficult

Evaluations are a cinch . . .
unless you do them well.

By Cynthia Hammer, CTM

Being "evaluator" rather than "speaker" seems an easy way to participate in a club meeting. When signing up, I think to myself, "No sweat. No preparation is needed for evaluating." Then when it's time to evaluate I wonder, "Will I be able to think of anything to say?" "Will I say it in a helpful way?" Evaluating, which seems easy at first glance, can loom larger and more intimidating when the task is actually at hand.

What makes it so difficult? Evaluating, like Table Topics, is extemporaneous speaking with all the challenges that it entails. But evaluating requires further criteria to be met: (1) **sharing an honest reaction** (2) **in a**

constructive manner (3) **within prescribed guidelines.** Let me discuss each of these aspects in more detail.

■ The **prescribed guidelines** are the simplest to understand and follow, and can be assembled from many different sources. The various speakers' manuals contain guidelines for each particular speech, and the Effective Speech Evaluation manual offers suggested guidelines as well. The materials used at the judges' training for speech contests and the occasional article in *The Toastmaster* are all excellent sources of prescribed guidelines. I try to keep all these in mind as I listen to the speaker and make brief notes. I attempt to

cover each category in my mind, assessing how well the speaker and his speech are fulfilling each requirement.

■ Our **honest reaction** to a speech can be more difficult. We may get so caught up in our own anxiety about needing to evaluate that it gets in the way of our reaction. Our tension – “What will I say?” “How will I say it?” – interferes with our ability to have a gut reaction. So, relax! Listen as a listener, like any other member of the audience. Get in touch with your feelings about the speaker’s performance in general and the effect of the message. What kind of impact is she having? If she is successful, what is she doing that is making it go so well? If he is not engaging the audience fully, what is lacking? Listen as an audience member, but do so analytically. What is going right for the speaker? What could be better? What can the speaker do to improve his next speech?

Bear in mind that your evaluation of a speech is, to a large extent, a personal reaction. You are not a judge; you are not an authority. You are just a useful source of feedback to the speaker on this particular presentation. Your purpose is not to change the speaker but to provide information. On the basis of this information, the speaker may decide to make changes in the content, structure or delivery of future speeches.

You may know the areas you want to discuss in your evaluation and you are prepared to be honest, but how can you present the information in a constructive – not destructive – manner? How do you tell a beginning speaker that, while she did a good job for a beginner, she has areas that need more work? How do you give the right amount of praise, tempered with the right amount of judiciousness, so the speaker feels good about his effort and motivated to keep improving? Tricky though it is, this skill is well worth developing. It will benefit you whenever you need to make others aware of areas in which they may want to improve.

As evaluators our honest reaction must include sensitivity in what we say, how we say it, and to whom we say it. Sometimes we know what our honest reaction to a speech is, yet we are afraid to express ourselves. We worry that we will demoralize the speaker. We are uncomfortable – or perhaps just inexperienced at – expressing criticism in a sensitive, caring and positive way. As a result, we are too timid and our evaluations are unvaryingly pleasant, uselessly obtuse and nauseatingly positive.

Others err on the side of caution’s counterpart: reckless overreaction. Any sensitivity is trampled in the stampede to “tell it like it is.” The result is frankness that can be brutal and hurtful, rather than buoyant and helpful to the speaker.

And much of this measuring of fine lines depends on who you are evaluating. Some speakers can take more “heat” than others; in fact, they welcome it. Others might endure a contentious evaluation with smiles on their faces, but will quietly leave to wither and wilt in the privacy of their homes. So be sure to weigh people’s frailties as you assess their abilities.

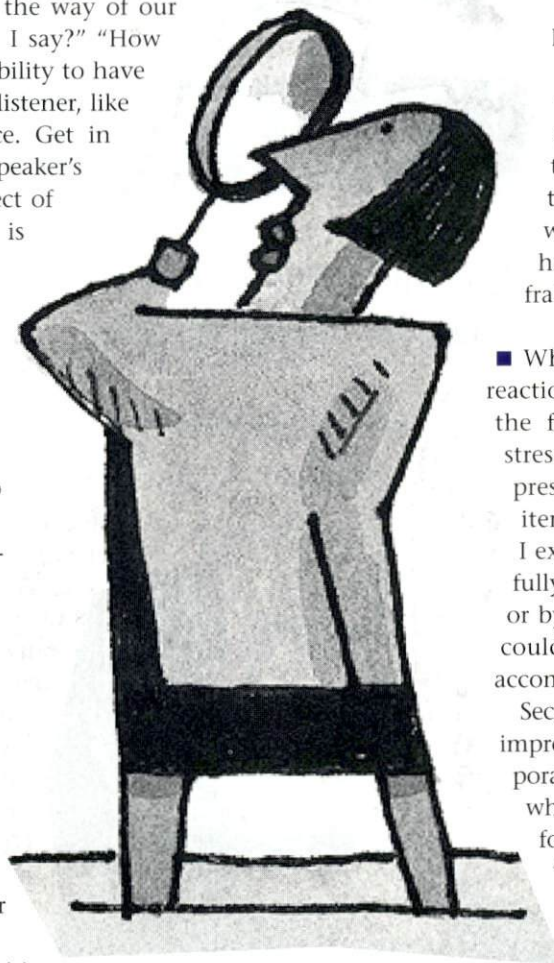
■ When it comes to sharing my honest reactions **in a constructive way**, I keep the following points in mind: First, I stress whatever strengths I see. Using the prescribed guidelines, I highlight all items that warrant positive comments. I explain what the speaker did successfully by using examples from his speech or by physically demonstrating what he could have done. Since generalities accomplish little, I try to be specific.

Secondly, I cover areas where I believe improvement can be made. Again I incorporate praise for the speaker’s strengths while pointing out areas that have room for growth. I might say, for example, “While your voice was strong and easily heard by everyone in the room, I think you would have more impact if you varied your pitch at times.”

By using “I” messages, the speaker continually hears that this is only my opinion. I try to stay away from impersonal statements such as “should,” “must” and “ought to.” These kinds of comments are authoritarian in nature and imply that I know what is best for the speaker. When I remind myself that I am only offering my observations and comments for the speaker to consider, I find I am more likely to choose the right words.

Evaluating may seem like an easy task to take on, but when you actually do it you’ll find that a considerable amount of balancing is involved. When you are the evaluator, you take part in an exciting process, that of helping a fellow Toastmaster grow. Simultaneously, you are helping yourself grow by acquiring and refining important skills. Evaluating is a risky and difficult business. But it’s through risk-taking that we grow, and that’s what Toastmasters is all about. **T**

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Cynthia Hammer, CTM is a member of Evergreen 333 Club 333-32 in Tacoma, Washington.



WHEN YOU ARE THE Evaluator

Bypassing a speaker's positives misses the point.

By Dr. Ravi Upadhye, ATM-B

I travel quite a lot in my business. One of my habits is to look up the name of the local Toastmasters club where I am visiting, and attend its meeting if I can. During one such visit I noticed something that really made me think, resulting in this article.

A Toastmaster I'll call "Keith" was delivering speech number 9 from the Communication and Leadership Manual, "Persuade with Power," and had prepared his arguments, practiced potential rebuttals and worked in a little bit of humor. Oh, sure, it wasn't perfect. Some of his arguments were neither cogent nor air-tight, and he lacked confidence, but overall I thought it was a very good speech. With a little encouragement, Keith could have improved a great deal.

The real shocker came when "Marsha," (also a fictitious name) got up to evaluate Keith. Her very first sentence was, "Keith, your project was to convince me of your viewpoint but after listening to your speech I am not convinced, so you have failed to meet your objectives!" She then went on to criticize the speech in detail. She pointed out how Keith's nervously repetitive gestures showed a lack of confidence, how he shuffled his feet in one place rather than using the whole area available to him, how he used the phrase "you know" as a filler, and how he avoided full eye contact.

She did not utter a single word of encouragement or point out even one positive aspect of Keith's speech.

Many of the points raised by Marsha were valid, yet because of the way they were presented,

her evaluation failed to have the desired impact on Keith, namely, to help him improve his speaking ability. The next time I visited the same club, I learned that Keith had not attended a single meeting since that day, and had, in fact, quit the club!

What went wrong? Before I tell you my answer, I'd like to share my views about why Toastmasters clubs exist, and my philosophy of evaluation. (These are my personal views, which are not necessarily shared by the clubs I belong to, or by Toastmasters International.)

