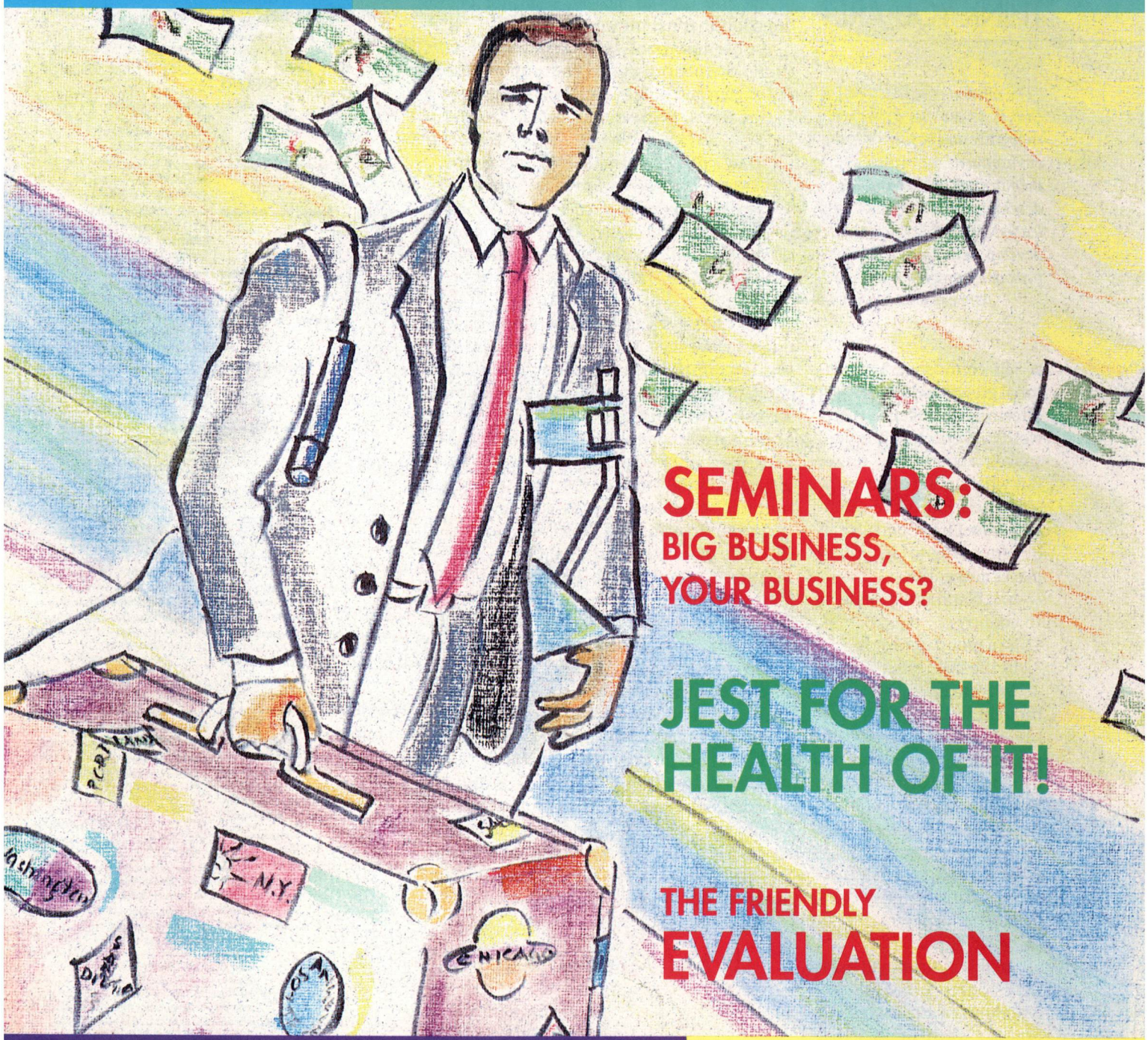


# THE TOASTMASTER

JUNE 1992

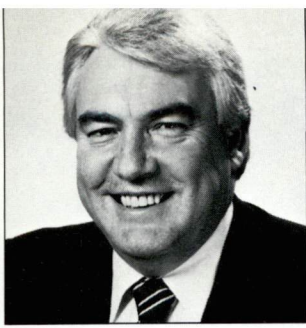


**SEMINARS:  
BIG BUSINESS,  
YOUR BUSINESS?**

**JEST FOR THE  
HEALTH OF IT!**

**THE FRIENDLY  
EVALUATION**





## VIEWPOINT

### WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

*"The mission of a Toastmasters club is to provide a mutually supportive and positive learning environment in which every member has the opportunity to develop communication and leadership skills, which in turn develop self confidence and personal growth."*

THE BASIC C&L MANUAL

■ Self confidence and personal growth, self image, self esteem, self concept – many words have been written and spoken about these terms. But what does it all mean?

Self esteem is the catch-all phrase I'll use here. It can be encouraged in many places and entities:

- In a community, state or country
- In a group of people
- In the individual

Self esteem is generally thought to be a personal issue. Recently, however, the application of the term has broadened considerably. Economists, for example, now analyze national and international trends by discussing "soft factors" such as national inferiority complexes, national will and basic world views.

American statesman Adlai Stevenson recognized this concept during a 1952 speech in Chicago when he said that

"Government in a democracy cannot be stronger or tougher-minded than its people. It cannot be more inflexibly committed to the task than they. It cannot be wiser than the people." Stevenson understood that a nation's way of viewing itself (1) reflected the general quality of life and (2) was also an indicator of the direction that nation would take.

In her new book, *Revolution from Within*, Gloria Steinem discusses the importance of self esteem and quotes a recent statement from Vaclav Havel, President of Czechoslovakia:

*"Only a person, or a nation self confident in the best sense of the word, is capable of listening to the voice of others and accepting them as equal to oneself. Let us try to introduce self confidence into the life of our community and into the conduct of nations."*

Self esteem starts with a personal sense of one's own value. Unfortunately, these feelings are sometimes undermined, especially in adolescence, when criticisms and put-downs are common. During those years we undergo a physical metamorphosis and attempt to cope with new, unfamiliar emotions. Somewhere along the way, we may lose the self esteem nurtured so tenderly in early childhood.

In our Toastmasters clubs, we hear many speeches that reveal an initial lack of speaker self esteem or confidence. The act of preparing and delivering a speech, however, provides the framework for a healthy sense of accomplishment. And so, eventually, does successful achievement as a club leader.

Our Toastmasters experience is priceless in giving us an opportunity to enhance our self esteem by examining our talents, testing our limits and opening new doors.

Who do *you* think you are? Let's find out by reaching far beyond the comfort level we are used to and using Toastmasters to explore the infinite possibilities within us. As Dr. Ralph Smedley said, "The first result of speech training is self-discovery."

JACK GILLESPIE, DTM  
International President

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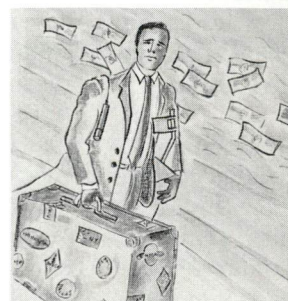


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# LETTERS

## ARTICLE OUT OF ORDER?

I commend you for publishing "Take a Few Minutes" (February). This is exactly the type of article we need. While our organization claims to be concerned with both communication and leadership, at least 90 percent of the focus is on communication. Solid information on leadership and the mechanics of conducting effective meetings is long overdue.

But articles containing inaccurate information do more harm than good. Many Toastmasters consider *The Toastmaster* an authoritative source for conclusive information. With this in mind, I suggest careful critiquing of articles.

This was obviously not done with "Take a Few Minutes." To the best of my knowledge, Toastmasters has adopted *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (RONR) as the parliamentary authority, and yet the article contains several statements that directly contradict RONR. Mr. Ollie mentions much good information in his article, but the few inaccuracies could cause someone to make a critical mistake.

EDWARD R. WEBER, DTM  
REGISTERED PARLIAMENTARIAN  
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

## MORE ON MINUTES

Mr. Ollie's article on minute taking has several helpful hints. But *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (RONR) differs from Mr. Ollie's article on several points.

1. Ollie mentions that the reading of minutes may be dispensed with and accepted "as presented." Dis-

persing with the reading of minutes merely means they are not read *at the regular time*. The minutes must be read either at a later time in the meeting or before the reading of the minutes at the next meeting.

2. Ollie instructs the secretary to record the names of those making and seconding motions. RONR states that "the name of the seconder of a motion should not be entered in the minutes unless ordered by the assembly."

3. Ollie tells the secretary to summarize each speaker's comments in a debate. However, RONR says that "unless the minutes are to be published, they should contain mainly a record of what was *done* at the meeting, not what was *said* by the members."

4. Ollie says that "some organizations prefer to include the time of adjournment." RONR *requires* not only the time to be entered, but also the secretary to sign the minutes.

DWAYNE ROBERTS, ATM  
LT. GOV. EDUC. & TRAIN., D-26  
COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO

## LOOKING FOR SPEECHES

I'm compiling a collection of American speeches delivered between September '91 and August 31, 1992. With a working title of *I Hear America Speaking: Best Speeches, 1992*, the book will be published in early 1993 by Simon & Schuster. I would dearly like to include one or more speeches by Toastmasters.

