

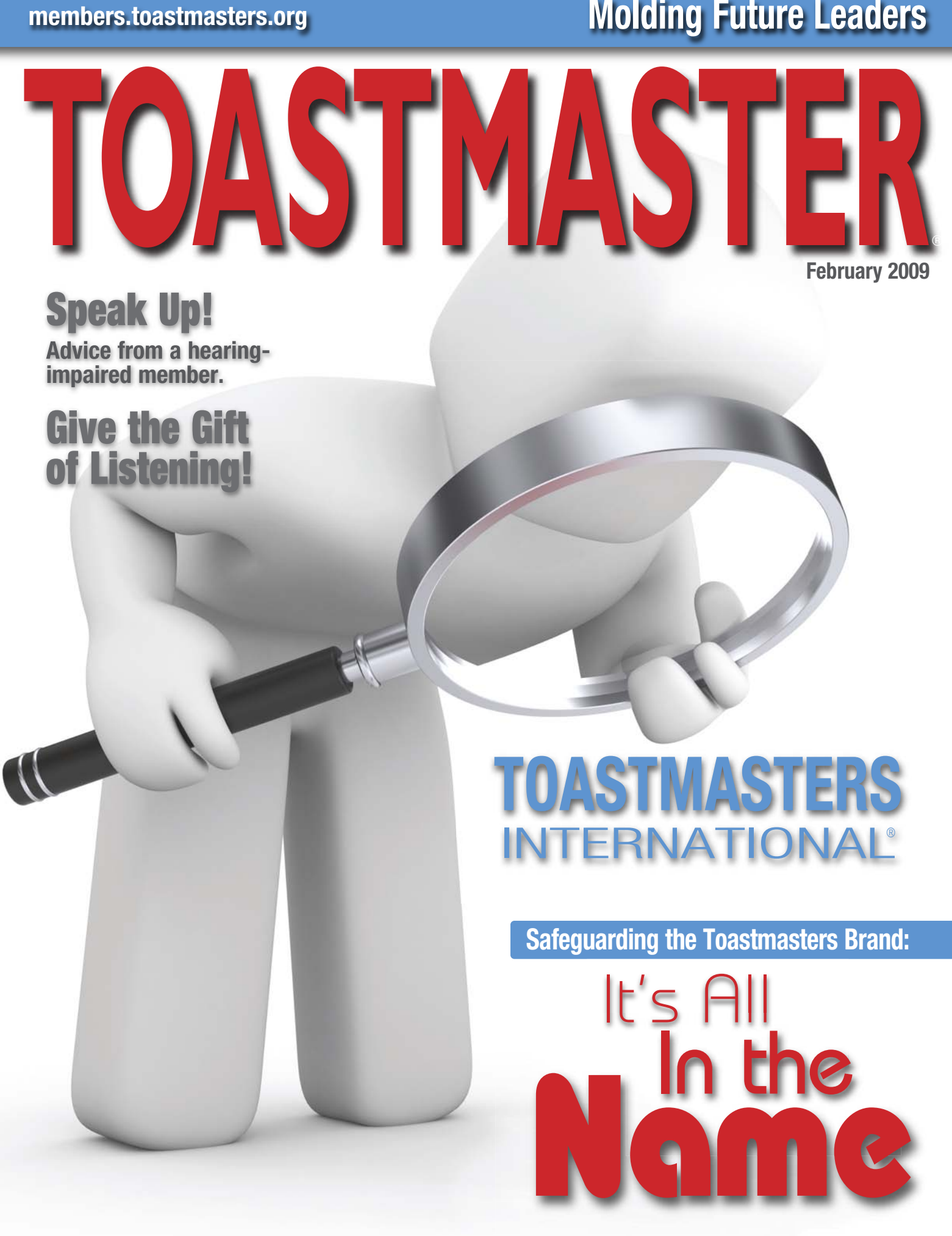
TOASTMASTER

February 2009

Speak Up!

Advice from a hearing-impaired member.

Give the Gift of Listening!



TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL®

Safeguarding the Toastmasters Brand:

It's All
In the
Name



The Courage to Conquer Tough Times!

✦ I recently received an e-mail from Immediate Past District 14 Governor Joy Lewis. Part of it read, "The troubled economy will undoubtedly take its toll on our clubs, but I think troubled times are the prime time for Toastmasters. We all need to take time in this downturn to think of self-improvement. We shall certainly have to promote that aspect of the Toastmasters experience."

Troubled times are the prime time for Toastmasters! Evidence of that is an article I saw the other day in *The Wall Street Journal*. It showed a photograph of a man and described him as an attorney, recently out of work. To give himself an edge, he had enrolled in a speech class at a local community college.

During one of my district visits I was speaking with a man at the Midland, Michigan, chamber of commerce. He was sharing with me how he had asked a very successful business executive how he had done so well. The executive responded, "I learned to articulate my thoughts effectively." Wanting to know more, the man asked how he accomplished that. The executive answered, "I joined Toastmasters."

I was watching the television game show *Wheel of Fortune* the other day and heard the host, Pat Sajak, ask one of the contestants a question. This contestant was a recent college graduate, fresh on the job search. She provided such a quick, articulate response that Mr. Sajak actually made a big deal out of the fact that she had not been briefed on the question and was so articulate in her response that anyone looking for someone in her field should give her a call! That's what the ability to think on your feet will do for you. That's what Table Topics will do for you! How many people looking for jobs today need that skill?

Stanford University research tells us something we already know: A person's business success is only 20 percent attributable to his or her technical competencies; the other 80 percent is a result of personal competencies, which include communication skills. We offer what people need – especially in troubled times!

Unfortunately, often when times are tough, many people pull back on any activity they consider non-essential, including Toastmasters meetings. But Toastmasters is absolutely essential! Now is the prime time for us to encourage anyone we know who could benefit from Toastmasters training to stay a member or become a member. Effective communication and leadership skills, along with self-confidence, are the attributes that will give anyone an edge. Today a lot of people need that edge. No one develops those attributes like Toastmasters. Now is the prime time for Toastmasters to give everyone ***The Courage to Conquer Tough Times!***

Jana Barnhill

Jana Barnhill, DTM, Accredited Speaker
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The TOASTMASTER Magazine (ISSN 00408265) is published monthly by Toastmasters International, Inc., 23182 Arroyo Vista, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688, U.S.A. Periodicals postage paid at Mission Viejo, CA and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: Send address change to The TOASTMASTER Magazine, P.O. Box 9052, Mission Viejo, CA 92690, U.S.A.

Published to promote the ideas and goals of Toastmasters International, a non profit educational organization of clubs throughout the world dedicated to teaching skills in public speaking and leadership. Members' subscriptions are included in the \$27 semi annual dues.

The official publication of Toastmasters International carries authorized notices and articles regarding the activities and interests of the organization, but responsibility is not assumed for the opinions of the authors of other articles. The TOASTMASTER magazine does not endorse or guarantee the products it advertises.

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The Toastmasters Vision:

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

The Toastmasters Mission:

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

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

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

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

In Short, You Get Support

I belong to a small, yet dynamic club. I have taken an executive position within the club, despite being a novice Toastmaster (as has our president, who joined when I did). But as the old adage says, you only get out of something what you put into it. My fellow club members must all have the same attitude, because each and every time I attend a meeting I am rewarded with vibrancy, humor, great speeches, camaraderie, support, friendship and the talent of my fellow Norvicians, and all that while I'm learning valuable skills. Thank you, Toastmasters, for being there!

Wendy Swinton • Norvic Toastmasters Club • Victoria BC, Canada

Encouraged and Empowered

To me, a non-native speaker of English, Toastmasters has been a goldmine of opportunities for getting over the linguistic hang-ups of having been born and raised in a foreign country (in my case, Italy).

For those of us born and raised in non-English-speaking countries, the challenge of speaking in front of a group entails much more than just overcoming the fear of public speaking. We must first acquire technical linguistic competence and then embody confidence in the new language. This is something native speakers [take for granted].

It is precisely in these sociolinguistic aspects that the Toastmasters experience shines with unequaled brilliance for us non-native speakers. Toastmasters clubs offer such supportive, nonjudgmental environments where we feel both encouraged and empowered at each step of the way to develop the very confidence we so badly need to grow as effective speakers. I have personally gained more self-confidence and effectiveness as a speaker in the past 11 months as a Toastmaster

than I did during my preceding 20 years of life in the U.S. I've witnessed such a marvelous personal transformation, which attests to how valuable the Toastmasters experience truly is.