The first and paramount purpose of any Toastmasters club is to increase the self-esteem of its members. The way this is achieved is through the medium of public speaking. In this sense, Toastmasters clubs are no different from gourmet cooking clubs, which help their members improve their self-esteem through the art of cooking, or inline skating clubs, which help their members increase their self-worth by teaching them the art of inline skating. Yes, public speaking is important, but more important is how members feel about themselves.

"Should we not, then, offer honest evaluations?" you may ask. On the contrary. We owe it to our fellow members to give



them an honest and thorough evaluation, but it has to be done with sensitivity and wisdom. If a member, like Keith, quits a club as a result of a harsh evaluation, the basic purpose of that evaluation is lost. A speaker who has stopped speaking has stopped improving. The key is to give the evaluated members reasons to feel good about themselves so that they will come back. So how do we make sure that evaluations serve their purpose? Here are a few guidelines I like to use:

1 Evaluators should never forget that their job is to help improve the speaker's self-esteem, while at the same time providing feedback that will help him or her become a better public speaker.

2 Evaluators should never forget that their job is to provide feedback from one person's point of view, rather than to pronounce an official judgment on the quality of the speech. Remember, it's feedback, not criticism!

3 Always start by accentuating the positive. No matter how inexperienced the speaker is, you must find something good about that speech. Hone your skills of looking for the positive aspects of any speech. You will be amazed how quickly this habit spreads to other areas of your life in which you'll subconsciously start looking for pluses in any situation or person! A word of caution, however: Thou shalt not tell lies! Listen to the admonition given by the Indian Poet, Rabindranath Tagore: Do not insult your friends by lending them merits from your own pocket! If the speaker shows good eye contact, say so, but if she doesn't, move on to some other attribute that is positive. Telling lies, however pleasant, is a horrendous disservice to the speaker, because the one avenue of improvement corresponding to the lied-about attribute is now closed!

4 Provide concrete suggestions for improvements. Had Marsha made specific suggestions about Keith's organization, instead of just saying that he had failed to convince her, Keith would have known how to improve his next speech.

5 As an evaluator, you have the awesome responsibility of helping the speaker grow. No matter how good the speaker is, he or she can always improve. As the evaluator, you must hone your skills to look for areas that could be better. Believe me, suggestions for improvement, if they are phrased differently than Marsha's, will be welcome and appreciated.

6 Never criticize. Never say, "Your eye contact was inadequate!" or "You were too nervous!" Instead, get into

the habit of saying something like, "If you had maintained a continued eye contact for a few seconds, your speech would have had more impact on me," or "Taking a deep breath before you start may help you feel more confident."

7 My preferred rule of thumb is to mention four positive attributes per suggestion for improvement. If you feel like modifying that ratio, I suggest erring on the side of too many positive comments. If you provide fewer suggestions for improvement than you would have liked, it's okay. There will be other opportunities. Besides, you

can always tell the speaker about what you missed at some other time. But pointing out too many areas in need of improvement may result in the member not coming back, which would defeat the whole purpose of evaluation!

If you are the General Evaluator, and if you find an evaluator giving an evaluation of dubious value, please point it out to him or her, gently but firmly, that such evaluations are not consistent with the spirit of the organization, and that they are counterproductive to the evaluator's true goal, namely, to help the speaker

improve her public speaking skills. Once you establish the culture of avoiding overly-critical evaluations in your club, the rewards will be forthcoming: a lower dropout rate, more camaraderie, and dramatic improvements in attendance!

Instead of a terror-filled atmosphere, your meetings will be more relaxed, you will attract and keep more new members and the high stress level at your meetings will be replaced by an encouraging learning environment. And the value of that is indisputable. **T**

Dr. Ravi Upadhye, ATM-B. is a member of Microcentury Club 2797-57 from Livermore, California.

Note: Let's face it, just getting up and giving speeches won't make us better speakers. We need to receive good evaluations. At the end of each speech project in the Communication and Leadership manual, an evaluation guide is provided. In addition, Toastmasters International has materials that can help every member in every club give and receive better evaluations. The "Evaluate to Motivate" module (Catalog No. 292) is a short training program that costs only \$3.50, plus S&H. There is also an Evaluation Kit (Catalog No. 167, \$4.25, plus S&H) that will help you add variety to your club meetings by showing how to give group evaluations and evaluate the evaluator.

By Kai Rambow, DTM

How to turn
guests into
members.



A Tale of Two Guests

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times. Plenty of guests were visiting, but no one was joining. Sound familiar? Are you having trouble turning your guests into members? It could be because your club members have forgotten some basics about treating guests well.

Most of us joined our club because we felt comfortable with the people we met, yet we were challenged and inspired by their public speaking skills. How well is your club doing with membership building? Below are examples of worst- and best-case scenarios. Decide whether your club needs to brush up on these facets of recruitment:

GETTING GUESTS TO MEETINGS

Worst: A prospective guest called three executive club members – the

President, Vice President Education and Vice President Membership – and left messages for all three. No one returned the phone call.

Best: A potential guest called the club contact name. The phone call was returned in less than 24 hours. In addition, information about Toastmasters and directions to the club meeting were faxed.

Goal: Make it easy for potential guests to get in touch with your club and to find the meeting location. Corporate executives often call their

own companies anonymously to see how well customer service really works. Why not do the same for your club? Review the telephone response and directions provided to potential guests.

GREETING GUESTS

Worst: From the time the guest arrived and until the meeting started, not a single member said “Hello.”

Best: The club’s executive officers lined up outside the meeting room and greeted everyone. Club members and guests were greeted with equal enthusiasm. As a result, people were pumped up and raring to go even before the gavel hit the lectern.

Goal: Make your guests as comfortable in your club as you would in your home. Do you greet everyone, welcome them and get them comfortably seated?

INTRODUCING GUESTS

Worst: Totally unprepared, the Toastmaster of the meeting said, “I see some

new faces. Who are you people?"

Best: A member had been assigned to each guest. The Toastmaster then called on the members to warmly introduce their assigned guests.

Goal: Assign a member to each guest. Engage in small talk to get enough information to introduce the guests to the other club members. Find out their names, how to pronounce them, why they came to the meeting, what they do professionally and possibly some hobbies and interests. Now you will be prepared to give a warm and interesting introduction. Don't talk too much about the Toastmasters program unless asked specific questions. Let your dynamic meeting sell guests on the value of the club membership.

HAVING GUESTS PARTICIPATE

Worst: The Topicmaster insisted that the guests participate. One guest literally turned pale and heaved a huge sigh of relief when a visiting Toastmaster intervened on her behalf.

Best: The Topicmaster explained what Table Topics are and why they are part of the meeting. She then invited guests to participate but mentioned they could simply say, "I'll pass," if they felt uncomfortable.

Goal: Remember how you felt the first time you spoke before a group; this is how your guests and new members might feel. Then act accordingly with gentle encouragement and kind words.

EXPLAINING THE MEETING

Worst: No part of the meeting was explained to anyone. Non-Toastmasters had to guess as to the logic of the agenda.

Best: Everyone remembered to explain each part of the meeting. No assumptions were made.

Goal: You are not just explaining for the benefit of guests but for new members as well. The more we understand something, the more comfortable we are with it and the

more likely we are to participate enthusiastically and confidently. Does your club's general evaluator comment on explanations given?

ASKING GUESTS FOR COMMENTS

Worst: No guests were asked for comments. The meeting ended and everyone went home.

Best: Each guest was invited to share their impressions of the meeting. They also were told to remain seated if that would be more comfortable for them.

Goal: Create a safe environment, so guests will feel comfortable enough to comment. We can learn a lot from the opinions of visitors, and also find out if a person wants to join.

GETTING GUESTS TO JOIN

Worst: Right after the meeting, several Toastmasters pounced on the guest and urged her to join the club. "It's the best thing you can do," enthused one member.

Best: Each guest was invited to join. Those who said yes were helped right away. Those who said they needed more time were warmly welcomed to attend again.

Goal: Have such an exciting, dynamic meeting that guests want to be a part of your club. There should never be a need for a hard sell.

HELPING GUESTS GET STARTED

Worst: A guest interested in joining wasn't able to because no one in the club seemed able to find the New Member forms. In fact, no one even knew how much the membership dues were.

