


The TOASTMASTER®

AUGUST 2002

ALSO INSIDE: The Power of Your Thoughts • Confessions of a Wounded Speechwriter - Part 2

A man in a light-colored suit is seen from behind, addressing a large, blurred crowd of people. He has both hands raised in a gesture of emphasis or encouragement. The background is dark, and the crowd is out of focus, suggesting a large-scale event or conference.

THE ART OF Motivation

Does your message have staying power?
Or is it merely uplifting-but-ephemeral rhetoric?



VIEWPOINT

Bringing It All Together

As I close my year as your International President, let's go over some of the ideas I've shared – in keeping with my theme.

To "Take Control of Your Destiny" it's necessary to aim high, set written goals and, most important, act on your plan. Earning a CTM should be every Toastmaster's goal. Officers should set their sights on becoming President's or Select Distinguished. Our Distinguished programs measure how well we're meeting our mission and serving you.

The most important meeting in Toastmasters is your club's, because this is where we deliver the Toastmasters program to you. All club meetings should be of the highest quality. Present the "Moments of Truth" module from the Successful Club Series to assess your club's quality. To benefit from being a Toastmaster, you must actively participate and attend club meetings. Aren't you worth that hour and a half investment every week? I think you are.

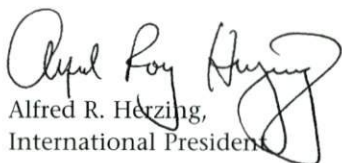
Every club should have at least 20 members to prevent the need for anyone to perform multiple duties. But don't be limited to 20. One of our best membership-building tools is Speechcraft – use it! Club membership is everybody's responsibility and you are our best advertisement. Spread the word – tell everybody about the benefits you receive as a Toastmaster and invite a guest to your next meeting.

Now more than ever you need Toastmasters. Employers are looking for great communicators. Staying active in Toastmasters will keep you sharp and improve your communication skills. If you are looking for a new job, your Table Topics skills will give you a tremendous advantage over other candidates interviewing for that position.

When destiny presents you with an opportunity to be a leader in Toastmasters, say "yes!" As a Toastmasters leader, you learn to motivate and influence volunteers, to work as part of a team and to run productive meetings. You learn planning, time management, delegation and follow-up skills. All of these skills are in demand in today's workplace.

Don't forget about mentoring. As a mentor you learn as you coach others. You can be a mentor for a new member, an advanced member or even a new club. And building a club is a great way to leave your mark on the world. Starting a new club is easy, and your district officers are eager to help. Each area governor should ensure that a new club is built in his or her area. Find that new club today!

It has been my honor to serve you as your International President. Thank you for your support. Margie, Adam and I thank those of you we had the pleasure of meeting for your hospitality and kindness. Keep up the great work, and always TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR DESTINY.


Alfred R. Herzing,
International President

The TOASTMASTER

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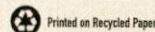
THE TOASTMASTER Magazine (ISSN 00408263) is published monthly by Toastmasters International, Inc., 23182 Arroyo Vista, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688, U.S.A. Periodicals postage paid at Mission Viejo, CA and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: Send address change to THE TOASTMASTER Magazine, P.O. Box 9052, Mission Viejo, CA 92690, U.S.A.

Published to promote the ideas and goals of Toastmasters International, a non profit educational organization of clubs throughout the world dedicated to teaching skills in public speaking and leadership. Members' subscriptions are included in the \$18 semi annual dues.

The official publication of Toastmasters International carries authorized notices and articles regarding the activities and interests of the organization, but responsibility is not assumed for the opinions of the authors of other articles.

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The Toastmasters Vision:

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

The Toastmasters Mission:

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

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

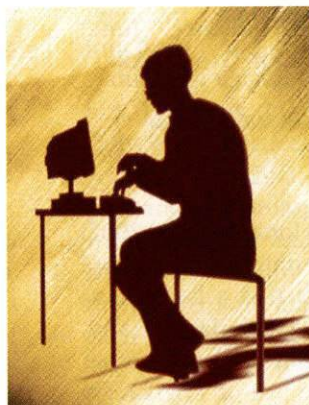
It is basic to this mission that Toastmasters International continually expand its worldwide network of clubs thereby offering ever-greater numbers of people the opportunity to benefit from its programs.

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LETTERS

IMPORTANT INTRO

I wholeheartedly agree with Michael Hart ("Don't Forget Your Intro," June 2002) on the importance of properly introducing a speaker. I have a reputation for speaking about controversial issues and use that as part of my prepared introduction. Otherwise, I suspect my audience will not receive my speech in a proper context.

Edward J. Kmiec. ATM-B • Fairfax Club 1899-27 • Fairfax, Virginia

ANCHORS AWAY

William Hennefrund's article "Learning from Anchors" (June) had some interesting insights. As Toastmasters, however, we can't rely on a sophisticated TelePrompTer or hidden earpieces to help us convey information to our audiences.

Toastmasters may learn a lot from television news anchors, particularly some of the skills the anchors have honed in unrehearsed, one-on-one interviews. But, like so many of our professional politicians today, many television news anchors have used technology to polish a speaking technique every Toastmaster strives to avoid: reading to the audience.

Paul Marsden. CTM • Crystal Clear Club 9332-F • Garden Grove, California

THE GREAT LAKES MISTAKE

While it is true that Lake Michigan lies completely within the United States, the rest of the Great Lakes are shared with the beautiful and unique country of Canada. Perhaps Mr. McClendon ("Amaze an Audience," June) could call them the North American Great Lakes? Accuracy is always appreciated!

Andrea Harvey. ATM-B • Peterborough Club 3427-60 • Peterborough, Ontario, Canada

LOVELY LANGUAGE

I read with alacrity the letter from Mr. Jonason (May 2002) regarding Craig Harrison's use of certain words, whose meaning eluded Mr. Jonason. English is a living language, with the widest and richest vocabulary of any, having willingly embraced contributions from most other languages. To curtail or belittle the use of English by another would be a sin.

The vast proportion of my club's membership is Angolan, for whom English is neither their first or second tongue. I constantly marvel at their linguistic knowledge, which too often shames those for whom English is their native language. Toastmasters should be praised in

this regard – an opportunity to broaden one's knowledge and skills in language and communication. We would all do well to praise Mr. Harrison for sharing his acquired knowledge. A dictionary is not just for school children; it should be a companion for life because, as the philosophers tell us, those who stop learning have stopped living.

Mark Ian Smithard • CABGOC Luanda Club 3890-U • Luanda, Angola

SLIP-UP

Richard Lederer is a wonderful word wielder, as his article "Pun Your Way to Success" (May) shows, but he surprisingly misidentifies Christopher Morley as a British writer. Not only was Morley American, he attended Dr. Lederer's (and my) alma mater, Haverford. This failure to identify a fellow Ford (as a Haverford student or graduate is called) is probably just a Fordian slip.

Mack Lindsey. ATM-S • Armadillo Avenue Club 6755-55 • Austin, Texas

CLOUDY ADVICE

The May issue contained a lengthy article on copyrights and the various ways that copyrights could be unwittingly infringed by speakers or clubs. For clubs within the United States, or in areas subject to U.S. law, this is an excellent article full of timely advice and helpful knowledge. For clubs outside the U.S., it is dangerously misleading and a misuse of seven pages of the magazine.

Copyright law is different in every country. While some points made in the article may be relevant to Australia or other countries, it would take a specialist in each different nation to say which those are. Innocent Toastmasters relying on statements made by the author could leave themselves open to prosecution under the laws of their own country. The point that different countries have different laws is not made clearly enough in the article.

Brian Duckworth. DTM • Burwood Club 6865-70 and Southern Gourmet Club 7140-70 • New South Wales, Australia

GREEN LIGHT FOR ROAD WORK

I fully agree with Wes Andruess' "Road Work: A Case for Practicing Your Speech in the Car" (February). I wanted to get better at joke-telling since our club agenda includes a joke of the day. I practice my joke a few times on my way to club meetings, and that has helped me do a better job.

Vimal Goyle. CL • Via Christi Club 6297-22 • Wichita, Kansas

By Martha Darling, ATM-B



A President's Main Job: Show Up!

AS TOASTMASTERS CLUBS AROUND THE WORLD ARE INSTALLING new officers and our organization begins a new cycle, I've been reflecting on what I learned during my just-ended term as a club president. In particular, I value three bits of

wisdom, which I have found to provide good lessons not only for club presidents, but for life in general. They are:

- (1) Show up – preferably in person, but if not in person, then in whatever way you can.
- (2) Use your officers – that is, delegate tasks.
- (3) Keep your priorities simple and clear.

It took illness to show me how important these ideas are.

As club president, you're the leader of the band. Now, well-trained bands can produce tuneful music without their conductor, and experienced Toastmasters can hold exciting meetings without their president being physically present. But the club president is the officer who helps all sections of the band make music together. This officer sets the tone for the club and represents the club to the public.

I wasn't able to attend club meetings during the last three months of my recent term because illness kept me home. I was upset, distraught, anxious, frenetic, and also experiencing feelings that could be expressed by other "words of the day" – until I realized there's more than one way to show up.

E-mail is one way. I e-mailed my club officers regularly. Through e-mail, I stayed informed about each meeting, called attention to future events, or just said, "Gee, I miss you guys."

Phoning is another way of showing up. I phoned club members sometimes only to say "hello." I helped with the annual district conference by phoning around our city, getting a speaker for the Saturday night banquet, lining up a Toastmaster to greet my speaker and make her comfortable throughout the evening. I also handled our club information line, answering questions about Toastmasters and verbally shoo-ing guests inside the club meeting door. All of this I did by "showing up" from my living-room recliner.

None of my showing up, however, would have been effective without our club's other officers. In many clubs, there are officers whose considerable talents are wasted because the club president is trying to do everything alone.

During my illness, I had to delegate everything. I admit I hated it at first. If there's one thing I love to do, it's to meet people, socialize, talk, draw guests out of their shy shells and watch them discover themselves.

Hard to do from a recliner! But our club officers picked up the pieces that I dropped. I phoned and e-mailed them with ideas, jobs to be done, reminders. They mastered every task and thought of new ways to help our club. They enjoyed it, they tell me. And they added to their own skills while they did my job for me.