Rino St. Paule, CC, CL • Toastmasters 90210 • Beverly Hills, California

Don't Drop the Ball – Raise the Question!

John Cadley's (January) article lambasting "smarty-pants verbiage" and "linguistic social climbers" is ironic, considering his misuse of "begs the question." To beg the question does not mean to raise the question! To beg the question is a logical fallacy in which a statement is assumed to be true without evidence other than the statement. Mr. Cadley might follow his own advice, "If you're going to use big words...do it right."

Keith D. Hanson Jr., ATMB, CL • Au Jus Toastmasters
Simi Valley, California

A Whopper of a Word

Your article ("Big Words? Big Deal!") was *supercalifragilisticexpialidocious!* Thanks for the humorous play with words.

Robin D. Domino, ATMB • National Finance Center Toastmasters
Chalmette, Louisiana

Still Learning

I enjoyed the article "Big Words? Big Deal" by John Cadley. It reminded me of the latest of many lessons I have learned at Toastmasters – you're never too old to learn new words!

I was grammarian at a club meeting where a speaker cited a lot of poetry in her talk. I enjoyed being grammarian; I am confident in my knowledge of grammar and I have an extensive vocabulary (or so I thought). The poetry spoke to me as if it was said in prose, so I complimented the speaker on being "prosaic," because that's how I have always used that word (on the rare occasions I have found a use for it).

Being a conscientious member, she looked up the word in the dictionary when she got home, then complained to the club president that I had insulted her, because to be prosaic is "lacking in wit or imagination."

Ouch! After my deep-felt apology was gracefully received and accepted, I took the lesson to heart – you're never too old to learn new words!

Keith Hart, CC, CL • Cottonwood Speakers
Blandford Forum, United Kingdom

A Riposte to Remember

I take umbrage with John Cadley's diatribe upon lexophiles employing sesquipedalian verbiage. Multi-syllabic words are arguably the ultimate demonstration of *bon mots* and *sine qua non* to polished communication between scholars. Only troglodytes promulgate mono-syllabic utterances as *de rigueur* and *ipso facto*, establish vulgar, inchoate and jejune speech as standard usage.

Consider, if you will, the *je ne sais quoi* of chiliastic metaphors. The imposition of order upon chaos is, in fact, the dream of all who apply rhetorical logos via linguistic legerdemain, surely no province of the *non compos mentis* amongst us.

Mr. Cadley, do not consider this rejoinder a ferula over your reticence to embrace "poly-syllabism" as a philosophy. It is merely my satyagraha to enhance critical thinking by enlarging vocabulary. Rather than argufy, I wish you a generous pair of comfortable pajamas to promote restful slumber, hoping it will prevent further somnambulist episodes on your word processor. After all, we are all epigone compared to Papa Hemingway.

Did I just prove your point? Oh well, I'll just go back to reading my *New Yorker*. Thanks for the great article.

Ernest R. Raynor III, CC • All Stars Toastmasters • Tulsa, Oklahoma

How Toastmasters training helped a teacher in a tough spot.

Selling My Skills to a School

I sat in the parking lot of my doctor's office with a lump forming in my throat: This wasn't a health care crisis, but a simple case of speaking nerves, and I – an Advanced Toastmaster – was crestfallen.

Not only am I a Toastmaster, I'm also a professional writer, speaker and speech coach. But the simple cell phone conversation I was having at that moment was not going as expected.

A couple of months prior, I had answered an advertisement in my local paper, calling for instructors with innovative course ideas for the regional adult education center. I had a course in the can: "Speak Your Truth," a communications class that highlights spiritual principles and conflict resolution skills. I'd subtitled it "How to Get What You Want (by Simply Saying What You Mean)" and had geared the curriculum toward interpersonal relationships. The ideal pupils I envisioned were spiritually aware, highly intellectual and willing to go deep into their inner selves in front of strangers. In short, they were just like me!

I submitted my proposal and received a cursory e-mail response ("Your course sounds interesting"; "We'll phone you in November to set up an interview/learn more"). That convinced me I would reach these neighboring, like-minded souls, and that my course would be a major success.

As fate would have it, Hurricane Ike remnants rained fury over the American Midwest, damaging many properties in that area, including my home. I suffered from stress-related heart problems after that, and spent some time in the hospital, racking up bills that my husband

and I could scarcely afford. In the wake of the November presidential election, the media buzzword became "economy" – but I soldiered on with faith in my fellow spiritual seekers, certain that there were others out there pursuing personal improvement, maybe with even more vigilance during these trying times. It seemed destined that we would connect, because we were so much alike.

However, it wasn't going to be easy. My health care team slated a three-week intensive therapy program for me. The November dates were not flexible; I begrudgingly cleared my work schedule and social calendar to begin treatment. Halfway through the program, I received a voice mail message at my home office: The adult education center was ready to schedule my interview, and wanted it to happen as soon as possible.

The catch to this joyously expected news was that the center's offices closed at 4 p.m. daily – while my therapy sessions lasted until at least 3 p.m. on the other side of town, a 30-minute drive from my home office. Panicking, I concocted a plan: I would phone from the parking lot of my doctor's office, date book in hand, and schedule my interview then. Four days of "phone tag" passed before I finally reached a receptionist who muttered a complaint about not hearing from me. She also said interviews had been finished the day before. Then, while I was trying to process that bad news – and wondering why they hadn't received my voice- and e-mail messages – she patched me through to the center's director.

So there I sat in my car, poised over calendar, listening to the director explain that "due to the economy," their enrollment rates were at an all-time low; and that the demographics were mostly blue-collar employees who were looking for practical courses aimed at gaining employment. Certainly, he was saying my course was no longer a good fit.

When he graciously asked me to tell him a little about myself, I seized the moment: This was the interview I'd been calling to get! Though nothing in my professional past had ever prepared me for an on-the-fly, over-the-phone, sitting-in-your-car-in-a-parking-lot interview, Toastmasters had prepared me to speak on any subject at any moment via our many Table Topics exercises.

I told him the truth: As an active member of my Toastmasters club and the group's former public relations officer, I had tripled the club membership through a marketing campaign that included a monthly newsletter. I said little about my career or corporate success. But he hired me on the spot to teach a different class, asking me to craft a course description that addressed the needs of the center's new market: the newly unemployed.

When I returned to my desk that day, I realized, as I began to write the course description, that my new class would still be filled with ideal students who were – as fellow job hunters in trying times – truly *just like me*. ■

Kealah Parkinson, ATMB, is a member of Extreme Toastmasters club in Chicago, Illinois. Reach her at kealahparkinson@aol.com.

At 85, this Toastmaster has spent two decades teaching the Youth Leadership Program to students.

Molding Future Leaders

Eleven-year-old Tyler Jones plans to run for a U.S. Senate seat when he's 30 and eventually make his way to Washington, D.C. The Arizona youngster discovered his desire for a life in politics when he took the Toastmasters Youth Leadership course from instructor Michael Di Cerbo.

"Toastmaster Mike changed my life," says Tyler, who attended the class at Kiva Elementary School in Paradise Valley, Arizona. "He made me realize that one of my talents is public speaking, and that I'm very interested in politics and leadership."

The sixth-grader, whose presentation skills surpass those of many adults, is one of thousands of children who have been fortunate enough to take the leadership class from Di Cerbo in Arizona schools over the last 20 years.

Because the veteran Toastmaster has positively affected so many young lives, he received the 2008 Hon Kachina Award for Volunteerism, which has been awarded in Arizona since 1977 to recognize the achievement of outstanding volunteers.

Di Cerbo joined Toastmasters in 1980 and quickly rose through the ranks, serving as a club officer and then a district officer. At one point, he was preparing to become a district governor and also

get his DTM; while working toward his DTM, he chose to conduct a Youth Leadership Program as a way to meet one of the requirements.

"Initially, I didn't want to hold the youth [program]," admits Di Cerbo, who chuckles about his reluctance now. "Eventually, I gave in and decided to teach one course so that I could fulfill the requirements, and I found it wasn't so bad." The results were actually so good that they prompted a call from a teacher who asked him to teach the course to her class. Today, at age 85, he is still teaching the Toastmasters Youth Leadership course, spending as much as 20 hours a week in the classroom, and often working a full day.

Di Cerbo follows Toastmasters' Youth Leadership Program manual,

holding nine-week classes that cover the basics of speaking, including the various types of speeches and their functions, the organization of a presentation and leadership training. Each class meeting features five speakers as well as evaluations from peers and a coordinator. Speech topics vary according to participants' age. Di Cerbo teaches leadership by giving students various roles each meeting, such as Topicsmaster, Meeting Leader and Ah-Counter. "These positions make the students realize that they are in command, and with those positions come responsibilities," he says.