Best: At meetings where several guests wanted to join, a sample New Member form was handed out with each application, as well as a prorated dues sheet indicating how much would be due for each particular month.

Goal: Be prepared for guests who want to become members. Have the information ready and make it easy for them to join. Remember: New

members don't care about when and how much money gets sent to World Headquarters. All they want to know is the total amount they need to pay.

It's a good idea to hand out guest kits that include the Communication and Leadership Manual, *Toastmaster* magazines and other information. This way new members can get started in the Toastmasters program right away.

FOLLOWING UP

Worst: No one bothered to get guests' names, phone numbers and addresses, so no one from the club could call and invite them back.

Best: Having obtained the visitor's address, the club president sends a handwritten note expressing appreciation for the person's visit. This is followed by a phone call from a club member inviting the guest back.

Goal: Let guests know that they would be a welcome addition to the club. If a guest doesn't join right away, it doesn't mean he or she isn't interested. We need, gently but persistently, to follow up with a simple message like, "Our next meeting is . . . and we would love to have you visit us again." And, of course, leave a name and number in case they want to call back.

If you recognize any of these areas as ones in which your club and members could be doing better, get everyone involved in making improvements. Make it every member's responsibility to ensure that club visitors are comfortable. Invite your guests warmly, have fun and treat them well, and many of your membership challenges will disappear. And that could be a far, far better thing that you do for your club than you have ever done. **T**

Kai Rambow, DTM, is a past international director and a member of X Club 8630-60 and Manulife Financial Club 9050-60, both in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

WHEN YOU'RE THE

Ah Counter OR Grammarian



Even small jobs have big impact.

Do you dread those Toastmasters meetings when you're scheduled to serve as Ah Counter or Grammarian? Do you habitually arrive just a little bit late in hopes that someone else will volunteer to take on these tasks?

When considering the eight basic roles Toastmasters International recommends for meeting participation, those of Ah Counter and Grammarian are probably the least popular. The Ah Counter is often reluctant to point out the unconscious slips of his fellow Toastmasters. The Grammarian can easily feel uncomfortable critiquing the grammar of her peers. And no one is exactly thrilled to have his or her every little mistake revealed – especially not in front of others.

You may ask, "Why must we endure this discomfort in our Toastmasters meetings?" "What real purpose do these seemingly trivial tasks have?" The answers may surprise you.

THE AH COUNTER

Make sure you are aware of the duties of the Ah Counter each time you take on this job.

Before the meeting:

- Review the Ah Counter's duties.
- Obtain a blank copy of the Ah Counter's log from the Sergeant-at-Arms, or a large piece of paper and a pencil or pen.
- Prepare a brief explanation of the Ah Counter's duties. You will be introduced at the beginning of the meeting and asked to explain your duties for the benefit of new members and guests.

During the meeting:

- Pay close attention to every introduction, speech, evaluation, Table Topic, announcement and comment from the time the meeting is called to order until adjournment.
- Note the words and sounds used by each individual as fillers or "crutches," such as "ah," "er" and "um" or words and phrases that function as verbal pauses.

At the end of the meeting:

- When called upon, report the number and the nature of the "crutch" sounds and words used by each Toastmaster throughout the meeting.

While the task of Ah Counter may run a close second in popularity to taking out the garbage or going to the dentist, there are many hidden benefits. As the official guardian of verbal ticks you get to hone your listening skills and sharpen your attention to detail. You also learn



HOW TO BENEFIT FROM THE AH COUNTER'S REPORT

If the Ah Counter has tallied an inordinate number of "ahs," "ums" and "ers" under your name, practice eliminating them from your speech. Listen to your speech patterns. When do you tend to insert these

to evaluate your peers in a non-judgmental, helpful way. And when you're the Ah Counter, you become more aware of the crutches in your own speech patterns.

Few speakers enjoy having their speech habits scrutinized by the Ah Counter, but it's this person who can offer new Toastmasters the greatest assistance. Many men and women join Toastmasters with an "ah, er, a-a-a, um" habit. Yet it's this very habit that most Toastmasters conquer first. Why? Because someone brings it to their attention. Once you become aware of a problem, you're able to overcome it. If your goal is to learn to speak without faltering or using crutches, the Ah Counter's feedback is of infinite value to you.

So instead of avoiding the responsibility of serving as Ah Counter, embrace it as a great opportunity for growth, as well as a tremendous service to members. And instead of shrinking into your seat when the Ah Counter stands to give her report, welcome the feedback. What you know about your speech habits will help you, because it's only through awareness that it's possible to improve.

"crutch" words? When do you speak too fast? Is your pace keeping others from interjecting their thoughts?

Over the next few weeks, whether you're speaking to a neighbor, ordering something over the phone, conversing with your spouse or talking to a customer or client, try speaking more slowly and deliberately. Think about what you're saying and avoid rushing in to fill the silence with sounds and superfluous words. Are the Ah Counter assignment and the resulting report to be dreaded? Not if you're in Toastmasters for the purpose of self-improvement.

A member once told me that she had a love/hate relationship with the Ah Counter. She said, "I had the worst - I mean, the *worst*-case of the 'ums' when I joined Toastmasters. It was humiliating, at first, to have my 'ums' counted up and the number announced at the end of the meeting. But the thing is, I didn't even know I was doing it. Of course, I was aware that I said 'um' a few

times when I spoke, but I had no idea how much until the Ah Counter told me. It was embarrassing, but worth the embarrassment in the long run because I no longer rely on 'crutch' words and sounds in my speech."

This woman admits that if she hadn't become aware of her poor speech habits, she wouldn't have known to correct them.

Another Toastmaster I know was hooked on the phrase, "Know what I mean?" At her first meeting, the Ah Counter pointed out that she had used that phrase 13 times. She didn't believe him. As she attempted to defend herself that night, the phrase popped out twice in her explanation. Only then did she realize how much of a habit it had become.

THE GRAMMARIAN

For some Toastmasters, the task of Grammarian is slightly distasteful. Members may feel intimidated by a job for which they feel unqualified. They're timid about pointing out the grammatical errors of their peers.

However, it doesn't take an English major to be Grammarian. Everyone has some grammatical expertise.

The Grammarian has two basic duties: to introduce a new word to members and to comment on the use of their grammar during the course of the meeting. Here's the Grammarian's checklist:

- Select a "Word of the Day." The brochure "A Toastmaster Wears Many Hats," published by World Headquarters, suggests that this be a word that will help members increase their vocabulary and that can be incorporated easily into everyday conversation.
- When called upon, give a brief explanation of the Grammarian's duties. Display a printed version of the Word of the Day where everyone can see it. Give a definition of the word, use it in a sentence and encourage all members to incorporate the word into their speech or conversation during the meeting.
- Obtain a Grammarian's log from the Sergeant-at-Arms or use a blank piece of paper to note grammatical errors throughout the meeting.
- Give a report at the end of the meeting. Mention who used the Word of the Day and point out any grammatical errors.

Each Grammarian may not catch every error, but do the best you can.

TIPS FOR THE GRAMMARIAN

Listen for mispronounced words, the misuse of words, the incorrect use of plurals and incomplete sentences. While some mistakes may go right over your head, others will grate on your nerves. Something that bothers me is when people say, "He is the one that didn't eat his lunch." I suggest saying, "He is the one *who* didn't eat his lunch." Another common mistake is, "I have a friend of *mine* who

did such and such." This is redundant! It should be, "I have a friend who did such and such." Or, "A friend of mine did such and such"

Sometimes people use words creatively. If a phrase sounds good to you, compliment their usage. If you're not sure whether it's correct or proper, ask for input from other club members. They may have heard something you didn't. Let it be a learning experience for all of you.

And by all means, don't short-change your fellow Toastmasters or yourself. I recall an instance in my club involving a wonderful Chinese man named Jim. Newcomers to the United States use any number of methods to improve their English skills. Some go to school. Others watch television. Jim joined Toastmasters. I noticed that most members in this club, when serving as Grammarian, would pretty much ignore Jim's language errors.

Once, however, the club's founder had Grammarian duties on an evening when Jim spoke, and she did not hesitate to point out some of his grammatical errors. With compassion and grace, she explained the errors and how to correct them. Rather than seeming insulted or embarrassed, Jim expressed his appreciation and asked for additional clarification.

Witnessing this, I felt ashamed that I had not been more helpful to him when I'd had the opportunity instead of being afraid of hurting his feelings or of confusing him.

