

# THE TOASTMASTER

December 1990

## The Speech Contest

A REWARDING CHALLENGE. EVEN IF YOU LOSE.





## The Rope of Tradition: How Will We Use It?

The holiday season is a good time to review traditions. For centuries, people throughout the world have celebrated an assortment of holidays. On New Year's, for example, traditions vary from location to location, but usually the manner of celebration changes little from year to year. In our home, my family gathers on New Year's Day for a holiday feast, fellowship and relaxation. This has become part of our family culture.

Likewise, Toastmasters clubs also have traditions that we recognize from year to year. They may consist of excellent attitudes, legends or cultural contributions that support the mission of the club. An induction ceremony detailing the commitment of both the club and the new member is a fine example of a club tradition. On the other hand, we can become ingrained in meaningless traditions simply because "we have always done it this way."

Traditions, like ropes, have many purposes. Ropes can help you scale obstacles or climb a peak. Do your traditions help you climb to higher levels of performance? Or do they bind and stifle growth? Is tradition a rope that everyone uses to pull together, or does it separate, like the ropes police place around a crime scene to keep bystanders away?

Toastmasters is a teaching organization. Our traditions must offer the opportunity to teach better communication and leadership, rather than serve as ends in themselves.

We must use each situation to help members learn more about our organization. Our induction ceremony must explain the commitment of the new member to the club and the commitment of the club to the new member. The club officer installation should explain the duties and responsibilities of the offices. Clubs should celebrate CTM, ATM and DTM achievements at a special ceremony, noting the success of members and explaining the benefits of each level of achievement. And the list goes on.

When a member asks for a Success/Leadership module, does the rope say "No, we don't do that in this club," or does it say "Let's climb up and see what is on top?" When a member suggests using a video camera to record a meeting, is the response "The club isn't ready for that" or "We tried that in 1980 and it doesn't work?" Try it! The worst that can happen is the club will learn a better way to do the project. Remember, the club provides a forum for members to try things without fear of failure.

A review of club traditions may even suggest a new tradition. For example, you may wish to begin honoring a special performance by a member each month (i.e., a Member of the Month).

Dr. Smedley very appropriately said "No one needs to waste time on unimportant themes." What better way to describe traditions! It is our responsibility to continually evaluate our club culture, looking for the activities that we can proudly identify as supportive to the purpose of Toastmasters. We can then use those ideas as ropes to climb and cast off the ropes that restrict and bind our creativity.

A. EDWARD BICK, DTM  
International President

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## ALL MEMBERS CREATED EQUAL

I was disturbed by Ron Merkin's article, "Not Everyone Was Born Speaking English" (June 1990). Although I agree that Toastmasters clubs should try to accommodate cultural differences among members, I strongly disagree with his implied suggestion that a woman Toastmaster should not have been assigned to evaluate an Arab man's speech. Since the man had attended meetings as a guest, he should have realized that all members are equal in a Toastmasters club. How would a female Toastmaster have felt if she had been told she was not good enough to evaluate a male? What if a woman were elected president of this Swiss club? Would the Arab man's "pride" prevent him from accepting a female leader or should the club only elect officers who meet his narrow definition of worthiness?

To bring this home to the United States—there are caucasians in Arkansas who would be uncomfortable being evaluated by a black person. Those people are welcome to join another club. In my club, races, cultures and genders are equal. Anyone who can't accept this should not join. I can't agree with accommodating one person's culture, pride or sensitivities at the expense of another.

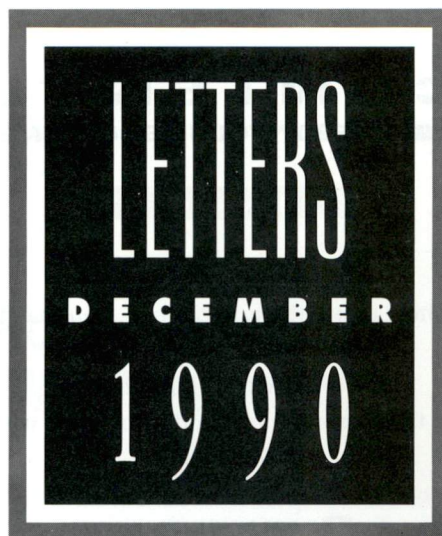
Although this letter is critical of the magazine, I find most articles to be well written and beneficial. I also appreciate their educational focus.

Marilyn Dunavant, CTM  
Federal Employees Club 2287-43  
Little Rock, Arkansas

## A DIFFERENT OPINION

The three technical presentation articles in the September issue are excellent. I commend Toastmasters International not only for the choice of authors, but also for providing a variety of viewpoints all in one issue.

However, I take exception to one point made by Lowell Jay Arthur in "Tips for Technical Talks" (Sept. 1990). He advises to "change the (speaking) speed to match your audience," citing as an example, "talk slower to Southerners,



faster to New Yorkers." Having lived both in the South and in New York, I find it is not speed of delivery that determines understanding in a speech, but enunciation and dialect. New Yorkers may have to speak slower to a Southerner, but only because the speaker's accent is different. Likewise, a Southerner may have to speak slower in New York to ensure the audience understands the message.

In spite of this difference of opinion, however, I have circulated the articles to our staff and anticipate the information will be well received.

M. B. (Bucky) Sutton, DTM  
Past International Director  
Rock Hill, South Carolina

## REAGAN 'SNUBS' TM HONOR

I read the account of the two Toastmasters' meeting with Ronald Reagan ("Secrets From the Great Communicator," August 1990) and I was surprised that these two men failed to recognize a snub (Reagan refused a medallion they presented to him). Honors are bestowed on many people, often by organizations to which the recipient doesn't belong, and I know of no instance in which a recipient refused the award.

Reagan accepted \$2 million from the Japanese, although he is not Japanese. Maybe the Toastmasters should have offered money instead of a medallion.

George A. Beckim, ATM  
Mount Vernon Club 258-2  
Mount Vernon, Washington

## DEDICATED TOASTMASTER

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the clubs and individuals that donated to the Ralph C. Smedley Memorial Fund in memory of John Briski, DTM. I'll cherish all the gifts of love and the beautiful cards forever.

John's wishes were carried out. He was buried wearing his Toastmasters name plate, DTM pin and membership tie. He wore them proudly in life. The fact that he asked to be put to rest with them is testament to his dedication and commitment to Toastmasters.

The love and support you have given me and to John's memory will always be in my heart. Thank you and God bless.

Becky Briski  
Anchorage, Alaska

## BRISKI REMEMBERED

It is not often that one feels it right to mark the passing of an individual Toastmaster in your columns. However, I believe our loss of John Briski, DTM, of Anchorage, Alaska, warrants an exception.

During his nearly 20 years in Alaska, John did more for Toastmasters than any single member. Starting from the rubble of a lost district, he spent 12 years expanding eight clubs to the present strength of more than 35 clubs in Alaska and the Yukon. He was the founder of YACT, its council, and served on that body in many capacities. He was also a grassroots Toastmaster.

No Toastmasters task was too humble for John to tackle. No challenge was too daunting. His positive, consistently "can-do" spirit encouraged all who met him. He was the focal point around which many Alaskan clubs were formed.

During my many visits there, I had ample opportunity to bear witness to the consistency of his dedication. With his courage, modesty, enthusiasm and concern for others, John was an example of what a Toastmaster ought to strive to become. We will all miss him.

Joe Garmeson, DTM  
Greenside, South Africa

# GET TO LIKE THE MIKE

**If you'll be participating in any speech contest outside of your club, you'll need to know more than just your speech. You'll need to know about the proper use of a microphone.**

**IF YOU CAN'T USE A MICROPHONE, YOU MAY AS WELL NOT SPEAK.**

**A microphone is essential when speaking before a large**

**audience. Without one, you won't be heard. In a contest, if you don't know how to use a microphone, you may as well not compete. But if you're familiar with microphones and how they work, you can make them add to your speech. When you are comfortable with your microphone, you can concentrate on what you have to say.**

## **KNOW YOUR MIKE**

Before the contest, find out from your contest chairman what microphones will be available to you during the contest. Your choices most likely will be a lectern with a microphone attached, a microphone on a floor stand, a handheld microphone, or a lavalier microphone that loops around your neck or clips onto your clothing.

Some microphones are highly directional in their pick-up, giving maximum support to your voice while reducing or eliminating extraneous sounds. Others pick up from a wide area or from all directions. How you must speak and direct your speech toward

the mike is partly determined by the type of microphone. Before the program begins, test and adjust microphone placement, and the volume and tone settings of the amplification system.

Following are tips to help you use microphones to your advantage:

- If you use a lectern with an attached mike, maintain a constant distance from the microphone and speak toward it whether you are looking to the right or the left. If you don't, your voice will fade as you move away from the mike.
- Don't start your speech by grabbing the microphone. Have the microphone position planned in advance and, if you

must reposition it, do so quickly and with precision.

- Use a lavalier microphone if you use visuals, such as a flip chart, set to one side of the presentation area. If your presentation requires much movement, make certain that the cord of your lavalier is out of your way.

## **CHECK THE SYSTEM**

- Whatever microphone you use and however the room is arranged, check everything before your presentation and have assistants help you, if necessary. Speak into the microphone at a volume you plan to use during your speech. Have assistants check your voice volume from different positions in the room.
- Feedback is the unpleasant squeal that occurs when the speaker system "feeds back" into your microphone and is reamplified. Again, test the sound system beforehand; have somebody standing by to make adjustments. Experiment with settings for volume, bass and treble in the sound system. Sometimes a reduction in treble, or an increase in bass, coupled with volume adjustments will eliminate feedback.
- Don't touch the microphone unless absolutely necessary, and never use it for support. Keep your hands off and away from it unless, of course, you are using a handheld mike.
- Be aware of how your voice is projecting through the PA system. Are you talking too quickly for a large room, so that your echo is interfering with clear communication? Does your voice fade because you turn away from the microphone?
- If you use recorded sound effects or music during your speech, test them in advance. You may need help from sound technicians to set up your tape recorder and wire it into the sound system. This usually works better than holding the tape recorder up to the microphone.

The best rule to follow, of course, whatever technique you use, is to avoid complex arrangements. Keep the mechanics and your technical problems—as simple as possible.

Based on *Toastmasters International's Audiovisual Handbook (code 1193)*, available from World Headquarters for \$1.75, plus postage and handling. Δ

# Remember Their Names

PICTURE THE PERSON'S NAME AND  
ASSOCIATE IT WITH THE FACE.