During each meeting, Di Cerbo scores the students' speeches and then names a Speaker of the Day, who is then eligible for the Speak-Off. That event is held during the

last week of classes. Parents and grandparents are invited to attend the program. Tyler, the budding politician, has won first place for the last two years.

Big Benefits

Di Cerbo started teaching leadership classes after he retired from a career working with semi-conductors. He says the Youth Leadership Program is valuable to today's youngsters. "One of



◀ Michael Di Cerbo (left) with YLP participant Tyler Jones and sixth-grade teacher Carla Schneider.

the major benefits of the program is that the positive and constructive criticism leads to an increase in self-confidence. Parents often tell me that their child was shy and then blossomed. Children also find that the program organizes their thoughts and makes them better writers."

Teachers who have worked with Di Cerbo over the years are amazed at the progress the kids make in his course. "There is no time in life when the fear of 'standing out' is greater, yet Mike helps students overcome this fear and move on to a higher level of self-confidence," says Holly DiTallo, a teacher at Cheyenne Traditional School in Scottsdale, Arizona. "Not many people have the gift of teaching to this age group, yet Mike comes in, offers valuable life tools, demands their respect, and leaves them better students at the end of the program. He's good at what he does because he cares for the students, and they can sense it.

"Who else at the age of 85 can walk into a room of middle-schoolers and have them say in unison, 'Good morning, Toastmaster Mike!' He's a beautiful anomaly!"

Carla Schneider is a teacher at Kiva Elementary School where Tyler Jones attends. She has seen Di Cerbo work his magic for the last eight years.

"I think the most important message that Michael gives the students is to have a positive attitude and confidence in their abilities," she says. "He also reminds students that the key to success is to practice, practice, practice. I have seen kids thrive under his direction, and I think the most important thing the kids get from the program is the lasting benefits they gain. Our elementary students who take his course go on to

become student leaders in middle school."

Kiva's principal, Michael Helminski, often hears stories of how the early training has helped older students. "Many seventh- and eighth-graders come back and tell me how the Toastmasters training

"If you think of Toastmasters as the training wheels for life, then eventually you're able to ride with no hands."

has helped them with confidence when they were required to do classroom presentations in middle school," he says. "We can't take it for granted that leadership is naturally developed. Many children need role models and strategies for developing leadership skills, and that's exactly what the Youth Leadership course provides."

Educators who have watched Di Cerbo work over the years feel that his infinite patience and good humor are the secrets to his success. "I have seen Michael model how to deliver a line and patiently work one-on-one with the student until he gets the desired effect," says Schneider. "Never have I seen him get exasperated or frustrated with a student. He always manages to find something positive to say to each child."

Tyler's mother, Laura, agrees that Di Cerbo has the right approach with kids. "He's really good at motivating elementary and middle schoolers and relating to them," she says. "While he doesn't hold back on the negative, I've seen him critique the kids without criticizing in a very constructive way that they understand. Since taking the classes, Tyler's organization of his message and ability to really get that message across has improved considerably, and his confidence has soared."

According to Tyler, the confidence and organizational skills he gained in Di Cerbo's class helped

him improve in many areas of his life. "Throughout life you have to make a lot of tough decisions and Toastmasters training gives you the confidence to make those decisions," he says. "If you think of Toastmasters as the training wheels for life, then eventually you're able

to ride with no hands. The most important thing that Toastmaster Mike taught us was that our speech has to be from the heart, not just from the brain. I learned that if you are confident with your speech and really know it, the rest will follow."

Wise comments from youngsters like Tyler drive Di Cerbo and make teaching the class gratifying. "It is so uplifting and satisfying when students say that they've been helped by the program," he says. "I feel that in some small way I am contributing to helping the next generation become leaders. The things they learn stay with them. About three years ago I got a call from a young teacher who wanted me to teach the leadership classes in her school. When I asked her how she knew about the program, she said that she had been one of my students and she wanted her students to benefit from the class like she did. Calls like that show me that I'm doing something valuable." **T**

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

Editor's Note: To conduct a Youth Leadership program, order the Youth Leadership Educational Packet (Item 811; \$17 for material for five students).



Speak Up!

By Rick Moore, ATMB

A hearing-impaired Toastmaster offers practical advice.

OUR WORLD TODAY IS NOISIER THAN EVER.

Airplanes, jackhammers, MP3 players – whether the noise is self-created or environmental, absolute silence is almost non-existent. And when the volume of that noise reaches unsafe levels, especially for prolonged periods of time, damage to our delicate hearing mechanisms is likely to result.

I know this to be true from personal experience. As a Toastmaster who has to make a conscious effort to hear and understand others, I'm paying for the ignorance of my youth, when I worked in a noisy factory, went to painfully loud concerts and eventually worked as a professional musician, all with no hearing protection. I'm not alone, though. According to the U.S. National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication

Disorders (NIDCD), 26 million Americans between the ages of 20 and 69 may have permanent hearing damage from excessive noise exposure. And the World Health Organization estimates that there are about 280 million people around the globe with moderate to profound hearing loss in both ears.

In addition, the American Tinnitus Association estimates that another 12 million people have tinnitus, a persistent ringing in the ears that can interfere with other frequencies (especially higher ones), and in extreme cases, can actually be so loud that it becomes all but debilitating. I have both hearing loss and tinnitus, so listening to someone give a speech is often a challenge.

I've been asked, "Why don't you wear hearing aids?" Well, I sometimes do, since I'm one of the fortunate ones who can afford them (insurance normally won't pay for them). But hearing aids are nearly useless at a Toastmasters meeting. Why? Because hearing aids, while they do make it easier to hear the speaker, are an almost-painful nuisance when the audience applauds or laughs heartily, or when the gavel is banged on the podium. Those sounds are magnified several times, the same way a speaker's voice is, turning a hearing aid into a jolting loudspeaker inside the ear.

Given the number of people whose hearing is less than perfect, it's reasonable for all of us to assume that when we speak to a group of any size, there is bound to be someone in the audience with a hearing impairment. As speakers, we have a certain obligation to make sure people can hear and understand us, just as those people have an obligation to do what they can to hear us speak. So, having been on both sides of the podium, I'm suggesting a few things we can all do to help make both the speaking and listening experiences more effective and enjoyable.

When You're the Speaker:

As a good general practice, scope out the room when you first enter it. Think about where you will stand to make maximum visual and auditory contact with everyone.

I have found that when many Toastmasters give presentations, especially novice speakers, they tend to vocalize too softly – as if they were talking to someone close at hand, even if some listeners are 30 feet away. So speaking louder in general is a good idea, and an even better idea when dealing with listeners who may have trouble hearing. Now, you may be wondering, "How do I know who can or can't hear me?" There actually are a few ways.

- First, **consider the ages of your audience members.**

Instances and severity of hearing loss and tinnitus both increase with age, so if someone in your audience is older – especially over 50 – take into account that the person may not hear you as well as the 20-year-olds in the audience. In addition to helping you keep your volume up, this practice may inspire you to work on your diction to make sure your words are easily understood.

Daniel Sklare, an expert on hearing-related issues, agrees it's important to speak precisely – and not too fast – when there are listeners with hearing difficulties.

“As speakers, we have a certain obligation to make sure people can hear and understand us, just as those people have an obligation to do what they can to hear us speak.”

“Make sure the speed and clarity of your words are well-matched to your audience,” says Sklare, a program director at the NIDCD in Bethesda, Maryland.

- You should also **remember to look up from your notes as much as possible to face the audience**; when you do this, your voice goes out, not down, and a hard-of-hearing audience member can figure out what you're saying better by watching your lips and your body language. These are good general suggestions for public speaking, anyway.

- **Using visual aids is also helpful – and be sure they are readable and not too busy or complex**, says Sklare, who is responsible for clinical research on hearing disorders at the NIDCD. “Research that's been done, and that the NIDCD has backed up, demonstrates that young and older people, whether they are wearing a hearing aid or not, have benefited very handsomely from combining auditory and visual elements in speech,” he notes, adding that well-prepared slide presentations – such as PowerPoint – tend to be very effective.