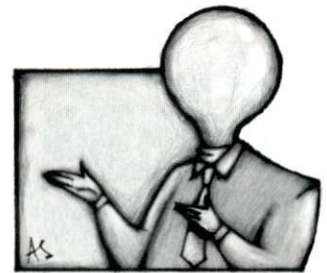
If we look at the tasks of Ah Counter and Grammarian as negative ones, and if we fear that we are going to insult someone, we are missing the whole point of being a Toastmaster.

We join Toastmasters to improve in the area of public speaking, communication and leadership. If we are unwilling to perform in every Toastmaster role to the best of our ability, there's little opportunity for growth.

The next time you're asked to be the Ah Counter or the Grammarian, accept the task with confidence, enthusiasm and a strong desire to be the best that you can be. Not only will your members and your club benefit, but you will, too. **T**

Patricia L. Fry, CTM. is a freelance writer living in Ojai, California.

Note: Sometimes the Ah Counter or Grammarian focuses so much on finding areas in need of improvement that the outcome is, well, somewhat negative. Add positive experiences and learning to this role by using it to build your members' vocabularies. The "Word of the Day" and "Word of the Day II" (Catalog Nos. 1415 and 1416 respectively, each \$3.00 plus S&H) each provide 50 new words that can be shared with your club's members. At the beginning of the meeting, the Ah Counter or Grammarian introduces the word, defines it, uses it in a sentence, then challenges members to use it during the meeting.



By Sharon Marchisello

From Idle to Ideal:

Tuning Up Your Table Topics

MANUAL SPEECHES MAKE ME NERVOUS ENOUGH. HOWEVER, adequate preparation ensures that reasonably sensible words will flow out of my mouth in an organized manner, even if my delivery is not perfect.

Table Topics are another story. A good day is when I can babble about something – anything – until the green light comes on, instead of staring stupidly at my fellow Toastmasters, stuttering and gulping, fidgeting with my hair and forgetting that I can speak English. (I have not yet advanced to the point of arranging complete, thoughtful sentences addressing the topic into an introduction, body and conclusion.)

Even though my adrenaline will never allow the Table Topics portion of our meetings to become boring for me, others who have better mastered the art of extemporaneous speaking need a little variety and added challenge. Some of our club members have introduced creative new twists to Table Topics, to remind us that learning this skill can be fun.

One Topicmaster brought in pictures clipped from the newspaper, with all captions eliminated. Each Table Topics “victim” was given a picture, and asked to explain what was going on in the scene. If you did not – or chose not to – recognize the news items, you could use your imagination to invent a story. (You were allowed to begin by describing what was in the photograph while collecting your thoughts.) At the end, the Topicmaster told the audience what news articles the photographs were actually illustrating. Only one of us had guessed right. Still, it did not matter; some of our stories were better.

On another occasion, this same Topicmaster made the Table Topics session into a game, which was a cross between Jeopardy and Russian Roulette. Sheets of paper representing five categories were pinned to the bulletin board, and each member got to select a category. The actual topic question lay on another sheet of paper beneath the title category. The few seconds of preparation time during which members normally would rise from their seats and settle at the lectern, were taken away.

Another Topicmaster handed each member a penny, using that item as a focal point for her topics. One Toastmaster was asked to talk about what significance the

year on his coin represented for him. One question dealt with “liberty,” one of the words imprinted on pennies. Another question centered on the actual value of the penny, and whether or not it had become an obsolete unit of currency. As a bonus, we all got to keep our coins.

At one meeting where no speaker was scheduled, several members got together beforehand and prepared a reading from *Hamlet*. The reading was Hamlet’s most famous soliloquy, done in traditional Shakespearean style. The Table Topics then focused on the passage, Shakespeare himself, the relevance of his writings today, and the changes in the English language over the centuries.

Although current events, holidays, and seasonal changes make perfectly valid Table Topics, unexpected subject matter and varied presentations allow our brains additional exercise. Last Christmas, a cousin sent me a book titled *If² ... 500 Questions for the Game of Life* by Evelyn McFarlane and James Saywell. It is filled with all sorts of philosophical questions, such as “If you found out for certain there is a Heaven and Hell, would you change your life? How?” and “If you had to name the single most important duty of a parent, what would you say it is?” I was flabbergasted to find that the book offered no answers or opinions. What was the point? The I realized that its thought-provoking questions could come in handy the next time I am the Topicmaster. **T**

Sharon Marchisello is a member of Delta Premier Club 8009-14 in Atlanta, Georgia.

Note: Creating a terrific Table Topics session doesn’t have to be a major project. The Think Fast! Table Topics Handbook (Catalog No. 1315, 75 cents, plus S&H) contains instructions for conducting a dynamic program and features six easy-to-remember outlines to follow when responding to a Table Topics question. Also available are cards with sample Table Topics questions, which are great for last-minute preparation. TableTalk cards (Catalog No. 1318, \$5.95, plus S&H) present an interesting fact, then pose a terrific Table Topics question. See the Toastmasters International Supply Catalog for more products and complete descriptions of these items.



HOW TO

By Darin Smyth, Ph.D., ATM

Take initiative in your
quest for growth

Six Ways to Build Leadership Skills

Leadership skills are essential to reaching many goals in life. Where can you develop those leadership skills? In Toastmasters!

Leadership skills are gained by practicing initiative-taking tasks and by working with others who have the skills you wish to develop. You can receive valuable leadership training within Toastmasters in the following six ways:

1 Become a Club Officer – Every facet of running a club is potentially relevant to your business or profession. If you need leadership or management skills, you develop the appropriate leadership skills by serving as an officer in your club. The club President leads and empowers the club members. The Vice President Education facilitates educational growth, and empowers members to stretch and advance. The Vice President Membership empowers and assists guests.

2 Complete an Advanced Manual – The Advanced Manuals offer some of the best training available within Toastmasters.

Once you have built your foundation both as a speaker and as a leader by completing your CTM, don't stop there! Build a house on top of that foundation through the advanced manuals, which help you to further define your communica-

tion and leadership style. When you select your manual, you are, in effect, choosing the areas of specialization you want to pursue. Do you want to learn more about storytelling? Informative speaking? Interpretive reading? Speaking on television? These are but a few of the subjects you can explore.

3 Become a Mentor to a New Club Member – Mentoring is an ideal form of leadership encompassing listening, teaching and empowering. By becoming a mentor, you are passing on to others what has been taught to you.

Your self-image, bolstered by the person whom you mentor looking to you for guidance, will continue to develop into that of a leader. So every time you help someone, you reinforce your own skills as well.

4 Give a Success/Leadership or Success/Communication Module – The Success/Leadership Series helps participants improve management and leadership skills, conduct meetings, motivate and inspire others, and build teams. By leading a Success/Leadership Module, you not only practice leadership, you reinforce your own knowledge in each of these areas.

5 Help With an Area, Division or District Event – This can include any of the following:

- A. Youth Leadership Training
- B. Speechcraft
- C. Leadership Breakfast
- D. Officer Training
- E. Area, Division or District Conference

Every time you participate or help in an Area or District event, you surround yourself with experienced Toastmasters who have gained leadership skills by practicing in each of the above areas.

6 Help Build a New Club, or Rebuild a Small Club – Building a club is an accelerated course in leadership in which you can apply all of your leadership skills. The three steps to building or rebuilding a club are: publicity, membership and leadership.

- A. **Publicity** – Building a club is like building a small business. Toastmasters provides the basic structure to make your "business" (i.e., your club) a success, beginning with a good publicity plan.
- B. **Membership** – You learn all facets of public relations through building your club membership. Greeting and orienting guests is just one of the skills you can transfer to nearly any line of work.
- C. **Leadership** – Successfully empowering, mentoring and leading new members, once they join are

When You Are the Club President

You just became the president of your Toastmasters club. Now what are you going to do? Start by reviewing your club officer manual. Then follow these basic steps:

Set the course. As president, it is your job to decide where the club is headed. This does not require a formal strategic plan. It can be as simple as stressing careful preparation for club meetings, or challenging the club to become a Select Distinguished Club and using the Club Success Plan (found in the Distinguished Club Program booklet (Catalog No. 1111)) to set goals and identify steps to achieve them.

Manage Yourself. To harness the talents of others, you first must know your own strengths and weaknesses. Once you know yourself, you can use others' strengths to fill in areas in which you are less strong.