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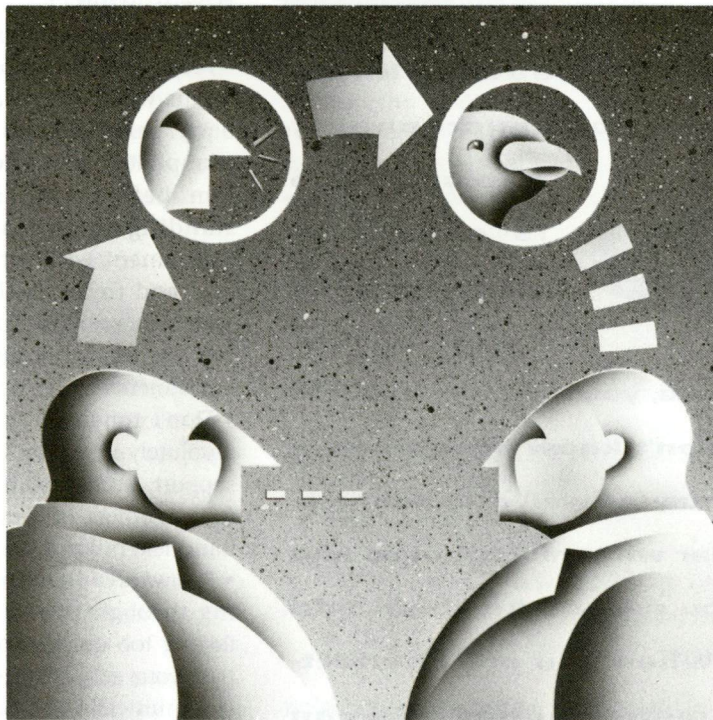


Illustration by Jeff Koegel

**A**s you talk with your friends and fellow members just before the beginning of your Toastmasters meeting, the atmosphere and conversation is pleasant. Suddenly, you start feeling nervous: A first-time guest at tonight's meeting is coming your way to be introduced to your buddies.

The problem is that 15 minutes ago, being the friendly, hospitable Toastmaster you are, you introduced yourself to him and explained how great, warm and personable the people in this club are. The two of you chatted a while, and you remember that he told you his name. In fact, you remember him repeating it. You even remember

the details of the entire conversation. Unfortunately, you don't remember his name! And you definitely don't want to ask him to repeat it a third time. You wonder if there is any way you could sneak a quick peek at his name tag without him catching you. Can you fake it...successfully?

You can probably recall occasions like this one, when remembering a person's name would have been a lot more comfortable, not to mention potentially profitable. Fortunately, this doesn't have to happen. This article outlines six simple steps for remembering people's names and faces.

How many times have you said

to someone, "You know, your face is so familiar, but I just can't remember your name?" That probably doesn't make them feel any better, although they might understand because they do the very same thing. (By the way, have you ever said to someone, "I remember your name, but I just can't remember your face?") Of course, remembering faces is simple. Faces are "tangible" -- they are obvious. The face you see on your club treasurer today is the same one you will see on her next week.

William Lyons Phelps once said, "We are all so vain that we love to have our names remembered by those who have met us but once. We exaggerate the talents and virtues of those who can do this and we are ready to repay their powers with lifelong devotion."

Not to mention our business dollars, as well. Don't you feel good when someone remembers your name, especially when you don't expect it? It makes us feel important and liked.

Memory is based on three concepts: observation, association and imagination. The first and last are self-explanatory. So let me briefly explain association, and shatter a myth.

All memory is the direct result of some association. In fact, association is simply the joining together of two ideas: one you already know, with another you want to remember.

The key to remembering people's names and faces is to picture the person's name, which we want to remember, and associate it with the face, which we already know. To do that, we must follow the following six steps:

- 1) Observe the person's most outstanding facial feature.
- 2) Exaggerate that facial feature in your mind.
- 3) Learn the person's name.
- 4) Repeat the name to make sure you heard it correctly.
- 5) Form a mental picture of what the name suggests, or sounds like.
- 6) Form a ridiculous association between the mental picture suggested by the name or sound alike, and the outstanding facial feature.

First, we need to observe the person's outstanding facial feature. This

doesn't necessarily mean a feature that's good or bad, but simply one that is most prominent: thin eyebrows, big nose, dimples, etc.

Next, exaggerate the person's outstanding facial feature. Now that you have isolated it, make it really stand out. In other words, if the person has big eyes, imagine those eyes being huge. If the person's eyes are small, then see them as tiny. If he has a thin face, see that face as being so thin that a toothpick would have trouble hiding behind it. If she has a scar, then see that scar as being very deep.

Observe the person's name. Watch out—this sounds simpler than it is. Don't wonder what you're going to say next, and don't be distracted by other activities in the room. Concentrate and listen carefully when the person tells you his or her name.

Repeat the person's name to ensure you heard it correctly. For example, if you hear a couple tell you their name is Smith and their name is really pronounced "Schmidt," they might correct you. Both you and they will feel good. If you don't hear it clearly enough to be sure you know it, simply ask them to repeat it. You can also repeat their name once or twice during the conversation just to get familiar and comfortable with it: "Nice to meet you Mr. and Mrs. Schmidt," will do fine.

Form a mental picture of what the name suggests, or sounds like -- this will remind you of the real name. Names such as Taylor, Lake, Plumber, King, Carpenter, Goldman, Frost and Rose all suggest pictures easily visualized. On the other hand, most names, such as Gordon, Kakish, Sullivan, Quigley, Harackiewicz, Malinowski, Sannicandro and Marcott don't easily conjure up visual images, so you'll have to try harder.

This final step ties it all together. Form a ridiculous association between

the mental picture suggested by the name or sound alike, and the outstanding facial feature. To do this, use your great powers of imagination, and even a phrase, if necessary.

Let's meet several people right now, for practice. You will still be able to see them in your mind's eye. I'll walk you through the first one, then you'll try it on your own.

Let's pretend you are about to be introduced to a woman who has deep set eyes. Now exaggerate this prominent facial feature and imagine her eyes as extremely sunken into her face. As both of you shake hands, she tells you her name is Joan Forrest. Now, repeat her name as it would fit naturally into the conversation, such as, "I'm pleased to meet you

Ms. Forrest." In this case, the name Forrest easily prompts mental imagery. The fact that "Forrest" and "forest" are not spelled the same doesn't matter.

The final step is to form a ridiculous association between the forest you have conjured in your mind, and her deep set eyes. You may picture her sunken eyes as a huge forest containing thousands of trees. Take the idea further, and picture yourself walking, lost, through the forest. All the while, you are saying to yourself, "It sure would be easy to get lost in that huge forest inside Ms. Forrest's deep set eyes." Simple, isn't it? Make sure to make the association as weird and illogical as possible.

Here comes a woman with hairy eyebrows. She says her name is Hazel Gold. After you've done the first five steps, you're ready to make the association. See her eyebrows covered with thousands of gigantic nuggets of gold? Can't you see yourself plucking those nuggets right out of Ms. Gold's hairy eyebrows?

Next, you bump into a gentleman with a scraggly mustache. (Facial hair counts. Ever known someone with

a mustache or beard who shaved it off and it was weeks before you realized it?) His name is Mark Taylor. Simply picture a skillful tailor mending together Mr. Taylor's scraggly mustache.

Then a woman with dimples asks you for the time. Her name is Mary Garrett. For Garrett, you might picture a carrot, since the two words sound alike. In your mind's eye, you can picture gigantic carrots sticking out from each of her dimples. The already huge carrots continue to grow larger as you look at her. Really force yourself to visualize this picture. It gets easier with practice.

Learning to tie first and last names together is relatively simple. After you memorize someone's last name, you just need to associate it with their first name.

For example, let's use the name Joan Forrest again. I use "groan" to remember Joan. Use your original picture of being lost in the forest, mentioned earlier. I don't know about you, but being lost in a forest would certainly make me groan loudly. You get the idea.

You'll only have to carry around these silly pictures in your mind until the names become true knowledge. After you know a name, you don't need its associations. This method is simply a means to an end.

One more thing: please don't go to a party tonight and try to meet 20 people. You aren't ready for it. Putting this into effect will take some practice but the results are well worth it. Practice by meeting and remembering one new person a day until you are comfortable. Then try two a day, three a day, and so on. You can practice by looking at pictures of people (accompanied by a name) in magazines and newspapers.

With practice, remembering names will become second nature. I'll venture to bet that both your personal and professional effectiveness improve because of it.

Best of success....and good memories! Δ

*Robert Burg is a member of Gold Coast Club 2727-47 in West Palm Beach, Florida. A speaker in the field of memory improvement training, he is author of an audio tape series titled "On Your Way to Remembering Names and Faces!"*

**MEMORY  
IS BASED  
ON THREE  
CONCEPTS:  
OBSERVATION,  
ASSOCIATION  
AND  
IMAGINATION.**

**MAKE SURE  
TO MAKE THE  
ASSOCIATION  
AS WEIRD  
AND  
ILLOGICAL  
AS POSSIBLE.**

# Speaking to Win



**THE SPEECH CONTEST: A REWARDING CHALLENGE —  
EVEN IF YOU LOSE.**



**IF YOU'VE NEVER ENTERED A SPEECH CONTEST, THE REASON MAY BE THAT YOU'RE NOT AWARE OF ITS BENEFITS, OR PERHAPS YOU FEEL NERVOUS AT JUST THE THOUGHT OF COMPETING. "TO VENTURE CAUSES ANXIETY," OBSERVED THE DANISH PHILOSOPHER SOREN KIERKEGAARD, "BUT NOT TO VENTURE IS TO LOSE ONESELF." KEEP IN MIND KIERKEGAARD'S WISE OBSERVATION, ALONG WITH THE WISDOM OF THE FAMILIAR PROVERB, "NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED."**

### CHALLENGING COMPETITION

A speech contest is a special kind of public speaking. Contest speeches are creative attempts to make ideas understandable, impressive and dramatic. Seeking to inspire or persuade, contestants venture beyond rhetoric to reach the listener's heart and conscience.

Contestants get involved in the challenge of the competition. The challenge of taking part in a speech contest not only demands time and effort, but the latent talents of the contestant as well. These abilities existed before the contest but were not active, developed or visible until the competition stimulated the contestants to use them.

The speech contest, like life itself, is a voyage of self-discovery. Surprising even themselves with what they can do, contestants apparently agree with the advice of religious leader Harry Emerson Fosdick, who once said, "Have the daring to accept yourself as a bundle of possibilities and undertake the game of making the most of your best."

The point is this: Too many of us set our own limits far below what we could actually achieve. You can outdo yourself—if you really want to.

### NO LOSERS

What counts is not so much whether the contestants win or lose. The Roman orator Cicero once said, "If you aspire to the highest place, it is no disgrace to stop at the second, or even the third." Winning is a continual process of self-development.

There are no losers in speech contests. All contestants gain valuable experience from participating. What matters is that you compete, and not just once but again and again. Keep going even when you feel like quitting.

Research studies consistently show that the most important ingredient for success is perseverance. Adopt the slogan, "A quitter never wins and a winner never quits" and you've taken the first important step on the road from club contest to the international finals, through the area, division, district and regional levels.

Garry C. Porter, reminiscing about his experience as a finalist in the Toastmasters International Speech Contest, recalled "the joy, the heartache, the excitement that comes with competing for the highest speaking honors in Toastmasters." "Who would have dreamt," he mused, "that I would be competing in a district contest, let alone the international contest, after struggling for three years just to win my own club's contest?"

### OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

"Struggling" is the right word to describe what's necessary to reap the rewards of speech contests. It's the struggle to win, to make your way in the world, to earn a living, and to try to overcome a problem or handicap, that drives you to success.

Demosthenes, Cicero, Patrick Henry, Daniel Webster, Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill all struggled with handicaps before they became great orators. In their youth, they struggled with speech impediments, stage fright, awkwardness or shyness. They gave little promise of their eventual success in public speaking.

Churchill, for example, struggled long and hard to overcome his stutter and lisp. A doctor told him that only constant practice and perseverance would help him eliminate or modify his speech defects. Diligently and faithfully, he practiced and eventually overcame his speech impediments.