Still though, club officers look to their president to lead in setting club priorities. I learned that our club worked better when I kept priorities simple and clear. As president, I had two priorities: Make sure we had exciting, professional meetings and that guests and new Toastmasters were welcomed and encouraged. Out of all the wonderful tasks in the "When You Are Club President" manual, I chose those two. I have only so much time and energy. Isn't that true of us all? I don't want to do several things carelessly, inconsistently, shabbily. I'd rather do one or two tasks thoroughly, dynamically, enthusiastically.

So our club had – and has – stimulating meetings. We start and end promptly. Guests and new Toastmasters get warm greetings and help over the long run, not just at their first meeting. We don't always win membership drives. We don't make all of our Distinguished Club goals each year. But our two priorities – have excellent meetings and take care of the "newbies" – are firmly in place, and our club is thriving.

Again, I emphasize, use your officers to help achieve your priorities – and to provide opportunities for them to grow in maturity and professionalism. **T**

Martha Darling, ATM-B, is past president of Ann Arbor Toastmasters and Friends Club 6563-28 in Ann Arbor, Michigan.



Area Governor:

The Best Job in Toastmasters

Did you ever wonder why Toastmasters volunteer to serve beyond the club level? My curiosity got the best of me, and I volunteered to become an area governor. I want to share with fellow Toastmasters that, in my opinion, the area governor office is the best job in our organization. People who volunteer for this position receive rewards they could never have imagined. The job is exciting and, what's more, it improves one's ability as a communicator and a Toastmaster.

The district provides new area governors with excellent training to start the term. The area governor package contains everything needed to attack the job. The word "attack" may seem aggressive, but attack is what a person must do to succeed. Events occur on a regular basis, and the challenge is to stay ahead by both planning and execution.

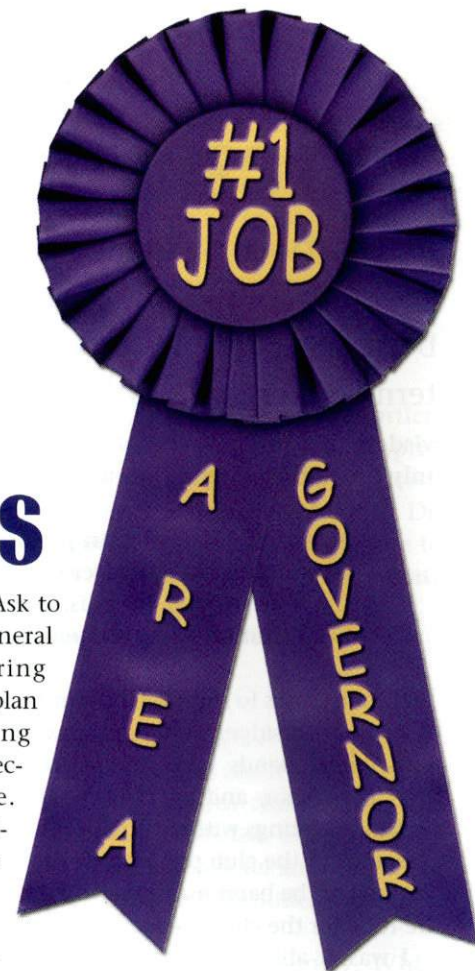
Building your own area governor book helps keep you on track. Develop and use a Performance and Action Plan, and provide a copy to the area clubs. The plan should lay out objectives, milestones and expectations. Also as an area governor, you should publish a matrix of events for the first six months and again for the second six months and provide copies to the district and to each club.

Initiate the club visitation plan. This is an opportunity to observe clubs in action and assess their unique personalities. Coordinate each club visit beforehand. Provide an advance copy of the visit form to save time. Observe how well the club follows Toastmasters guidelines. Non-manual speeches are the bane of many clubs. Recommend changes as necessary. Area governors must make recommendations in a professional manner. Do not dictate to clubs or you may not be welcomed back for

the second visit. Ask to meet with the general membership during the meeting, and plan for a brief meeting with the club's executive committee. Above all, be positive with your comments. Before leaving, thank everyone and follow up with a thank-you note.

The Fall and Spring Contests require detailed planning. Finding a suitable room for the contest becomes critical. Our budget is usually zero, so to receive a free room it's necessary to make reservations at least three months in advance. Libraries are an excellent source, and rental fees are usually waived. Know the costs before making commitments! And remember the organization's tax-exempt status. Club teamwork is the secret to success. Ask for help in carrying out assignments and watch how eager clubs are to assist. Order necessary forms and awards. Make a checklist so that nothing critical is left out.

Semiannual dues collection, although a club task, requires the area governor's undivided attention. Coordinate directly with club presidents and lend assistance when asked. Obtain a response from each club when it submits dues. Delinquent club dues submission is controllable. Late dues submission impedes progress of mem-



bers trying to obtain a CTM, ATM or other achievement award. Club officer lists fall into this category, as well. It's less work when all clubs elect annually because semi-annual election of officers requires another follow-up.

Communicate with each club. E-mail is a blessing for an area governor. Keep messages brief and to the point. Don't overwhelm club officers with trivial information. A monthly update of key areas keeps everyone abreast of events. Focus on educational achievement, forthcoming events and pertinent information. As you gather information, it becomes the source of newsworthy items for local newspapers and sometimes for radio or television, especially if a good public access TV channel is in your area. Publishing an area governor newsletter can provide another venue for expressing thoughts about the Toastmasters message to club members. This shows the general membership that the area governor has an interest in each member. It's also important to hold an area governor's meeting for club officers and to use area clubs' collective energy in decision-making.

If you're an area governor, you should attend district conferences and cast your vote on important issues. Don't be shy about expressing an opinion. Be diplomatic, but stand firm in your convictions. Volunteer to help the district at the conference. This presents you with another opportunity for Toastmasters growth. Leadership takes work. Your role as an area governor abounds with leadership opportunities.

Continually monitor each club in your area on its progress in the Distinguished Club Program. Early in your tenure, have club officers explain to you how they interpret the program. Ask club members what they understand about the program. If they don't fully understand how to achieve requirements, provide them with an explanation. Show them how to track their progress on the Toastmasters Web site. Excitement builds when a club reaches Distinguished and higher status. Your encouragement as area governor aids clubs in reaching this objective. If all the clubs in your area work toward achieving Distinguished status, your job becomes easier and more enjoyable. Becoming a Distinguished Area is a lofty goal. As governor, you have the potential to lead your area to reach this goal.

Does all the above sound overwhelming? Only if the area governor fails to adequately plan for each event. Districts hold periodic meetings. The area governor renders a report, either written or verbally, to the division governor. The district's collective synergy is a powerful

tool. Take advantage of this expertise. As the year progresses, your enthusiasm grows and you find yourself getting more excited about Toastmasters. Contagious enthusiasm spreads like wild fire. If you maintain a positive, friendly attitude, clubs willingly respond and everyone benefits.

My philosophy about Toastmasters is that it is an educational opportunity. We watch the timid person stumble through the Ice Breaker and become a powerful speaker. Working with area clubs and the Distinguished Club Program is important. Make a big fuss, along with the club, when a member becomes a CTM, ATM or DTM. Recognizing personal achievement goes a long way in retaining members. If someone in the area does something special, write the person a note. During my tenure, I received written

words of encouragement. I still possess notes written years ago. Try using this technique in your term. A few kind words yield tremendous dividends.

After my tenure as area governor was complete, my level of satisfaction as a Toastmaster was at an all-time high. Networking with the area clubs is a worthy challenge. Don't be afraid to accept an opportunity to stretch your mind. Discover new talents and polish old techniques for use again. Serving as an area governor is a step on the path to becoming a Distinguished Toastmaster. Don't take a detour; stay on the road to success. Take a chance, and enjoy the best job in Toastmasters. **T**

Robert Spencer. ATM-G. CL is a member of North Side Post Toasters Club 3702-43 in North Little Rock, Arkansas. He served as area governor in 2000-2001.

"Becoming a Distinguished Area is a lofty goal. As governor, you have the potential to lead your area to reach this goal."



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Does your message have staying power?
Or is it merely uplifting-but-ephemeral rhetoric?

THE ART OF Motivation

Every year, companies spend millions of dollars hiring people whose job is to get up in front of people and motivate them. Every day, millions of executives, salespeople, trainers and consultants step onto the podium with one goal in mind: to motivate or persuade people in their audiences to take what they are saying to heart and act on it. And every day, every year, millions more walk away from these encounters completely unmoved or unchanged in any way, grumbling about what a waste of time it was.

WHOSE FAULT IS IT?

Some say the traditional motivational speech should be accepted for what it is – a short-lived jolt, an invigorating change of pace or even an entertainment reward for hard-working employees – and that problems arise only when people try to make it something it's not. Others believe that if companies intend to continue spending employees' valuable (and increasingly scarce) time on mass motivation, they are obliged to provide their people with something that has more staying power than a dose of uplifting-but-ephemeral rhetoric.

"Real motivation is much more than antics on a lecture platform, more than bellowing into a microphone," writes Saul Gellerman, a business management professor and internationally recognized motivation expert, in his book, *Motivation in the Real World* (Dutton Books, 1992). "Real motivation is the serious, never-ending task of creating conditions to which the natural response of ordinary people is to accomplish extraordinary things. Motivating people is extremely hard work that takes thought, attention to detail, know-how and, perhaps above all, flexibility to individual differences."

BY DAVE ZIELINSKI ■ ILLUSTRATION BY MASTERFILE

SCIENCE AND SLOGANS

Volumes have been written about what motivates audiences sitting in auditoriums and employees working in cubicles or on factory floors. The scientific research on the subject could fill a few Amazon.com warehouses. Every month someone seems to come out with another management self-help book on motivation. The models are plentiful: positive and negative reinforcement, antecedents and consequences, intrinsic and extrinsic factors, the "sandwich" theory (slip a thin slice of criticism between two slices of praise), attribution theory and management theories X and Y.

We generally know people to be motivated for three basic reasons, though: to avoid some acute pain in their lives, to gain some form of what they define as pleasure, or to respond to a specific "driver-state" or emotional condition at a given time.