Creating a Rewarding Environment. If you think you can do it all yourself, you are truly a beginner. Share the wealth of chores and, more importantly, the credit. By empowering others you gain their knowledge and abilities and allow them to grow into future leadership positions. You must also attend to the needs and desires of your fellow members – especially your fellow officers. With their support you can accomplish just about anything, and without it, nothing.

key to building or rebuilding a club.

Challenge yourself to increase your capacity to lead. Choose two items from the above list to complete during the next year. Select challenges that match the leadership skills you wish to develop. With each success, choose a new challenge, one that will help you to stretch yourself further as a leader. **T**

Darin Smyth, Ph.D., ATM, is a psychotherapist and member of Surf City Advanced Club 5127-4 in Santa Cruz, California.

You ran, so don't hide!

By Rich Owen, ATM

Incorporate History and Culture.

Capture and use historical and cultural data, along with organizational trends. Build on past trends for a solid future.

Ensure Availability.

Keep in touch with members – never forget that they are the reason you were elected president. Be available. Listen to their comments and suggestions, but do not take criticisms personally. If something is not right, view it as a process or problem that needs fixing – not as a flaw in your character. Collect the information as objectively as possible, then determine how you can correct the problem.

Make Meetings Effective.

It is to everyone's advantage for you to run effective meetings. Remember that most of us don't have enough time to do all we want to do at work and at home, so we certainly don't have time to waste in poorly run meetings.

Stay Positive.

Keep a positive attitude and smile. You must be decisive and say "no" when it is appropriate, but try to phrase your opinion positively, and highlight its ben-

efits to the club and Toastmasters organization as a whole.

Mentor Others.

In some cases, you need to help, guide, train and mentor someone into a new job or role. Remind officers, especially those Toastmasters who have served as club President several times, that a crucial job of a leader is to find and train one's replacement.

View the Short term.

Your term in office, whether it's six months, a year or longer, will be over before you know it. Make the most of it, because when it is over, someone else will have to take over where you left off. Then you must let go of the reins and begin supporting the person replacing you.

When you hold the title of Club President, you have to put forth your best effort. Strive to be stern, but fair. Incorporate mentoring and coaching while holding to the bottom line. By accomplishing all of the above, you will be in an excellent position to enhance your club, which looks to you for leadership and guidance. **T**

Rich Owen, ATM, is the president of Dell Master Club 827-56 and past president of Dell Toastmasters Club 7616-56, both in Austin, Texas.

Note: While much of Toastmasters is about giving speeches, another vital part of it is leadership. Not the stuffy, theoretical type, but the hands-on, get-it-done style that enables Toastmasters clubs to expand and helps individual members grow. Of course, your leadership efforts won't go unrecognized! The Competent Leader and Advanced Leader designations were created to recognize leadership accomplishments. Requirement details appeared in the December 1997 issue of *The Toastmaster* magazine. One of the requirements for Advanced Leader is completion of the High Performance Leadership Program. This project-based program offers instruction and practice in vital leadership areas such as developing a mission and vision, goal setting, planning, etc. Available from World Headquarters for \$19.95 plus shipping and handling, Catalog No. 262.



By Tamra B. Orr

Club officers need to juggle several responsibilities to handle their functions well.

A Toastmaster Wears Many Hats



No organization, no matter its size or mission, can succeed if it doesn't have an established structure, a sense of teamwork and an agreed upon code of conduct. This is certainly true in Toastmasters, where each officer is integrally linked to the next and where the club's quality depends on the focus of its

officers. All club officers, from President to Sergeant-at-Arms, need to juggle several responsibilities to handle their functions well.

One of the essential roles within a Toastmasters club is that of **Vice President Education (VPE)**. This officer plans exciting, dynamic meetings that stimulate old members to return and intrigue new members and visitors to hang around. The VPE works to make new

members feel comfortable with the other members and with the organization's meeting structure. The job description doesn't end there, however. The Vice President Education also is quite active in organizing activities outside the traditional meeting setting. It is this person who arranges and administers speech contests and may organize a speaker's bureau for civic and social clubs to call upon. He also may

coordinate various leadership programs and, knowing the importance of teamwork, he strongly encourages club members to participate in these exciting activities. His voice represents the club as he votes in area and district council meetings as well as at regional and international business meetings.

The **Vice President Membership (VPM)** fulfills an equally vital role within the club. This person is in charge of building club membership – the one to give a pat on the back when new members join. Bob Richmond is Vice President Membership at Medical Center Speak Easies Club 5016-11 in Southbend, Indiana, and his primary way of promoting his club is easy: Everyone in town knows Bob Richmond. "I talk to anybody and everybody about Toastmasters," he says. "I've been involved with this organization for 25 years and I take it seriously." He

adds, "I have fun, but I absorb everything." His success is apparent when he notes, "Everyone attending the Toastmasters meeting today was introduced to the club by me." In addition to recruiting new members, the VPM also is responsible for helping to prepare the Semiannual Membership Report, chairing the Membership Committee and participating in Executive Committee meetings.

Being the **Vice President Public Relations** (VPPR) is a related role, but it carries its own specific and essential duties. No club can flourish without someone who is willing to write, talk and spread the word about the rewards of Toastmasters, and that is just what this position is all about. Bob Schultz, the VPPR of Castleton Club 5870-11 in Indianapolis, puts it this way: "My profession is public relations and I recognize the value of public awareness," he says. "Making the club known requires two things: Internally, members must know why the club exists. And they must be strong advocates for the club's mission externally."

To that end, Schultz promotes the club to local businesses and media. "I provide them with pictures

of our awards and contests. Everyone likes a local story even if it's just a little blurb about upcoming meetings." And indeed, it is the VPPR who plans a public relations program, prepares the material and commonly produces a newsletter.

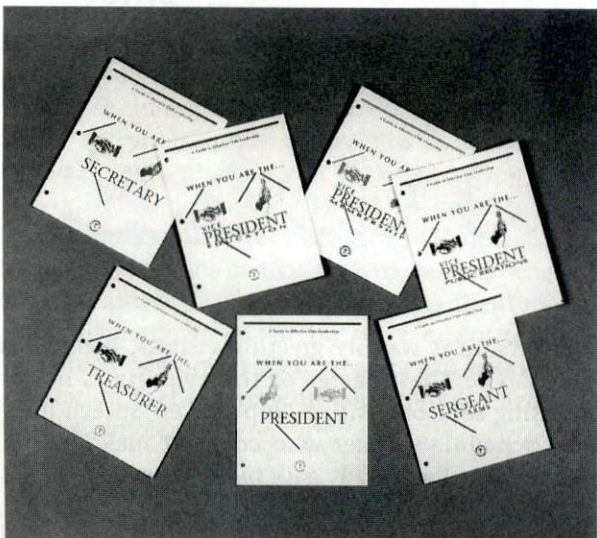
As many would expect, the **Secretary's** role involves paperwork and a lot of patience. The secretary must maintain accurate membership rosters, record and read meeting minutes, assist with various reports and be in charge of all club correspondence. Kathryn Walker, the Castleton club's secretary, says, "I keep track of the nuts and bolts and inner workings of the club." She credits her officer duties with making her more organized in her thoughts and presentations.

The **Treasurer** is, of course, the accountant of the club, keeping as close an eye on figures and expenses as the Ah Counter does on um's and uh's. She is in charge of preparing an annual budget for the club, notifying members of dues and then collecting them, paying bills, keeping accurate transaction records and preparing monthly financial reports. Precision is usually this officer's middle name.

Lastly, the **Sergeant-at-Arms** is the person who makes the meeting room a comfortable but professional place. Without him, organized meetings would likely grind to a halt. He arranges the room set-up and takes care of any refreshments or meals. He collects ballots and tallies votes while also maintaining club materials and equipment. Most importantly, he greets all guests and members at meetings, setting the stage for people to feel welcome and at ease. Bill Pierson of the Castleton club emphasizes that "The key is in the welcoming – not the arranging." Indeed if this person's role is handled improperly, it can sink a club, because visitors and new members who don't feel welcome are unlikely to return.

In Toastmasters, each officer depends on each other. No leadership position is more important than another, for each is a necessary step in a ladder that allows the club to grow, to improve and to represent the organization's mission of making effective communication a worldwide reality. **T**

Tamra B. Orr is a former Toastmaster living in Warsaw, Indiana.