The collection will be an annual one, and will include speeches both by noted business and political leaders and

by people whose words are rarely heard. There will be room for anyone who delivers an original speech of real distinction.

To be considered, speeches must be in manuscript form or on micro-cassette. Include the date the speech was given, as well as your name, address and phone number, and send it to:

STEVE MALONEY  
BOX 550  
NORTH SPRINGFIELD, VERMONT 05150

## TEAMWORK PREFERRED

In "The Courage to Compete" (January), Judith Pearson confers upon non-winning speech contestants the dignifying term, "honoraries." While belief in the strengthening effect of losing may turn defeat into a kind of victory in higher echelon competitions, one wonders how well it plays at the club level, where one's adversaries are regular fellow members, participation is not voluntary and the limited number of three speakers creates only two losers, making the experience uncomfortably personal.

When a practice prompts such soul-searching angst that it seems necessary to tell participants how to feel when they lose, it may be time to question the premise involved, i.e., that competition is essential for building character and achieving success. This ego-serving attitude is fast giving way to a group consciousness, a desire to work cooperatively in a joint effort to achieve a common goal.

Our club has found that competition is not only unnecessary, but is at odds with our purpose. We believe that creative teamwork will advance our common goal of

speech proficiency and the shared concern for each member's personal growth.

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OAKTON, VIRGINIA

## THE POWER OF POSITIVE CLUBS

When I joined Toastmasters in 1980, I was an alcoholic in the habit of having two or three beers before meetings to get up some courage. But the club members didn't shun me; instead, there were unspoken words – a silent trust – that someday I would turn my life around. Five years later, I quit drinking. Cold turkey. I owe a lot to the faith of my fellow Toastmasters and to the Toastmasters program for giving the challenge I needed to grow. Thanks, Toastmasters, for being there.

RON ROUSER, ATM  
DIVISION G GOVERNOR DISTRICT 11  
LOGANSPOUT 621-11  
LOGANSPOUT, INDIANA

## ONE MAN'S POISON ANOTHER MAN'S ROAST?

I agree with William Hodges (Letters, April 1992) that positive self-talk and roasts are opposite perspectives. Your open-minded featuring of both in the December issue presents a balanced view (as usual). However, Mr. Hodges missed the entire focus of the roast articles, which describe "how to cook up tasteful farewells that are 'well done.'" With our cherished freedom of speech comes a range of philosophy, taste and humor. Thanks for helping us separate good-natured repartee from character attacks.

PAM PRICE, CTM  
SECOND STAGE CLUB 3742-F  
IRVINE, CALIFORNIA



**John A. Fauvel, DTM**

## ELECTION OF INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORS: a stockholder's guide to the election process.

■ AT THE INTERNATIONAL Convention in August each year, eight (or nine) people are elected to serve as members of the Board of Directors of Toastmasters International. (In even-numbered years, a Director-at-Large is elected from the districts outside North America). When the ballots from the Annual Business Meeting are finally tallied and the results are announced, these dedicated Toastmasters have officially been given a vote of confidence by Toastmasters clubs all over the world to guide the organization's future for the next two years.

How did these Toastmasters get elected, and what are their responsibilities? Why must they be elected at the International Convention before assuming their mantle of responsibility?

### WHY NOT AT THE REGION?

Like any corporation, Toastmasters International has its stockholders: the Toastmas-

ters clubs, which represent the members. Each chartered club carries the right to cast two votes at the Annual Business Meeting during the International Convention. Toastmasters International Directors, like directors in any publicly held corporation, are responsible and

demanding schedule. Campaigning for international office usually includes visiting neighboring districts and calling and writing fellow Toastmasters around the world. It's an exercise in working *with* people that, after the election, evolves into working *for* people.

accountable to *all* stockholders, to all the clubs in the organization. Therefore, clubs have the right to decide who is elected. If Directors were elected by regions, districts or areas, only a limited number of clubs and members would influence decisions that impact Toastmasters around the world.

By a long, well-established process, the stockholders in a corporation gather yearly at an annual meeting. Reports are received and the election of directors to the Board takes place. Toastmasters International can not be excepted from this democratic process. Although any eligible Toastmaster has the right to run as a Director candidate from "the floor" at the International Convention, candidates usually will have received a specific vote percentage and nomination at the Regional Conference.

### HOW DO THEY GET THERE?

The road to becoming a Director is open to all Toastmasters who have completed a full term as a District Governor and are members in good standing. As in any election, candidates for International Director must first officially announce their interest in running (this is done by writing a Letter of Intent to the International President), and then do some local campaign work to ensure nomination by their district. Once nominated by the district, all candidates from districts located within a region must also be nominated at their Regional Conference.

From the time they are nominated until the day of election at the International Convention, the candidates face a long and

### WHAT DO THEY DO?

The 17 Directors of Toastmasters International each serve two consecutive years, half of them being elected every year. During this time, they will attend six Board meetings. Beyond this policy-making function, there are only two requirements of the position for those Directors nominated by a region: official District Visits, as approved each year by the International President, and participation in the Regional Conference and its various planning sessions. The Director-at-Large plays a very important role: He or she works with overseas districts and clubs in member and club development. When Toastmasters International develops educational material, the Director-at-Large ensures that the material fits the cultural norms of the various countries abroad.

It's important to realize that while Directors are nominated from a specific region or area, once they are elected they become *International* Directors and no longer represent only a specific region or area. These individuals now serve as Directors of the Toastmasters corporation and their prime responsibility is to establish policy that governs the direction and future of the entire organization. This is a big responsibility that no Board member takes lightly.

Are you ready for this challenge? If so, you may contact the Policy Administration Department at World Headquarters for more information. Good luck! **T**

**John A. Fauvel, DTM**, served as International President in 1987-88. He lives in Auckland, New Zealand.



By Robert L. Knotts,  
DTM

---

SPECIFIC TIPS  
FOR THE  
CLUB'S GENERAL  
EVALUATOR.

---

**E**VALUATION IS THE cornerstone of your club's educational program.

People join Toastmasters to develop their speaking skills. This happens through the evaluation process: A member prepares and presents a speech based on a manual project, and another member evaluates the speech, noting what was done well and offering suggestions for improvement. The speaker then incorporates these suggestions into future speeches.

But another evaluator plays an equally important role in your club: The General Evaluator, whose primary purpose is to observe the club meeting as a whole and evaluate what takes place. Like a speech evaluator, the General Evaluator notes what was done well and suggests areas for improvement. Meeting participants can then incorporate these suggestions into the next meeting. In this way, your club is able to maintain meeting excellence. And excellent meetings not only keep members interested and active, they also attract new members to the club.

In addition to evaluating the meeting, the General Evaluator has other specific duties. For example, he or she coordinates the speech evaluation portion of the meeting. To be effective, the General Evaluator must be aware of all the duties required. These duties can be broken down into three time periods: what to do before the meeting, upon arrival at the meeting, and during the meeting. Try following the checklist and evaluation tips below the next time you are called upon to be general evaluator.

#### BEFORE THE MEETING

At least one week before the meeting:

- Ask the Toastmaster of the meeting about the upcoming agenda. Is something special planned, such as a theme meeting or officer elections?
- Review the roles of the club officers and meeting participants (descriptions are found in the "Master Your Meetings" manual (Supply Catalog #1312). After all, you cannot properly evaluate someone's performance if you don't know what they are supposed to do.
- Review "Effective Speech Evaluation" manual (Catalog #202) to refresh your memory on evaluation techniques and principles.
- Choose the evaluation format to be used. Will evaluations be given by individuals, or will a panel format be used?
- Contact all of the evaluators and brief them on their responsibilities, the speakers they will be evaluating and the evaluation format

# LOOKING AT THE BIG PICTURE





**“Excellent meetings  
not only keep  
members interested  
and active, they  
also attract new  
members to  
the club.”**

to be used. Suggest that each call the speaker in advance to discuss the evaluation. Emphasize to evaluators that evaluation is a positive, helping act that enables fellow Toastmasters to develop their skills.

- Contact the Timer, Grammarian and Ah Counter to remind them of their assignments.
- Prepare a brief explanation of the purpose, techniques and benefits of evaluation for presentation during the meeting. This is for the benefit of guests and new members.

#### **UPON ARRIVAL AT THE MEETING**

Arrive at least 15 minutes early to:

- Make sure all evaluators have arrived. If not, arrange for substitutes.
- Check that each evaluator has the speaker's manual and understands the project's objectives and evaluation.
- Confirm the recommended time of each speech (this is listed at the beginning of each project) and notify the Timer.
- Sit near the back of the room to fully observe the meeting and its participants.

#### **DURING THE MEETING**

As the meeting proceeds:

- Present a brief talk on the purpose, techniques and benefits of evaluation and the methods today's evaluators will use.
- Introduce the Grammarian, Timer and Ah Counter and ask each to briefly explain their duties. Also introduce the evaluators and explain their duties.
- Take notes on everything that happens (or doesn't happen, but should) during the meeting. For example, is the club's property (banner, supply catalog, guest book) properly displayed? Were members and guests properly welcomed as they arrived? Did the meeting, and each part of it, begin and end on time? Were transitions between meeting segments smooth? Was the President given control of the meeting in between each segment on the agenda?
- Observe every participant in the program, from the person giving the invocation or thought for the day to the last report by the Timer. Look for good and unsatisfactory examples of preparation, organization, delivery, enthusiasm and performance of duties. Don't reevaluate the speakers, but offer something that the evaluator may have missed.
- Conclude with a general evaluation of the meeting, referring to the notes taken during the meeting.