We also know that one person's motivation is another's empty slogan or cheerful idiocy. We are unique beings triggered in vastly different ways, with idiosyncrasies that demand, to the extent possible, customized, what's-in-it-for-me appeals, not recipes or one-size-fits-all propositions. A motivational approach that relies primarily on tugging heartstrings might resonate with people in certain human-relations professions, but lawyers, journalists, engineers or scientists hearing the same thing might well cry, "Where's the beef?"

"Nothing works all the time. People are too varied and complicated for that," writes Gellerman. "Instead, some techniques work some of the time. There's no magic to motivation, no miracles, no amazing results. Anyone who promises you any of these is either a naive fool or a con artist."

COMPLIANCE VS. COMMITMENT

Scott Lee, a clinical psychologist in Kirkland, Washington, who studies the psychology of influence between speakers and audiences, believes one reason attempts to influence from the podium fall short is the presenter's failure to build an "emotional bridge" to the audience.

Lee says behavioral influence – a consistent change in behavior resulting from a concrete change in belief – happens primarily on the right side of the brain, and speakers' attempts to influence should target that area. While the brain's left side is designed to pick apart logic in arguments, presentation approaches targeting the right side – things like personal stories of failure or chal-

lenges overcome – travel through most filters "straight to your gut, belief system and world view, and that's where true change takes place," Lee says. "You have to first soften an audience before you can shape it, to create receptivity to a new message. It's hard to do that by citing research or data." But Lee acknowledges that connecting emotionally with an audience doesn't guarantee you'll lead them anywhere. People can always be persuaded to do something in the short term if you wave a big enough stick, Lee says, but it's far more difficult to get them to believe something and then persuade them to act on that belief. It's the difference between compliance and commitment. Successful organizations know that committed employees outperform compliant ones every time.

"Real motivation is much more than antics on a lecture platform, more than bellowing into a microphone. Real motivation is the serious, never-ending task of creating conditions to which the natural response of ordinary people is to accomplish extraordinary things."

– SAUL GELLERMAN

MOTIVATION CATALYSTS

Speakers don't have the power to motivate anyone; they have only the power to create conditions that enable people to motivate themselves. So believes Marilynn Mobley, a former IBM execu-

tive who heads her own consulting company, the Acorn Consulting Group in Marietta, Georgia. Mobley, who does plenty of motivational speaking, also makes use of the philosophy behind an old sales maxim: People don't buy because they are made to understand; they buy because they feel understood.

"Motivation comes from the listener, and the presenter's job is to use compelling examples and personal stories that connect with the audience in a real way and give them something they can take away for their own lives," Mobley says. "All we as speakers can do is share experiences we've had that motivated or taught us and trust audience members to figure out for themselves what motivates them from that message." Indeed, Mobley often finds that audiences extract messages from her stories that she never intended or didn't recognize herself.

Mobley also knows that what inspires one person might fall flat or ring hollow with another. She tells a personal story about having a kidney transplant, getting pregnant and then having to make a life-or-death decision between keeping the baby and having a second kidney transplant. Women tend to respond deeply to her story, but men, although sympathetic, tend not to have the same visceral reaction.

STRESSING THE LOGOS

Motivational speaker Jim McCormick knows his "reason-based" approach to motivating audiences swims a bit

against prevailing tides and targets audiences less inclined to respond to overtly emotional appeals. McCormick, a world-record-holding skydiver who has parachuted into the North Pole, helps people and organizations improve performance and avoid "plateauing" by becoming more effective risk-takers. His pragmatic approach takes the form of a promise or calculation: If the audience members do A and B, they will experience C and D. "The emotion-based approach is wonderful for those who respond to it, but it's never worked for me, probably because of my engineering and MBA background," McCormick says. "I'd rather have someone make a very reasoned, almost airtight argument to me, and that's in turn what I try to do for my audiences. They're willing to embrace my risk-taking message, but only if I have a credible, irrefutable argument for it."

HELPING THEM RELATE

Unlike speakers who rely on their "expert" status or cutting-edge research to sway an audience, Mobley believes her success at inspiring depends on how well she positions herself as a content expert and as an equal. "For audiences to truly relate, you need to make yourself a bit vulnerable up there," she says. "You need to be willing to tell stories in which you're not the hero, when you failed or made a mistake and somehow bounced back. I think that's what more people relate to and are inspired by these days."

Indeed, according to a 2001 article in *The Wall Street Journal*, failure is trendy as a motivational speech topic. Amidst a struggling global economy and following the dot-com crash, audiences are embracing real-world stories of how people coped or bounced back from some professional or personal setback – and the lessons they learned along the way. Mobley herself developed a speech called "The Stupidest Things I've Done as an Entrepreneur."

"When you stride on stage in front of hundreds of people, there's this air that you're superior to them," Mobley says. "But when you begin to talk about some stupid things you've done or life plans that haven't gone so well, the [listeners] start to think you're one of them."

"The only difference is, you have a bit more nerve to get up on stage and tell the world about it."

GAUGING LATITUDE OF ACCEPTANCE

Positioning yourself that way is among the best ways to build that all-important bridge to the audience, says psychologist Lee. A number of psychological studies suggest that "you can't truly lead anyone until you've walked alongside them," he says.

Lee says listeners have a natural "latitude of acceptance" to any new message – that is, limits on how much their belief systems can be shifted on a continuum from a one-shot presentation. Furthermore, presenters must first gauge where an audience stands before attempting

to move it anywhere. If the goal is to improve technical professionals' understanding and application of human psychology and interpersonal relations, for example, you should first ask them to rate their understanding on a scale of one to 10 – with the inward-looking technowork at zero, and the technophobic people-person at 10. If most put themselves at four on the scale, Lee says the most a speaker might realistically hope to move them in one motivational presentation is one-and-a-half or two points, to about six on the scale. That's their latitude of acceptance.

"If you're too ambitious in trying to change beliefs, you not only might lose an audience, you may move them on the scale in the opposite direction of your intentions," Lee cautions.

LET'S MAKE A DEAL

McCormick believes audiences are increasingly cynical and resistant to motivational messages because they've been exposed to too many presentations that create little lasting impact. He takes a slightly different tack to the challenge of sustaining change. First, he strikes a deal with audiences: If they're willing to take certain risks and follow concrete steps laid out in his presentation, he promises them they will, with great certainty, experience specific long-term outcomes and rewards.

In a half-day presentation to 700 independent life-insurance agents, for instance, McCormick encouraged the audience to "intentionally do things differently than in the past" to meet new organizational and personal goals. The general advice was followed with a battery of specifics. Step one: The agents' own risk-taking should begin with trying to interest their established property and casualty insurance customers in life or health insurance. "That can be a difficult step – most everyone needs insurance for their home or car, but life insurance can be a tougher sell," McCormick says.

He then laid out incremental steps to sustain agents' efforts toward the new goal:

- Commit to a certain life insurance sales target, and ask a colleague to hold you accountable.
- If you don't already have one, obtain a securities license or certified financial planner designation to increase your ability to sell an expanded product line.
- Learn to use existing software on laptops that can greatly enhance and streamline the sales process – software many of the technology-averse agents had shied away from using.

What outcomes does McCormick promise agents who take these steps? An increase in short-term and long-term income, the satisfaction of securing the financial futures of more clients and the personal rewards of their own risk-taking breakthroughs.

Up in Smoke: The Fleeting Nature of Motivational Speeches

By Dave Zielinski

In general, motivational messages have a better chance of sticking if they are targeted at a specific event, like the salesperson or athlete gearing up for the final sales pitch or big game. Motivating for the long haul – the day-in, day-out work place performance – is another challenge altogether. If you want long-term motivation to work, continuous coaching, customized approaches and positive reinforcement are critical.

For their part, speakers can strengthen their effectiveness by solidifying their messages toward the end of a presentation, says psychologist Scott Lee. That means creating action plans or in-the-field reinforcement tools that can keep audiences galvanized after the presentation is over. "If you've made any attitudinal change with your speech, an audience will begin moving right back to its starting spot as soon as they walk out the door unless things are done to solidify that change," Lee says.

In a sales interaction, solidifying often takes the form of encouraging prospects to get some hands-on experience with the product – the car salesman who convinces you to test drive the car after the pitch, for example. Solidifying can be "anything that gets your audience to practice its new belief system," Lee says.

This approach requires McCormick to customize his standard message more than the average motivational speaker might. "Any time we have the honor of speaking to an audience, we have enormous responsibility because we're using that company's most valuable asset, which is employee time," he says. "If I'm given 700 people for 60 minutes, that's 700 work hours, which is a valuable and expensive asset. We need to maximize our impact in that time, and the only way I can think of doing that is by heavily customizing my work."

PEOPLE DON'T ARGUE WITH THEIR OWN DATA

Another theory holds that the most effective way to motivate is to present information, arguments or data in ways that allow audiences to draw their own conclusions. The "people don't argue with their own data" approach rests on the belief that we're far more convinced by our own experiences or research than we are by what someone else tells us to be true.

Anne Warfield, a certified speaking professional and outcome strategist with Impression Management Professionals in Minneapolis, frequently uses this approach in her consulting and presentation work. For example, she often encounters some audience resistance when talking about the importance of projecting a good visual image in the corporate world. Most people naturally want to be judged more on their inner selves than outer selves. But in making a point about "what should be" versus "what is" in the real world, Warfield wants participants to create their own "aha" reactions.

"Instead of trying to persuade them about the impact of a person's appearance, I want them to experience it

for themselves," she explains. So she created an exercise where she projects onscreen the images of two different males, each of whom, Warfield tells the audience, is a suitor of a particular woman. She then asks audience members to pair up and jot down their impressions of the two men based only on physical appearance, including dress. Warfield polls the entire group to capture audience-wide perceptions, which tend to be very similar for both men. She then shows a slide summarizing how audiences around the world have judged these two men during the 10 years of doing the exercise – opinions that usually coincide with the current audience's impressions.

While the exercise may not change bedrock right-versus-wrong belief systems, the process of "creating their own data" validates for participants the importance of visual appearance to other peoples' perceptions.

Warfield also believes it's critical that leaders or speakers have more than a passing knowledge of the personality types they're trying to motivate or influence. One-size-fits-all approaches usually are doomed to failure, she says.