Officer Manuals

Doing a great job as a club officer is challenging – especially if you don't know exactly what you're supposed to do. First, attend officer training (ask your Area Governor when the next scheduled training is) and then refer to your officer manual. What? You don't have an officer manual? A complete set of manuals is sent to your club each year in May, but if you just took office in January, it is likely that a copy wasn't given to you. You can order the manuals individually, or order the entire set for only \$8.00 (plus S&H), Catalog No. 1310-H by calling World Headquarters at (714) 858-8255.



The Invocation Should

Inspire, Not Intimidate

Personal prayer
is appropriate in
private but not
always in public.

The meeting room is a flurry of activity. Several people are helping the Sergeant-at-Arms set up the chairs and lectern and put out the voting ballots. The club President is looking for the gavel. The Vice President

Membership is warmly greeting visitors, members and guests. The Toastmaster of the evening is hurriedly recruiting someone with a "hip-pocket" speech to fill in for a schedule speaker who couldn't make it tonight because his wife recently gave birth to twins.

Suddenly, the club President notices it's time for the meeting to begin. She locates the gavel, but can't find the person who is supposed to give the invocation and

pledge. Oh no, she's looking at *you*. You look down at the table. You try to look preoccupied with your notebook. It doesn't work. Here she comes. You cringe. She smiles.

"Would you give the invocation and pledge? The person who's scheduled to do it isn't here and it's time to start. Thanks."

Your throat goes dry. Your tongue sticks to the roof of your mouth. "This is silly," you tell yourself. "After all, I am an ATM. Why should I be nervous?" *Gulp!*

Why are many otherwise outgoing, self-confident Toastmasters intimidated when asked to give the invocation? Could it be that the dictionary definition of invocation makes some of us feel inadequate? Perhaps so; Webster defines invocation as "a prayer given at the opening of a meeting."

Aha! The clue is the word "prayer." Because, unless you happen to be a rabbi, priest or minister, you may find it somewhat difficult to pray in public. For some of us, the words of devotion, which might flow freely when we are alone or in our place of worship, get stuck slightly south of the esophagus when we're asked to pray in front of even the friendliest group, such as our fellow Toastmasters.

One justifiable reason for this difficulty may be that we are acutely aware of the great diversity within our club. We realize that a prayer, however appropriate in our own religious circles, might make someone of another religion feel quite uncomfortable. Toastmasters, as we know, try never to offend or put anyone in an uncomfortable position. We've been trained that way; if not since birth, then certainly since our introduction to Toastmasters etiquette. How, then, do we deal with this challenge?

Perhaps it would help to take a look at the purpose of the invocation, just as we would analyze the objective of a speech. As we do this, we may notice that an invocation is similar in purpose to a keynote speech: to lift, to inspire and to establish a sense of agreement and common purpose among the members of the group.

Just as a keynote speech is intended to appeal to the shared values and ideals of the audience, so too should the invocation encompass them. This can be accomplished by making the invocation general in tone.

Depending on their particular views, be they religious, agnostic or atheistic, people may address their conception of a higher power in varying ways, or not at all. No matter which name we use, if any, we can easily create an invocation that everyone in your club can agree on. Here's an example:

May we learn and grow from our experiences here tonight. We desire to come closer in our understanding of each other and we ask

that the skills we acquire here will be used in ways that benefit not only ourselves, but also will benefit the world around us. Let us lift and encourage one another in a spirit of brotherly love and strive always to do and be our best.

Because of the enormous diversity among people of different backgrounds and orientations, what inspires one person may leave another cold. Some people are devout; others are not. Recognizing this, some Toastmasters clubs have thoughtfully initiated a method to help overcome the hesitation some members might feel about giving invocations in such a mixed group. These clubs have

"Toastmasters need to face the diversity of our membership not only with tolerance, but with genuine warmth and joy."

compiled notebooks of uplifting thoughts, brief but pithy poems, exhortations, general prayers and inspirational prose – all of which are appropriate for reading to a mixed group as an alternative to a personal prayer. Many of the readings are quotes from famous philosophers and poets whose words have stood the test of time. Some are written by contemporary writers and a few by talented Toastmasters.

Your club may want to start a similar collection of inspirational materials, to be made available for members who are more comfortable reading aloud than praying aloud. Persons called upon to give the invocation or inspirational thought would then have the choice of giving an impromptu prayer, reading from the club's collection, or contributing from their own.

Now, you may ask, "What about the person who feels it would be a violation of integrity *not* to express personal beliefs when giving the invocation?" This can get a bit controversial. It may help to remember that what is appropriate in private is not always appropriate in public – especially when it concerns leading a diverse group in prayer.

On the other hand, if someone *does* give a prayer that seems purely personal, it is hoped all Toastmasters will recognize that the person is speaking from his or her heart and almost certainly does not mean to offend. With that thought in mind, the members present will surely respond with understanding, tolerance and courtesy.

If the members of your club begin collecting inspirational material, remind them to be sure the readings are short, easy to read and understand, and, above all, *uplifting*. Keeping these three criteria in mind will help your members bypass readings that might leave some listeners bothered or bewildered. If well-chosen, readings can be given with feelings, flair, or even a touch of drama, resulting in learning experiences of the oratorical as well as the inspirational kind.

Somewhere tucked away in your files or in that beat-up old box in the basement, you surely have a few poetic jewels or wonderful writings you've saved because they

were just too good to throw away. Now may be an excellent time to pull them out, dust them off and share them with your fellow Toastmasters. You may even have the perfect one for your next meeting.

Inspirational material appropriate for Toastmasters falls into three categories: exhortations, thoughts-to-ponder and non-denominational prayers. The following examples may give you ideas for your club's collection. I hope these gems will encourage you and other members of your club to go searching for some treasures of your own. The following exhortation by Patti Rose had been lost in my files for years. Recently discovered, it has become a favorite in my club:

Think freely. Smile often. Tell those you love that you do. Rediscover old friends. Make new ones. Hope. Grow. Give. Give in. Pick some daisies. Share them. Keep a promise. Laugh. Laugh heartily. Reach out. Let someone in. Hug a kid. Slow down. See a sunrise. Listen to rain. Trust life. Have faith. Enjoy. Make some mistakes. Learn from them. Explore the unknown. Celebrate life!

Consider this encouraging exhortation written by Ralph Waldo Emerson:

Finish every day and be done with it. You have done what you could; some blunders and some absurdities crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; you shall begin it serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered by old nonsense.

Here are two excellent examples of "thoughts to ponder:"

*There is a destiny that makes us brothers
None goes his way alone.
All that we send into the lives of others
Comes back into our own.*

EDWIN MARKHAM

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*

T.S. ELIOT

Non-denominational prayers often bring enjoyment and inspiration to groups from diverse backgrounds. For example, seasonal prayers like the following old Irish blessing, often used for St. Patrick's Day, can add warmth and charm to the atmosphere of a meeting:

*May the road rise to meet you. May the wind
be always at your back. May the sun shine warm*

*upon your face, the rain fall soft upon your
fields. And, until we meet again, may God hold
you in the hollow of his hand.*

And speaking of seasonal material, here's an excerpt from a lovely patriotic poem by John Mitchum that offers uplifting thoughts for Independence Day:

*You ask me why I love her? Well, give me time and
I'll explain. Have you ever seen a Kansas sunset or an
Arizona rain? Have you drifted on a bayou down
Louisiana way? Have you seen the cold fog drifting
over San Francisco Bay? . . .
You ask me why I love her? I've a million reasons
why. My beautiful America . . . beneath God's wide,
wide sky.*

The following non-denominational prayer by the late Peter Marshall, Chaplain to the U.S. Senate, should allow all Toastmasters and guests to feel at ease and perhaps slightly amused. (Evaluators, take note).