It's the same with Toastmasters. Desire and determination provide them with the motivation and self-reliance that lead to their self-improvement in speech contests and other Toastmasters activities. Those with handicaps learn to cope with their disadvantages.

For example, Toastmaster Clarence Enzler had a severe stuttering problem ever since childhood. To learn to control this handicap, he joined the Potomac Toastmasters Club in District 36. He won the district humorous speech contest twice and placed second in the Toastmasters International Speech Contest.

Evelyn-Jane Burgay lost her sight as a teenager. Yet she became the first woman to win the Toastmasters International Speech Contest and was the District 36 Governor for 1987-88.

"I am a great believer in speech contests, one of the most valuable educational programs in Toastmasters," she says. "Speech contests give you the opportunity to sharpen and refine your thoughts and ideas, as well as your communication of them. What's more, you learn to do all of this under great pressure."

### PRESSURE PAYS OFF

About learning to speak under pressure, Barney Kingston, with wide experience as a speech contestant, says, "All you have to do to learn to speak under pressure is to enter a Toastmasters speech contest—and that means starting right in your club. If you reach the pinnacle

**DON'T FRET ABOUT THE OTHER CONTESTANTS—YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT THEM ANYWAY. YOU HAVE ONLY ONE COMPETITOR—YOURSELF.**

of speaking before hundreds of Toastmasters, their wives and guests, with distinguished luminaries at the head table, you couldn't possibly find a speaking situation of greater pressure. But when you find that you can rise above these conditions, you can accept the pressure of speaking anywhere—and with complete confidence."

Before 1989 Golden Gavel recipient Joel H. Weldon became a professional speaker, he sold encyclopedias. One of his firm's top salesmen, he was promoted to manager. Then he discovered that his selling experience had not prepared him for

running training sessions, conducting meetings and speaking to audiences.

So one day Weldon visited the Tempe Toastmasters Club in District 3 to see if they could help him develop the skills he needed. Soon he began to compete in Toastmasters speech contests, and eventually earned a third-place award in the Toastmasters 1974 International Speech Contest. When word of his contest victory spread among local organizations, a group invited him to speak. That first professional speaking engagement netted him \$25 and a free chicken dinner.

These days, Weldon receives fees of thousands of dollars for each engagement. Top companies across the United States now book him for customized seminars on sales, management and personal effectiveness. Stressing the importance of a positive attitude, he says: "Positive expectancy is seeing the result you want and then expecting to achieve it. Never sell yourself short."

#### **GREAT BENEFITS**

Never sell yourself short is good advice. In general, speech contestants spend hundreds of hours preparing and practicing their contest speeches. First, they write the speech word for word and memorize it. Then they practice the speech daily to make it sound as if it's not memorized.

Are speech contests worth the effort? Yes. The challenge of achieving your potential by participating at any level in the annual Toastmasters International Speech Contest yields great benefits:

- You learn a lot about a specific topic from gathering material and developing perspective.
- Your self-discipline and self-confidence increase.
- It gives you visibility, respect and recognition.
- It provides opportunities to speak before new and large audiences. The bigger the crowd, the greater is the need for more drama, emotion and gestures in your speeches.
- You develop ability to speak under pressure as you move from club to area, division, district, region and international levels of competition. The higher you go, the more pressure you're likely to feel. As the competition progresses, the contestants tend to become rather equal in performance. A little

nervousness can be an advantage, as it gives you a shot of adrenaline that adds energy to your delivery.

- You're compelled to tighten up the composition of your speech and timing of your delivery. Roy Fenstermaker, winner of the 1983 International Speech Contest, prepared 20 versions of his winning speech between the first text in June and the final in August. Sticking to the time limitations is necessary to avoid disqualification. If you use humor, allow time for laughter.
- It's also important to practice your speech delivery. Participation in a contest that runs through the various levels of competition requires constant rehearsals. Jeff Young, who won the International Speech Contest in 1980, said: "I have practiced each of my contest speeches more than 100 times. Practice is arduous work and very boring. But until you are sick of delivering your speech, you haven't practiced enough!"

#### **DON'T COMPARE**

As you consider entering a speech contest, you may wonder how good the other contestants will be compared to you. That sets you off on the wrong track. Zig Ziglar, speaker, author and authority on motivation, says: "Success is not measured by what you've done compared to others, but compared to what you're capable of doing."

Worrying about a competitor's abilities and possible superiority generates self-consciousness and can be self-defeating. Don't fret about the other contestants—you can't do anything about them anyway. You have only one competitor—yourself. And you can do something about that.

Focus intently on improving your own efforts. Each contest is a learning experience. You can learn even if you don't win, since failure often teaches more than success. Contestants lose time and time again but continue to compete. Many also-rams win later, some just a year or two afterward.

Evelyn-Jane Burgay says, "Don't let previous losses stop you from trying again. The truth is that no matter who goes home with the prize, everyone who competes in a Toastmasters speech contest is a winner. We may not always go home with the trophy, but we are always better speakers for the experience."

Jeff Young, who won second place in 1978 and first place two years later in the Toastmasters International Speech Contest, advises that your main reason for entering a speech contest should not be to win a first-place trophy.

The award, says Young, "is, after all, merely a symbol, a by-product of a job well done. Your primary motivation for entering a contest ought to be that you have something to say! This 'something,' whatever it may be, must be burning within you. You must believe it, understand it and live it."

#### **THE MAIN EVENT**

We've now explored the nature of a speech contest and the benefits it provides for the contestants.

But what is it that makes the speech contest one of the most thrilling and best-attended events at the annual Toastmasters International Convention?

Year after year, despite the long hours of the preceding days and nights of the convention, 1,500 to 2,000 Toastmasters and their guests gather for breakfast on the last day in the hotel's largest banquet hall.

They look forward to the convention's "Grand Finale," the exciting and impressive drama that features the nine finalists—Toastmasters' best speakers in the world—in the "World Championship of Public Speaking."

Judges and other Toastmasters who help in staging the speech contest gain from their participation as do the contestants themselves, since the experience develops self-confidence and personal growth.

The speech contest, as we have seen, is both a challenge and an event. At the same time it's a richly rewarding program in self-improvement for all Toastmasters involved in it—the contestants, judges, and those who plan and administer the staging of the event. It's an arena where all Toastmasters involved can achieve their potential. Go for it! Δ

*Thomas Montalbo, DTM, a member of Sparkling Toastmasters Club 3602-47 in St. Petersburg, Florida, has received a Presidential Citation for his articles in The Toastmaster. He is author of The Power of Eloquence, a book on public speaking available from Toastmasters International.*

# Anatomy of a Winning Speech

**TOASTMASTERS' 1983 WORLD CHAMPION OF PUBLIC SPEAKING SHOWS HOW EVERY WORD COUNTS IN A CONTEST SPEECH.**

BY ROY FENSTERMAKER, DTM

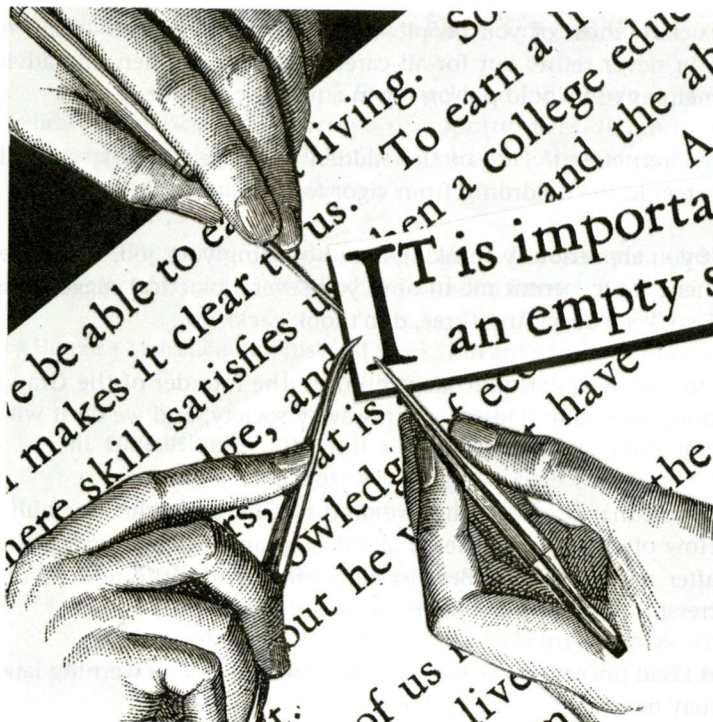


Illustration by Lou Beach

One of the first admonitions we receive when we join Toastmasters is: Don't write out your speech!

This is good advice—for the most part. It deters the neophyte speaker from writing an essay on a subject of choice and then reading it at the lectern or, worse still, memorizing it and running the risk of memory failure in the recitation.

Some speeches must be written. The president of the United States or the head of a major corporation cannot afford to take chances on being misun-

derstood by an off-hand remark. For the average speaker, however, the well-prepared extemporaneous speech delivered with or without the use of notes is the only way to go.

The trouble with writing the speech is that the speaker-writer usually isn't that skilled in writing "spoken American" (or British, or Australian) or in the use of words that convey direct contact with the audience. Both of these factors are important in any speech, and are especially critical in a contest speech.

## A winning speech should:

- Capture the imagination, interest and sympathy of the audience.
- Drive home a single, significant theme.
- Convey the speaker's enthusiasm for the topic and message.
- Have the potential for considerable vocal variety.
- Allow for graphic illustrations, concrete imagery, word pictures and humor.
- Permit the energetic display of body language.

The typical "written speech," on the other hand, is too often like an essay. It has no direct appeal to the audience. The failure of many contest speeches is not that they lack beauty or loftiness of expression, but rather that they lack a sense of human contact; they don't translate into a live interchange between the speaker and the audience, which is the essence of communication.

This is the real difficulty of writing a contest speech. Especially since a Toastmasters contest speech must be completed within 4.5 and 7.5 minutes!

Within this time frame, every paragraph, every sentence, every word must have a function. There is no time for cloudy generalities that can be clarified by trailing explanations. Every expression must be simple, clear and trenchant.

This limiting time factor puts a premium on the economical use of words. A speaker with an average speaking rate of 120 words a minute will use up 30 seconds in speaking 60 words. In effect, one paragraph, or three or four sentences of excess material may spell disqualification.

**ONE PARAGRAPH,  
OR THREE OR FOUR  
SENTENCES  
OF EXCESSIVE  
MATERIAL,  
MAY SPELL  
DISQUALIFICATION.**

With this Damascene sword of time hanging over his or her head, the speaker is obliged to hone and polish, and delete every word, phrase or sentence that does not contribute to the total effect.

Writing the speech beforehand, therefore, is an unfortunate but practical necessity. The process of writing is really one of recording changes in thought, illustration and expression as practice and evaluation dictate.

During the weeks prior to final delivery, the speech will grow and develop (and contract to the seven-minute format) as the speaker includes some things that work, and delete others that don't.

The following text is the final copy of some 20 typewritten versions I prepared during the months prior to the contest. I decided on the topic and theme in 1981, and defined the basic structure of the speech in January 1983. I completed the first text (more than 1,200 words) in June. The column of notes and comments may provide some insight into the structure of the speech and its development...