The general evaluation itself is a challenging task. Most clubs allow only two to three minutes for the general evaluation – not much time for a thorough report. Here are some tips for making the most of this time and for presenting an evaluation that motivates:

#### **1. Cover only the most important points.**

Don't try to mention every item on your note pad. Highlight some aspects of the meeting that were done well. For example, suppose your club has had a problem with starting late but this one began on time. You should point out this accomplishment and offer praise. Likewise, mention only flaws that, in your opinion, seriously detracted from the quality of the meeting. For example, if the Topicmaster obviously had not prepared the Table Topics portion of the meeting, you might address this.

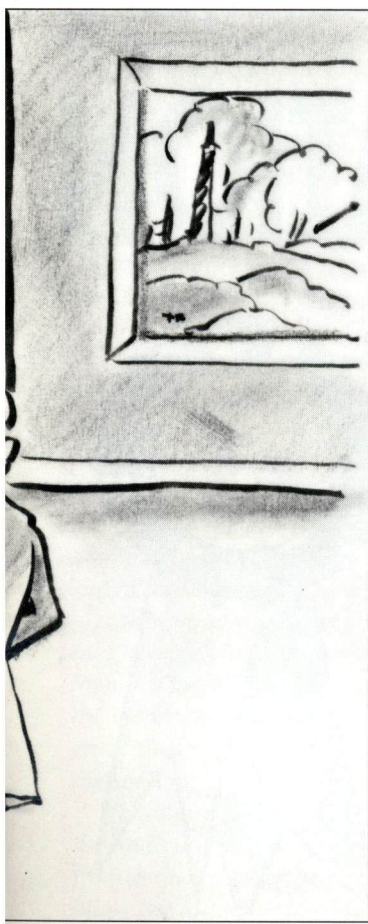
#### **2. Be direct.** Clarity and brevity are important, since time is limited.

**3. Be sensitive.** Never humiliate or embarrass anyone. One nervous meeting participant (and fairly new member) fidgeted with the zipper on his trousers as he spoke, creating awkward moments for his listeners. Fortunately, the General Evaluator spoke to the person privately after the meeting about his habit.

**4. Make it positive.** The overall tone of your evaluation should be encouraging and helpful. A good evaluation promotes personal development as well as club teamwork. You want to build participants' self-esteem and motivate them to do better next time. A positive approach is the best way to accomplish this.

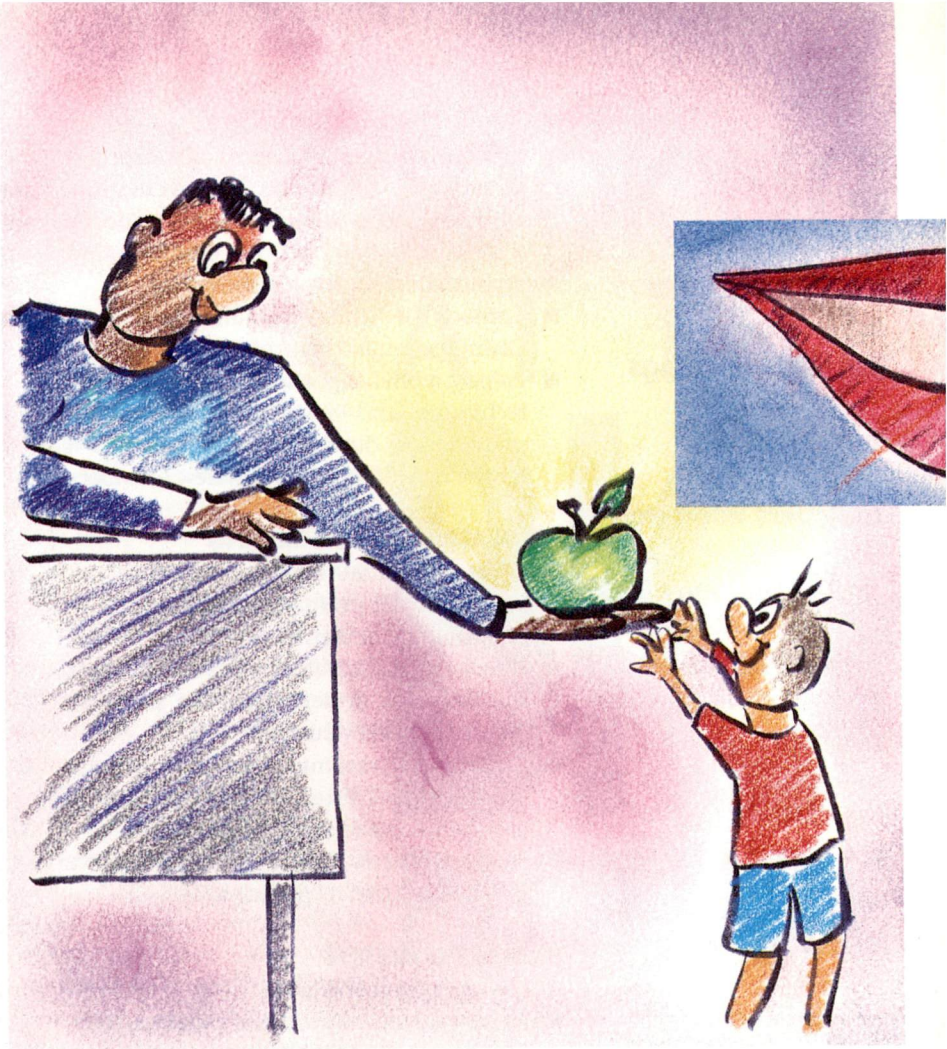
Constructive criticism is an art to be mastered in all relationships, whether at home, on the job, with friends or at Toastmasters meetings. While clarity, brevity and directness are necessary in an effective evaluation, the feelings of those being evaluated must remain the number one concern. Remember: evaluations set the tone for the level of excellence at each club meeting. They serve as learning experiences for each person present and promote teamwork as well as individual growth. So next time it's your turn to serve as General Evaluator, don't take your task lightly! **T**

**Robert L. Knotts, DTM**, served on Toastmasters' Board of Directors in 1963-65. He lives in Weslaco, Texas, and is a member of Harlingen Club 860-56.





"Make every word count toward providing the most useful feedback by using precise, well-edited word pictures."



# THE FRIENDLY EVALUATION

**How to make comments that influence speakers.**

**W**inning the area evaluation contest had been an honor. But now I was diligently preparing for District 3's evaluation contest and needed something to give me that extra edge. So how could I increase my effectiveness in (1) structuring an evaluation, (2) presenting it coherently and (3) providing substance that would help the speaker and possibly even the audience?

**BY MICHAEL E. SANDS, ATM**





I started to develop a format I hoped would serve all three of these objectives. By the day of the contest, I was confident that the plan would work. Eureka! My new approach was not only born, but successfully delivered as well.

To some Toastmasters, an evaluation simply means a series of ideas used to critique a speech. Others consider an evaluation something like a drill sergeant's checklist, i.e., "This was good / that was bad" / "This was done right / this was done wrong..."

Well, what is an evaluation, anyway? I perceive an evaluation as a short speech helping the speaker become better. Done properly, it can also provide tips to the audience and improve your own speaking skills as well. The most effective evaluation you can deliver is a smooth-flowing, extemporaneous speech that gives both the speaker and the audience the benefit of a hasty, yet well-formed analysis. Additionally, evaluators benefit by gaining confidence in the preparation and delivery of such a speech.

Good evaluations are characterized by organized format, focused observations, precise language and effective delivery. Let's take a look at each of these areas:

#### FORMATTING A FRAMEWORK

First, develop a format that will allow you to quickly organize your impressions and focus on a few key items. One method is the "sandwich approach": Positive comments, then suggestions for improvement, followed by words of encouragement. Begin by using a standard opening comment to introduce the major areas of the speech. Then proceed to the body of your evaluation, including strong points and positive impressions of the presentation. Follow with areas needing improvement, and offer tangible suggestions on how to improve. Conclude with highlights of the speaker's strengths, your positive impressions, suggestions for improvement, and a final encouraging statement.

I gave the following evaluation at a district contest using some of the ideas just mentioned:

*"An effective presentation usually includes building rapport with the audience through the use of humor and enthusiasm on the part of the speaker. Joan, your speech today included each one of these features. I felt comfortable immediately, I laughed with you and I was stimulated by your enthusiasm.*

*I compliment you on your ability to get the entire audience involved in an exercise designed to illustrate the speech theme. This allowed the audience to experience first hand the ideas you planned to relate. However, I did notice some areas that, if done differently, could have added impact to the speech.*

*For example, next time exaggerated gestures would help the audience visualize the message more effectively. Careful timing and pacing also would provide more impact and allow the audience to absorb the meaning of the ideas.*

*In all, Joan, you gave a fine presentation. I appreciated your ability to relate to the audience, your humor and enthusiasm. In conclusion, I would encourage the use of more effective body language, timing and pacing to maximize the power of the message. Joan, I wish you great success in your future public speaking endeavors!"*

You can alter this format to focus on selected aspects of speech content or delivery. Decide in advance with the speaker which features of the speech are to be observed and analyzed.