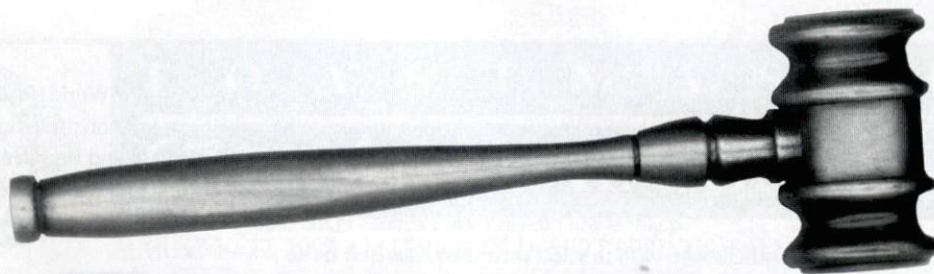
*Keep me from unkind words and unkind silence.
Restrain my judgments, I pray.
Make my criticisms kind, generous and constructive.
Make me sweet inside, that I may be gentle with
other people, gentle in the things I say, kind
in what I do.*

Humor can soften and even erase the differences between people, provided it is used prudently and with good taste. The following wry prayer was written by Ed Coffey, ATM, former president of two Toastmasters clubs and former Area Governor in Founder's District. Coffey is an entertaining raconteur with a delightful Irish brogue and, as you can see, an impish quality of composition:

*Lord, let this be a meeting of the minds here at our
Toastmasters club this morning. May eloquence
be the mainstay and brevity be the soul of our wit.
Let our comments be kind in nature, without malice
aforethought, and may we speed easily through
a morning of erudite commentary unhindered
by verbosity or loquaciousness.*

In conclusion, let us remember that we as Toastmasters need to face the diversity of our membership not only with tolerance, but with genuine warmth and joy. Let's all respect and honor the differences that make us distinct while we celebrate the similarities that make us sisters and brothers – not just in Toastmasters, but in this whole incredible world. **1**

Diana L. James, ATM, is the co-founder and 9-year member of the Possibilities Unlimited Club 7368-F in San Juan Capistrano, California.



TOASTMASTERS' 1998 GOLDEN GAVEL RECIPIENT:

Jeanne Robertson

Humor Is No Joke For This Popular Speaker

Not many are called (and even fewer are chosen) to compete for the exalted title of Miss America. And although the experience of the pageant may represent the pinnacle of achievement for some women, for Jeanne Robertson it was hardly her life's highpoint. You might even take the perspective that it was the *pageant* that reached its highest high through Robertson's involvement in it, for in her the competition had its tallest participant ever.

At a towering six-foot-two, Robertson holds the added distinction of being the tallest participant not to win the crown. But losing is in the eye of the beholder, and Robertson views the experience as perhaps the most contributive of all others to her current career. She believes that her participation in, and perhaps even her losing of the Miss America contest eventually led her to become one of the funniest and most popular professional speakers in the United States. As Miss North Carolina, Jeanne Robertson traveled her native state for one year, speaking at pageants and addressing civic clubs and corporations. She quickly noticed that people responded to her humor, and she found that people seemed to more easily identify with someone who had *not* won the title of Miss America than with someone who had been so honored.

But the real key to Robertson's success throughout her 35 years as a public speaker is her humor – specifically, her ability to laugh at the funny things that happen (or don't happen) to her; and to invite others to laugh along with her. If you are lucky enough to hear her southern accent in action, though, don't expect stand-up comedy and formulaic jokes. Robertson stresses, "Telling funny stories doesn't give a person a sense of humor. A real sense of humor means being able to laugh at yourself, and being able to laugh at day-to-day situations that are often anything but

funny when they happen." Thus, she prefers to promote herself as "a professional speaker who is a humorist."

And therein lies the added challenge. In Robertson's opinion, being a professional humorist entails far more than getting a laugh. For her the goal is to inform, to motivate and to impart some bit of wisdom from her experiences to her audience. Humorous treatment of a given topic or story is her means to that end.



About the only things that aren't laughable in Robertson's life and career are the distinguished honors and awards she has received. One of these was the CPAE Award, conferred by the National Speakers Association. She became the first woman to keynote an NSA convention and, in 1989, the first to receive its highest honor, the Cavett Award. She served as the NSA's president in 1985-86. Also in 1986, Toastmasters in her home state of North Carolina presented her with their Communication and Leadership Award in honor of her out-

standing achievements and excellence in communication. And this August she will be honored with Toastmasters International's highest honor, the Golden Gavel, at the Annual Convention in Palm Desert, California.

Whether or not honors keep coming her way, her goal will continue to be to "keep 'em laughin'!" Through her humorous looks at both her successes and her losses we may find reason to replace the bittersweet adage "Tis better to have loved and lost" with: 'Tis better to have lost and *laughed* – words of wisdom all Toastmasters would do well to remember.

Don't miss your chance to hear Jeanne Robertson's humorous and enlightening storytelling this August at Toastmasters International's 67th Annual International Convention in Palm Desert, California. For registration information, please turn to page 28.



PRESELECTION OF SEAT LOCATION

This year, in an effort to reduce delays in the seat selection line, World Headquarters will offer convention registrants the opportunity to have their seat location preselected for the *Golden Gavel Luncheon, Fun Night, International Speech Contest, and President's Dinner Dance*. Simply check the appropriate box located on the convention registration form. World Headquarters will preselect seat locations in the order in which it receives convention registration

forms – so, register early! Those individuals who wish to select their own seats may do so at the Convention beginning on Wednesday, August 19, at 10:00 a.m.

Seating Preselection Procedure

1. World Headquarters will assign seating locations in the order in which it receives convention registration forms.
2. Preselected seating will be offered on an "all or none" basis only. Registrants may purchase tickets to one or more of the events which have assigned seating. However, if preselected seating is requested, World Headquarters will select seat locations for **all** tickets for event(s) that have assigned seating.
3. Assignment of preselected seat locations will be at the discretion of Toastmasters International.
4. All preselected seat locations are **final** and **cannot** be changed prior to the convention or on site.
5. Toastmasters requesting preselection of seat locations and who wish to sit in a group must mail their registration forms together in the same envelope. World Headquarters will make every attempt to accommodate such requests.
6. World Headquarters will make every effort to seat larger groups (*registrants purchasing six or more tickets for any single event*) at the same table. However, it is possible groups of six or more may be seated at separate tables.
7. **Deadline:** Advance registrations must reach World Headquarters by **July 7**. Cancellations and refund requests will not be accepted after **July 15**. Cancellations will not be accepted on site — no exceptions!



**Marriott's
Desert Springs
Welcomes**

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL® 1998 CONVENTION AUGUST 19 - 22, 1998

MAIL THIS FORM TO:
**Marriott's Desert Springs
Resort & Spa**
74855 Country Club Drive
Palm Desert, CA 92260
(800) 331-3112 or
(760) 341-2211

HOTEL REGISTRATION FORM

Arrival date: _____ Departure date: _____

Number of nights you will stay: _____

Number of people in room: _____

Approx. arrival time: _____

(CHECK-IN 4:00 P.M. - CHECK-OUT 12 NOON)

Method of transportation: Car Air Other

Late departures will be charged a full night's rate plus taxes.

Please Note: Special conference rates are based on reservations received by July 1, 1998, and room block availability.

PLEASE RESERVE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR: (*please print or type*)

Name (last) _____ (first) _____ (initial) _____ Company _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____ Fax () _____ Sharing room with: _____

Special Requests: Prefer non-smoking room Other (specify) _____

(Note: Every attempt will be made to honor your request, however we cannot guarantee a special request.)

To guarantee your reservation we require first night's deposit or credit card guarantee. Please include 9% occupancy tax per night. DO NOT SEND CASH. Make check or money order payable to the Desert Springs Marriott.

Credit Card type _____

Credit Card # _____ Exp. _____

Check # _____ Amount _____

SIGNATURE

DATE

Special Conference Rates (circle rate desired)		
	KING OR TWO DOUBLES	SUITES
Single (1 person)	\$95.00	Phone hotel directly if suite is desired. Cost and availability varies.
Double (2 people)	\$95.00	
Triple (3 people)	\$105.00	
Quad (4 people)	\$115.00	

Check here _____ if rollaway is needed. (no charge)

After July 1, all subsequent reservations will be subject to availability at the current hotel rack rates.

DON'T BE A NO-SHOW

To cancel your reservation call (800) 331-3112 or (760) 341-2211. Deposit refunded only if reservation is cancelled **10 days prior to arrival** and you have your cancellation number.

A room confirmation will be mailed to you as soon as possible.

DO NOT MAIL THIS FORM TO TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL



T O A S T M A S T E R S I N T E R N A T I O N A L

67TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

AUGUST 19-22, 1998 ♦ MARRIOTT'S DESERT SPRINGS, PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA, U.S.A.

MAIL THIS PART TO: Toastmasters International, P.O. Box 9052, Mission Viejo, California 92690 U.S.A. (This form is not to be used by International Officers/Directors, Past International Presidents, Past International Directors, or District Governors elected for 1998-99.)