## R E T I R E M E N T ? N E V E R !

Mr. Toastmaster, Toastmasters and guests, ladies and gentlemen:

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### 1. "Grabber"

- Illustration • Word Picture • Humor

- Body Language

#### 2. Theme

- Clarification—Personal—Audience
- Humor—Word Picture—Comparison

#### 3. Explanation • Personal • Alliteration

#### 4. Speech Outline • Personal

- Points to be developed

### II. BODY:

#### 1. First Point

- Quotation—Personal—Word Picture

- Point  
—Personal—Theme  
—Illustration  
—Word Picture

- Illustration  
—Humor

#### 2. Second Point

- Theme

- List of sub-points

- First sub-point—Illustration  
—Humor

- Personal—Illustration—Humor

- Personal  
—Audience  
—Personal

There is a commercial on television these days which shows a gentleman, apparently just returned from his office retirement party, walking through the front door and saying to his wife: "Honey, I'm home...forever!"

Imagine the look on his wife's face. And what does he have to look forward to? Happiness? Joy? Relief? The end of a working life! Perpetual unemployment! Deterioration! Stagnation! Decay!

Luckily, most of you people—especially homemakers—don't have that problem. You never retire. But for all career men and women, my advice is: Avoid retirement as you would poison ivy in a nudist camp.

By "retirement" I mean the sudden stoppage of work, going from the dynamic career to the doldrums, from vigor to vegetation.

If you are seriously thinking about quitting your job, and have no ready replacement for it, permit me to offer you several practical suggestions: One, don't quit! Two, keep busy! And three, don't look back!

First of all, don't quit! Maggie Kuhn, the founder of the Gray Panthers organization, once said: "Ours is a throwaway society, and we do it with people as well as machines."

Unfortunately, sometimes we do it to ourselves, when we quit work prematurely. How often have you heard about men and women having heart attacks, shortly after retiring? Why? Because not infrequently, the retirement itself is more distressful than the work it was supposed to replace.

If I had my say, every pension check would carry a warning label: "This retirement may be hazardous to your health."

My second point is a corollary to the first: keep busy! You've got to keep working, one way or another. You've got to have a goal in life in order to survive.

There are a number of options available: employment, leisure, volunteerism...take your pick.

If you choose employment, why not become a management consultant—like everyone else. All it takes is a title, a phone number and 500 business cards.

If you need a title, be imaginative. I know an auto mechanic who is now a "vehicle maintenance engineer." He repairs my Toyota—and drives a Mercedes.

If you need a degree, that's simple for you Toastmasters. All you have to do is complete the Basic Communication and Leadership Manual, and Terry McCann will put a CTM behind your name, just like that. For all anyone knows, CTM

—Humor

- Second sub-point
- Theme—Illustration

- Humor—Illustration
- Word Picture

- Third sub-point
- Illustration
- Humor

- Theme
- Audience

(Deleted in the interest of time.)

### 3. Third Point

- Quote
- Illustration (Pathos) • Word Picture
- (Deleted in the interest of time.)

- Theme
- Up-beat—Word Picture
- (Deleted in the interest of time.)
- Personal

- Illustration
- Humor—Word Picture

- Illustration • Humor • Transition

## III. CONCLUSION:

### 1. Summary

- Examples

### 2. Theme

### 3. Peroration

- Illustrations • Pathos • Transition

- Illustrations
- Audience • Humor
- Pathos • Personal

### 4. "Grabber"

- Word Picture • Emotion...energy

- Audience

means "Master of Computer Technology," and that's pretty important these days.

Another way to keep busy is by what I call "purposeful leisure." Too often people think of leisure as the absence of work. Nonsense! It's productive labor. Do you realize how much greens fees and golf cart fees, for example, contribute to the gross national product? Billions! You golfers out there, men and women, tell your spouses that when you get up at four o'clock in the morning.

The best way to keep busy, of course, is by volunteer service. There must be a hundred thousand organizations out there that could use your help right now. They won't discriminate against you because of your gray hair—or the lack of it, you gray panthers and bald eagles.

If you run out of ideas, try coordinating Speechcraft and Youth Leadership, the finest programs ever invented, for the training of the young—of all ages, and, I might add, for the rejuvenation of jaded Toastmasters. (Those two programs alone are more potent than monkey glands or vitamin E.)

Which brings me to my third point: don't look back! James M. Barrie, the author of *Peter Pan*, once wrote: "God gave us memories, so that we could have roses in December." Roses, not regrets. Nursing homes are filled with people who cling to their regrets like security blankets.

Don't look back and look down. Life isn't a vicious circle. It's a rising spiral, a cornucopia of opportunities. (Grandma Moses, Buckminster Fuller, Col. Sanders, Pablo Casals and our own Cavett Robert and Roy Graham are models of geriatric initiative.)

Pablo Casals, at 90, for example, when asked why he practiced eight hours a day, replied: "I think I'm improving."

Just last week, I heard of a Toastmaster who spent his first Social Security check on lessons in hanggliding. That's the spirit!

What it all adds up to is this: We can't quit. We can't retire from life. It's too precious. We've got to keep working, whether for money, fun or glory. And, above all, we mustn't look back...

Retirement? Never!

It's never too late to learn—to grow—to create—to do all the wonderful things we had no time for in our youth. This is what the last third of life is all about.

It's a time of discovery, when we really begin to see, perhaps for the first time, the providence of God, the love of family, friends and neighbors—even Toastmasters—and sometimes we even catch a glimpse of our own potential...still...to do great deeds.

Life, my friends, is not a candle flickering in the breeze. It's a torch to light new flames.

Mr. Toastmaster.

*Roy Fenstermaker, DTM, was the first-place winner of the 1983 International Speech Contest. Seventy-seven-year-old Fenstermaker is a member of Rising Stars Club 5050-F in Downey, California, and Dynamic Forcemasters Club 587-F in Santa Fe Springs. After 27 years with North American Aviation and Rockwell International, he now occupies his time with teaching, consulting, public speaking and freelance writing.*

# SPEECH CONTEST RULES

## YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A CONTESTANT

**WHEN YOU ENTER THE INTERNATIONAL SPEECH CONTEST (OR ANY SPEECH CONTEST), YOU HAVE COMMITTED TO MORE THAN JUST GIVING A SPEECH. YOU'VE COMMITTED TO COMPETE IN A CONTEST ACCORDING TO THE GIVEN RULES AND PROCEDURES. BUT DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE RULES AND PROCEDURES ARE?**

When you enter the International Speech Contest, study the rules, especially those pertaining to eligibility, speech length, originality, timing and protests.

In addition to studying the rules, attend the pre-contest briefing for all contestants, held by the contest chairman. Your contest chairman will tell you when the briefing of rules and procedures will be held. During the briefing, contestants draw for speaking positions and become familiar with the speaking area. This is your opportunity to ask any questions you may have about the contest.

Familiarity with contest rules and procedures often makes the difference between winning and losing. Be a winner -- know the rules and procedures.

### **INTERNATIONAL SPEECH CONTEST RULES:**

#### **I. PURPOSE**

A. To provide an opportunity for speakers to improve their speaking abilities and to recognize the best as encouragement to all.

B. To provide an opportunity to learn by observing the more proficient speakers who have benefited from their Toastmasters training.

#### **II. APPLICABILITY**

These rules, unless otherwise noted, apply to all Toastmasters speech contests which select contestants for the annual International Speech Contest, which is conducted in English only. These rules may not be supplanted or modified, and no exceptions may be made.

#### **III. SELECTION SEQUENCE**

A. Club, Area, District. Each club in good standing may select its club speech contest winner to compete in the area contest. An alternate (second place winner) should also be selected. The area speech contest winner (or alternate) then proceeds to the division (if applicable) and district contests. Note: The district contest chairman informs World Headquarters of the name and address of the winner and alternate in the district contest. Information concerning the regional contest is then mailed to the winner and alternate.

B. In those areas with three clubs or less, both first and second place winners may participate in the area contest. In those divisions with three areas or less, the first and second place winners from each area contest may compete. Similarly, in districts with three or fewer divisions, the first and second place winners from each division contest may participate in the district contest.

C. Each region shall select a winner and an alternate. The contest chairman, usually the first-year International Director, informs World Headquarters of the name and address of the winner and alternate in the regional contest. Information concerning the International Speech Contest is then mailed to the winner and alternate. Eight speakers, one from each region, compete in the International Contest. A ninth speaker, selected in a special speech contest among districts outside of North America, also competes in the International Contest.

#### **IV. ELIGIBILITY**

A. To be eligible to compete at any level of the International Speech Contest, an individual must:

1. Have been an active Toastmaster in good standing of a club in good standing since the previous July 1.
2. Have completed at least six projects in the Communication and Leadership manual.

B. Only one kind of exception may be made to the requirements listed above. A charter member of a club chartered since the previous July 1 is eligible to compete. (The club must be officially chartered prior to the area contest.)

C. The following are ineligible for competition in any contest: incumbent international officers and directors; district officers (governor, any lieutenant governor, area governor, secretary or treasurer) whose terms expire June 30; international officer and director candidates; immediate past district governors; district officers or announced candidates for the term beginning the upcoming July 1.

D. Past first place international winners are not eligible to compete at any level.

E. A Toastmaster who is a member in more than one club and meets all other eligibility requirements may compete in each club contest in which he or she is a member in good standing. However, should he or she win more than one, he/she can represent only one of them at any level beyond the club. No Toastmaster can compete in more than one area contest—even if the two areas are in different divisions or different districts.

F. A contestant must be a member in good standing of the club, area, division, district or region that he or she represents at the time he or she competes in a speech contest at the next higher level.

#### **V. SPEECH SUBJECT AND PREPARATION**

A. Subject for the prepared speech shall be selected by the participant.

B. Participants must prepare their own five- to seven-minute speeches, which

must be substantially original, and certified as such in writing to the chief judge by the contestants prior to the presentation of the speeches (on form 1183, Speaker's Certification of Speech Originality). Any quoted material must be so identified during the speech presentation.

C. All contestants will speak from the same platform or area designated by the contest chairman with prior knowledge of all the judges and all the contestants.

The contestants may speak from any position within the designated area and are not limited to standing at the lectern/podium.

1. A lectern/podium will be available. However, the use of the lectern/podium is optional.

2. If amplification is necessary, a lectern/podium fixed-mounted microphone and a portable microphone should be made available, if possible. It is suggested that the fixed-mounted microphone be nondirectional. The selection and use of a microphone is optional for each contestant.

3. All equipment will be available for contestants to practice prior to the contest. Each contestant is responsible for arranging his or her preferred setup of the lectern/podium microphone and other equipment in a quiet manner before being introduced by the Toastmaster.

D. Every participant must present an entirely new and different speech for the regional and for the international contest than he or she has given that same year. Up to and including the district contest, contestants may use the same speech, but are not required to do so.

E. The successful contestant at each district shall present a detailed outline of his or her district winning talk to the chief judge of the regional contest. Successful contestants at the region will prepare and mail to World Headquarters an outline of their district and regional winning talks, which will be given to the chief judge at the international contest.

## VI. GENERAL PROCEDURE

A. At the club or area level contests, a contest chairman, chief judge, at least five judges, three counters and two

timers are appointed. These appointments will be as far as practical at the club level, but required for the area level.

At the division or district level contests, there should be at least seven judges or equal representation from the areas composing the division or district in addition to a contest chairman, chief judge, three counters and two timers.