"It's important, especially as the leader of a team or work unit, to speak from the employee's perspective and to find out, by asking, what does or doesn't motivate each person," Warfield says. "What's most important to them? Is it a sense of stability or private recognition? Teamwork and public recognition? Freedom to make decisions or control over work? Accuracy? Whatever it is, try insofar as possible to create some of those conditions." **T**

Dave Zielinski is a freelance writer and editor based in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



By Brenda Caine, ATM-G

Make It Sizzle!

Most members – new and old – have questions. And more often than not, they fail to ask them out of fear, embarrassment or shyness. Do not be afraid; Miss Behavin' is here to help you!

DEAR MISS BEHAVIN': *I have a terrible time coming up with attention-grabbing openings and memorable closings for my speeches. Now that I think about it, the middle could use a little sizzle too. Can you help me?*

SIZZLE-LESS IN SAN ANTONIO

DEAR SIZZLE-LESS: Experienced speakers know how to get their audiences' attention and keep it.

Now you can, too. One or more of these seven techniques can add sizzle anywhere in your speeches:

1 Informal survey (show of hands). How many of you sometimes look out at the audience and wonder if they're even listening to you? An informal survey is a great way to get and keep your audience involved in your speech. When we're asked a question, we instinctively want to answer it. It's especially effective to start your speech right off with a question. But prepare people to respond by saying something like, "With a show of hands, tell me how many of you...?" You can adapt this to any topic.

2 A rhetorical question serves a function similar to that of an informal survey. Even though no reply is expected, when you hear a rhetorical question – such as "How could anyone fall for that scam?" or "How can the problem be solved?" – you want to answer it, don't you? This technique gets people involved and can bring back their attention if it starts to drift in the middle of your speech.

3 A startling fact grabs people's attention fast. Another opportunity to use a rhetorical question: "Did you know that 3,000 kids in America become 'regular' smokers every day?" I have your attention now, don't I? Case closed.

4 Story/anecdote to support point – Nothing helps your audience identify with you and your topic more than a story. It makes your point real and human. I once

did a persuasive speech on car safety. In it, I described my own head-on collision at the age of 18. I included how it felt as I saw the headlights coming at me, the chaos of the crash scene

with all the emergency vehicles, the fire and the other car flipped onto its top. I also mentioned that the other driver died at the scene. I put a human face on my argument. Use lots of stories, everywhere.

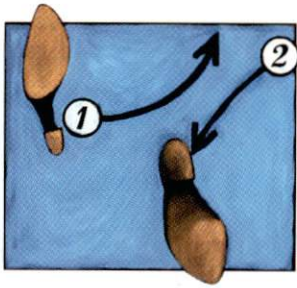
5 Demonstration/props – It's said that a picture is worth a thousand words. And demonstrations or props can certainly make your speech livelier. A fellow Toastmaster illustrated how much weight she lost by plopping a 20-pound bag of potatoes onto the floor in front of us. You can dramatize a point by having people stand. For instance, in a speech on cancer, ask everyone in the audience who has had a friend or loved one battle cancer stand up. It can have a powerful impact.

6 Humor can help make a difficult or sensitive point. It can relax your audience. It can make your ideas memorable. But don't use humor that isn't relevant to your speech; it makes people feel that you're wasting their time. And remember, you don't need to have people rolling in the aisles – you're not a professional comedian. As Educator Francis Harvey Green said, "Once you get 'em laughing and their mouths open, you can stuff something in." Which brings me to my last technique:

7 Quotation – Why not borrow the eloquence and wit of the brightest minds? Quotations often help you drive home an idea in a memorable way. They're great anywhere, but especially at the end.

Try one or more of these techniques and watch your speeches start to sizzle. As New York Yankee legend Babe Ruth once said, "Never let the fear of striking out get in your way." **T**

Brenda Caine, ATM-G, aka Miss Behavin', is a member of Sunrise Bluffers Club 6347-26 in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. She welcomes your questions at BrendaCaine@yahoo.com.



HOW TO

By Michelle Kulp, CTM

Move 'Em to Action

A speaker's biggest challenge is to motivate audiences to take some type of action. It is not enough to get the audience worked up and excited about your topic; you must also offer a plan that will move them to act.

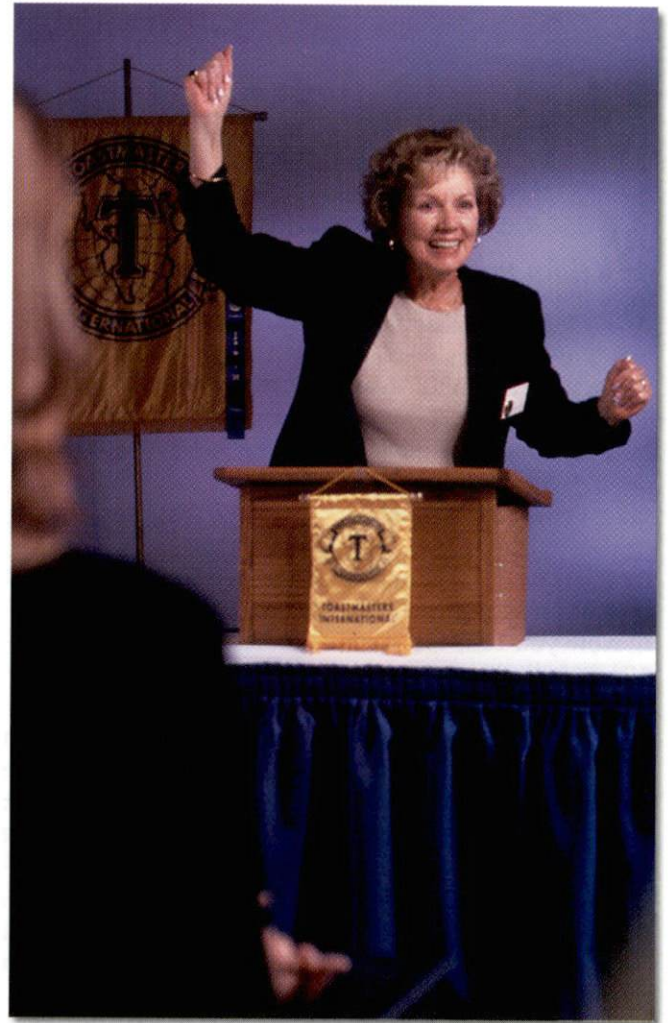
A few years ago, a speaker in my club gave a presentation on diabetes. She discussed her own experience with this disease and then examined, one-by-one, the disease's debilitating effects on the body – especially if it goes untreated. She passed out a simple, one-page questionnaire, which the audience completed during her speech. The questionnaire informed us as to whether we were considered “high risk” for the disease. The presentation ended with detailed instructions on how to get tested for diabetes and exactly what the test involved.

After completing the questionnaire, I realized I was, indeed, a high-risk candidate for diabetes. I was so moved by her presentation that I decided to get tested. Luckily the results were negative, but her speech moved me, and many others in the audience, to take a specific action and get tested for diabetes.

By following these five steps, you will increase your chances of not only giving an inspiring speech, but getting the audience to take action:

1 Use a Personal Story to Get Your Point Across.

Stories are a much more powerful way of getting your message across than simply reciting the facts. Mark Victor Hansen, co-author of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series, says “Storytelling helps speakers make a lasting impression on their listeners. Your name and face may be forgotten, but an effective story will stay within the listener's



mind forever.” Regardless of what your subject matter is, find a personal story and make it connect with what you are speaking about. Facts connect us to our listeners' minds, but stories connect us to their hearts.

2 Use Language that Stirs Emotion. When you are sharing stories that describe your feelings, ideas and thoughts, use descriptive dialogue and body language. For example, if discussing your fear of flying, instead of just telling your audience that you are consumed with fear at the mere thought of boarding an airplane, add language that will evoke their emotions. Here are a few examples:

- **Body Sensation:** “As I called to make the airline reservation, my heart began to pound, perspiration dripped from my forehead and my voice quivered so much I couldn't get the words out.”

- **Sensory Detail:** "As I walked across the airport lobby, my beating heart drowned out the noise of the passengers. Everyone and everything became a big blur, and I could no longer focus on what I was doing."
- **Action:** "As I boarded the airplane, my muscles tensed, and I suddenly froze. I tried to move, but my legs wouldn't budge."
- **Dialogue:** "An observant stewardess approached me and asked 'Is everything okay? You look a little pale.'"
- **Body Language:** Unless we try too hard rehearsing it, our body language can help us tell the story in a natural manner. Perhaps when you are talking about your muscles freezing up, you could begin to take a few steps and stop in your tracks.

3 Add Humor. Humor lets the audience know you don't take yourself too seriously. It makes even the most boring topic fun to listen to. Humor is not about reciting jokes. It is about sharing stories with elements of humor in them, using props to make people laugh or showing a funny visual aid. But be sure your humor relates to the speech topic.

4 Use Props. I've heard hundreds of speeches at my club, but one that stands out is a speech called "A Monkey on Your Back." As the speaker approached the lectern, I noticed he had a large, white, stuffed monkey hanging from his back. The arms of the monkey wrapped around his neck while he gave the entire speech, literally, with a "monkey on his back." The topic for his speech

was getting rid of worries. That speech had a powerful effect on me because now, whenever I am consumed with worry, I remember his speech and the monkey. His speech caused me to actually visualize myself carrying around this large, heavy load of worries on my back.

5 Bring a Plan of Action. Don't just bring theories, principles and ideas to your audience – bring 'em a plan of action. Years ago, I gave a speech on "Becoming a Millionaire." I researched the topic thoroughly and came across step-by-step instructions on exactly what to do to become a millionaire. These steps included how much money a person needed to save each month, with what percentage of interest and length of time required to save a million dollars. I provided a copy of these instructions to my audience. There was a lot of talk about that speech for months afterward. I believe there were even a few people who, as a result of my speech, actually started down the road to becoming millionaires.

So the next time you have to give an inspirational, motivational or educational speech, remember that people want more than ideas, facts and opinions. They want to know exactly what they need to do, where they need to go and how they can get there. They're depending on you to tell 'em!



Michelle Kulp, CTM, is a member of Triple-Crown Club 176-36 in Bowie, Maryland.

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THE Power of Your Thoughts

If you don't like what your thoughts are doing, start reprogramming them.

How would you evaluate your last Toastmasters presentation? Were you awesome – giving the best performance of your career? Or were you disappointed in your speech?