Another way to tell if a person is having trouble hearing you is if their interest seems to be flagging and their body language indicates that they would obviously rather be somewhere else. True, they may have had a hard day, or have a lot on their mind, or it could be – but hopefully isn't – that your speech is just plain boring. But it's also possible that they can't hear you very well. In this case, walk over to where they're sitting as you speak, and perhaps raise your voice ever so slightly or punctuate a certain point to get their attention. Don't

do it threateningly, but in a manner that makes them feel like a valued member of the audience. Whether the problem is with their ears or your speech, it's a good way to keep the listener engaged.

If you're a woman, keep in mind that people with tinnitus may often have trouble hearing you, because the ringing in their ears can cancel out some of the higher frequencies of the female voice. So if you've been told that you need to project your soft voice a little farther, this is one more reason to do that.

Sklare, of the NIDCD, says the environment in which you give your speech can also play an important role for the hearing-impaired listener. For one thing, you want it to be a quiet place with no distractions around. And if you can speak in a room with a public address system, it would be ideal if the system is a Hi-Fidelity one that has as much amplification as possible without causing too much distortion.

“If seats are arranged straight across in rows, try to sit near the middle.”

The onus shouldn't always be put on the speaker, however. Public discourse is a partnership between the speaker and the listener, so the audience has a responsibility too.

Dr. Gerald Hickson is a physician and an associate professor of hearing and speech sciences at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. He regularly addresses groups of medical professionals of varying sizes around the country. Depending on the audience size, he speaks both with and without a microphone, so he is someone who is very aware of the auditory needs of his listeners.

“You have to think about what you're going to do to ensure that the audience is focused on what you have to say,” says Hickson in an authoritative but not overbearing voice he has developed through years of public speaking. “One of those things, of course, is to make sure everyone can hear you, and you need to take into account that there may be one or more people in the room who have a hearing impairment. Assessing their body language is one way you might be able to determine that.”

“At the same time,” adds Hickson, “as a listener you have to be aware of the everyday things in life that might distract you, that may stop you from getting the most out of a speech. So the listener does have a certain amount of responsibility to take whatever steps are available to get the most out of what the speaker has to say.”

When You're the Hearing-impaired Listener:

- **Don't get frustrated** when a speaker doesn't seem to have your hearing problem in mind, especially if the

speaker is a younger person. And don't feel guilty about your hearing impairment. Others can't see your problem, so it's up to you to take steps to deal with it. Trying some of these ideas might help:

- No matter what the seating configuration is, **sit at or near the front of the room** (assuming the speaker is in the front). Being shy and sitting at the back of the room, especially when there is no amplification, almost guarantees that you won't be able to hear everything. If the seating is in a horseshoe configuration, sit with your weaker ear toward the podium. If the seats are arranged straight across in rows, try to sit near the middle. This will allow you to hear the speaker better should he or she walk from one side of the room to the other.
- If the person giving the speech is wearing a microphone, **determine the placement of the public address speakers** (either speaker cabinets or ceiling speakers) and try to position yourself in the path of their projection.

- If you're still having trouble hearing the speaker, make the simple motion of **cupping your hand behind your ear when the speaker makes eye contact with you**. You may be doing everyone a favor, because chances are that if you're indeed sitting at the front near the speaker, you aren't the only one having trouble hearing.

And when you're the speaker and are also hearing-impaired:

- **Watch your audience.** Use eye contact to judge their reactions to your speaking voice as well as your speech.
- **Don't yell.** Those of us who don't hear well sometimes tend to talk pretty loudly, so practice speaking at a level that's commanding but doesn't make people feel like they're being yelled at. After your next speech, ask your evaluator how your volume was (although more volume is still better than not enough).

In the end, we can always learn to be better listeners even if we're not hearing-impaired, and we can all become better speakers by being cognizant of voice projection and volume, and making eye contact as much as possible with the entire audience. In fact, focusing more on the audience's need to hear may actually help alleviate some of your nervousness as you speak, and make you a better communicator in general. So speak up! 🗣️

Rick Moore, ATMB, is a member of Nashville Toastmasters in Nashville, Tennessee, and is a professional freelance writer. Contact him at www.rickmoorewriter.com.



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The voice you hear is different from the one the audience hears.

That's Not My Voice – Is It?

As a speaker, you need the best voice quality possible. But to get your voice sounding the best it can, first you have to know what it actually sounds like, right? And that can be difficult – because the voice you hear is different from the one the audience hears.

Just think about the first time you heard your voice captured on a tape recorder, computer or other electronic device. You shook your head in amazement and said to your friends, “You’re joking. That’s not *my* voice – is it?”

“Sure,” they replied. But you still could hardly believe the two sounds were one and the same.

Pretend to be one of my voice students for a moment and I will explain this simple, yet profound concept of listening to your voice. As a speaker (or singer), you hear something different from your listeners because of three basic factors that work together: Your inner ear hears your inner voice; your outer ear receives a distorted outer voice; and your sound waves vibrate the whole ear mechanism. The end result is that you hear a different voice than other people do.

Let’s break down this process, so that you’ll better understand how to make vocal adjustments as a speaker.

Factor One: Your inner ear hears your inner voice.

“It’s a surprise! Don’t listen,” Chris instructed Kelly as he began whispering birthday plans to her friend. Kelly put her fingers in her ears and made nonsensical sounds to keep from overhearing their conversation. In the process, she noticed that with her fingers in her ears, her voice sounded so much louder than usual. Why?

Your voice originates in about the middle of your neck. Initial sound waves are created as air passes through your vocal folds (cords) drawn tight across the trachea (windpipe). You can feel the flutter with your fingertips if they lightly rest on the “adam’s apple” area of your throat while you speak or sing.

This tiny vibration is then magnified in the voice box (upper throat). The waves continue to grow in magnitude as they resonate in the cavities of your head before coming out your nose and/or throat.

Thus, your internal voice is created and grows from inside your neck up through the nasal cavities where it reverberates. And because your inner ear – which contains the actual organ of hearing – is located so closely to your inner voice, only you can hear your internal voice.

This is a unique sound your listeners will never experience. Now, let’s add the next factor.

Factor Two: Your outer ear catches the distorted outer voice.

The other day my husband and I took a short hike. Several times I had difficulty catching everything he said when he was ahead of me on a narrow, single-file section of the trail. Likewise, he would ask me to repeat things when I was in the lead. The leader’s voice projected forward, in the opposite direction of the follower. Listening was much easier when we stopped, turned toward each other and spoke face to face.

Our listeners’ ears catch and pull in the sound waves, channeling them into the inner ear canal. But you cannot directly hear your own voice. Your ears are behind your mouth, like I was behind my husband on the hike. You hear the result of your vocal sound waves traveling forward, hitting surfaces and bouncing back to you. On this return trip, these somewhat distorted waves are caught by your outer ear and moved along inside to your ear drum.



So your inner ear not only hears the initial interior voice but also the distorted, round-about exterior voice coming in through the outer ear passage. Michael Kelly, author of *Understanding the Power of Your Voice*, says: "You hear your voice in stereo (air and bone conduction) while other people just hear it in mono (air conduction)."

Factor Three: Your sound waves vibrate the whole ear mechanism.

The sum of the first two factors – inner voice and indirect outer voice – would be enough to explain why speaker and listener hear two different things. But this third factor, vibration, plays an even more significant role:

When I'm a guest teacher in a junior or senior high school music class, I love to ask the students to experiment with vibration: "Try

shaking your head from side to side as rapidly as possible while you say 'peanut butter and jelly.'" The students have fun – the resulting words feel silly and sound ridiculous! And this crazy illustration demonstrates what is going on inside your head. Sound waves being created in the neck and head of the speaker or singer are vibrations that literally shake up everything inside, including your inner ear mechanism.

Therefore, the inner voice and around-the-corner outer voice are further distorted because your head is vibrating.

Help! How Can I Hear My Real Voice?

So that explains the process of why you hear your own voice differently from your listeners. When you are trying to develop the best voice quality you can, I encourage you to

observe and play with all three factors outlined above. You can experiment with listening to your inner voice. You can take under consideration the additional vibrations in your head. But most importantly, you want to tune your outer voice to an audience-friendly sound.

You can hear more of what everyone else hears by amplifying your *real* voice with one of the following methods.

- Record a short speech or piece of prose on an electronic device and play it back. The higher quality the microphone, the more accurate your recording will be.
- Extend your sound catchers – your ears! Cup a hand around each ear and draw your elbows together. As you speak, channel

(Continued on page 27)

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Give the Gift of Listening

By Patrick Mott

Hear the story of a lifetime.

Tell me a story." It was one of our first articulate requests as children. And when the story unfolded, we always expected to be fascinated, enveloped in a world beyond our own, transported to a different time and place, thoroughly captivated by the uniqueness of it all.