Keep in mind the type of speech and the level of the speaker's oratorical ability when developing the evaluation format. For instance, when evaluating an icebreaker speech, provide initial feedback on *general* strengths and weaknesses, as well as basic skills to improve. But evaluate an advanced speaker on more subtle aspects, such as timing, pacing and precise gesturing and language. Only specific observations change from evaluation to evaluation, not the format.

#### OBSERVE – DON'T INFER

Your evaluation will be most effective if you observe the speaker closely. The observations you make should be just that – observable – and analysis should be aimed at the effectiveness level of the speaker's actions and words. For instance, you can comment on how well a person gestured or used vocal variety. However, you cannot accurately observe how, or even if, a person has prepared adequately for the speech. Only an inference can be drawn, and such inferences are not useful to the speaker.

**"Your observations should be just that: observable – and analysis should be aimed at the effectiveness of the speaker's actions and words."**

#### PAINT WITH WORDS... PRECISELY!

Because an evaluation should last no longer than three minutes, it is impossible to evaluate every aspect of a speech. So make every word count toward providing the most useful feedback by using precise, well-edited "word pictures."

When evaluating speeches, many of us mention phrases such as "you had good eye contact" or "you did a good job with gestures." Based on these phrases, what specifically can the speaker assume worked well? Not much!

However, if such general phrases are combined with specifics on *why* something was effective, the feedback will have value. For instance, if a speaker uses gestures effectively, you might say, "Wayne, your gestures were effective, especially when explaining your struggles to reach the top of the mountain. The desperate grimace as you reached to grip imaginary boulders had us all on the edge of our seats." After a comment like that, Wayne knows the strengths of his performance and what effect it had on you.



Make every effort to edit the evaluation before presenting it. Some editing, of course, is done while forming the evaluation. If your format already includes standard phrases, however, the editing process should proceed more effectively. For example, if the speaker misses opportunities to use vocal variety, you can cover this under a standard phrase, such as, *"Wayne, you used some vocal variety, but there were several other opportunities to do so. I'm thinking of the time when you described your fears of falling. Vocal inflection at this point would have helped make that experience more immediate."* By reviewing general phrases before the evaluation, you can focus on specific examples during the speech and relate them to the general phrases.

Word pictures will add more 'punch' to an evaluation and say much more than just trite terms. In three minutes, an evaluation needs to paint pictures in the minds of the speaker and the audience that would otherwise take hundreds of words. Use terms that stimulate mental pictures of how the speaker appeared before the audience and let your words speak to as many senses as possible.

For instance, you might say, *"Maria, your gestures caused me to visualize the events you described, and your vocal variety clearly conveyed the emotions of the characters in your speech. My stomach dropped when you described the turbulence encountered during the flight. And I could almost taste that rubber chicken served on the airline!"* Word pictures and feelings can convey vital feedback for the speaker and provide ideas for future speeches.

#### SAY IT WITH TACT

Try not to sound accusatory. Because an evaluator is addressing the speaker, the word "you" is frequently used. Saying "you should," "you did" or "you could" too many times can make the speaker defensive. So make sure to phrase your comments tactfully and carefully. You want the speaker to feel relaxed and attentive.

Evaluating the speeches of fellow club members is a tremendous opportunity for you. Challenge yourself to make each evaluation benefit not only to the speaker and the audience, but yourself as well. **T**

**Michael E. Sands, ATM**, is a member of Old Pueblo Orators in Tucson, Arizona.

# EVALUATE: Straight from the Heart

A good evaluation, what does it take?  
It takes sensitivity, that you can't fake.

It takes positive feedback, and the good things they do,  
along with a few suggestions before you're through.

Avoid criticism, nitpicking, and looking for something wrong.  
Look for what they do right, search for the good and the strong.

When you evaluate others, your kindness is on display.  
You can build others up, or you can surely ruin their day.

Your guests are watching to see your level of tact.  
Depending on the delivery, they may or may not be back.

Evaluating others helps you practice what you preach.  
When you share suggestions, it gives you a high standard to reach.

So if you want to be a better speaker, and you know we all do;  
Keep giving speeches, but evaluate too.

For this is one more way, to let your creativity flow.  
Unleash your potential so that we will ALL grow.

*By L. Jane Draughn, DTM*  
*President, Mobile Club*  
*226-29 in Mobile, Alabama*



# Stretch Your Evaluation Skills

By Penny Wilkes, ATM

The evaluation process provides a two-way opportunity to stretch your skills as a speaker, evaluator, or audience member. As an evaluator, you learn to listen effectively and to diplomatically express your thoughts about the speaker's strengths and limitations. You also gain valuable insights into the diverse opinions of others as they evaluate you.

You've probably not always taken the time to write helpful comments. Or, you've tossed your evaluation slips immediately following the meeting. Maybe once or twice you've overreacted to criticism?

Keep the following suggestions in mind as you receive and give evaluations:

## WHEN EVALUATING

- Think fast. Creative evaluation requires rapid listening and reactions that are gentle, honest and helpful.
- Take notes – it will help you remember subtle aspects of the speech.
- Be specific. Tell the speaker what grabbed your attention. Don't begin with generalities like, "I really liked your speech."

- Use the "sandwich approach" – start with a positive comment, follow with constructive criticism, and always end on an upbeat note. Use humor to soften the punch.

## WHEN RECEIVING AN EVALUATION

1. Try to disengage your ego. Others' insights and reactions are their perceptions only, and not necessarily reflecting the opinions of the entire audience.
2. Take notes during your evaluator's presentation in case the evaluator forgets to write down some points in your manual.
3. Listen carefully to your evaluator's concerns without worrying about why the person did not understand your intentions.
4. Ask for further clarification from fellow Toastmasters on their comments, but try not to feel defensive and explain, "Well I meant..." Questions are raised because you did not communicate precisely what you meant.
5. You may misread your evaluation slips because of the tension and excitement of speaking. Keep them to reread a day later when you have settled down.

T

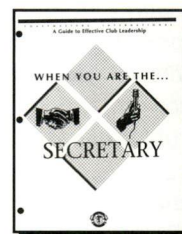
*Penny Wilkes, ATM*, is owner of Creative Communications and a member of Toastmasters of La Jolla Club 895-5 and Laughmasters Club 4727-5 in San Diego, California.

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A GOOD  
EVALUATION  
ENCOMPASSES  
ATTENTIVE  
LISTENING,  
FOCUSED  
THINKING AND  
EMPOWERED  
SPEAKING.

“**H**ow can I make my evaluations that good?” a new Toastmaster often asks after hearing a well-presented evaluation. Experienced Toastmasters aren’t immune to this question, either. While I can’t claim to have found the perfect solution, I can at least document what has seemed to work in my 12 years as a Toastmaster.

Without a doubt, Toastmasters who regularly attend club meetings have ample opportunity to hear different speech evaluations. When an evaluation is successful, three things happen:

- The **speaker** is shown how to improve the weaker aspects of his speaking skills, and how to build on existing strengths.
- The **evaluator** only mentions significant aspects of the speech that will help the speaker to improve.
- Other **club members** learn to develop their own quality evaluations.

To consistently get these results from speech evaluations, you as an evaluator can adopt a

process that emphasizes **attentive listening, focused thinking and empowered speaking.**

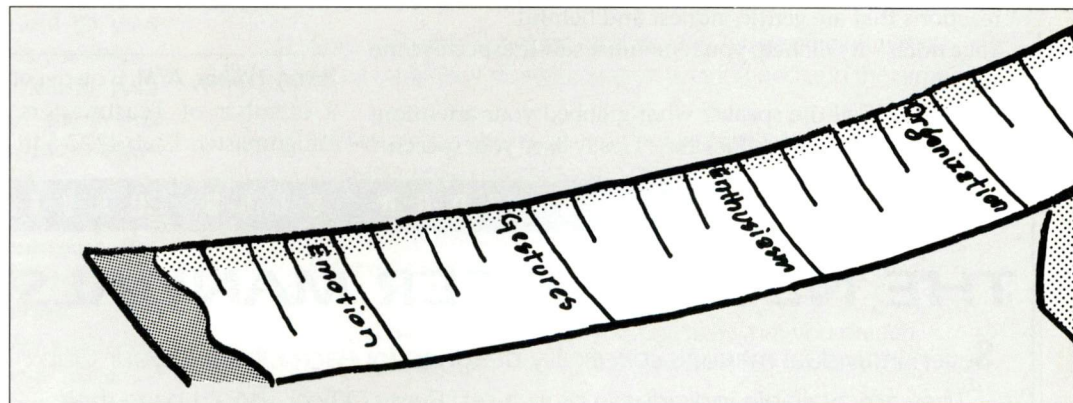
Whenever those three components are successfully integrated in my speech evaluations, I am able to deliver evaluations that are positive, constructive and mention only the most important suggestions for improvement.

When an evaluation encompasses these components, Toastmasters are presented with a model that shows how criticism can be done in a supportive and caring way – what a terrific skill to incorporate into our personal as well as professional lives!

As we turn our attention toward a more detailed explanation of this process of evaluation, remember that – as with most Toastmasters activities – the key is always practice, practice, practice.

#### PREPARING THE EVALUATION

When you are scheduled to evaluate, begin by reviewing the purpose and objectives of the speech. Next, read the criteria in the evaluation form in the speech manual. Finally, determine



# Do your Evaluations MEASURE UP?

By John J. Candelaria, ATM

from the speaker any specific needs or goals he or she may have for this particular speech.