Try to recall your mindset going into the presentation. Were your thoughts positive or negative? Did you believe that you would shine or were you sure you would fail?

Those who give a good speech usually approach it with positive thoughts. Those who do poorly think, "I can't speak without fumbling for words." Or, "I don't think I can remember the progression of my speech." Or, "I hope I don't sound foolish."

Whether you're a new Toastmaster or a longtime member, you can give an excellent presentation, but you're also at risk of delivering a really bad one. It all depends on your belief system.

As an illustration, consider John and Cynthia's situation. They both were preparing their fourth manual

speeches and planned on not using notes. John worried about this all week. Preoccupied with thoughts of defeat, he told himself, "I can't do it without notes. I'll forget the sequence of my talk. I really do need notes."

Cynthia, on the other hand, thought about how much she wanted to get away from using notes. In fact, she had joined Toastmasters to learn to speak without that crutch. She expected to do well. All week she told herself, "I know my material and I know I can do it without notes. The last time I spoke, I didn't even look at my notes. I feel ready to do this."

At the next Toastmasters meeting, Cynthia gave a near-flawless speech without relying on notes. John struggled. He eventually brought his notes out of his pocket and referred to them while finishing his speech.

Is Cynthia smarter or luckier than George? Some might say so, but isn't luck subjective? Don't we actually make our own good and bad luck?

I used the following illustration in my keynote speech during Toastmasters training a few years ago. My daughter, Penny, was attending Bible college. Most of the students needed jobs to pay for their own expenses and

The Power of Your Thoughts

Thoughts produce in your life, so start programming them now.



Penny went right out in search of one. A friend of hers, Brian, decided to “trust God” to find him a job, and he sat in the lobby of the dorm waiting for a job to materialize. Needless to say, Penny landed a job rather quickly and Brian continued to sit day after day in the dorm lobby waiting for someone to bring him news of a job. Is Penny naturally luckier than Brian, or did she create her own luck?

While positive thoughts can take you a long way in your pursuit of perfection and good fortune, sometimes it’s also necessary to take appropriate action. Use the following steps to make good things happen in your life:

1 Employ positive self-talk. Think about what’s going on in your life. Is your life running smoothly, or is it riddled with problems and unpleasant situations? Take time to listen to your thoughts and you’ll find that your life is pretty much in harmony with your self-talk.

Change negative thoughts into positive ones by eliminating these words from your vocabulary: *won’t, don’t, can’t, shouldn’t, should, try*. Instead, use words like, *am, can, will* and *do*.

2 Rein in those sneaky negative phrases. Sometimes we think we’re speaking in positive terms when we’re not. Saying to someone during an evaluation, “You didn’t fidget and look down as much as you did last time,” isn’t as positive as saying, “You seemed poised and you made good eye contact.” Can you see the difference?

What if someone says to you, “You did a good job as the Toastmaster of the meeting. I sure wouldn’t want to get up there and look like an idiot all evening, though.” What would you focus on, that this person thought you did a good job or that he thought you “looked like an idiot”?

Unfortunately, human nature dictates that we bypass positive comments and zero in on the negative ones. And those pessimistic views will stick and fester if we let them. Learn to shake them off and practice eliminating the negative undertones from your own vocabulary.

I have an acquaintance who prides herself on being a positive thinker. She often glorifies a beautiful day with her narratives. She speaks kindly of people and she’s generous with compliments. Her friends hear her positive remarks and then wonder why they feel kind of deflated after spending time with her. Here’s the reason:

She often peppers her positive comments with negative undercurrents. She'll say, for example, "It's such a beautiful day; too bad I don't have time to enjoy it." Or, "I love Sarah, but I can't stand spending more than 30 minutes with her." Or, "Congratulations on your new job. How did you convince them to hire you instead of someone who's more qualified?"

Do you hear the negativity in these phrases? Are these the kinds of statements that govern your thought process? If so, consciously change your words. Your thoughts will follow suit.

3 **Out with the negative and in with the positive.** Every time you become aware of a negative thought or word, change it on the spot. You might think or say, for example, "I really dread tonight's Toastmasters meeting. I'm the Toastmaster for the evening and I don't have a clue as to what to do." Stop yourself in your tracks and rephrase that comment in your mind or on your lips. Say, instead, "I'm looking forward to the challenge of being Toastmaster tonight. I've watched numerous Toastmasters perform this task and I know what to do, but I'll also review the Toastmaster's duties in my manual. I will do a great job tonight."

If you happen to tell yourself, "I'm a lousy speaker," rephrase those words immediately and say, "My speaking skills improve with each Toastmasters meeting." The more often you think of yourself as a poor speaker, the more you need to repeat that positive phrase. You might add: "There is a wonderful speaker living inside this body, and I've joined Toastmasters to find him/her."

4 **Hear the positive in other people's words.** Sometimes we buy into the negativity spewed forth by others. Here's a technique for making those negative comments become a positive impetus for you:

Let's say that your evaluator says, "You appeared nervous tonight and, while I loved your subject, I really feel that you could have done a better job of organizing your talk." Instead of focusing on the negative and blowing it out of proportion, view this as an opportunity. Rather than seeing yourself as a nervous wreck who appeared completely disorganized, start planning how you will be less nervous and more organized for your next talk.

Instead of bemoaning the evaluator's opinion, be grateful for the opportunity to learn and to grow.

5 **Focus on the positive.** Randy had a terrible fear of Table Topics. He lived in dread each week that he would be called on to respond to Table Topics. His self-talk went something like this: "What if I get a Table Topic that I know nothing about? I don't think very well on my feet, and I don't want to appear foolish."

What would you do? I can tell you what I would do because I've done it. When I realized that the fear was worse than participating in Table Topics, I decided to overcome the fear. I began focusing on the positive aspects of Table Topics. I wanted to learn how to speak off the cuff, and my fear was definitely getting in the way of that. So I devised a plan.

I began practicing Table Topics outside of the club arena. I'd come up with a topic while driving, showering or while trying to fall asleep at night, and then I'd create a dialogue around that topic.

I started preparing for Table Topics before each meeting. I'd come up with a couple of things on which I could speak extemporaneously, and then I'd figure out a way to segue into my subject from the Table

Topic. I'd envision, for example, that the topic was the U.S. budget deficit or a proposed tax cut, and I'd come up with verbal pathways to a topic that I was comfortable talking about. As my confidence grew, I challenged myself to participate without practice and take my chances with the topic. Soon I was actually looking forward to Table Topics.

6 **Change your mind and change your attitude.** Sometimes you have no control over situations that cause negative feelings, such as anger, frustration and resentment. Even here, you have choices. You can choose to stew in your negativity, you can take steps to alter the situation, or you can change the way you view the situation.

Let's say there's a member who constantly disrupts club meetings and this really bothers you. You want to continue attending the meetings, but you don't enjoy them anymore because you're so irritated with this individual. What are your choices? You can talk about this to the board members, you can confront the disruptive member, you can join another club or you can change the way you look at the situation. It's amazing what a little shift in thinking can accomplish: from anger to understanding, from fear to trust.

What if you're asked to perform a task in Toastmasters that you dislike? Some Toastmasters don't like the Timer's responsibility, for example. If this is you, how do you handle it? Do you fret and stew about it for a week, reluctantly do the job and hate every minute of it? Or do you consider your other choices? You can stay home that evening and get someone else to do it for you. Or you can think of all of the positive aspects of being the Timer and assume the task with an optimistic attitude.

Your thoughts are not there by chance, they're there by programming. If you don't like what your thoughts produce in your life, start reprogramming them now. **1**

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Patricia L. Fry, CTM, is a freelance writer and frequent contributor to this magazine. She lives in Ojai, California.

What chathink?

We want your opinion. For the next few months we're going to ask you about major (and not so major) issues. To answer, visit our Web site at www.toastmasters.org and take our online poll. The results will be posted in a future issue of *The Toastmaster*. This month's question is:

When people ask why you joined Toastmasters, what do you say?

On the home page of the TI Web site, you'll find a button labeled: "Online Poll." Click on that button to get to a page of questions.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Results From Our

Online Poll

By Dr. Ken Tangen

In the May issue, we asked readers to go online and share their views.* We challenged readers to summarize a speech as if it were a bumper sticker. Some were skeptical – "Who ever heard of a 5-7 minute bumper sticker?" Others provided illustrations. Some used an Ice Breaker, focused on speaking techniques such as use of posture and gestures or referred to a presentation from work. Topics included health care, leadership, education, sales and self-discipline. Some were succinct (pray) and some were specific (Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy). Titles included "Know a little about a lot," "Political correctness," "Success does not equal not failing," "Take nothing for granted" and "The 10 Commandments of e-mail."

We also asked "What's your favorite bumper sticker?" As you might expect, there were many reactions. Some didn't like bumper stickers at all. Some liked more than one. By far the most common response was some variation of a vision test ("If you can read this, you're too close"). "We love Toastmasters" also was popular. Other choices included "Change is inevitable. Growth is optional;" "Beam me up, Scotty;" and "If I had known grandchildren were so much fun, I would have had them first." In addition to pro-gun and anti-abortion slogans, favored themes were patriotic, anti-government spending, religious or driving related. Some were intended as humor ("Cat: the other white meat") and others were

quasi-philosophical ("Life is uncertain, eat dessert first" or "Life is too short to dance with ugly men.")

Comments included an appreciation for Toastmasters ("A wonderful organization"), enjoyment of the online polling ("Good issues for the online polls" or "Great idea!! Good luck with your online poll.") and a reminder that zip codes apply only in the United States. Most liked the look of the Web site and thoroughly enjoy their clubs.

Of those who specified, 53% were women (down 4% from last month). They were from four basic age groups (19% from 19-34 years, 25% from 35-44, 33% from 45-54, and 23% were 55 or older). Approximately 85% of the respondents were Toastmasters (up 4%) and 17% had never participated in one of our online polls. If you haven't toured the site recently, go to www.toastmasters.org. See the most recent changes and take the current poll

*Note: This unscientific poll is intended as a forum for people around the world to put their thoughts, reactions, and experiences into words. Neither the questions nor the answers are meant as official statements of policy. We seek to facilitate open communication and to build an international sense of community.