Today leaders of an oral history program want to bring this same sense of wide-eyed intrigue to people of all ages by changing a single word of that childhood request: "Tell me *your* story." The organization is called StoryCorps, and it recently launched a campaign that encouraged folks to listen to each other. Not just over coffee or a beer, however; StoryCorps wanted people –

family members, friends and others – to sit down deliberately with an audio recorder or video camera and share the stories of their lives.

It started in the U.S. with a National Day of Listening, held Nov. 28, and was expanded from a single day to encompass the entire 2008 holiday season. David Isay, the president and founder of StoryCorps in New York City, New York, esti-

mates that around 30,000 families participated throughout the United States. He calls this "an absolutely phenomenal response."

The nonprofit organization came up with the idea "about the time the economy began to go south," says Isay. One person listening to another's life story, and recording it, "is the least expensive and most meaningful gift we can give each other in these tough economic times," he notes.

Can Toastmasters give this gift to each other? *Why not?*

Oral history is a concept that fits quite well with our organization's goals. Listening is, of course, a much-valued skill for all Toastmasters. So having members of a club split up into pairs, for example, and interview each other for a speech or even a club's own oral history project, would further hone the ability to listen carefully.

Sharing Life Histories

Toastmasters members bring rich and interesting stories they can tell about their lives. Charles W. Watson, who founded the Chicago South Toastmasters in Chicago, Illinois, says he thinks his fellow members would enjoy doing oral history interviews with each other. "I'm 80 years old – I've got a lot of history," says Watson, who grew up in the American South and witnessed many brutal acts of racism committed against African Americans.

There are no doubt many other Toastmasters around the globe who could be recorded talking about experiences from their past. Perhaps members of clubs in China could reflect on the dramatic social and economic transformation they've seen in their country; Toastmasters in Sri Lanka – young and old – could recall how the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004 impacted their country; and those in England could share their memories and impressions of the royal family over the years. Maybe some clubs could ask their members to talk specifically about one common, major societal event – in Germany, perhaps that could be the Berlin Wall coming down in 1989; in Australia, perhaps it could be the Olympic Games held in Sydney in 2000.

How would such a Toastmasters project be structured? Each club could tailor it to suit their own needs. The oral histories could be recorded on video camera, audio recorder or whatever devices worked best. Perhaps once these histories were presented to the group, members could then give speeches about what they saw and heard.

An added benefit of sharing life stories in this way is that it would enable fellow Toastmasters to get to know each other even better, increasing feelings of club camaraderie and friendship.

Learning to Listen

StoryCorps, which was founded in 2003, has also published a book detailing how to conduct oral history interviews; it's called *Listening Is an Act of Love* (Penguin Press).

Far from being a difficult or arcane skill set, listening and interviewing family members, friends and others about their lives is something any amateur can easily learn with a bit of preparation and some simple and, usually, inexpensive tools, says Isay. Toastmasters meetings and informal gatherings of members can be ideal opportunities to work on these techniques and exchange personal histories, he says.

Beyond this, however, participation in the gathering of individual oral histories offers deep and lasting rewards, say professional oral historians such as Charles Hardy III, the president of the Oral History Association, an international group

of oral historians that was established in 1966.

"Storytelling is at the heart of who we are, the way we understand the world, and has been since time immemorial, whether it's about epic events or just everyday occurrences," says Hardy. "And what the tape recorder and now the video recorder allow us to do is capture those living voices and preserve them. And the new digital technologies make it not only affordable but very easy to transcribe them and edit them into polished pieces that are a delight to listen to for many people."

Beyond making a unique gift for the subject of the interview – indeed, for other family members and friends as well – a recorded story of their life in their own words provides an invaluable link to other

(Continued on page 28)

A Few Tips for Oral History Interviews

- **Do your homework.** Learn as much as you can about the person you're going to interview before sitting down with them. Ask yourself: What can I learn from this person? What have they lived through and experienced that's likely to be of interest?
- **Prepare your questions in advance, but don't write them down.** Become familiar with what you want to ask, but use the questions as guidelines rather than a strict road map. Be willing to let the person you're interviewing take the story where they want.
- **Choose a quiet environment** where you won't be distracted or disturbed.
- **Listen actively and closely.** Don't concentrate on your next question; concentrate on what the person is saying.
- **Take your time.** Let the person tell the story without limits of time or subject. Keep yourself in the background. Don't be afraid of silences.
- **Ask open-ended questions.** Encourage the subject to go into detail. For example, how did a particular person in the story look, dress and speak? How was a room furnished?
- **Avoid leading questions** or questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no. Begin each with *who, what, when, where* or *how*.
- **At the end of the interview,** ask the person if there is anything they want to add, or if they want to address a subject that didn't come up during the interview.
- **Make sure your recording equipment is in good shape** and batteries are fresh.

Leading by a T



**How to put
storytelling to work
in your organization.**

By Caren Neile, Ph.D, ATMS/CL

***L**et me tell you a story: I once presented a program to the department heads of a university business school in which I attempted to demonstrate why and how storytelling was useful to their students. After a few jokes about milk and cookies, these professors told me that they preferred statistics to stories. The consensus was that with a few minor exceptions, storytelling had no place in a serious business school curriculum.*

Within six months, most of these department heads were let go. I believe that the same lack of imagination that caused the faculty members to scoff at my presentation contributed to their short-lived careers.

Fortunately, imagination is very much in evidence at some of the greatest organizations in the world, from Nike to the World Bank. The leaders of these companies know that storytelling is one of the most

Tale

powerful tools of persuasion there is, and for good reason. According to **Makingstories.net** president Terrence Gargiulo, well-told stories can perform nine main functions:

- Empower a speaker
- Create a particular environment
- Bond individuals
- Engage the mind in active listening
- Negotiate differences among individuals and groups

“Storytelling is one of the most powerful tools of persuasion there is, and for good reason.”

- Encode information
- Serve as tools for thinking
- Act as weapons
- Bring about healing

What’s more, they accomplish all these tasks by appealing to emotion and enhancing memory – creating indelible images in our hearts and minds that are so strong, we actually feel we have experienced the story ourselves.

Perhaps even more importantly, storytelling exercises the imagination. And when you have a strong imagination, you can imagine alternatives to a whole range of business and personal challenges, from developing a new type of widget to solving inter-office conflicts.

What is Storytelling?

The National Storytelling Network, and the several thousand professional storytellers it represents, define storytelling as face-to-face oral narrative that employs non-verbal communication and imagination. However, stories can also be created for annual reports, newsletters and any other internal or external written business communications. Just bear in mind that when stories are shared live, they tend to be much more powerful than when they appear in print.

For one thing, the storyteller can gauge the best way to deliver the story by the reaction of the audience. This means that if attention is flagging or people look puzzled, he or she can respond immediately and adjust the performance accordingly. In addition, a dynamic performance can generate the kind of energy that engages and inspires, especially for people who may not respond as well to the printed word, such as young people or those with limited reading skills.

How Do Leaders Use Storytelling?

Stories told by leaders – whether they are bosses, generals, politicians or team captains – are generally intended to build trust, motivate, inspire or educate, and sometimes all four at once. They can be personal experience stories, folktales, current events stories or fictional tales created for a particular situation. Leaders can deliver a

full-blown story with a beginning, middle and ending as part of a speech or in a meeting. They can also use *story shorthand*, referring to a name, event or phrase that summons up a familiar narrative in the minds of the listeners. For example, mentioning “9/11” so powerfully evokes the image of a cataclysmic terrorist strike that when Mumbai, India, fell under attack, the events were described as “the 9/11 of India.”

Experts say that the most effective type of story in any given situation depends on which of the above-mentioned goals a leader intends to achieve. Business-storytelling guru Annette Simmons, president of Group Process Consulting, says there are six types of stories that leaders tell:

- **Who I Am.** A story that demonstrates where I am coming from and why you should trust me
- **Why I Am Here.** A story that expresses my agenda
- **The Vision.** A story that reflects a vision of the future that my listeners can buy into
- **Teaching Stories.** Demonstrating how and why a desired skill is valuable
- **Values-in-Action.** An example of the positive benefits of shared values
- **I Know What You Are Thinking.** A story that reflects what I know about the group I’m addressing to show that I have their interests and attitudes at heart. Simmons notes that these kinds of stories will help persuade others that the leader is worthy of their trust and hard work.