To attend general sessions on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, a registration badge will be required. Preregister and order event tickets now! **You must be registered to purchase tickets to any events, including the International Speech Contest.** ATTENDANCE AT ALL MEAL EVENTS AND THE INTERNATIONAL SPEECH CONTEST WILL BE BY TICKET ONLY. Advance registrants will receive a receipt by mail. Tickets can be claimed at the registration desk beginning at 10:00 a.m. Wednesday, August 19.

ALL ADVANCE REGISTRATIONS MUST REACH WORLD HEADQUARTERS BY JULY 7.

FULL CONVENTION REGISTRATION allows you to attend ALL general and educational sessions during the Convention. *Full Convention Registration* also allows you to purchase tickets to any events of your choice. Event tickets must be purchased separately. (See below)

- _____ Full Convention Registration for Members (Wed., Thurs., Fri., & Sat.) @ \$105.00 \$ _____
- _____ Full Joint Registration: Husband/Wife (both Toastmasters) (Wed., Thurs., Fri., & Sat.) @ \$195.00 \$ _____
- _____ Full Spouse/Guest Registrations (Wed., Thurs., Fri., & Sat.) (each) @ \$90.00 \$ _____

ONE-DAY CONVENTION REGISTRATION allows you to attend general and educational sessions and purchase event ticket(s) for one day of your choice (Wednesday/Thursday/Friday, or Saturday). If you wish to attend general and educational sessions or purchase event ticket(s) that take place on more than one day, then you must purchase a Full Convention Registration. No exceptions can be made.

- _____ Wednesday/Thursday (August 19 & 20) Convention Registration for Member/Spouse/Guest @ \$53.00
(With this registration, you may purchase ticket(s) only for the Golden Gavel Luncheon.) \$ _____
- _____ Friday (August 21) Convention Registration for Member/Spouse/Guest @ \$53.00
(With this registration, you may purchase ticket(s) only for the Toastmasters & Guests Luncheon, Leadership Luncheon, and Fun Night.) \$ _____
- _____ Saturday (August 22) Convention Registration for Member/Spouse/Guest @ \$53.00
(With this registration, you may purchase ticket(s) only for the International Speech Contest and President's Dinner Dance.) \$ _____

EVENT TICKETS. To attend any of the events below, you must purchase a Full Convention Registration or purchase a One-Day Convention Registration for the day of the ticketed event(s).

- _____ Tickets: **Interdistrict Speech Contest** (Tuesday, August 18) @ \$13.00 \$ _____
- _____ Tickets: **Overseas Dinner** (Note: Open only to delegates from outside U.S./Canada) (Tuesday, August 18) @ \$42.00 \$ _____
- _____ Tickets: **Golden Gavel Luncheon** (Thursday, August 20) @ \$32.00 \$ _____
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Check only one box. (See page 28 for Seat Preselection Information)

- Please preselect my seats. Do not preselect my seats.

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A



CAN WE TALK?

By Dennis Hartenstine, ATM, and Katherine Callan, CTM

**The elevator is out of order;
you'll have to take the stairs.**

Quick Fixes Are Seldom Permanent

WHEN NEW TOASTMASTERS ASK BRYANT PARK MEMBERS HOW to improve their speaking skills, they usually don't like what they hear. "Complete your CTM," we advise them. "Serve as a club officer. Give advanced speeches. Attend club officer training

sessions. Earn your ATM. Serve as a district officer. Attempt things that are different and risky. If you do this for at least three years, you'll be satisfied with your speaking skills."

To succeed as a Toastmaster, you have to be in it for the long haul. You can't learn all there is to know about public speaking in an hour a week over several months. You have to climb to the top a step at a time. At Bryant Park Toastmasters, we present it this way: The elevator is out of order; you'll have to take the stairs.

The truth can be hard to swallow, and no one wants to hear this particular one. Everyone wants a shortcut. Short-term training courses litter the market. Brochures promise that "you will become a dynamite speaker in one weekend (for \$850!)." But any long-term Toastmaster knows that's a lot of hype. It takes time to master the art of public speaking. There are no shortcuts. By joining Toastmasters, you become involved in a process.

Along the way, you set many goals, which change the longer you participate in Toastmasters. You start by aspiring to deliver the Ice Breaker speech, then to achieve one of the four educational levels, then to serve as a district officer, and so on. It takes time to make this ascent.

Some members become impatient and quit, often at a point when they're on the verge of a breakthrough. Others feel they've satisfied their goals by reaching their CTM. But you get the most out of the program if you keep on going. Here are some ways our club motivates members for the long-haul:

Schedule goal-setting sessions. At Bryant Park Toastmasters, incoming club presidents ask members to write down their speaking goals. The new officers collect these lists, and when their terms are over they return them so members can see their progress.

Another way to inspire progress is to post a progress chart in the meeting room. This gives members a visual aid to monitor how well they're doing independently and in relation to other members of the club.

Maintain high standards. As members make the climb toward becoming accomplished speakers, don't allow them to skip any steps. To inspire high standards, Bryant Park presidents set themes for their terms:

Raise the Bar, Jump Out of the Box, Stretch Yourself. These themes are reinforced – creatively – at the beginning of meetings. During one meeting, a Toastmaster brought in a wooden plank and had every speaker hold it over his head to represent raising the bar. Another time, everyone was given a rubber band to symbolize their personal stretching.

When evaluating speakers, maintain high standards as well. Don't accept anything less than the objectives of the speech. Evaluate each speaker according to his or her level of expertise.

Constantly Recruit. New members add energy to a club. Don't wait until you have a dry spell to begin recruiting. Promote your meetings all the time. Encourage members to invite co-workers and friends. Advertise your club to local businesses. Ask your Area Governor for a list of people who have inquired about clubs in your region. Invite these people to a meeting.

Always Focus on Getting Better. Everyone who joins our club makes a three-part pledge: to give manual speeches, to speak when scheduled, and to attend meetings whenever possible to support other members. When members adhere to this pledge, they improve.

The Toastmasters model is powerful because it is logical. It recognizes that quick fixes are seldom permanent. Becoming a great speaker takes hard work, plenty of supportive feedback, and patience.

The next time a new member asks you how to improve as a speaker, tell him or her the truth: The only way is to stay committed to the Toastmasters program. Feel free to borrow our club's slogan. Simply tell the member, "The elevator is out of order. You'll have to take the stairs." **1**

Dennis Hartenstine, ATM and Katherine Callan, CTM are members of Bryant Park Club 7949-46 in New York City, New York.

HALL OF FAME



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

DTM

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

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 Michael D. Johnson, 9775 - 2
 Judy LeFevre, 2003 - 6
 Darrel J. Zeller, 5963-12
 Diane Goodhart, 7974 - 14
 James Francis Farny, 4240 - 18
 Geraldine Warnke, 6246-21
 Salvador Gonzalez Robles, 7440-34
 Maria Rodriguez de Gonzalez, 7440-34
 Ava Turner, 9003 - 37
 Tim Lambert, 3146 - 42
 Gloria Fedorchuk, 5847-42
 Clifford T. Fournier, 2204-45
 David L. Vaughn, 2284 - 47
 David Hadsell, Jr., 79 - 54
 W. A. Sutton, 43 - 56
 Lupe Roy, 1722-56
 Susanne Warren, 1744-60
 Gail Perry, 4574 - 64
 Lesley Storkey, 6934-69
 Sheryl Gardner, 8967 - 69
 Janice M. Hands, 8158 - 70
 Lynne Lusty, 1054 - 72
 Denise Anderson, 1834-74

ATM Silver

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

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 Margaret Lipper, 8704-12
 Genny Marie Yarne, 617-19
 Sid Gilman, 2476-25
 Terrence J. Smith, 7055-29

Gloria Fedorchuk, 5847-42
 Danie Hardie, 6901-42
 Mark F. De Cesare, 8926-46
 Linda R. Wright, 1355-58
 Bert Post, 1940-60
 Connie Gilliam, 6548-63
 Carol L. Moreland, 9706-70

ATM Bronze

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

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 JoAnn Williams, 7634-33
 Rogelio Salvador G. Gaitan, 4276-34
 Carol Pabst, 4819-50
 Robert H. Stratton, 8796-52
 Donald Cogan, 7033-56
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 Robert Wright, 3783-70
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