Dr. Ken Tangen has more than 20 years of experience as a research psychologist and management consultant specializing in surveys and the independent, third-party evaluation of training programs. He is an expert in information processing, memory, and the integration of cognitive science, psychometric assessment and strategic planning. Visit www.kentangen.com for more information.



Feeling a little, like, whacked,
'cause your screenager's
language is so ghetto?

Understanding Teen-Speak

Dude! 'Sup? Need the 411 on teen-speak? Don't go postal. Chill! Are you, like, faded (out of it)? Don't know what the heck your teen is saying in your own crib (home)?

Feeling a little, like, whacked (bad), 'cause your child's language is so ghetto (of poor quality)?

Don't sweat it, dude. American slang, mostly spoken by teens, is transitory, short-lived, and, like, before long it'll be toast (gone).

So says Tom Dalzell, author of *Flappers 2 Rappers: American Youth Slang* (Merriam-Webster). According to Dalzell, since slang is spoken more often than it's written, it generally doesn't get passed on from one generation to the next. Add to this, that since the primary purpose of teen slang is to disassociate youth from adults, your grandkids won't even be speaking the same language as your own children. In fact, only about 10 percent of the lingo your screenager (today's teenager that lives in front of a computer or television screen) uses will be passed on.

Dr. Pat Doetkott, communications department chair at Chapman University in Orange, California explains, "Slang is really whatever is popular in the vernacular at the time." Use of slang words comes and goes with each generation, she says. "People who use certain kinds of slang date themselves. You don't hear many teens today saying, 'That's neat.' Or, 'It's the cat's meow.'" Therefore, according to Doetkott, slang is not a case of history repeating itself.

Gareth Branwyn, author of *Jargon Watch* (Hardwired), a pocket dictionary of the latest jargon, believes that slang is simply an informal vocabulary that is coined by a specific social group. He writes, "It packs a tremendous

amount of information, values and anxieties into a single word or phrase."

Take the word "suck," for example. Not a particularly proper word, but one that seems to get the job done. Doetkott's take on the word? "It's used to describe something that is just really horrible. People say, 'That's so sucky.' I know what they mean by that intellectually, but I wouldn't be able to put a dictionary definition to it."

Actually, Dalzell claims the word originated in the '80s and at that time had a sexual innuendo attached to it. More than 20 years later, the taboo no longer exists. Doetkott says, "'sucks' now seems to be something that no one pays any attention to, but at one time it was a swear word." As a result, she says, "Today you could probably hear gray-haired grannies using it."

Slang is, to use the CBS *Survivor* vernacular, a tribal thing. Kids use it to identify with their peers in much the same way they dress similarly. Slang is to English what fad clothes are to fashion. While hippies influenced the '60s with words like "bummer," "head trip" and "turned on," the surfer and the valley girl took over in the '70s and '80s. Recall, "dude" and "omigosh"?

While teens tend to use more slang than adults, primarily because the words are usually fun to say, tweaking our language occurs to some extent in all social groups. Take, for example, the office. Executives are referred to as "suits." (Note: Your surfer son would die to know that the word "dude" actually evolved from the description of a well-dressed man. "Dud," the origin of "dude," was another word for clothing). During a business crisis, management often engages in blamestorming to avoid responsibility. Even dentists have their own jargon, sub-

stituting “napkin” when describing the lead apron used during X-rays.

But, at some point, a more polished use of the English language is what determines not only the image one projects, but also the way they view the world. Dr. Richard Kroll, an English professor at the University of California, Irvine, says that today’s kids talk in fractured sentences. Consider the overuse of the word “like,” which is injected into sentences randomly, the word itself representing nothing. Kroll says jokingly, “It’s a disease.”

He claims that his students aren’t thinking about what they’re going to say all the time, so instead of pausing or using the old standby, “umm,” they insert “like” instead. “It’s simply a way of punctuating what you’re saying.” As a result, he claims, they end up also viewing the world in a fractured way.

“The way they talk helps them construct pictures of the world,” Kroll says. “The more sophisticated they are about their language, the more sophisticated their world is.” He is clearly frustrated with his students’ apparent

lack of respect for the English language. “They see it as a purely communicative instrument that can be used like a paper cup and

thrown away when finished,” he said. “English is the richest language in the world, but our students have an entirely impoverished approach to its possibilities.”

One does have to wonder how this new slang – some call it mallspeak – will affect our teens’ ability to function in the world beyond the dormitory and the shopping mall. In fact, some colleges are now putting an increased emphasis on verbal skills, hoping to answer the complaint from alumni that graduates today don’t present a professional image.

Smith College in North Hampton, Massachusetts, implemented a program that required its students to do more oral presentations. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology is among other colleges also now using more oral exams. Professors seem to agree that bad speaking reflects bad thinking.

UCI’s Kroll doesn’t believe that speaking up more in class will result in more articulate students. “The only way to become more articulate is to become more literate,” Kroll claims. He emphasizes that reading, not speaking, is key to developing language skills.

Kroll also stresses, “You’re not going to get people to talk in an educated way unless society values it.” He points out that our culture doesn’t reward intelligence, or the articulate. Citing the presidential debate between Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, he noted that even though Carter was more thoughtful and precise in his arguments, Reagan won the debate because his speaking style mirrored that of the general public.

On **Slanguage.com**, a Web site hosted by Mike Ellis, a self-prescribed butcher of the English language, “one can find slang terms from as far back as the ’20s. A lot of slang comes from World War I,” Ellis says. “Words like ‘phat’ and ‘da bomb’ came from the war.” He pointed out that the word “bogus,” which kids now use to describe something fake, originally was used to describe counterfeit coins.

Even if society did decide to promote eloquence and value verbal skills, kids will still be kids. They’ll still rebel. They will dress and speak as a counterculture. Perhaps the only way to combat teen slang is to begin using it ourselves, as a sort of reverse-psychology?

Dude. Think of the possibilities. **T**

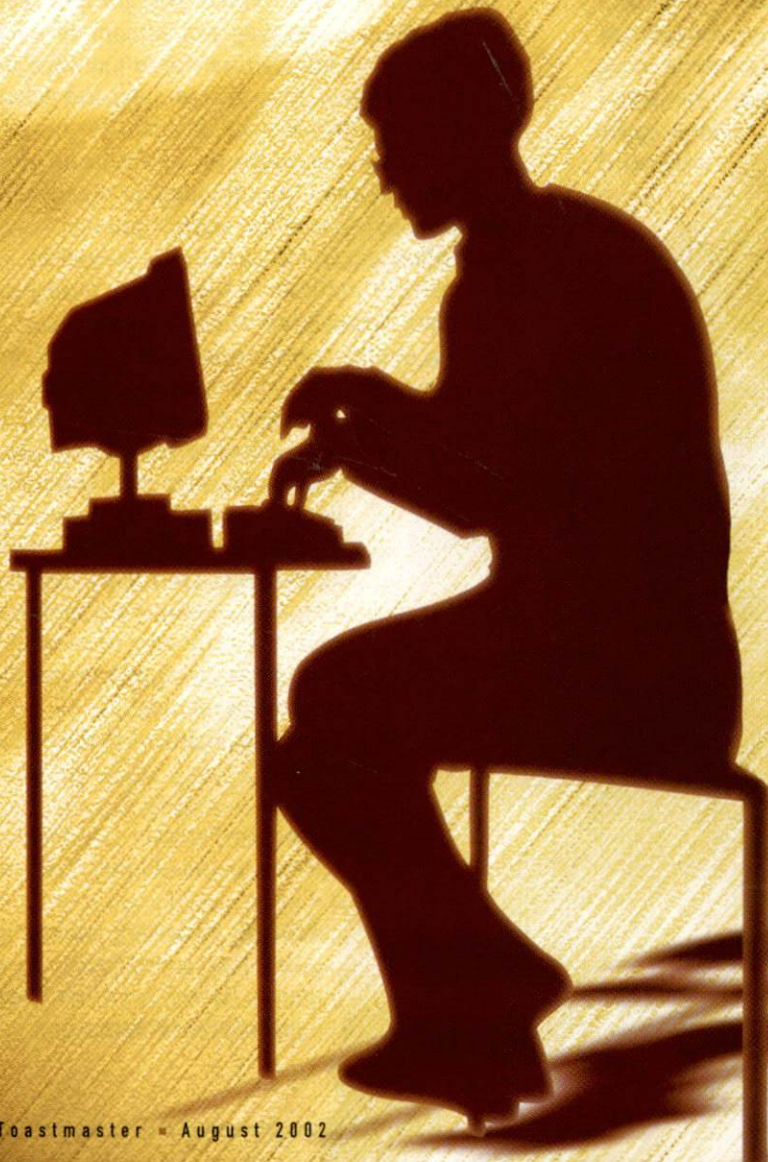
Kimberly Porrazzo is a freelance writer living in Lake Forest, California.

Editor’s Note: We welcome examples of slang from other English-speaking countries. Please send your comments to pubs@toastmasters.org.



Confessions of a Wounded Speechwriter

PART II



In the July issue of *The Toastmaster*, the author – a speechwriter for Presidents, Senators and CEOs – shared his experience in treading the treacherous career path of a political and corporate scribe – the organizationally insignificant ‘speck’ who shepherds policy despite having little power. In this second installment of a two-part series, he discloses what makes a speech stand out...for better or worse.

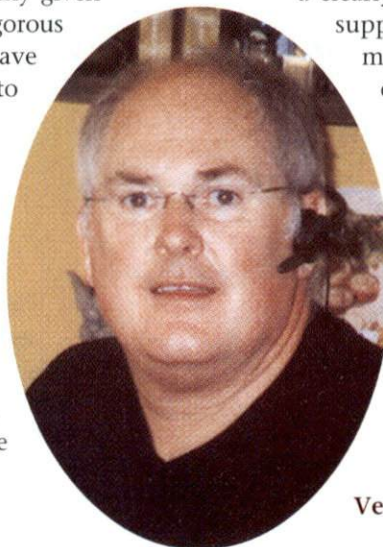
Like others who write them, I remember speeches for the wrong reasons. But at least I remember them. Can you remember one, gentle reader? Among how many you have endured?

News flash. Most speeches are bad! Background noise with no reason to exist. But unlike say, bad performance art, bad speeches lack the good grace of being funny. They're just dull. And hark! Therein lies the biggest trouble of all.