Summarize this information on the left side of a writing pad. Now you are prepared to listen, observe and comment on the speaker’s presentation.

#### ATTENTIVE LISTENING

Attentive listening involves using all our senses to hear, see and feel the speaker’s message, making sure to note the cohesiveness of content, organization and delivery. Pay close attention to the speaker’s use of intangible factors such as energy, enthusiasm and emotion to help carry the message.

I remember hearing a speaker enthusiastically describe how Toastmasters had helped



**"Don't be distracted by emotional or entertaining aspects of the speech, or any unrelated activity in the room."**

him build his confidence and self-esteem, ultimately bringing about positive changes in his life. By allowing his emotions to show, his message became especially powerful.

Obviously, an evaluator must be *selective*. She must know what to choose, understand what is important, and only use information that will (1) help the speaker improve and (2) enhance those skills already developed. A particular challenge is the many variables to choose from. Since they are interconnected, separating them from the whole for analysis and explanation can result in emphasizing the insignificant over the significant. When this occurs, you are likely to have a "white-wash" evaluation, or a thoroughly negative evaluation. As the evaluator you see, hear and feel what the speaker is saying. You then write the selected information on the right side of the writing pad. This information is the subject of focused thinking by you, the evaluator.

#### **FOCUSED THINKING**

At this point, you are ready to compare your observations to the information – speech purpose, manual criteria and speaker goals – on the left side of the writing pad. You must now refine your observations to make them suitable for oral presentation.

Keep in mind that you are creating a mini speech with a definite opening, discussion and conclusion. Use this information to complete the written portion of the evaluation. It's also important to recognize that, as evaluator, you cannot be distracted by emotional or entertaining aspects of the speech, or any activity in the room. I've often heard evaluators comment that they were so enthralled by the content of the speech that they forgot to concentrate on the other aspects of the presentation. Obviously, this doesn't help the speaker.

Once you have focused on the most important observations, you are now prepared to deliver a powerful evaluation.

#### **EMPOWERED SPEAKING**

An effective evaluation uses effective listening and thinking as the building blocks. If you have those two components under your belt, you already know how the speaker can improve his or her next speech.

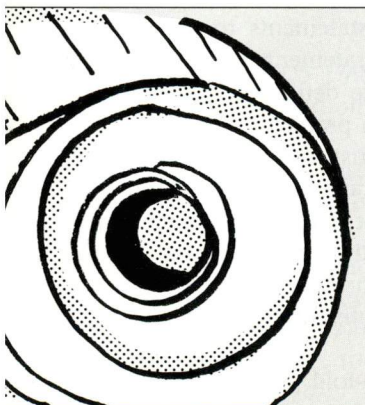
An effective evaluation highlights two significant concepts: Emphasis over evaluation, and transference of responsibility.

1. **Emphasis.** Present suggestions for improvement that allow speakers to change their thinking rather than eliminate an unwanted aspect in their speaking. For example, don't suggest eliminating "ahs" per se – after all, an "ah" is a pause, and pauses are necessary in effective speaking. Suggest instead that the "ah" be replaced with another word – maybe "and" – or just an actual pause that lets the thought or ideas take root in the listeners mind. Appropriate use and combination, not elimination, must be emphasized.

2. **Transference of responsibility.** An evaluation that uses empowered speaking also transfers to the person being evaluated the responsibility for taking the actions necessary to improve their skills. An evaluation that uses empowered speaking leaves no doubt as to how the speech can be improved.

In summary, the value of evaluation encompasses attentive listening, focused thinking and empowered speaking. When you incorporate each of these points into your evaluation, the results will be beneficial to all. **T**

*John Candelaria, ATM*, a Toastmaster for 12 years, is a member of Sandia Club 765-23 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.



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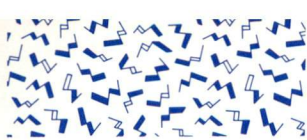
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## HOW TO

# The purpose is GROWTH

By **Bob E. Couch,**  
Ph.D., CTM

■ You have spent considerable time gathering the information, writing and rewriting the speech and practicing the delivery. It's been a great deal of work, but you're finally ready to present your speech at the Toastmasters club meeting. You have benefitted greatly by this preparation process. As you walk back to your seat and sit down, you ask yourself, "Is that all there is to it?" The answer is no! For now comes the most important part of the learning procedure: the evaluation of your speech by a fellow club member.

An evaluator has the responsibility to make comments that will help you grow not only as a speaker, but personally and professionally as well. Like the traditional "Three Rs" of teaching, an evaluation can be divided into three "C" categories:

### **Compliment, Critique and Challenge.**

An evaluator's initial comments ought to *compliment* any aspect of a speaker's performance. Physical appearance is a good place to start;

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### EVALUATIONS SHOULDN'T BE TAKEN LIGHTLY.

---

after all, many people believe "you are what you wear." So it stands to reason that physical appearance can and will set the mood for the presentation.

If for some reason comments about appearance are not appropriate, compliment any other aspect of the presentation, such as the fact that the speaker did not use note cards, or that the ones used were small and hidden from the audience.

Next, the evaluator might look for a sincere smile and an enthusiastic approach to the lectern. A speaker's enthusiasm in shaking hands with the Toastmaster and moving right into the topic can excite an audience and make people eager to listen to the message.

Other areas of a presentation that can also be complimented are:

- Suitability and timeliness of speech material
- Volume and voice inflection
- Pitch, pace and pause
- Eye contact
- Appropriateness of gestures
- Body language
- Effective use of microphone

The second phase of the evaluation, *critique*, is meant to recognize areas the evaluator would have liked to compliment, but was unable because they detracted from the effectiveness of the presentation. Aspects such as attire, speech material, presentation techniques and delivery should be considered. Importantly, the evaluator should tell how each area mentioned affected the speech.

During phase three, *challenge*, the evaluator can make specific and dramatic comments about the one or two areas where improvement will be

most noticeable in the speaker's next presentation. These may include:

- Voice
- Eye contact
- Gestures
- Body language
- Vocal variety
- Enthusiasm

For example, in discussing vocal variety, the evaluator may repeat and imitate a couple of the speaker's statements to demonstrate how these same statements could have been spoken with more definition and emotion. Another common problem, lack of eye contact, can be demonstrated by the evaluator as a way to draw the audience into the presentation. The evaluator can always repeat effective gestures and body language used by the speaker, or demonstrate how gestures would have made the presentation more exciting and alive.

There is a two-fold purpose in this third phase of the evaluation: (1) to challenge the evaluator to be specific and dramatic with all comments and (2) to recognize, in detail, the presentation's strong points and then challenge the speaker to improve specific areas when preparing and presenting the next manual speech.

Being an evaluator is like being a parent: You have the responsibility of helping another person grow to achieve their potential, and you have a very short time in which to do it. But at its best, evaluating, – like parenting – nurtures, corrects, stimulates and provides an optimal experience for growth and personal development. **T**

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**Bob E. Couch, Ph.D., CTM**, a member of Business-Professional Club 2207-56, is a professional speaker and seminar leader in San Antonio, Texas.





# UPDATE

already spent!) I even got to give a plug for Toastmasters on national TV during the interview portion of the program.

By Alan Badger, CTM

As a software engineer from Monterey, California, I'd been daydreaming for years about

of people will be watching you. You'll need nerves of steel, and Toastmasters is just the place to temper any fears or anxieties.

■ Next, get a home video game and play until you're bored stiff. Half of the strategy

## BEING A TOASTMASTER PUT ME IN JEOPARDY!

CALIFORNIA  
TOASTMASTER  
WINS BIG  
ON POPULAR  
GAME SHOW.

EVERY ONE OF US HAS dreams that lie beyond our grasp – or so we think.

Thanks largely to Toastmasters, my dream recently became a reality when I appeared on the popular television game show *Jeopardy!* and won over \$40,000. (Please, no phone calls – it's

testing my knowledge on *Jeopardy!* However, it wasn't until I joined Garden Variety Toastmasters (4547-4) and eventually Monterey Peninsula Club (934-4) that I developed the self-confidence and courage necessary to participate in a studio audition.

Becoming a Toastmaster three years ago began a trend that steered me toward that once "unreachable" goal. In addition to becoming an active participant and earning a CTM, for example, I also got involved in Monterey's community theater program – good *Jeopardy!* training, even if my first stage part was that of a catatonic lobotomy patient.

For anyone who has ever considered auditioning for *Jeopardy!*, I would recommend three things – and studying is not among them. (After all, if you're *Jeopardy!* material, you're the kind of person who accumulates trivia without even thinking about it.) Instead, do the following:

■ Stay in Toastmasters! There is no better way to prepare for the moment when millions

is knowing useless information; the other half is hitting a button at exactly the right moment.

■ Finally, get plenty of exercise, eat right, and get a good night's sleep. Most game shows make the contestants stand, and that's very draining. It's vital to care for the body if you want to improve your mind.

The most important thing I've gained from my *Jeopardy!* experience is not the money, or even the ephemeral celebrity; it's the knowledge that every one of us can fulfill dreams and ambitions that might ordinarily seem unattainable. Toastmasters helped me gain necessary skills and made me realize that I could reach further than I had ever imagined! **T**

Alan Badger, CTM, is a member of two Toastmasters clubs in Monterey, California. He's also an origami (paperfolding) enthusiast and collects, among other items, plastic wind-up toys and cartoon character drinking glasses.