Some Leading Books on Storytelling for Leaders

- Denning, Stephen. *The Leader's Guide to Storytelling: Mastering the Art and Discipline of Business Narrative*. John Wiley & Sons, 2005.
- Silverman, Lori L. *Wake Me Up When the Data Is Over*. Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- Simmons, Annette. *The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence and Persuasion Through the Art of Storytelling*. 2nd Revised Edition. Basic Books, 2006.
- Simmons, Annette. *Whoever Tells the Best Story Wins*. AMACOM, 2007.
- Wacker, Mary B. and Silverman, Lori L. *Stories Trainers Tell: 55 Ready-to-Use Stories to Make Training Stick*. Pfeiffer, 2005.

When Do Leaders Share Stories?

Do you train people in your line of work? Jo Tyler, assistant professor at Pennsylvania State University, has worked in organizational development for several corporations, including the Otis Elevator Company. She recalls that an escalator repairman who ignored safety precautions was once seriously injured on the job. Instead of letting the man go, Tyler reassigned him to train the company's maintenance crews. He told his story to new hires, and the company's safety record skyrocketed.

Do you need to resolve diversity issues? Acclaimed storyteller/trainer Susan O'Halloran works with corporations to help them resolve employee issues connected to gender, race, religion and other sensitive subjects. One of O'Halloran's most effective stories is a West African folktale she calls "Kofi's Hat.": Two brothers and two sisters got along perfectly; the couples married and happily settled on adjacent yam farms. When they decided to pool their resources and work together, they won the village's annual yam contest, much to the dismay of the perennial winner, Kofi.

Kofi then created a hat that was different on the right than on the left. He walked down the road between the two farms and caused dissension between the couples as to what the hat actually looked like. They stopped speaking to each other and never worked together again. Needless to say, they never won the yam contest again.


You can see how a story like this could lead to a useful discussion among people who are certain that their – and only their – perspective is correct.

Want to liven up a meeting or keynote address? Create a strategic plan or corporate vision? Ignite change? Enhance technology? Personalize employee orientation sessions or annual reviews? In these situations and more, storytelling has brought about proven results.

How Can You Start Using Storytelling In Your Organization?

You may wish to keep a story diary of memories that come to you during your day that you may wish to share with others in your organization. Or, you can search the Internet for folktale collections that contain simple tales demonstrating important character traits. You may also put out a call to your organization for stories – anonymous or not – that demonstrate certain themes (courage, loyalty, jealousy, honesty) or situations (first day at work, harassment, job training). As you can see by the examples, the stories may be positive or negative, depending on the desired goal. Some companies initiate sessions where employees of all levels are mixed together in small groups and share stories on particular themes. In cases like this, be sure to encourage good listening skills, without judgment and with generosity. You may also wish to employ the "Vegas" rule – that is, the stories told in the group remain in the group.

Is there a storyteller in the house? Although the ability to tell and understand stories is said to be one of the main characteristics that makes us human, some people are more talented and practiced at it than others. You may not be comfortable sharing stories with those you lead. In that case, there may be someone else in your organization who can take on that role.

Or, you may wish to bring in a professional storyteller to coach and guide you, or even to help create and present the story herself. (To find a storyteller, visit the National Storytelling Network at www.storynet.org.) Just remember storytelling consultant Stephen Denning's advice: We don't choose to use storytelling in business; we *must* use it if we are to achieve consensus about the organization's goals and the best way to achieve them. The only choice, he says, is whether or not we do it well. 

Caren S. Neile, Ph.D., ATMS/CL, is a member of West Boca Toastmasters in Boca Raton, Florida. She directs the South Florida Storytelling Project at Florida Atlantic University and serves as Southeast Regional Director on the Board of the National Storytelling Network. Dr. Neile has presented on storytelling at two Toastmasters International Conventions. You can reach her at cneile@fau.edu.

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By John Spaith, ACS

Bad bragging has a bad rap and rightly so – but good bragging is good for you!

The Art of Bragging

The Toastmasters party line goes something like this: We're a supportive group where members are guaranteed to have listeners who always give their undivided attention. Um...not always. And if you can't hold the attention of a bunch of supportive public speaking devotees, what happens when you're in the real world? You can lose an audience fast with a boring opening. But there's another

problem that often goes undiagnosed: failing to brag about yourself.

I've given the speech this article is based on many times and always receive nasty glares when I say the "b-word." Bad bragging has a bad rap and rightly so. But bragging done right establishes credibility and creates an audience connection. I once visited a club where the speaker told us about the need for vitamin supplements. Two thirds into her speech she said as an aside, "This reminds me of back when I was finishing medical school..." Huh? Because the woman didn't do any bragging, I'd thought she was an amateur rehashing the encyclopedia, not a trained expert on the subject.

Professional speakers don't make this mistake. Pros appreciate they have competition and so should you. You're competing for the audience's attention – against their stray thoughts if nothing else. By bragging about your internship at

the Mayo Clinic or that you've seen every *Golden Girls* episode 15 times, your audience is more likely to pay attention to you and, more importantly, your message. If you're absolutely awesome at something – even if it's only *Golden Girls* trivia – let the audience know by telling them early and directly.

DBAJ

The principle I follow when bragging is DBAJ – "Don't Be a Jerk." Most of us are so afraid of violating DBAJ that we go to the other extreme of not bragging at all. You probably understand intellectually the need for self-promotion, but at a gut level you may be terrified you'll look snotty. DBAJ helps serve as a self-check.

First, is what you're saying relevant? Consider a speaker starting with: "Hello everyone! I can speak six languages, am a French chef and a concert pianist. Today I'm going to talk about improving

your tennis game." None of Mr. Perfect's skills is related in any way to teaching me tennis. Instead it feels like he wants to teach me how great he is.

The next check is whether the audience can possibly relate to any aspect of the achievements you're bragging about. Consider tennis great Andre Agassi. He has a lot of God-given talent and I can't relate to the level at which he plays the game. But I *can* relate to the fact that Andre has overcome a lot to get where he is. That's enough. Even if you're talking about the time you won Wimbledon, a reasonable audience won't resent your success if you talk about how you screwed up along the way – how you're human like them. What an audience won't put up with is a jerk who says, "I'm a natural at tennis, I've won too many tournaments to count, and I don't remember learning, so it's always interesting trying to teach people."



The final DBAJ check is to **make sure you don't spend too long bragging**. No matter how good you are at it, you need to get it over with quickly. How long you should spend bragging is analogous to how

It's important to put as much thought into your bragging as you would the opening and conclusion of your speech, even if you skimp on the body. Your bragging can't be off-the-cuff like Table Topics or you'll risk getting into trouble some day. Either you'll be too self-deprecating, a la "I have a DTM but, well, you know that's not

"A great way to brag is to have the Toastmaster, emcee or printed agenda do it for you."

long a mini-skirt should be: short enough to be interesting, but long enough to cover the essentials.

Implementation Details

When I give the "Art of Bragging" talk, I have the audience act as a speaking coach for a hypothetical tennis player on the lecture circuit. In Intro A, he very dramatically tells how he was losing a match badly until his competitor made a vulgar remark that inspired him to come back, even though it almost killed him. Intro B has some decent bragging (no DBAJ violations) that's a bit dry about various tennis tournaments he won. No one ever has said that Intro B is better. You should brag sooner in your speech rather than later, but it doesn't have to be your lead.

so big a deal really, oh never mind." Or you'll say something that makes you look like a jerk, catch yourself, and then lamely back-track. Your bragging needs to be rehearsed to the point that it's like pushing the play button on your DVD machine.

A great way to brag is to have the Toastmaster, emcee or printed agenda do it for you. Even though you're still the one writing nice things about yourself, seeing it on the page or hearing it from someone else gives the audience a degree of removal from your bragging. This also saves you from problems with impromptu bragging. The same general rules of DBAJ apply regardless of who is praising you, though it's easier to

get away with the "I'm your French chef/tennis instructor/..." bullet point list on paper than it is coming out of your mouth.

Don't Establish Credibility

Why am I saying "brag" all over the place rather than something more palatable, like "establish your credibility"? It's because I've found it's much easier to think up ways to brag about myself and then root out the jerk parts rather than start out with "establishing my credibility" and try to build it up so it's not wishy-washy.

I'm sure someone is angry at dumb John Spaith right now. You'll complain that your speech content should do all the bragging for you. Fine. In a fair world, you'd be guaranteed to have everyone always listen to your speech too. Just think about the doctor and the vitamins. Take a bragging pill – not for yourself, but for your audience. ■

John Spaith, ACS, is a French chef, concert pianist, tennis pro... Never mind. John is just a member of Redmond Toastmasters in Redmond, Washington, who tries real hard. Visit his blog at <http://www.mySpaith.com/>.