Do they go out on the highway? Looking for adventure? Golly, no, they're born to be mild. Any given speech is statistically doomed to fail the rigorous Dance of the Seven Corporate Veils. I have worked overtime to stretch this analogy into seven, dear reader, so be forgiving:

Veil of the Wrongheaded Writer – I took my first writing job because it offered dental insurance; as a result there is now available a fine book about annuities as a source of retirement income. I am not alone. There be plenty of us liberal arts majors out there still confused about what people do in those tall buildings, even when we is one of they.

Veil of the Courageous Speaker – The outright dolt – commonly the public mouthpiece of middle management – has a motto: Dive into the pool of corporate rhetoric leaving scarce a ripple to show. Admit you know who I'm talking about. My favorite was the fellow at an unnamed car company who, at a prominent internal gathering, spoiled his coming-out performance to top management by ignoring the solid opening I drafted for him and substituted his own charming malaprop: "We've got a lot of personal charisma going on around here! A lot of personal charisma going on, right here in this room! Personal charisma, a lot of it



"Successful delivery is more than meets the ear." – KEN ASKEW

going on!" As we wilted in our seats, he wagged like a giddy dog with a bone on stage, repeating the nonsense phrase over and over and over. This dolt is no longer at the company; he's now wrapped around an axle manufacturing operation. Another speechwriter friend tells me of a favorite dolt client, who to his credit discovered a clearly sexist image among visuals an ad agency supplied for product presentations. He called my friend into his office, pointed at the offending picture of a tart model draped over a car and spouted – "Alex! We can't use that! It's feminist!"

What's a poor speechwriter to do?

Veil of the Vomit Topic – A speech assignment I took the liberty of renaming (okay, downright changing) Time Merchants was originally presented as The Role of Integrated Services Digital Network in National Infrastructure Development. Say, fellas – a toe-tapper!

Veil of the Inspiring Venue – Let's see now. Cow pasture. Chicken farm. Fellowship Hall under Marta tracks. Warehouse in Jersey slum. Shall I continue?

Veil of the Subject Matter Experts, aka Junior Speechwriters – Most SMEs, as they're fondly called by speechwriters who – truly – rely on their input, are genuinely helpful, but there's always the turd in the punchbowl. Typical edit, on some level: Happy to Glad, as in "I'm happy to be here." No, "I'm glad to be here." "No, that happy sounds right...but hmm, that glad's startin' to look purty good." However, I emphatically repeat: Most SMEs are helpful. Only when they stray from substance

BY KEN ASKEW ■ ILLUSTRATION BY EYEWIRE

into amateur wordsmithing do they wear out their welcome, like the blowhard at the party who recently read *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* and hey, just wants to share.

Veil of the Robust Audience – How on earth do you rouse a convention hall full of 2,000 hung-over Shriners at 8 a.m., stunned and puffy with their fezzes on backward? Audience motto: Try to imagine how little we care.

Veil of the Variable – One CEO I know was too distracted to speak well because a New York City gypsy cab driver showed him pornographic photos of his (the cab driver's) monkey just before he dropped my client off curbside at the speech venue. This was particularly upsetting because the monkey was in the cab at the time and had bonded with the CEO (platonically). Another speaker, the Prime Minister of A Major Germanic Land, had this note shoved in front of him by the host just as he was getting wound up about the glory of new jobs: "We are behind schedule. Please make this your last sentence." To his credit, he read it out loud and it was.

Do you begin to see, gentle reader, why few speeches are for the right reasons memorable?

Successful delivery is more than meets the ear. To slightly paraphrase Somerset Maugham, there are three rules about writing a great speech. Unfortunately, no one knows what they are. But I reckon these three are as good as any.

Rule #1 – Bend the rules. Surprise the form. Stretch predictable limits by avoiding prosaic ruts thousands of lazy writers (and speakers) before have carved into the well-worn paths of rhetoric. Robert Frost said writing blank verse is like playing tennis without a net; it follows that once we view a speech as a form to exploit and a system of limits to push – a tennis court with boundaries and a net – we can start plumbing its potential, surprising the audience and making the speech effective. Do you start with a joke? Perhaps – if you want to stay comfortably in form. Maybe you open instead with a dramatic statement, a challenge, an accusation, a question or even an obvious bald-faced lie. Struggling against the limits of a form is what makes bonsai and haiku interesting templates of a larger idea, and packs a world of expression within their tiny selves. Conversely, staying safely in the middle of the form is a sure path to mediocrity. Clearly the major variable here is the stage skill of the speaker,

which introduces a subset of rules beyond the scope of this article, although I will submit this handy hint: If the client ain't funny, the client ain't funny.

Rule #2 – Employ the senses. Robert Blake illuminated poetry with images. Stan Freberg proved radio can be more visually powerful than TV, vindicating Matisse ("I close my eyes that I might see"). Going outside the medium to metaphorically evoke sight, smell, sound and abstract senses, such as humor and irony, hooks an audience and shrink-wraps their minds around the shape of your idea.

Rule #3 – Keep it simple. That knee-slapping Greek Archilochus wrote in his fable *The Hedgehog and the Fox* that the fox knows many things but the hedgehog knows one big thing. Strong writers can fall flat penning a speech if they write for the eye. The eye is a fox and can see many things. The ear is a hedgehog and hears one big thing. Write for the hedgehog. Does this hold true for the speeches you remember?

*"The eye
is a fox and
can see many
things. The ear is
a hedgehog and hears
one big thing.
Write for the
hedgehog."*

We learn slowly. An interior designer once asked if what I do for a living isn't somehow dishonest. I asked her, "What is it again you do for a living?" We stopped dating soon thereafter.

I remember a fateful day when a tattered, outrageously smelly quilt showed up at Senator Sam Nunn's office, where I was his speechwriter, with an earnest note explaining it was created by a sweet soul in the interest of world peace. The note said many prominent leaders had slept under this Peace Quilt for one night and deepened their concern for our species as a result. A quick inspection, however, revealed that clearly more than a few had done quite a bit more to this quilt. Would the Senator please sleep under the quilt too? the note pled. The Senator took one look at the skanky thing and said, "Askew, you sleep under it and tell me about it."

We're paid for such hazard duty, and by golly if there were a junior speechwriter on staff I, too, would have delegated. But maybe the interior designer was right. Maybe that rhetorical ottoman over there does express my thoughts more than it does the client's.

I was airlifted into Atlanta awhile back to craft an emergency draft for perhaps the most elegant executive of his generation, Roberto Goizueta. Because of circumstances beyond anyone's control at Coca-Cola I did not have the opportunity to hear his thoughts on the subject at hand, which coincided with the Company's redoubled efforts to "brand" the color red.

Time was short. I holed up in a hotel and wrote the wrong speech, describing an arc of a career framed at one end with a boy's small world being painted violently red in Cuba, and framed at the other with a man's globe being painted an entirely different shade of redemptive red from atop a North Avenue tower. Only after submitting the draft did I learn that Mr. Goizueta vigorously shied from publicly broaching how Castro's communism disrupted his youth, and the speech was graciously rejected, perhaps for other good reasons as well. Although I was paid fairly for my work and later gratified to find shards of the "Red Speech" filtered into subsequent Coca-Cola corporate material, after such a failure I had to ask myself, have I really learned all that much?

Of course so. In a similar crash-and-burn situation a few years earlier I was holed up in a Gatlinburg, Tennessee, motel pulling an all-nighter for another prominent CEO hours before my sister-in-law's funeral. That speech also took a symbolic tack, using as metaphor for individual ethical responsibility the Dolphin, an 18th-century frigate whose crew members pulled precious nails from its decking for trade currency to South Pacific islanders – which caused the ship to sink. My particular circumstances that night infused the speech with a bit more raw heart than usual. It could have backfired. Instead the speech was a great success. Win some and lose some, and the price is sometimes too dear.

Occasionally an idea can get away from you like a big floor-buffing machine. Peggy Noonan put "A thousand points of light" in George Bush's mouth and the guy moves into the White House. I put "It ain't over 'til Cabrera swings" into George Bush's mouth, the poor guy ends up with an Aggie library, Cabrera gets traded, and the best team of the 1990s has just one World Series Championship ring to show for it. Still, if I never write another successful speech, Bush provided me with the high point of my career.

It happened during the desperate last days of perhaps the worst-run presidential reelection campaign in recent history, when some genius in our camp decided Bush should embark on a whistle-stop tour through the heartland. The team rounded up a train, gussied it with bunting, and POTUS (President Of The United States) was off and running, sort of.

The trick to campaign speeches is to string a couple dozen policy ideas together, each pearl a stand-alone

point so the press gets to choose its bits. It helps to punch each pearl with a one-line zinger.

One idea before us this particular day was the long-standing Democratic control of Congress – 38 years. In a moment of giddy fatigue, I threw out the line, "Thirty-eight years? That's 266 dog years!" It was so lame we put it in triple brackets to flag it for the President's review and moved on to the next idea. What I failed to understand was the President's fascination with dogs. Dogs are always thoroughly magically wonderful, according to George Bush. He loved the line.

He used it at 8 a.m. to a crowd of half-asleep supporters at the first whistle-stop. It met with confused silence.

What did the leader of the free world just say? Something about Congress and dog years?

On the way to the next scheduled stop, the President retired to the back of the train with his #2 pencil and wrote furiously.

Next stop, he tried the joke again. Again, confused silence. A sprinkling of polite titters.

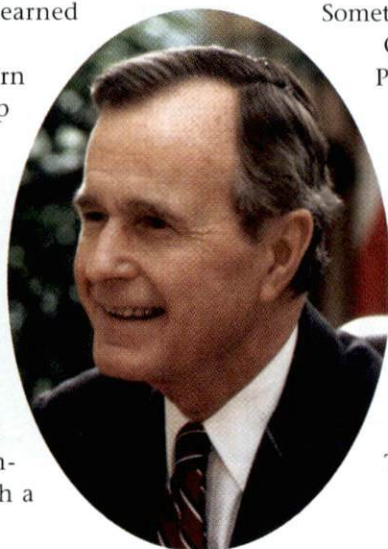
Back in the train, he barked out requests for more facts and figures. Next stop, lo and behold, the same dog-year joke, the same response. But this time, a paragraph later, POTUS describes the Pentagon budget in dollars, multiplies it by seven and calls it dog-dollars. The crowd begins to catch on.