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-Winston Churchill



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By Leslie M. Gibson,  
R.N., B.S.

# JEST FOR THE HEALTH OF IT!

## THE SENSES AND A SENSE OF HUMOR

*"...What's too painful  
to remember  
we simply choose  
to forget.*

*So it's the laughter  
we will remember  
Whenever we  
remember  
the way we were..."*

**BARBARA STREISAND  
THE WAY WE WERE**

A good sense of humor is both a protective shield and a vehicle for survival. By enhancing it, you can reduce stress and learn to have fun.

Consider your biological senses: sight, sound, taste, touch and smell. Each of these allows you to perceive your environment. When any of these senses become distorted, the distortion can often be corrected by medical treatment (such as sinus antihistamines) or supplemental devices (glasses or hearing aids).

What if one of the senses is not merely distorted but almost totally withdrawn? Take the sense



of touch, for instance. One of the warmest expressions two people can share is the embrace of a hug, signifying warmth and sincerity. But research suggests that a child who dies from infant-death syndrome has had little or none of the warmth normally provided by human contact.

Sensory feedback begins at the earliest stages of human life. Most infants, for example, begin to smile after about two to ten days. Thought to be only random muscular movements, these smiles are often reinforced by parents, who smile back. Once this response is promoted, the baby smiles at everyone, instinctively knowing that someone will return that smile. From this moment, a sense of humor has been born.

**C**hildren, in fact, have the uninhibited ability to perceive humor in any situation, and they easily laugh at themselves. But as we grow older and assume more responsibilities, we sometimes face failure, illness, financial pressures, or any number of tragedies that can make laughter seem like the least likely solution. As a result, our sense of humor and perspective is suppressed. Studies have shown, for example, that the average four-year-old laughs about 400 times a day, while the average adult only laughs about 15 or 16 times a day.

Our senses have been designed to provide us with the tools necessary to gather information and provide safety from our environment. If a person is unfortunate enough to lose any or all sensory contact yet is able to maintain a sense of humor, that person's attitude can still be improved. So it stands to reason that the loss of a sense of humor is the most significant form of sensory deprivation.

An example of a great sense of humor was displayed by one of my paraplegic patients. He was 35 years old and frustrated with his new lifestyle. One day he requested that I come to his room. He was lying in bed, wearing a pair of Groucho glasses with bushy eyebrows and a big nose. Laughing, I asked if he had better vision with the new glasses. "Are you the nurse who promotes laughter?" he countered. "Yes," I said. With a beautiful smile on his face, he said, "Well, I want to tell you something. If you can't be good in bed, at least be funny!" After sharing a hug and laughter, I knew this young man was on the road to rehabilitation.

Just as we should wear corrective lenses when our vision becomes distorted, we need to remember our sense of humor when our lifestyle begins to lose its focus. Laughter can be used effectively as a "safety valve" for the release of tension or stress. It allows ventilation of pent-up feelings or frustration.

Moreover, a well-developed sense of humor can preserve our self-respect and protect us from self-pity. In fact, when we can poke fun at the tension areas in our lives, we are better prepared to deal with them. And if we can laugh about ourselves first, other people will find it difficult to laugh at us. It has been said that a person's maturity can be measured by his ability to laugh at himself. Of course, this is not always easy.

When you discover a person with a good sense of humor, you can be sure he worked to acquire it. Life is like a boomerang: it will return just exactly what you have projected. So if you want meaning and direction in life, you have to put it there. If you want friends, you have to be one. If you want love, you have to give it.

A healthy sense of humor has no economic or cultural boundaries. Regardless of who you are or what you have come from, humor can become your protective shield and a vehicle for survival.

A variety of definitions have been elicited from participants in my workshops. Here are some replies to the statement: "A sense of humor is someone who...":

- Can laugh at himself.
- Can find something humorous in every situation.
- Can laugh along with others.
- Is able to tell a joke.
- Is able to see the bright side of a hopeless situation.
- Has a "relief valve" in times of tension.

**A**n important aspect of developing a sense of humor is the exercise of a "humor strategy." It is our responsibility to create opportunities so as to better enjoy ourselves, our friends, our experiences and our lives. And every day offers new possibilities for enhancing one's personal sense of humor.

Reflect on the innocent joy expressed in a child's smile. Recognize the boomerang effect. Receive and use as many corrective techniques as possible. In this way, you will never lose that most wonderful of all the senses: your sense of humor.

Finally, think of the words of master comedian/entertainer Victor Borge: "Laughter is the

shortest distance between two people."

So, keep smilin'!



**Leslie M. Gibson, R.N., B.S.**, created the Comedy Cart Program for Morton Plant Hospital in Clearwater, Florida, which provides humor stimulation for hospitalized patients. She is a popular speaker, teacher and author of *Laughter: The Universal Language*.

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**"Just as we should**

**wear corrective**

**lenses when our**

**vision becomes**

**distorted, we**

**need to remember**

**our sense of**

**humor when our**

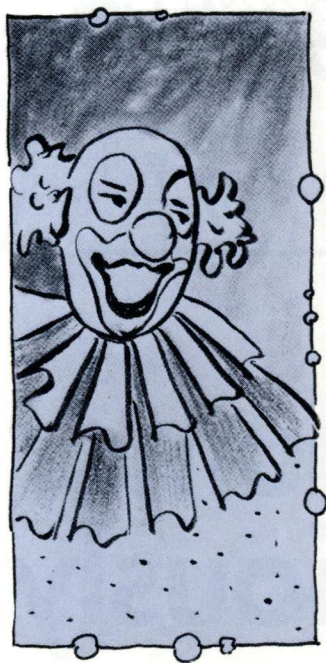
**lifestyle begins to**

**lose its focus."**



# THE COMEDY CONNECTION:

## CLOWNS AREN'T JUST FOR KIDS.



*“A merry heart works like medicine; a downcast spirit dries the bones.”*

PROVERBS 17:22

**T**herapeutic humor is any positive interaction that, when used constructively, will maintain, enhance or improve a person's physical or emotional well-being. Children's hospitals have long used humor to cheer up their young patients.

But clowns aren't just for kids. About 40 members of the auxiliary at Morton Plant Hospital, a 700-bed facility in Clearwater, Florida, dress up as clowns and visit children and adult patients on request. The volunteers take an eight-week training course from professional clowns.

In 1989, after receiving a grant from the Humor Project at the Saratoga Institute in New York, the Department of Education and Institute of Neurosciences at Morton Plant Hospital created a cart filled with comedy resources. The program has several goals:

- To enhance the physiological or psychological needs of a patient.
- To serve as an interdepartmental humor-resource center.
- To provide a vehicle for humor research.

Leslie Gibson, a registered nurse, developed the humor-therapy program to put smiles on the faces of Morton Plant patients and health-care professionals alike. One part of the program is a home-study course for healthcare professionals; the other is the Comedy Cart, which carries funny videos, books, gag gifts and toys and games to patients' bedsides.

The adage “laughter is the best medicine” can be traced as far back as the Bible, says Gibson, quoting Proverbs 17:22:

“I have a videotape of a 95-year-old woman, who is blind and slightly deaf, and you clearly can see how she reacted when we put a Walkman on her head with a Burns and Allen tape on it. She started laughing, and you could see such a transformation – from depression to happiness,” says Gibson.

Humor therapy began to receive serious attention after the publication of Norman Cousins' 1979 book, *Anatomy of An Illness*, in which the author claims to have cured his collagen-related degenerative spinal disease by a regular diet of “Candid Camera” TV episodes and funny movies.

According to Gibson, “Humor plays a diversional role in pain reduction. In my 15 years as a nurse, I've developed a way to find out what makes people laugh. I never leave a patient's bedside without some form of humor: a joke or something. Even hospice patients can benefit. Quality of life is important, no matter where a person is in the life cycle.” Laughter stimulates the release of endorphins, the body's own pain relievers, Gibson says.

Several customized Comedy Carts are operated by the Morton Plant Hospital's auxiliary. Upon admittance, patients receive a catalog of the cart's offerings and are encouraged to call the Comedy Cart office for “free humor therapy.”

For more information on this program, contact the Morton Plant Hospital Auxiliary, P.O. Box 210, Clearwater, FL 34617 (813) 461-8010. T

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By Victor Raskin, Ph.D.

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HUMOR

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RESEARCH IS

---

NO LAUGHING

---

MATTER.

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# Taking humor seriously

**D**ON'T ASK ME WHY HUMOR SHOULD be researched – ask me why humor research should be funny! Actually, don't ask; I'll answer both questions anyway.

Back in 1976, *Time* magazine devoted a whole page to the First International Conference On Humor in Cardiff, Wales. This venerable publication wasn't the least bit concerned about the psychology, philosophy, sociology, anthropology or linguistics of humor. Rather, most of the page was filled by two photographs: one of a yawning man, the other of a couple of back-benchers dozing away at the session. Get it? A conference was held on humor, but the participants were bored!

Why should a conference on humor research be funny? Should research on schizophrenia be schizophrenic? Is sexology supposed to be sexually arousing? Research is research is research. Research is serious, respectable and... well, boring. In fact, it is one of my missions in life, secondary only to slaving for my wife and daughter, to make sure that humor research be serious and respectable. Boring is a bonus.