At the regional or international contest, there should be at least nine judges or equal representation from the districts or regions respectively; no judge shall be a member of a club represented by a contestant. In addition to these judges, five qualifying judges, a contest chairman, chief judge, three counters and two timers are appointed.

B. Before the contest, contestants are briefed on the rules by the contest chairman. Judges, counters and timers are briefed on their duties by the chief judge. Contestants will then draw for their speaking position with the contest chairman.

C. If a contestant is absent from the briefing, the alternate speaker, if present, may be included in place of the primary contestant. During the meeting when the presiding officer introduces the Toastmaster for the contest to begin the contest, if the primary contestant has not arrived, he/she is disqualified and the alternate officially becomes the contestant. Where the primary contestant arrives and makes his/her presence known to the Toastmaster with all required paperwork in good order prior to the introduction, and missed the briefing, he/she shall not be disqualified and may speak in the order his/her name was drawn, but waives the opportunity for a briefing.

D. There will be a one-minute interval between contestants during which the judges will mark their ballots.

E. Contestants may remain in the same room throughout the duration of the speech contest.

## VII. TIMING OF THE SPEECHES

A. Speeches will be five to seven minutes. A speaker will be disqualified from

the contest if he or she speaks under four minutes, 30 seconds, or over seven minutes, 30 seconds.

B. Upon being introduced, the contestant shall proceed immediately to the speaking position. Timing will begin with the contestant's first definite verbal or nonverbal communication with the audience. This will usually be the first word uttered by the contestant, but would include any other communication such as sound effects, a staged act by another person, etc.

C. Timers shall provide warning signal lights to the contestants, which shall be clearly visible to the speakers, but not obvious to the audience.

1. A green light will be turned on at five minutes and remain on for one minute.

2. An amber light will be turned on at six minutes and remain on for one minute.

3. A red light will be turned on at seven minutes and remain on until the conclusion of the speech.

4. No signal shall be given for the overtime period.

5. Any sightless contestant may request and must be granted a form of warning signal of his or her own choosing, which may be an audible device. The contestant must provide any special device required for such a signal.

6. In the event of technical failure of the signal, a speaker is allowed 30 seconds extra overtime before being disqualified.

## VIII. PROTESTS

A. Protests will be limited to judges and contestants. Any protest will be lodged with the chief judge and/or contest chairman prior to the announcement of the winner and alternate(s). The contest chairman shall notify the contestant of a disqualification regarding originality or eligibility prior to that announcement before the meeting at which the contest took place is adjourned.

B. Before a contestant can be disqualified on the basis of originality, a majority of the judges must concur in the decision. The contest chairman can disqualify a contestant on the basis of eligibility.

C. All decisions of the judges are final. Δ

AGAIN, I HAVE BEEN APPOINTED BULLETIN EDITOR. I AM A TERRIBLE EDITOR, BUT MY EMPLOYER HAS SUPPORTED TOASTMASTERS WITH FREE DUPLICATION AND POSTAGE. MEMBERS OF MY CLUB DO NOT CARE IF I CAN READ OR WRITE, AS LONG AS THEY GET THE NEWSLETTER FOR FREE.



KNOWING THAT I AM A NO-TALENT EDITOR, I WILL RESORT TO SUBTERFUGE TO GET MEMBERS OF MY CLUB TO READ MY SCANDAL SHEET. OVER THE YEARS, I HAVE LEARNED SOME TRICKS THAT CAN MAKE ANY BULLETIN WORTH READING.

# DIRTY SECRETS *Of a* BULLETIN EDITOR

PUBLISH AS MANY NAMES AS POSSIBLE—  
PEOPLE LOVE READING ABOUT THEMSELVES

BY J. THOMAS PEBWORTH, ATM

**A** first-rate club bulletin does two important things: 1) it builds attendance, and 2) it attracts guests and converts them to members.

The bulletin has some other, though less important, functions:

- It reminds members of their meeting assignments.
- It announces upcoming events, such as district conferences.
- It gives recognition.
- It can list meeting minutes.
- It is useful for filling out the Distinguished Club Plan if attendance, guests, outside speeches, etc. are included.

How can I accomplish all of this when my only talent is free postage?

## SELL THE FUTURE

The biggest mistake editors make is to headline last week's program. Nobody cares. The members of my club want to know what we are going to do for them

next meeting. A bulletin is not a newspaper—it is an advertisement.

Headlining the future makes members want to come and makes it easier for them to invite guests. The members know what is going to happen and they have something to talk about when they invite a prospect. Headline the speakers and their topics. Is it a theme meeting or a special program? Who is the Toastmaster? Is there important business to be discussed? The headline has to provide a reason to come.

The snag is that speakers often do not decide on their topics in time for your deadline. In this case, I make up topics for them, and write headlines such as: "Mary Jones to Explain Why Women Are Better Speakers than Men." If John Jones is going to speak, I reverse the sexes. This is a wonderful attendance builder. Half the club will show up to listen and the other half will be there to tear the speaker's limbs apart.

You might feel this is a little drastic for your club. But the important thing is to create a headline that gets people excited about the coming program.

## USE NAMES—AND MORE NAMES

The reading time for the average bulletin is the time it takes a member to walk from his mailbox to the trash can. You must get their attention.

I guarantee that when someone sees their own name in print, it grabs their attention. Put in as many names as possible. Who is on next week's program? Who spoke or evaluated last week? Who spoke to outside groups? Who got married? Who had a baby? You can even put down who's having an affair. This may have undesirable side effects, but it'll certainly build reader interest.

Whenever you use a name, capitalize, underline, bold face or italicize



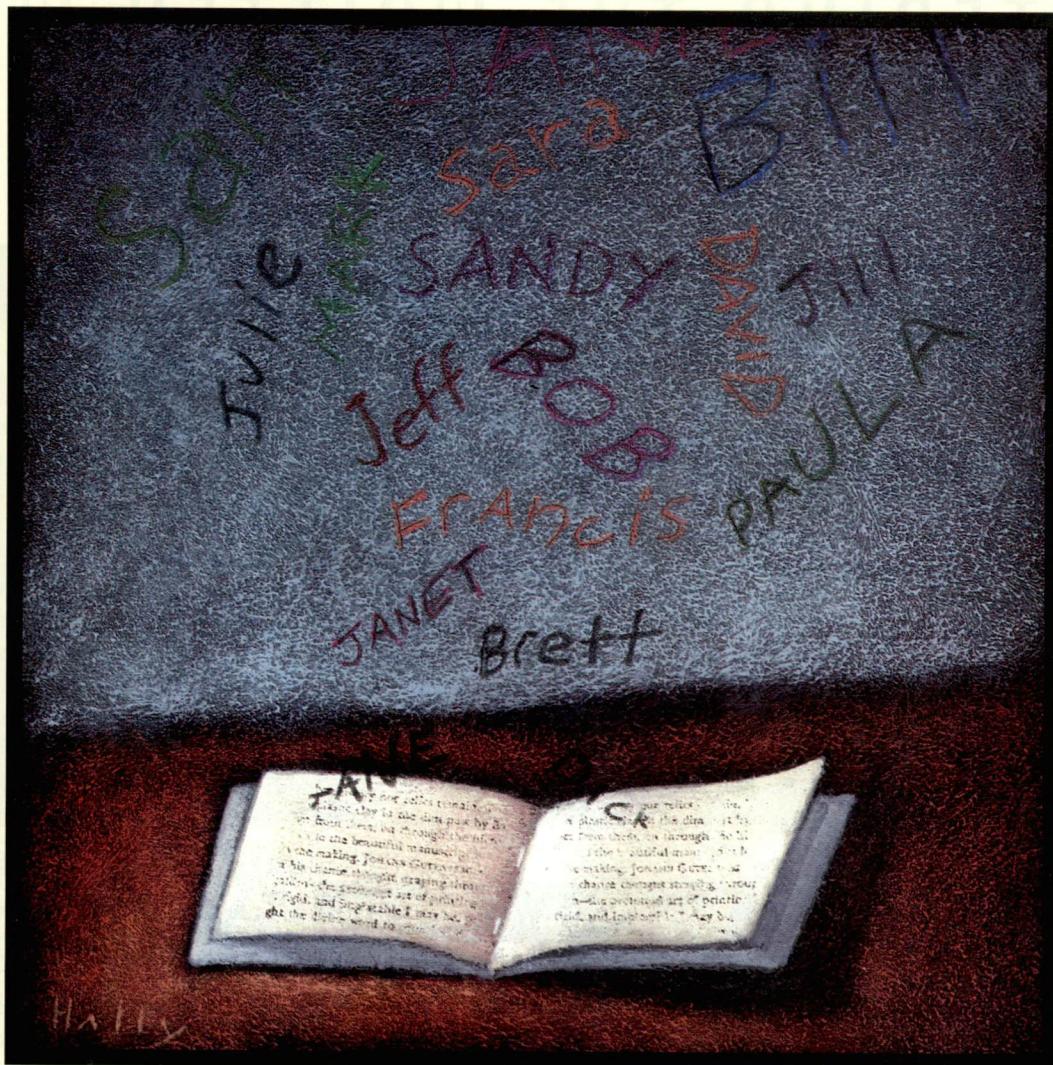


Illustration by Greg Holly

it so that it jumps off the page at the reader. You'll have members tripping over their front steps, they're so engrossed in reading about themselves (and others!).

#### GUESTS ARE FRONT PAGE NEWS

Be sure guests' names are on the front page (capitalized, underlined, bold faced or italicized). Tell something about them. Give them a pat on the back if they participated in Table Topics.

Then mail them a copy. You'll find guests sticking to your club like candy to a blanket.

#### GLAMORIZE THE PAST

If you insist on reporting last week's program, keep it brief. Remind the members who were there how good it was, and make absentees feel they missed something. Be intriguing. Don't repeat the whole joke, just the punch

line. This is another fertile area for editorial license. I once reported: "Harry showed us how we could save money and improve our sex lives at the same time." The next week we had perfect attendance. The ones who had been there for Harry's speech demanded a better listening program.

#### HIDE THE JOKES

You may not believe this, but there really are people who read the comics and skip the rest of the newspaper. Do not let this happen to your bulletin.

Keep changing the pace. Sandwich the joke in between the dues notice and future Toastmasters' assignments. Force them to read the whole thing. As editors, it is our duty to educate the barbarians.

#### ENJOY IT

When you headline next week, use lots

of names, publicize the guests, glamorize last week and keep changing the pace. You will see meetings improve, guests return, and attendance and membership increase. Pretty soon, your club officers will be going off to get an award for their Distinguished Club Plan.

They'll leave you behind to labor in the trenches, but who cares? You'll be grinning as you prepare next week's bulletin. If you have a good time writing the bulletin, the members will have a good time reading it. Remember, nobody wants our job, so we can't be fired. Enjoy it! Δ

*J. Thomas Pebworth, ATM, has belonged to Toastmasters clubs in Oregon and Singapore, and now is a member of Downtown Club 2455-68 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. This article is based on area training sessions in which he corrupted countless bulletin editors.*

# MASTERING THE WRITTEN WORD

THE CLUB BULLETIN IS A PERFECT FORUM  
FOR PRACTICING WRITING SKILLS

**A**sk that same experienced Toastmaster to write a magazine article or an editorial for publication, and you probably won't get the same

enthusiasm. Even if your request is two months before deadline, the best you can hope for is a firm "maybe."