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Most of us can name our favorite brand, whether it's a type of coffee, cereal or clothing line. But, we don't often think of why the brand is important in our choice of that product. Reasons may include the quality of craftsmanship, the price, or the value you get for what you pay – but whatever it is, there's that something extra that makes us want to purchase the item.

Safeguarding the Toastmasters Brand:

It's All In the Name

By Tammy A. Miller, DTM, PID

Recently, the term “branding” has become a buzzword that evokes not only a product but often something else associated with that product, such as a visual image or a catchy slogan. Think of Nike. One of the most recognized branding symbols in the world is the Nike “Swoosh,” the ever-present logo – it looks like a small tail or a little wing – that is on countless Nike products. Then there is its equally famous slogan, “Just Do It.” Together, the logo and advertising phrase have helped make Nike one of the most dominant brands in the world.

While Toastmasters isn't in the business of selling sneakers, it has elements in common with Nike – and many other global brands as well. Perhaps you have never thought of Toastmasters International as a brand? Yes, there is also a famous appliance company called Toastmaster, Inc., that still generates phone calls to the Toastmasters International Headquarters about fixing toasters (honest!), but we are Toastmasters *International*. Whether you see our logo or just hear the word “Toastmasters,” there is an immediate recognition – at least for all members of this organization, and for many people throughout the fields of business and industry as well.

Defining a Toastmasters Tagline

If someone were to ask you what Toastmasters stands for, what comes to your mind – what's your immediate response? That initial response gives us better insight into



how we really feel about our organization. As an exercise, try this in your club meeting: Ask your members what words come to mind when they hear the name “Toastmasters International.” Hopefully, the words will include: *communication, leadership, fun, speeches, Table Topics, evaluations, fellowship, meetings* and other positive responses.

A strong and successful brand, however, is also associated with words such as: *ethics, integrity, information,*

life-changing, confidence and *leaders*. Does the image of Toastmasters conjure up those words? For most of us, the answer is yes.

What other words can you name or would you expect to hear in response to this question in your club meeting?

The tag lines we use as an organization are also vital to our branding. Many of us remember this former Toastmasters tag line: “Making Effective Communication a Worldwide Reality” (and some readers of the *Toastmaster* may remember other signature phrases from our history). This former motto of ours was an excellent choice to help people understand that we are a communication-building organization. However, as we changed our organizational goals to also include leadership-building skills, it was necessary to change to our current tag line: “Become the Speaker and Leader You Want to Be.”

Now anyone who visits our Web site, or picks up our quality materials, can see that we are not only a communication organization but our program also builds strong leaders.

A Symbol of Quality

Our logo is another key piece of our branding, and it's one we need to protect to maintain the high level of standards we represent. If you have ever been in a position to create a logo, you know how much thought goes into something like this. Many of us belong to organizations that allow us to use their logos on any piece of material we choose, whether it is a well-crafted business card or a poorly designed educational piece for a conference. There are no limitations. One danger of this is that someone might look at the item and – not knowing the organization – decide that the entire group is of the same quality as the poorly designed material. At Toastmasters, we have seen this happen many times, and so we take great steps to preserve the quality of the materials that bear our logo.



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The Globe Logo vs. the Text Emblem: Which to use?

The Toastmasters “globe” logo is recognized worldwide. But over the years, the organization has also used a graphic image of the Toastmasters name as an alternative or in addition to using the official logo. This text emblem can, at times, be a better representative of Toastmasters International, depending on the project at hand. Both the logo and the alternative text emblem are acceptable to use on official Toastmasters materials. You’re encouraged to use the text emblem as it best suits your needs: in addition to the logo or instead of the logo. But you should know the rules for using the logo and the text emblem, in any case:

- **Using Existing Toastmasters Products.** Toastmasters’ manuals, programs, and other materials are copyrighted and may not be reproduced in any form without advance written permission from WHQ. So if you find materials that carry a logo or text emblem, be sure to ask for permission by e-mailing trademarks@toastmasters.org before copying and distributing any of it.

- **Using the Logo or Text Emblem on Your Own Materials.** The names “Toastmasters” and “Toastmasters International” as well as the logo are trademarks and cannot be printed, engraved or placed on any other items (e.g. badges, trophies, plaques, certificates, coffee mugs, clothing, etc.) without written approval from WHQ. Any such use is a violation of trademark law and TI policy. For example, Club 9999 may not purchase trophies from a local shop and have “Toastmasters International” engraved on them. They can be used, however, for official Toastmasters documents, such as a club or district newsletter.

This is only part of the story. Be sure to visit members.toastmasters.org and search for “logos” to read more about the appropriate use of the logo and the text emblem.

Likewise, the Toastmasters online store offers a wide variety of items that maintains the organization’s high standards and keeps them consistent across all levels.

As members of Toastmasters International, we each have an individual responsibility to protect and preserve our brand. When we wear a lapel pin, or talk to people about how this organization has changed our lives, or the lives of those around us – or how we have learned valuable communication and leadership skills – we are representing our brand. When people look at us and see the pin, or know our association with Toastmasters, they may be deciding whether or not this is a group they would like to be associated with, in some cases just because of that initial connection. How are you representing our organization?

What an organization stands for and how its members represent it are key elements for building membership in that organization. Many of us join clubs and associations because we believe in the work they are doing and what they stand for, and it is the same with Toastmasters. We all have the responsibility to bring more members to our meetings. While we have district officers who are responsible at that level for membership building, it is the individual members who have the greatest impact on new membership, club building and growth.

Word of Mouth is Best Promotional Tool

Think about it – why did *you* join Toastmasters? For most of us, it was because someone asked us to come to a meeting, or a friend or relative suggested this great place to learn or hone communication and leadership skills. Or the idea may have been brought up at an annual employment review. Maybe you simply saw a sign advertising Toastmasters meetings in your area and you were curious, so you attended a meeting.

Whatever brought you to Toastmasters, you are here. But what is keeping you here? Whatever it is, share your enthusiasm with others. What role are you playing in helping to build your club or our organization? Have you brought a guest to a recent meeting? Have you asked friends and family to get involved with our organization? Do you remember the excitement you felt when you finished your Ice Breaker without fainting, or completed your first manual? How has your life changed?

I know that my life changed tremendously because of my involvement with Toastmasters. It’s easy for me to talk to people about this organization, because it not only changed *my* life, but I have seen so many other lives changed for the better as people learned how to put their thoughts together and realized that not only do they have something to say, they are now empowered and equipped to say it. For some of us,


the benefit may just be presenting thoughts at work more efficiently. Others have talked about their life experiences in their speeches, in order to give hope to others dealing with difficult situations. The list of how we use the skills we learn in Toastmasters is endless, but sometimes we forget how far we have come from that first club meeting – how much we have grown!

Smedley's Sage Words

Our organization's founder, Dr. Ralph Smedley, once said, "*Ours is the only organization I know that is dedicated to the individual. We work together to bring out the best in each of us, and then apply our skills to help others.*" It is indeed our responsibility as members to make a difference, to introduce others to this life-

changing organization, remembering why we got involved and why we stay involved.

When we all work together to protect the valuable brand of communication and leadership training we have developed over the past 85 years, and to make sure the Toastmasters name and logo is representative of our quality programs, more people will understand why we are so proud of what we have to offer.

What a unique gift we can give others as we bring them to our program. Fellow Toastmasters, together we *do* make a difference in our organization! 

Tammy A. Miller, DTM, PID, is an international speaker, author and coach. She is a member of the State College Toastmasters and the ARL Pinggers, in State College, Pennsylvania. You may contact her at www.tammyspeaks.com.

Editor's Note: Here are some items available in our online store to help you get the word out about Toastmasters while preserving the organization's branding efforts.

- **Find Your Voice** (Item 99)
- **Confidence. The Voice of Leadership** (Item 101)
- **All About Toastmasters** (Item 124)
- **How Confident Are You? Fliers** (Item 116)
- **Toastmasters Can Help Cards** (Item 119)
- **Your Membership Provides Fliers** (Item 354)

For details about these items or a complete listing of products, go to www.toastmasters.org/shop.

That's Not My Voice – Is It?

(Continued from page 13)

the sound up your arms and into your ears.

- Purchase two PVC elbows that fit together like a phone. Speak into one end while the other end is positioned around your ear. (Caution: The smooth, hard plastic conducts sounds so well, you can damage your ear drum by speaking or singing too loudly.)