I edit the flagship journal of humor research called *Live and Die Laughing*. No, not really. I wish this were its title. It's actually called *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research* – a name that exudes respectability, even if I did think of it myself. I screen each article for the slightest signs of hilarity or exuberance. Then I farm it out to other humor researchers for the tightest peer review in the industry. Finally, vivisected to bits, the article is ready for our journal.

Since the 1976 media fiasco, we have wised up considerably. Each subsequent conference has featured a small group of funny hired help to mix with the media in the front rooms. In the back rooms, however, the respectable business of humor research has continued unabated, complete with yawners and dozers.

Our Ninth International Conference On Humor was held last June on the campus of Brock University in St. Catherine's, Ontario.





States in the mid-1970s. Now there are more than 450 prosperous ones. And people do not go there for food or drinks – even at the renowned Improv in Los Angeles, the owner continues to get razzed about burned food and diluted drinks. But people still line up and pay a hefty cover price to listen to professional and amateur comedians. In the same period, the amount of stand-up comedy on TV has grown manifold, and there are actually funny sitcoms on the air.

The megabucks of the humor industry will convince even the most jocular among us that humor is a very serious phenomenon. Humor researchers have known it all along, as has just about every major thinker and philosopher since the recorded world. After centuries of discussion and analysis, three major schools of thought about humor have emerged: **The aggression theory, the incongruity theory, and the release theory.**

Why there? Simple: it's 10 miles from Niagara Falls. You dare tell a joke at the conference? We'll throw you down the falls!

Our *HUMOR Journal* is published quarterly and prints about 20 articles a year on important scientific topics, such as "The importance of hair in Turkish cartoons," or "Gender differences in humor appreciation." A few jokes occasionally find their way into a section of it when I'm not looking. Of course, the articles are awash with funny examples, but that's okay because we analyze them to death. By 1989 our *Journal* even gave birth to the International Society of Humor Studies. *The HUMOR Journal* is published in Berlin, typeset in England, printed in Singapore, and my copies arrive in jute sacks, marked "Cocoa Beans," from the Dominican Republic. We are truly multinational by now...

#### HUMOR HEALS...AND SELLS

Well, after reeling off all this background information, I think I have made my point about the serious nature of humor research. As Toastmasters, you do not have to be convinced of the serious power of humor. Humor persuades, sells and elects. Humor can also deprecate, convict and depose. Most importantly, humor bonds, relaxes and creates an atmosphere of good will. It's worth noting that humor can cure stress, high blood pressure, hypochondria (except mine), and a host of other ailments.

Humor also sells itself, effectively! There were 21 fledgling comedy clubs in the United

#### THE AGGRESSION THEORY: WIT VS. HIT

Plato and Aristotle believed it. So did 17th Century philosopher Thomas Hobbes and evolutionist Charles Darwin. Contemporary scholars, such as University of Georgia communications professor Charles Gruner and philosopher John Morreall of the Rochester Institute of Technology also concur that the basis of humor is assault; that we enjoy laughing at the misfortunes of others; and that laughter is a way to establish superiority. For this learned group, verbal wit is just a civilized replacement for physical hostility.

For example, instead of giving each other punches on the nose, the theory goes, we verbally ridicule the shape of that same organ. Likewise, ethnic humor is hostile, as are political and sexual humor. On the other hand, I wonder what Darwin would find hostile about this elephant joke from the 1950s:

*"How does an elephant climb down a tree?"  
"It stands on a leaf and waits for September to come."*

Ardent proponents of the aggression theory say that hostility is a prime component of humor because the speaker tricks the listener. Telling jokes, they add, is also an act of one-upmanship: I make you laugh, you are briefly disarmed by laughter, ergo, I manipulate and control you. Well, if that's the case, it looks

**"Some scholars believe that verbal wit is just a civilized replacement for physical hostility."**



# DESTRUCTIVE FORMS OF HUMOR

By Leslie Gibson, R.N.

The purpose of healthy humor is to increase self esteem and promote positive attitudes. It is a very powerful tool that can be applied in destructive ways. Many people find it difficult to distinguish between being laughed at or being laughed with.

Here are various forms of inappropriate and destructive humor and some of their negative side effects:

**SLANDER** – A spoken statement that can injure someone's reputation and lead to legal action.

**RIDICULE** – Used to incite laughter at a person or a thing. Can provoke a negative attitude.

**SARCASM** – A bitter, cutting expression used frequently during anger.

**SATIRE** – Ironic sarcasm or ridicule used to scorn a subject.

**TEASING** – Disturbing by persistent petty annoyance; targeting a person or object to be laughed at.

**EXCLUSIVE HUMOR** – Used to shut out or isolate others from association or activities.

**MALICIOUS HUMOR** – Verbal jabs meant to injure or produce evil effects.

**PRACTICAL JOKE** – A prank or playful trick subjecting someone to embarrassment.

**SEXUAL HUMOR** – Pertaining to sex or the sexes. Can be vulgar and sexist.

**ETHNIC HUMOR** – Pertaining to a group of people sharing a common set of customs or traits. Promotes stereotypes.

that we just love to be one-downed – and in large numbers!

## THEORY OF INCONGRUITY: THE GIRL KANT HELP IT

Schopenhauer, Kant and Bergson, as well as most 20th century psychologists of humor, have favored the incongruity theory. It states that two very different situations, totally incongruous from a common sense point of view, are unexpectedly brought together with some kind of weird logic. What happens is that we are deliberately misled up the proverbial "garden path" and then suddenly confronted with a different situation. A very typical garden path can be found in this fairly recent joke:

*"George Bush has a short one. Gorbachev has a longer one. The Pope has one but doesn't use it, Madonna does not have one."*

What is it? A last name, of course. What did you think?

Incidentally, one of the professional hazards of a humor researcher is the necessity to objectively analyze jokes one may find distasteful. If you faint at the sight of blood, don't become a physician; if you can be offended by a joke, don't become a humor researcher!

## GET A RELEASE ON LIFE

Spencer, Freud and just about every psychoanalyst has treated humor as a release mechanism, a safety valve from the constraints, restrictions and taboos – a logic-free burst of extra intellectual energy. According to Harvey Mindess, a Los Angeles psychologist of Antioch University West, laughter liberates. One of Harvey's favorites is this simple joke:

*"Are you a psychiatrist?"*

*"Why do you ask?"*

*"You are a psychiatrist!"*

Freud took the release idea a little too far, however, when he suggested that a man may tell a dirty joke instead of making a pass at a woman. Personally speaking, I think there's a chance only if (1) the man smiles irresistibly while telling the dirty joke and (2) the woman does not understand the language he is speaking. Nonetheless, many psychiatrists favor laughter therapy, and proponents such as the late Norman Cousins have made laughter self-therapy quite popular.

Today, a plethora of seminars, workshops and lectures are offered about the curative powers of humor and laughter. Since 1977, The HUMOR Project Inc., led by Dr. Joel Goodman in Saratoga Springs, New York, has pioneered a focus on the positive power of humor and creativity. The organization provides practical services and resources that help people – especially in large corporations – to use humor as an antidote for stress. Also notable is Leslie Gibson, a brilliant nurse from Dunedin, Florida, who has written *The Healthy Humor Home Study Course* and is famous for her laughter therapy with terminally ill people and their loved ones. (See her article on page 16.)

No matter what your theory might be, there's no denying that humor is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon that bears closer study by linguists, communicators, philosophers, psychologists, physicians and anthropologists. It is a cultural commodity, influenced by sociology, social psychology, history and political science. And humor is replete with patterns and structures that lay themselves open to mathematical and logical scrutiny. Serial jokes, like "How many \_\_\_\_ does it take to change a light bulb?" can even be computer generated.

Far from being simple joke dissectors, researchers come up with practical results that comedy writers, stand-up comedians, public speakers, and yes, even Toastmasters should probably know about. How to assemble jokes? (Best of all, from scratch.) What kind of humor offends the audience? (The kind that makes fun of its strongly held beliefs.) What are the gender differences in humor? (The answer may surprise you.) Or, is humor an acceptable factor in public speaking in all cultures? (Mandatory in the United States, an absolute no-no in Arab countries.)

And so on and so forth. Humor research, you see, provides a solid theoretical and empirical foundation for a practitioner's intuitions and experiences – and it yields quite a few surprises as well.

Is humor research really boring? Of course not – if you like humor. Is it serious? Absolutely! But always remember that it's fun to preach what you practice. T

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**Dr. Victor Raskin** is a professor of English and Linguistics at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, and editor of *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*.



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STAND-UP AND THAT  
SINKING FEELING: COMEDY  
IS A HORRIBLE WAY TO DIE.

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## HUMOR IS MORE THAN MERE JOKE TELLING

By Carol Richardson

Picture category, the most recent 17 years ago: Woody Allen's sublime *Annie Hall*. Best Pictures are usually reserved for more "high minded" films (this year's winner notwithstanding). Even Mr. Allen has spent his directing career conflicted, torn between making "funny" and "important" films. The notion persists that the great themes are serious ones. Humor, in contrast, is puny and inconsequential.

But once you've made a case for humor's importance, you have a new problem. If you stress humor's seriousness, its essence is lost. Over-analysis ruins the humor. The great essayist E. B. White commented that analyzing humor is like pithing a frog; the very process of finding out what makes humor work leaves it lifeless. As Wolcott Gibbs write of Max Eastman's *The Enjoyment of Laughter*, "It seems to me Eastman has got American humor down and broken its arm." So at the risk of appearing an embarrassing ribnuder, I offer these few comments on laughing matters.