Getting people to write their ideas in a manner suitable for general reading can be difficult, if not impossible.

But why is this? Wouldn't people who pride themselves in being good communicators be interested in learning how to write? Don't all Toastmasters want to be well-rounded communicators? Common sense tells me "yes," but my intuition tells me otherwise.

My theory (certainly not confirmed scientifically) is that we, as Toastmasters, become so accustomed to using visuals, gestures and persona in our communication that we feel uncomfortable without them. Just like the blind person who compensates for his lack of sight by developing his sense of touch, many Toastmasters shy away from written communication and gravitate toward the spoken word. Thus, their writing skills atrophy while their speaking skills sharpen.

Another reason for not wanting to write may be that once a talk is delivered, it is gone (unless it's taped)—there's nothing to reexamine word for word. In contrast, once your message assumes written form, it is there for all to see, analyze and critique. It is there for posterity! Writing, like public speaking, makes us vulnerable to criticism, but the written word is more enduring.

Writing excludes a great portion of the communication tools we have worked so hard to master. Consequently, the written message must be particularly well thought out,

**If you ask an experienced Toastmaster to speak at a club meeting or a formal function at the last minute, chances are she would gladly accept the challenge. She would quickly make an assessment of the prospective situation and apply what she has learned in Toastmasters to deliver a skilled impromptu allocution.**

interesting and readable: A tough combination for those who emphasize delivery at the expense of content.

If you happened to read the article "Are You Content with the Content of Your Speeches?" by Leonard Serafino in the August 1989 issue of *The Toastmaster*, you noticed that he, too,

**BY LISA PASQUALE/CULLINANE, ATM**

believes that speech content often suffers from lack of substance. If you take all of the showmanship out of your speech, will the content of that speech carry you through? Will it still hold an audience's interest, or will it sound flat and mundane?

The written word allows less room for error in capturing attention. A reader who doesn't like the first paragraph will not read on. If you give the reader the chance to turn the page, you've lost him for good.

Showmanship is simply the icing on the cake and should not be a substitute for content. Serafino suggests that speeches first be written and perfected word for word before practicing their delivery. This way, speech content is less likely to suffer at the hands of our visual crutches.

It stands to reason, then, that learning to write better will help your speaking ability dramatically.

A bulletin editor for three consecutive terms, I have been able to recruit many members in our club to write short articles for our monthly bulletin. While few volunteered in the

beginning, I was able to motivate them with encouragement and writing guidance. After seeing their own work published, they began

to get a feel for what they wanted to do differently in their next submissions. Two members have even had their contributions reprinted in other magazines.

The club bulletin can be a teaching tool for the entire club, not just for the editor. Everyone should participate in the production of the club bulletin on some level. The editor should use the bulletin as a tool to encourage members to write, offering the same support that clubs provide for speeches.

If your club does not have a well developed bulletin, this may be an opportunity to accelerate your communications challenge. Perhaps a small group of people within your club might rally to start a bulletin or spruce up an existing one.

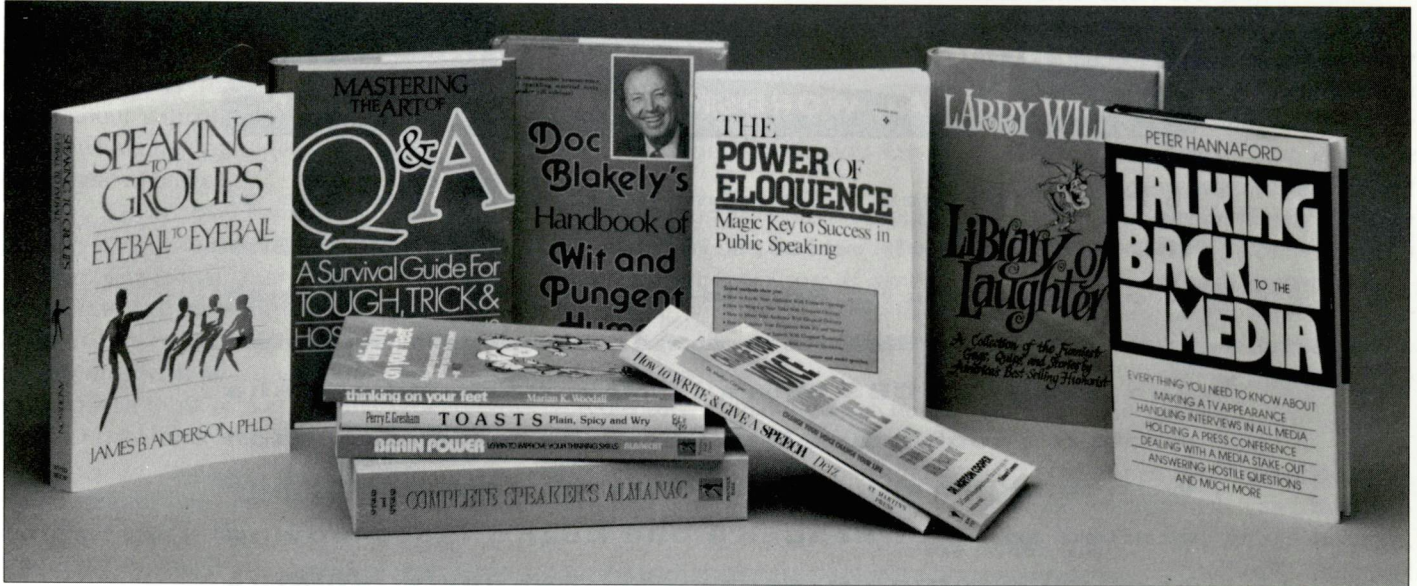
The Top 10 club bulletins are chosen from all over the world and were exhibited at the International Conference in Dallas. Examples of good writing are in each of these selected bulletins. This could be the opportune time to flesh out the content of those bare-bones bulletins and give your speeches a nutritional boost.

To become the proficient communicator we all desire, we must accept the challenge of the written word and overcome our writing weaknesses. Toastmasters gives us the necessary forum and incentive to improve. But like anything worth doing, it will take patience and hard work to achieve excellence. Δ

*Lisa Pasquale/Cullinane, ATM, is a former president and bulletin editor of Blue Flame Club 2717-F in Costa Mesa, California.*

# R • E • A • D

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# A THOUSAND POINTS TO WRITE

THOUGHTS ON SPEECH WRITING BY  
PRESIDENTIAL WORDSMITH PEGGY NOONAN.

**Is Peggy Noonan a Toastmaster? No. Is she one of the best speech writers in the country? Yes. She wrote speeches for Ronald Reagan and George Bush from 1984 to 1989. Before that, she was a producer and writer at CBS News in New York, where she wrote for anchorman Dan Rather. Her stellar speech writing skills caught national attention after she crafted some of Reagan's and Bush's most moving and memorable phrases—from Reagan's remarks**

**L**isten: "A speech," says Noonan, "is poetry: cadence, rhythm, imagery, sweep! A speech reminds us that words, like children, have the power to make dance the dullest beanbag of a heart."

In her best-selling memoir, *What I Saw at the Revolution*, Noonan delineates her life as a speech writer in the Reagan administration, and imparts advice on creating soul-gripping speeches. And although her experience lies mainly in the political arena, her insights can be applied to most speeches and audiences.

When you sit down to write a speech, you first have to "establish that you are an interesting and warm person," she says. "You have to make the audience feel like if they lean forward and listen, they will be gaining information that's in their interest to know—or be entertaining.

"It's also important to be very direct. Use short, clear sentences that say to the audience: 'I'm going to tell you something; this is why you want to know it; now, here it is.'"

On the significance of public oratory, she writes: "speeches are not significant because we make them heard by every member of our huge nation simultaneously. Speeches are important

**after the Challenger tragedy to Bush's trademark "thousand points of light" and "read my lips." With experience such as this, we thought you may like to hear what Noonan has to say.**

BY TRACY WATSON

because they are one of the great constants of our political history. For 200 years, from 'Give me liberty or give me death' to 'Ask not what your country can do for you,' they have been not only the way we measure public men, they have been how we tell each other who we are. They have been changing, making, forcing, history...They more than count, they shape what happens."

One irony of modern communication, Noonan points out, is that while electronic media disseminate speeches throughout the world with the greatest ease imaginable, the quality of the speeches has declined. She attributes this to several factors:

The first, she says, is that people no longer learn the rhythms of public utterance from Shakespeare and the Bible. Public oratory nowadays is found in places other than the theater and church. In President Lincoln's day the "common man" flocked to the docks for the latest installment of Charles Dickens. Today fewer people read the classics, but they still read. Noonan believes speech writers should remember that and avoid "talking down" to their audiences. But she also warns against using literary allusions for emotional impact. "If it is strained, it will never work and won't be memorable. Then it's just manufactured eloquence."

"The modern egalitarian impulse has made politicians leery of flaunting high rhetoric," she continues. "Attempts to find the right, if sometimes esoteric, quote or allusion seem pretentious. They don't really know what 'the common man' knows anymore; they forget that we've all had at least some education and a number of us read on our own. The guy at the gas station read *Call of the Wild* when he was 14, and maybe still sometimes thinks about it. Moreover, he has imagination. Politicians forget. They go for the lowest common denominator—like a newscaster."

Another reason speeches have declined, according to Noonan, is that speech writers for public figures put too much emphasis on writing clever, short phrases for the media. She calls these phrases soundbites—or "five seconds that a producer in New York thinks are the most interesting." She knows about these soundbites first-hand: she selected them while working as a producer at CBS. But she also knows the best soundbites come about naturally, they are integral to the whole message and shouldn't be quoted out of context.

"Great speeches have always had great soundbites," says Noonan. "The problem is that young speech writers don't realize that all great soundbites happen by accident. They forget the speech and write the soundbite. They plop down a hunk of porridge and stick on what they think is a raisin."

Like most writers, Noonan's stellar rhetoric didn't just flow out of the computer at first try, the result of inspired genius alone. She describes herself as a "fifth-draft speech writer." Her first drafts were awkward and ungrammatical. When people came by to see what she'd written, she'd be embarrassed and shield the computer screen with her hands.

In the first few drafts she focused solely on getting her ideas on paper, never mind the format. Correct grammar and poetic cadence came later—after accuracy—which she considers crucial in a speech. A speech may be flowing, poetic and dynamic, but it's not much good if it isn't factual. "Anybody can have an opinion," she says. "It's hard to catch mistakes. You have to know facts and numbers and names; you have to be awake."

While she wrote, she took time out to read—not only pertinent reference books but poetry and biographies.

The former, she says, "because the rush of words would help loosen the rocks that clogged the words in my head; the latter because biographies are about the great, and great people lead lives of struggle, and reading about their pain put the small discomforts of a speech in a nice perspective."

Staples on her reading list included Walter Jackson's Bate's biography of Samuel Johnson, and Stephen Vincent Benet's *John Brown's Body*, the Bible (especially the Psalms), and Ezra Pound's *Cantos*.

She encourages speech writers to "write, comb it out, rewrite, keep combing." In other words: If your favorite phrase is the height of eloquence but doesn't add anything to your message, take it out.