You get the picture. By day's end the speech was crammed with facts and figures, each multiplied by seven. Dog-years. Dog-dollars. Dog-this. Dog-that.

And as the train pulled out of the last station at dusk, the crowd actually was chanting, "Twenty-eight more years! Twenty-eight more years!"

Parturientes montes murem ridiculosum pepererunt: The mountains went into labor and there emerged a ridiculous mouse. It was my finest seven hours.

Until next morning, when *The New York Times*, front page below the fold, suggested perhaps the leader of the free world had lost his mind. Time to rewrite. **T**



President George Bush

.....
Former White House speechwriter **Ken Askew** has served as senior staff speechwriter for U.S. President George Bush; U.S. Senator Sam Nunn; Chrysler executives Lee Iacocca, Jerry Greenwald and Bob Lutz; and BellSouth Chairman John Clendenin. In subsequent private practice he has written for more than 35 Fortune 200 chairmen and CEOs worldwide. Askew operates a private communication consultancy and is associated with The White House Writers Group in Washington, D.C. He splits time between offices in Atlanta and San Francisco.



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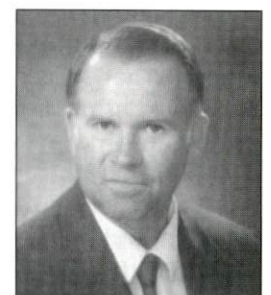
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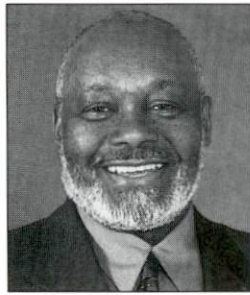
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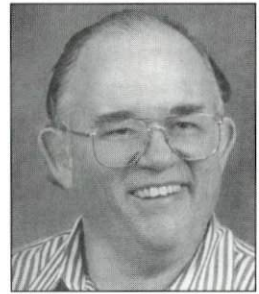
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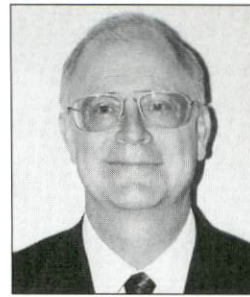
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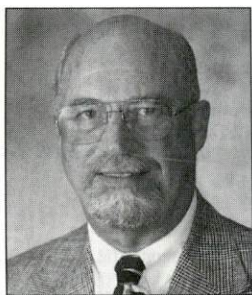
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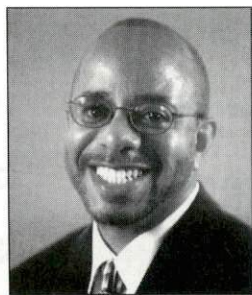
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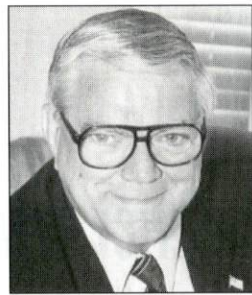
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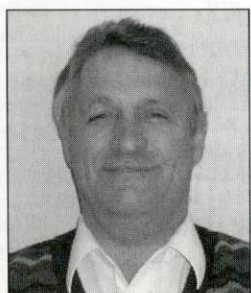
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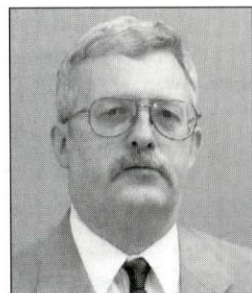
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Whittaker, MI 48190
- 29** **Norm Cyr, ATM-G**
791 Pine Hills Dr.
Biloxi, MS 39532
- 30** **Earl Bateman, ATM-S**
212 Hawk Ct.
Schaumburg, IL 60193
- 31** **Paul G. Fischer, DTM**
11 Savoy Rd.
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- 32** **Christine Hall, ATM-B**
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- 42** **Jacqueline Schnider, DTM**
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147 Blue Heron Dr.
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93350 Kuching Sarawak
Malaysia
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- 53** **Val Albert, DTM**
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- 54** **Louise Free, DTM**
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- 55** **Gloria Williams, DTM**
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- 67** **David Wang, CL**
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304 Hsin Chu
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 Brian L. Tanner 5654-19, Iowa City, Iowa
 Lynn Petz 6673-20, Stanley, North Dakota
 Darren King Marr 1882-21, Victoria, Canada
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 Sandra Y. McClaron 481-35, Franksville, Wisconsin
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 Terry Brady 1206-40, Miamisburg, Ohio
 Shiraz Kanji 3146-42, Edmonton, Canada
 Ralph Pritchard 6871-45, Moncton, Canada
 John W. Vernon 9322-47, Miami, Florida
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 Ruben Huertas 7620-65, Rochester, New York
 Mary-Jean Brill 584-69, Robina, Australia
 Heather Barlow 3845-69, Brisbane, Australia
 Diane Menzies 8284-72, Christchurch, New Zealand
 Martin John Ranger 1347-74, Cape Town, South Africa
 Kim Boon 9671-74, Somerset West, South Africa

Anniversaries

JUNE

20 years

Kwanza Kenya 4863-U, Nairobi, Kenya
 Ordinance Orators 4930-4, San Jose, California
 New Ulm 4878-6, New Ulm, Minnesota
 Shaker 4936-10, Beachwood, Ohio
 University Club 2250-12, La Verne, California
 Clayton County 4865-14, Clayton County, Georgia
 Let's Talk 4884-16, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
 OKC Speaking Singles 4906-16, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
 Gallatin Valley 4880-17, Bozeman, Montana

Kalamalka 4869-21, Vernon, Canada
 Waldorf 4862-27, Waldorf, Maryland
 Rochester 4890-28, Rochester, Michigan
 Deerbrook Park 4868-30, Deerfield, Illinois
 Orland Park 4871-30, Orland Park, Illinois
 Speakers International 4886-30, Chicago, Illinois
 Hinsdale 4888-30, Hinsdale, Illinois
 Wordsworth 4882-31, Hudson, Massachusetts
 Gold Coast Daybreakers 1900-33, Oxnard, California
 Tallyho 4889-36, Potomac, Maryland
 Moorestown Area 4887-38, Maple Shade, New Jersey
 Community 4891-38, Reading, Pennsylvania
 AFSCME 4910-38, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 TM Greater Burlington 4899-45, Burlington, Vermont
 Woodbridge 4864-46, Iselin, New Jersey
 ISO 4919-46, New York, New York
 Supersonics 4872-47, West Palm Beach, Florida
 Liliuokalani 4907-49, Honolulu, Hawaii
 Ithaca Area 4913-65, Ithaca, New York
 GSU Baton Rouge 4897-68, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
 Southern Cross 4892-69, Toowoomba, Australia
 Killara 4870-70, Killara, Australia
 Kings Langley 4875-70, Seven Hills, Australia
 Durian 4933-75, Davao City, Philippines

AUGUST

55 years

Ferguson 525-8, Florissant, Missouri
 High Noon 505-56, Houston, Texas

50 years

Little Rock 1140-43, Little Rock, Arkansas
 Twin City 1142-43, North Little Rock, Arkansas
 Tallahassee 1135-47, Tallahassee, Florida

45 years

Downtown 2550-10, Cleveland, Ohio
 Downtown 2552-29, Pensacola, Florida
 Wollongong 2456-70, Wollongong, Australia
 Old Johannians 2475-74, Johannesburg, South Africa

40 years

Jefferson 1998-68, Metairie, Louisiana

35 years

Columbus Uptown 2037-14, Columbus, Ohio
 Oatley R S L 787-70, Sydney, Australia

30 years

F C C 3740-27, Washington, D.C.
 Isaac Davis 2193-31, Acton, Massachusetts
 Freeport 1425-47, Freeport, Bahamas
 Endeavour 1776-69, Brisbane, Australia
 Adventurers 2572-69, Brisbane, Australia

25 years

Prince George 3081-21, Prince George, Canada
 Toastmasters Unlimited 1379-22, Kansas City, Missouri
 I'll Drink To That 3254-33, Las Vegas, Nevada
 Kakwa 3068-42, Grand Prairie, Canada
 LAUSD 382-52, Los Angeles, California

20 years

Alyeska 4960-U, Anchorage, Alaska
 Rocky Mountain 4962-21, Radium, Canada
 Columbine Communicator 4950-29, Littleton, Colorado
 Miss. Power Employees 4965-29, Gulfport, Mississippi
 Tacoma Public Utilities 4958-32, Tacoma, Washington
 Southwest 4955-35, Greendale, Wisconsin
 Aimcrier 4966-42, St. Albert, Canada
 Aim High 4952-55, Austin, Texas
 Talk of the Town 4969-56, Houston, Texas
 Nagoya 4957-76, Nagoya, Japan

Ralph C. Smedley Memorial Fund

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 Past International President Theodore C. Wood, DTM, in memory of Evelyn-Jane Burgay, DTM, International Director 1991-93

Contributing Club

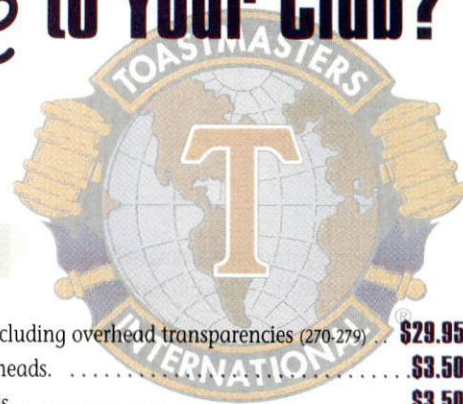
Toastmasters of the Bluegrass Toastmasters Club 4271-40, in memory of Cindy Loughlin

Contributor

Murray Rosenthal and Esther Rosenthal, in memory of Jennifer Moss
 Barbara W. Branton, DTM, in memory of Judy Parrott, DTM, District 57 Governor 1992-93
 Past International Director Clifford L. Thompson, ATM, in memory of Ann Thompson
 Victor E. Martinez
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 Past International Director Don Plaskett, DTM, in memory of Ann Thompson
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