With each of these methods, your initial goal is hearing the voice your listeners hear. Do you like it? First, get past the fact that it sounds different from what you normally hear. Then, ask yourself if this is how you wish to sound to other people. If you don't like what you hear, you do have the power to change it with awareness, practice and time.

Get Used to Your Voice – or Change It


Should you decide you wish to modify your voice, the next step is playing with your sound. Re-record or use your sound catchers or PVC "phone" to help you listen to the changes until you have something you like. Then practice this new way of speaking until it becomes second nature. Another helpful option is hiring a trusted vocal coach who can give you professional feedback on your *real* voice.

Seldom should a voice be changed drastically. Often the speaker just needs time to get used to the idea that the listener hears something different. Remember, different can be Okay.

Is it important to know what your listeners hear? Think about your old high school teacher with the nasally voice or your hair stylist who sounds so breathy. These people probably give no thought to their sound.

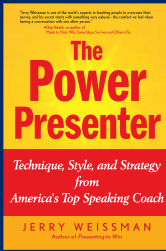
However, the speaker's voice makes an impression on the listener.

Ask yourself these questions. Is what I have to tell people important enough to present it in the most appealing manner? Does my voice complement or distract from my message? How much am I willing to work on my voice to make it work for me?

Some day you might be a Toastmasters speech finalist whose recording gets passed around clubs all over the world. I say, "Go for it!" Maximize the impact of your unique voice. 

Nancy Sebastian Meyer, ATMB, CL, is a member and past president of the Downtown Sunrise Toastmasters in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. A national speaker and author, she has recorded two solo albums and mentors students in voice and speaking. To learn more, visit www.nancysebastianmeyer.com.

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Give the Gift of Listening

(Continued from page 15)

times and places and, often, a deeper connection between intimates.

“There is no life story that’s not interesting,” says Elisabeth Pozzi-Thanner, the founder of Oral History Productions, a professional oral history organization. “We can often [learn] the biggest lessons from interviews we don’t think, at the outset, will be promising.”

Helping to Heal

And the person sharing their stories can also find the process greatly rewarding, adds Pozzi-Thanner, who has worked as a broadcast journalist and social worker, and who has conducted more than 100 interviews for Steven Spielberg’s Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation.

“How rare it is in our times, when everybody is talking constantly, that a person is given the chance


to sit in front of a microphone with a deep listener who says, ‘Please share your life story with me,’” she says. “That can have a really healing impact sometimes.”

If there is one absolute iron-clad dictum by which oral historians live and work, it is this: There are no insignificant or ordinary life stories. Hardy tells of an elderly woman from South Philadelphia whom he interviewed once, not expecting to hear what he heard.

“She had worked in the clothing industry, a typical modest elderly woman,” Hardy says. “And it turns out she had come to America from Russia at age 5 and lived through the influenza epidemic of 1918 and lost many family members. I asked how many children were in her family. She said 12. And how big was her apartment? Three rooms, she said. They all slept in the same bed, shared the same hot water for baths once a week, made room for relatives from Russia when they’d come to stay. It turned out to be an extraordinary re-creation of life in a Philadelphia immigrant neighborhood in the first part of the 20th century, absolutely fascinating.”

Such stories often galvanize people – many of them Baby Boomers who have entertained the idea of interviewing their elders – into action.

“I’ve been on a book tour with *Listening Is an Act of Love*,” notes Isay of StoryCorps, “and I’d say 50 people come up to me each day saying, ‘I wish I would have interviewed my grandfather or my father.’ Part of the lesson of StoryCorps is letting people know that it’s really worth it to do it now. They won’t regret it.”

To learn more about StoryCorps, and to hear people’s stories and get tips on good interview techniques, tools and resources, go to www.StoryCorps.org. 

Patrick Mott is a Southern California-based writer and regular contributor to this magazine.

Special
Announcement
Regarding
April 2009 Dues
Renewals

Club Officers:

Look for Your Renewal Invoice in Your E-mail Inbox!

Organizations around the world are becoming more focused on environmental concerns, and Toastmasters International is no exception. In an effort to combine first-rate service to members with environmental stewardship, WHQ will send the upcoming member dues renewal invoice via e-mail, rather than through the postal service.

Members will benefit from this change in several ways:

- Renewal invoices will be delivered faster and more efficiently.
- E-mail delivery is cost-effective, saving the organization (and its members) from unnecessary spending.
- Delivery by e-mail is more convenient for many members.

Club officers, please look for the April 2009 dues renewal invoice in your e-mail inbox the first week of March. Remember, member renewals are due by April 1, 2009. Club officers will be able to submit renewals online through the Club Business login: www.toastmasters.org/clubbusiness starting the first week of March.

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FUNNY YOU SHOULD SAY THAT!

By John Cadley

As OI' Will Would Say...

Perhaps you've heard the expression, "Everybody wants to go to heaven but nobody wants to die." For we language lovers, the equivalent might be, "Everybody wants to be well-read but nobody wants to read." Or, said another way, everyone wants to be *thought of* as well read. For some reason, there is an automatic assumption that if you read a lot, you know a lot. This has always seemed like a suspect goal to me, since highly knowledgeable people have gotten us into just about every mess there is. But admired they are, and if we want that same admiration there are two ways to get it. One is to actually read a lot, remember what you've read and to reference it at the perfect time.

That seems like a lot of work to me, and there is always the danger of matching the wrong author with the wrong book and having some twerpy former English major catch you, in which case you'll be labeled a poseur and sent to the corner with a dunce cap on your head.

Thankfully, there is an easier, faster and much safer way: quote Shakespeare. For some reason, quoting even a few lines of the Bard makes people think you've read the entire canon of Western literature.

I know this from experience. I was educated at a time when students were required to memorize Shakespeare's more famous soliloquies. And while the rest of that education went through my skull like wind through a tunnel, the interior monologues of Richard III, Macbeth, Hamlet and the rest somehow stuck. I remember one time in particular a girl with whom I was infatuated

mentioned that she was unhappy about the cold weather we were having – it was December in Massachusetts – and I replied, "Ah yes, now is the winter of our discontent." She looked stunned, as if Cupid had laid aside his traditional bow and arrow and had instead hit her over the head with a club. She fell breathlessly into my arms and I've been quoting Shakespeare ever since.

Recently, a colleague asked about my progress on an assignment he had given me.

"When is it due?" I asked.

"Tomorrow."

I looked at him with baleful eyes and said, "*Tomorrow... and tomorrow... and tomorrow creeps in this petty pace from day to day to the last syllable of recorded time. And all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death. Out, out brief candle! Life's but a –*"

At which point he interrupted me and said, "You know what? Whenever you get to it. No rush."

You really don't have to memorize much, either. You can simply say, "To be or not to be, that is the question," and people will think you know the whole speech. Throw in a little something about the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune and they may even think you wrote it.

Best of all, Shakespeare affords us the delicious pleasure of insulting others with impunity. The next time someone makes you angry, rear back and say: "*Thou calumnious onion-eyed death-token! Thou cockered, plume-plucked fustilarian! Thou roguish, tickle-brained clot-pole!*" Trust me: They will take it as

a compliment that their stupidity, ignorance and ineptitude can be described in such lavish terms.

So now the question is: How do *you* quote Shakespeare? First of all, *don't* go to the plays. The rhythms of Elizabethan iambic pentameter sound to the modern ear like an inebriated British aristocrat speaking with a speech impediment. You'll understand every fifth word at best and feel like you're taking a class in English as a second language.

And don't buy *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. It weighs 40 pounds and you could hurt yourself.

The obvious way, of course, is to spend a few minutes with *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*. Or you could use the Internet, although Googling Shakespeare gives even a barbarian like me pause. Somehow, ferreting out the most beautiful words in the English language with search engine algorithms is just bad form.

The easiest way is to make one up yourself, which is easier than it sounds. Throw in an "in sooth," an "alas," and some cheesy poetic metaphor and who's going to know the difference? Just this morning I was late for a status meeting and when asked for an explanation, I proclaimed, "*In sooth, time is a thief that steals my best intentions and leaves me, alas, well past the appointed hour for our meeting, hey nonny nonny.*"

My boss looked at me suspiciously. He didn't think Shakespeare went to status meetings. But he wasn't sure. □

John Cadley is an advertising copy writer in Syracuse, New York. Reach him at jjcadley@mower.com.

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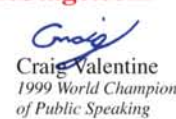
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