One way of making speeches real to the audience is to be specific, she says. To personalize. In other words, don't say, "America loves freedom." Say,

"Freedom to us is newspapers that everyone can buy on the street corner, newspapers that get to say just about anything about anybody..." History, too, can be brought alive, made real to the audience. This is how Noonan personalized Reagan's address in honor of the 40th anniversary of D-Day:

*"Here in Normandy the rescue began. Here in a lonely windswept point on the western shore of France. As we stand here today the air is soft and full of sunlight, and if we pause and listen we will hear the snap of flags and the click of cameras and the gentle murmur of people who've come to visit a place of great sanctity and meaning.*

*But 40 years ago at this moment the air was dense with smoke and the cries of men, the air was filled with the crack of rifle fire and the boom of cannons."*

Noonan here placed D-Day in time and space for herself and, by extension, for the audience.

"If we really listen and hear the snap of the flags," she says, "the reality of that sound will help us imagine what it sounded like on D-Day. And that would help us imagine what D-Day itself was like. Then your head snaps back with remembered information: History is real."

Another Noonanism: Avoid formalism and soul-deadening predictability. She appreciates candor in a speech and believes most people do. "Candor is a compliment, it implies equality. It's how true friends talk."

Noonan says she can't write a good speech for someone without first hearing that person

talk in conversation. An example: At her first meeting with Reagan, he dropped the phrase, "Boy, that was something," and Noonan latched onto it. "That's how he talks," she says, "like a happy

*Continued on page 29*

Photo © by Diana Walker



**Peggy Noonan, Author of  
*What I Saw at the  
Revolution: A Political Life in  
the Reagan Era,*  
published by Random House.**

If the thought of writing a single speech puts most of us in the sweaty palm/arrhythmia arena, imagine writing words that will be spoken by the president or the vice-president of the United States. From 1984 to 1989, Ivette Rodriguez did just that. As public affairs manager of the Commerce Department's Minority Business Development Agency, she performed a variety of promotional tasks, including researching and writing speeches, proclamations and messages for U.S. government officials.

Her words have been spoken by Ronald Reagan, George Bush, the secretary and deputy secretary of commerce and the Minority Business Development Agency's director. Her speeches cover the gamut of education, finance, business, and virtually any issue related to minority business.

Since January 1990, Rodriguez has headed up the Public Relations Department for McDonnell Douglas Electronic Systems Company in Huntington Beach, Calif., the aerospace giant, where she continues to write articles for publication and serves as spokesperson to the news media.

With credentials like these, she speaks with authority on the subject of speech writing. For those of us grappling with writing the spoken word, she says, take heart.

#### **Is speechwriting relatively easy for you?**

I don't know anyone who, if completely honest, would say they actually enjoyed writing. Most people find it painful. Especially putting that first word to paper. It's what I call "the tyranny of the blank page."

Speeches are unforgiving. By their very nature they have absolute deadlines. When the secretary of commerce needs a speech for a meeting in San Diego this Monday, you can't plead writer's block. It has to be done. And at any given time, I might be working on three 20- to 45-minute speeches a week on different topics, in addition to my other work.

#### **How do you revise?**

Most of my revisions for speeches have to do with how a speech sounds. A speech, above all else, is going to be heard, so it has to be easy to speak and easy to understand. I'm very big on a speech flowing.

# WORDS WISE

## AN INTERVIEW WITH FORMER WASHINGTON SPEECH WRITER IVETTE RODRIGUEZ.

by  
Carol  
Richardson

As I'm writing I'll read out loud what I've just written. If I stumble over a phrase, or find some word difficult to pronounce, I'll change it. You don't want the president stumbling over an awkward sentence on national television.

If you can, tape your speech, either on audio or video. Listen to your voice. If the speech is for someone else, go over it together. Work out the rough spots in advance, so the speaker is comfortable.

I like to have the text of my speeches returned so I can take a look at any impromptu editing the speakers made. I like to see what worked and what was changed. For example, did they alter the introduction to refer to a relevant event in the news? Or did they delete a passage that a previous speaker spent some time on? Or did some phrasing just strike them as awkward or inappropriate? I've learned a lot from these last-minute revisions.

#### **Are you aware of writing "sound bites" for broadcasting?**

Oh, yes. A speech is part poetry. You're inspiring people, giving them something to remember. Something that captures the essence of what the speech is about will be remembered, and will be quoted by the press. One method to doing this is through artfully used repetition. In one speech I wrote, for example, "Back in

the first century A.D., a Greek philosopher expressed this time-honored truth: 'only the educated are free.' Yes, only the educated are free. Free to leave the welfare lines and find gainful employment. Free to choose meaningful careers. Free to reap the benefits of our economic and political system."

The repetition of "free" in those sentences helps to make the phrase memorable, which is what "sound bites" really are; memorable phrases that encapsulate the message of the speech.

#### **Where do you get your material for a speech?**

In order to write, you have to read. I can't emphasize this enough. Read as much as you can. In addition, you should establish some filing system, so that when you store something you think might be useful later, you can retrieve it. I have an elaborate filing system. I keep statistics, motivational quotes, financial materials, anything I come across that could help me write a speech. Of course in Washington I depended on the Library of Congress and a network of contacts who were authorities in labor or education and other related fields. Libraries and experts are excellent sources of information.

**When you write for other people, are there any special considerations like per-**



**Does your research extend to the audience, then?**

Knowing your audience is just as important as knowing the speaker. Part of the research of every speech is to whom it will be given. I try to find out as much about the sponsor and the event as I can. It's not enough to rely on the title of the organization. Titles can be misleading. For example, I had to prepare a speech to be given to the Association of Mexican-American Professionals. I could only guess at who the "Professionals" were in the title. Were they lawyers or doctors? As it turned out, the group is an educational forum. If I had just assumed I knew who the audience was, the speech could have been a disaster.

So take the time to find out who is expected to be in the audience. What makes them tick? Are they inclined to share the speaker's point of view? Will there be other speakers? You don't want to discover too late that your half-hour speech will follow four other speakers.

**How is a speech different from the written word? Or from other forms of spoken communications, like a lecture or sermon?**

I suppose it's obvious to say that speeches are meant to be heard. But that implies a different kind of writing. I mentioned earlier that to me, a speech is akin to poetry. You are aware of poetic devices like rhyme, alliteration and repetition. Jesse Jackson is such an effective speaker because his phrasing is so deliberately poetic. It gives his words a persuasive force that few speakers can match.

Likewise, a speech is also a visual medium. A speech on paper looks boring. The sentences are short and uncomplicated. But when spoken and given gestures, it comes to life. Too many speakers cling to the written word, usually because they are unfamiliar with the text. This is unfortunate, because it no longer sounds as though it's coming from the heart.

There is nothing objective about a speech. Speech writing is not journalism. While a lecture seeks primarily to educate, a speech's main function is to motivate.

Facts are fundamental to a lecture but are secondary in a speech. In a speech, facts exist to support a point of view.

**From your point of view, what makes a speech successful?**

Like everything else, you can't always hit a home run. But sometimes you get a masterpiece. Good speeches are so hard to compare, but I'd say that a speech is only as good as it mirrors the speaker. I took pride in providing for another person what they would if they had the time, or even the ability.

Speech writing implies a total lack of ownership. As a professional speech writer, I will never be attributed as the author of a particular speech. It's not mine, and it never was. A speech writer's role is to be in the background, to put the speaker in the best light possible, to translate what that person is all about.

**What are the hazards of writing speeches for political figures? Were there times you had to write something contrary to your own beliefs?**

In all public relations, people are faced with decisions between principles and a paycheck. I was fortunate enough to work for an administration I believed in, although there were others in the office where I worked that did not, and it was difficult. As I said before, speech writing is an intimate activity, and it is definitely not neutral. In a political environment, your job is to persuade or to gain support for the administration's blueprint. I suggest you always align yourself with causes you believe in. Otherwise, you feel like a traitor to your intellect.

**Is there any final advice you can give to beginning speech writers?**

Read as much as you can. You can't be a good writer if you're not a reader. Develop a filing system for statistics and other useful tidbits. Tape speeches from television. Watch the speakers for delivery techniques. Take note of what works and what falls flat. Watch for those zingers, those golden nuggets, phrases that capture the philosophy of the speech. Because the more you know about the workings of a speech, the more successful your own speeches will be. Δ

*Carol Richardson is a freelance writer living in Laguna Hills, California.*

**sonal style or mannerisms?**

Absolutely. Before putting a pen to paper, you should know the speaker as intimately as you can. You have to get into a person's soul, their background, and look at the image they're trying to project. Reagan, for example, had his movie background, and Bush is the Texas entrepreneur. These impressions figure into how you might word a phrase. Since the content of a speech is inseparable from the speaker, you should try to personalize it to the speaker's own particular style. You should be especially careful of jokes and foreign phrases. Some speakers are natural comics, but most are not. Avoid anything that is not natural for the speaker.

For example, in the quote above on education, the philosopher I refer to is Epictetus. You have to consider whether the speaker sounds natural mentioning the author by name, or in fact whether he can pronounce it at all. In this case, it was better to simply refer to "Greek philosopher." And even if the speaker could pull it off, there's the audience to consider. A group of businessmen might find the Epictetus reference irrelevant or distracting. A group of university professors might not.

# HOW TO EMCEE A *Wedding*

BY JOHN J. SMITH  
AND BASIL ABBOTT



BEING A MASTER OF CEREMONIES  
AT A FRIEND'S WEDDING MAY BE THE  
BEST GIFT YOU CAN GIVE  
—IF YOU DO IT RIGHT.



**YOUR FRIENDS' WEDDING—THE MOST IMPORTANT AND MEMORABLE DAY IN THE HAPPY COUPLE'S LIVES. THEY EXPECT EVERYTHING ON THIS DAY TO BE AN ABSOLUTE SUCCESS—ESPECIALLY THE WEDDING RECEPTION. YOU, AS A TOASTMASTER, CAN HELP IT BE JUST THAT BY OFFERING YOUR SERVICES AS EMCEE AT THEIR WEDDING.**

**THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

The first step is to meet the people involved—the bride and groom, and their parents. Explain that you will rehearse the events planned for the wedding reception, and make any necessary changes in the program. If you can meet at the locale where the reception will take place, so much the better: You can study the layout of the place and ask the banquet manager about seating or catering.

Bring a questionnaire to the meeting that will cover the following information:

- The date of the wedding, the time, the place, length of ceremony, means of travel to the reception and time of arrival. Get the phone number of the reception venue and make sure the bride and groom know it, in case they are delayed. Out of town guests could be sent a map with directions.
- Get the names (spelled correctly) of the bride and groom, both sets of parents, best man, bridesmaids, pages and groomsmen. Make sure you can pronounce them all properly. Some may prefer to be known by nicknames or abbreviations. Raymond may be known to everyone as Ray, John as Johnny. Remember that the next time you meet, the bride probably will have a different last name.
- Get the address of the bride's parents, and keep in touch with them before the big day.

- A large hotel may have several banquet rooms, so double check that you have the right one. Also determine how many guests will attend, and if there will be an official receiving line.

- What time will the meal be served? Caterers may hold a meal, but they cannot serve it earlier than arranged. So it's up to the emcee to ensure that the arrival of guests and their meals coincide. An increasing number of people nowadays are vegetarians, or have special food requirements because of their health or religion. Make sure the catering staff knows how many will be served and where they will be seated.

Will children need high chairs and will you need room for wheelchairs for disabled guests? Where should they be placed?

- Who will sit at the head table? Seated at this place of honor are usually the bride and bridegroom, both sets of parents, the best man, maid of honor and the clergyman who conducted the ceremony. It is not advisable to have young bridesmaids and page boys at the head table; their concentration spans are short and they may interrupt service.

- Who will handle the photography and video filming? Contact these two people in advance: they will appreciate your help in setting up the shots they need.

- Determine the shape of the wedding cake and the color of the table flowers.

You need to know that the cake and flowers delivered are those the bride expects to see!

- Some couples may be taking advantage of a "wedding package" sponsored by the hotel. In Britain, this would include: flowers, catering services, a limited number of drinks, one night's accommodation for the bride and bridegroom and a dressing room. Advise the couple not to let anyone know if they are staying at the reception venue, in case of practical jokes. Not only is a dressing room handy for the bride, but also for your as emcee, for parents with young children, and for elderly who may need a quiet place to recover from the excitement of the day.

- Find out about bar arrangements. You may be asked to advise of these.

Your questionnaire should also ask who, if anybody, is saying grace, who will be making the various toasts and whether any presentations will be made.

**RESPONSIBILITIES AS EMCEE**

Write down all official announcements and assignments on small note cards that are numbered, in case they accidentally get in the wrong order. Be at the venue at least an hour before the bridal party arrives. This will give you time to find out where the restrooms are (the most common question from guests) and how the rooms are laid out. Do you

need sound amplification? If so, does the system work? Check that the seating arrangements are correct and easily understood by guests. Talk to the caterer and find out how and when you are expected to announce the cake cutting, speeches, and other events.

When the bride and bridegroom arrive at the reception, be available to open their car door. If the photographer wants a picture at that point, he may ask you to be in it. The photographer will then want to take the couple off for more photos.

Meanwhile, with the aid of the groomsmen or best man, gather the bridal party together for the receiving line. This may be the first time that most members of the families meet and it will serve as a good icebreaker. The order of the line is: bride's mother, bride's father (they are host and hostess), bridegroom's mother and father, bride and bridegroom, bridesmaids and best man.

Stand directly before and opposite the bride's mother and say to each guest, "How may I announce you?" Then you tell the hostess. Some will say, "Oh, they know me." You can say, "Well, I don't." Others may give face-

tious names. Your dignity will prevent this most of the time. But if someone tells you he is the Pope or Vice-President Dan Quayle, pass the information on without showing amusement.

Keep the receiving line moving briskly. Advise each person in the receiving line to merely shake hands with each guest and say, "Thank you for coming." If each of the 150 guests speaks to the hostess for one minute, boredom and a burnt buffet may result.

The caterer will have arranged a table for late arriving gifts and will also serve reception drinks to guests as they clear the line.

The photographer will want to take group and individual photographs after the receiving line has dispersed. You will make the photographer's task much easier if you advise the bridal party to make lists of required photo groupings in advance. Keep in mind that it is not your job to round up people for photos -- let the groomsmen do it.

Once the photos have been taken and you have checked that the meal is ready, it is time to usher the guests to the dining area. Hit your gavel or clink a glass to attract attention. Wait for silence, make the announcement, and lead the bride and bridegroom to the head table, after having instructed the best man to start the applause.

Ask people to remain standing for the grace, if any. If a minister is present, he or she may say grace, or it may fall to you. Have one ready, just in case.

Invite the guests to sit and then make yourself scarce while they eat. If one of them asks you for more wine or butter, tell the catering staff; you are not a waiter. For a buffet meal you can help by advising that lining up can be minimized if the guests wait for you to escort them to the food. A large gathering could otherwise become an undignified melee.

Be ready to remind members of the bridal party of what comes next at any point. This is one of your most important jobs. People want to enjoy their meal without worrying about the order of the speeches.

#### THE CAKE-CUTTING

After dessert dishes have been cleared, toasting wine served and coffee cups set, it is time for the cake-cutting ceremony.

Arrange for the banquet manager to signal for you when the staff has cleared the room, so you can proceed. Use your gavel or glass to call attention to your announcement of the cake cutting. If guests wish to photograph this event, encourage them to come forward. Gentle humor is acceptable, but don't try to be a comedian. Maintain your dignity. Escort the couple to the cake, lead the applause and escort them back.

Next comes the part that gives most people nightmares -- the speeches. As a Toastmaster, offer to help the father or best man if he is nervous. You are used to talking in front of people. He, on the other hand, may never have done it in his life.

Announce the toast of the bride and bridegroom, which is usually proposed by the bride's father, by saying: "Bride, bridegroom, parents of the groom, honored guests, pray silence for Mr. John J. Smith, the bride's father, who will propose this toast for the bride and bridegroom." Advise him how to end his toast -- by asking the guests to stand and proposing the toast. He may forget, so you may have to do it. In any case, you will echo his words by saying, "Ladies and gentlemen, a toast for the bride and bridegroom" or "Mary and George."

Next, announce that the bridegroom will respond to this toast and will propose the toast of the bridesmaids. He may also wish to present gifts. Make sure that these are near at hand, or that the groomsmen will bring them on cue. Again, you should be ready to get the guests on their feet for the toast.

Then announce that the best man will respond to the toast of the bridesmaids and may propose the toast of the parents. He will also read telegrams and cards, but advise him not to read too many.

Lastly, announce that coffee and wedding cake will now be served. Then your wedding gift is complete. Δ

*John J. Smith is a professional Toastmaster living in East Harling in Norfolk, England. He is president and founder of Articulate Speakers Club 6844-71.*

*Basil Abbott, also from East Harling, Norfolk, England, is a writer, drama teacher, an award-winning stage director and president of Cambridge University Players.*

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## THOUSAND POINTS

*Continued from page 21*

working-class American boy of the '30s."

She says Reagan has a "beautiful, distinctive, old Midwestern voice...that radiates integrity," which Noonan attributes in part to his acting training. He was good natured, extremely tactful, open and sweet tempered, but he had an aura that kept people away.

He had a gift of coming up with anecdotes that expressed his views, in fact he relied on humor to illustrate a point, defuse a moment or clinch a deal. Knowing this about him, Noonan would try to write these natural mannerisms into Reagan's speeches.

Bush is not Reagan, and she did not try to make him appear that way. In fact, she says "they are as different as chalk and cheese." Bush, she says, does not have the benefit of a beautiful voice like Reagan's. When working for Bush, she says he was quiet, yet conversational and curious. "Bush does not love the oratorical part of the presidency. He loves the pushing of the levers in the Oval Office. He does not massage a speech the way Reagan did. Reagan would get his hands around it. You could almost see his print marks on the text after he'd given it."

**"A SPEECH  
REMINDS US  
THAT WORDS,  
LIKE CHILDREN,  
HAVE THE  
POWER TO  
MAKE DANCE  
THE DULLEST  
BEANBAG OF A  
HEART."**

In contrast, Noonan says Bush's private and public speaking style is more fragmented. He uses "short bursts of words and thoughts, fragments of sentences, almost more the suggestion of thoughts than the statement of thoughts. Bush was harder to write for (than Reagan) in many ways, and easier in a few..." For example, she says Bush hated to refer to

himself in a speech. This posed a problem for her because when she wrote "I" into a speech, rather than change the pronoun, he'd sometimes delete the whole sentence or thought. In response she became adept at pronounless sentences, which had the benefit of sounding natural and conversational but were often hard to pull off without too much damage to syntax and grammar. Instead of saying, "I moved to Texas and soon my wife and I joined the Republican Party,"

for instance, the sentence became, "Moved to Texas, joined the Republican Party." During the presidential campaign, Bush stopped the habit, but Noonan was so used to the "I"-less style that she kept writing his speeches that way, and he continued giving them.

She says Bush "spoke with a striking gentleness." He gave her a list

of words that had special meaning for him—kindness, caring, decency, heart, family—and this was the genesis of his famous phrase (and soundbite) "I want a kinder, gentler nation."

People later asked Noonan if she knew the phrase would become the one most people would associate with Bush. She didn't. She knew it was striking because it marked a break with popular perception of the Reagan era, but she reiterates that such phrases only work if they're genuine to the personality of the speaker and part of the context of the speech, and for that reason doesn't stand out when reviewing the written speech.

Similarly, no one knew that the famous phrase "a thousand points of light" would have such impact in Bush's acceptance speech. The phrase referred to the network of charitable organizations in communities throughout the country, and Noonan says its power lies in the fact that it sounds like what it's describing: an expanse of separate, yet connected entities sprinkled across a broad and peaceful sky, symbolizing the stretched continent of America.

Why use stars to refer to communities? "I don't know, it was right," she says. "Separate, bright and shining, each part of a whole and yet discrete? Why a thousand? I don't know...a hundred wasn't enough and a million was too many."

Noonan learned speech writing the hard way: in the White House. And if her techniques worked for President Reagan, "the Great Communicator," and helped Bush win the election, then they might help you, too, with your thousand points to write. Δ

*Tracy Watson is a freelance writer living in San Pedro, California.*

## Board of Directors Issue/Pg.

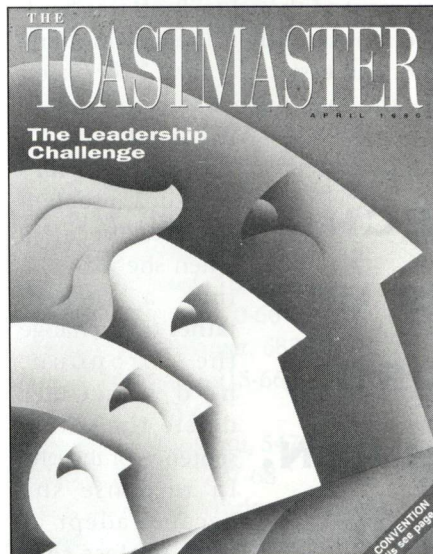
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# TOASTMASTER



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Sandra Hinks .....Sept/20
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Charles Dickson, Ph.D. ....Aug/13
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Eugene Griessman .....Jan/13
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R. Randall Padfield .....July/12
- Make 1990 the Year to Meet Your Goals  
Rita M. Chatham, CTM .....Jan/11
- A Moment's Pleasure  
Rita Robinson .....March/6
- Procrastination Can Be Murder  
Christine B. Jordan, DTM .....June/6
- Remedy For a Failing Memory  
Lin Gensing .....July/14

- Three Pounds of Gray Stuff  
Dr. Larry C. Bobbert, ATM .....Sept/29
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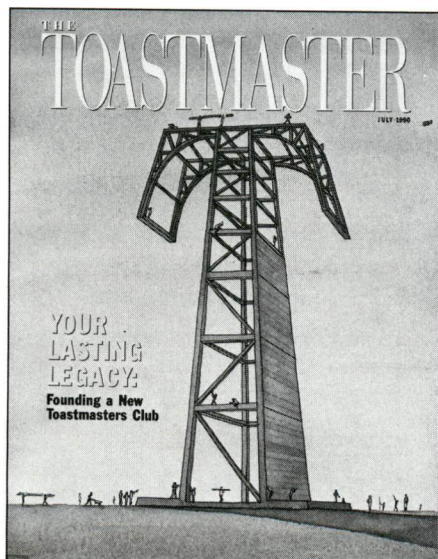
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Judith E. Pearson .....April/4
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