Perhaps it goes without saying that humor is much more than mere joke telling. Indeed, the practice of tacking a joke on the front of a speech to "warm up" the audience is typically artificial and a little too calculated. I'm reminded of the Gary Larson cartoon in which we peer over Abe Lincoln's shoulder to read his Gettysburg Address notes. We read: "And so the bartender says, 'Hey! That's not a duck!' (Wait for laughter) Four score and seven years ago...."

Too often this type of opening joke relies on stereotypes, be they ethnic, sexist, religious, or even occupational. Humor like this is

destined to go belly-up. And rightly so. As a former librarian, I can tell you how tiresome it is to be the butt of some stale gag about bunwearing, patron-shushing spinsters.

Public speakers ordinarily avoid offending their audience. At least with something as

predictable as a slur that arises from a certain meanness, or at least insensitivity. True humor can indeed be subversive and ultimately provocative. But that requires a deft speaker who knows exactly what she's doing.

Indeed, that is one of humor's greatest functions. While its friendly ambience gets under your skin, it can subtly begin to work on prejudices and preconceptions. Where in-your-face confrontation risks hostility, humor can be a Trojan horse bearing an uncomfortable message in a likeable guise.

Consider, for example, Woody Allen's quip, "I don't want to achieve immortality through my work. I want to achieve it through not dying." On one level, this is just a funny line. Yet on another, it has something serious to say about fear of death while it skewers the sentimental notion of one's legacy.

But humor is not only for comic Cassandras. It can be gently and good natured, like Garrison Keillor's recollections of Lake Wobegone. It can have bite, like an Ian Shoales commentary. Or, it can simply make you laugh out loud, like Mark Twain's tales of his *Innocents Abroad*.

Quips, punchlines, and bemused banter are devices skilled speakers use to draw us into their point of view. And from laughter comes recognition, which in turn leads to thought. Whatever form humor takes, though, it has, in E.B. White's words, "extra content. It plays, like an active child, close to the big hot fire of truth." **T**

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

■ Glance through any personals column and, aside from "enjoys moonlit walks on the beach," the number one trait people ascribe to themselves is a sense of humor. And yet probably no quality is as ineffable.

Certainly humor is a difficult subject to write about. The first hurdle is making the subject seem significant. Something intended for laughs is not easily taken seriously. The Academy Awards is a case in point. You could count on one hand the number of comedies that have won the Best



## Turn speaking skills into professional payoffs.

**F**or high professional visibility, credibility and profitability, why not become a seminar leader in your own special area of interest? After all, based on your education and experiences, you have a unique set of

information that someone else might want to pay to hear about. You could share this knowledge through seminars or workshops, not only to supplement your income, but also to draw attention to yourself as an expert in the field. Who knows, conducting seminars might even turn into a lucrative and satisfying fulltime career.

Seminars are big business. Dun & Bradstreet reports as many as two million people enroll in programs each year. In fact, there are an estimated 2,000 full time seminar leaders nationwide, who get paid more than a total of \$18 million for their services. Business people are always hungry for new information and, due to time constraints, search for condensed, personalized information.

"In this age of rapid technological advancement and intense competition, training is acknowledged as an investment," says Ron Vaughn, who organizes 1,500 meetings a year for AT&T. It makes sense, then, to consider either selling your skills to one organization on a regular basis or possibly developing a few topics for independent marketing. The demand is always high for topics such as interviewing

techniques, retirement planning, time management, sales strategies, conflict management, financial planning and basic supervisory and computer skills. Whatever your knowledge, capitalize on it!

Although related to speech making, seminars are less formal and require different formatting approaches. Creativity, observations of successful leaders and your own experiences can help determine the particular format to be used. Your subject matter and type of audience will further suggest what's appropriate. Participants in an interviewing techniques workshop, for example, learn best if they break into pairs for role playing. Financial planning workshops suggest overhead projectors and written materials to be studied under a leader's direction. And computer instruction requires each person seated at a computer.

### GIVE A NEW SPIN TO POPULAR TOPICS

Ideas are everywhere – in magazines, newspapers, bookstores, radio and television talk shows. John Stout, a nationally recognized lawyer with the Minneapolis law firm Fredrikson & Byron, presents annual seminars to attorneys that cover the various aspects of being a member of a board of directors. His consistent success with what seems to be a limited subject are well worth analyzing. How does Stout continue to come up with new angles, materials and techniques that draw raves from such critical and discerning audiences?

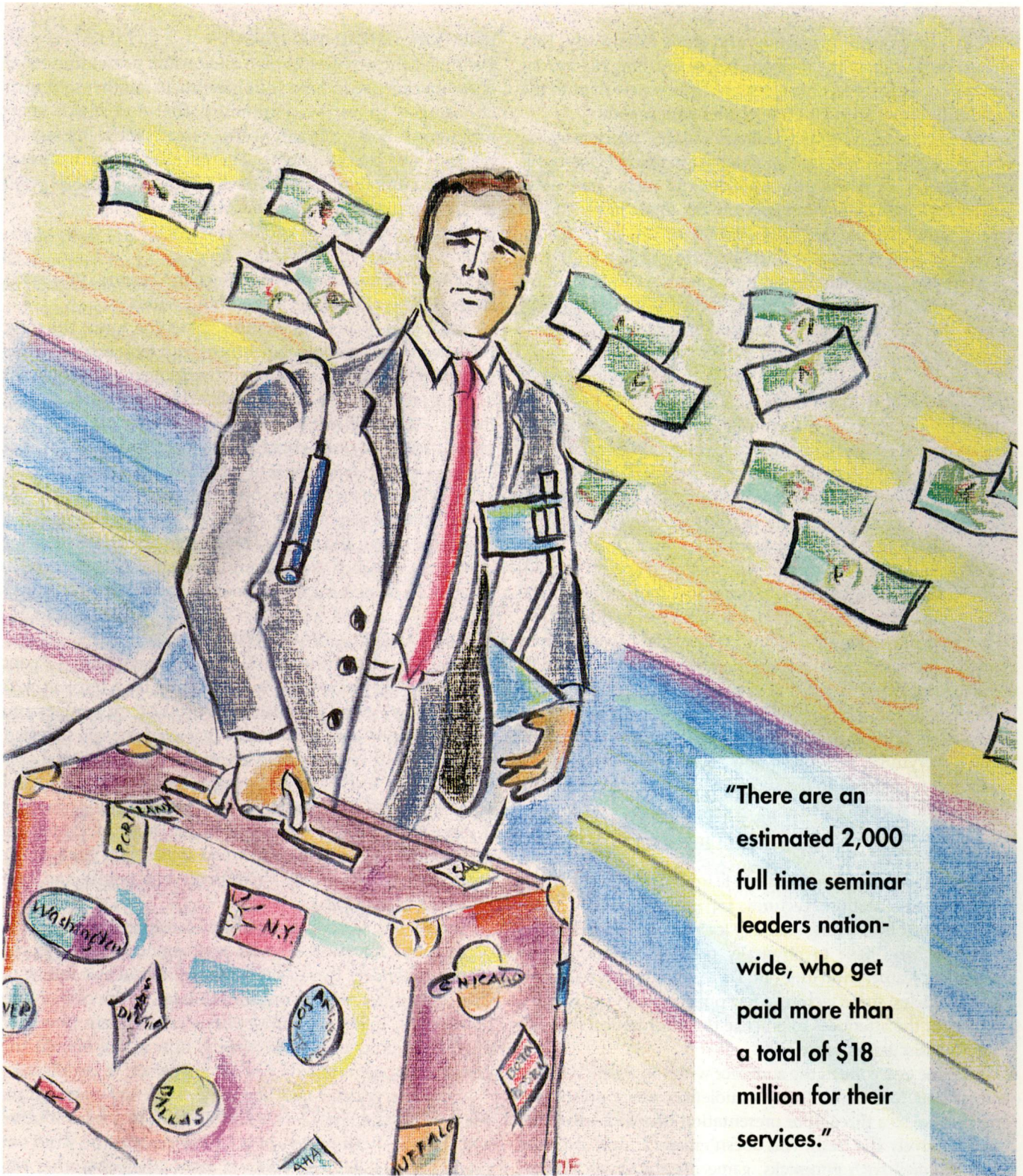
To begin with, he involves his audiences in the planning stages by sending letters to previous participants, asking for ideas they would like to explore. He also

By *Dorraine Turecamo*

# SEMINARS:

# BIG BUSINESS,





"There are an estimated 2,000 full time seminar leaders nationwide, who get paid more than a total of \$18 million for their services."

# YOUR BUSINESS?



attends numerous presentations and reads extensively. He's already preparing for the next one before finishing his current seminar – asking for feedback, searching for a new slant to the topic and setting an even more challenging agenda.

Take a tip from Wehrner von Braun's adage, "Basic research is what I'm doing when I don't know what I'm doing." Open your eyes and ears. Be where people are. Talk to them. Take notes wherever you go. Build idea files. Consider topics in which you have a strong background and question experts in that field. Know your topic thoroughly, and *never* stop learning!

Moreover, expect challenging questions. A candid "I don't know" is worthy of respect, and you might sometimes even throw the question back to the audience. A good seminar invites give-and-take and is less formal than a speech.

### **TAILORING FOR THAT CUSTOM FIT**

Although one program may suit different audiences, it can't just be dusted off and presented as is. Each audience requires specific tailoring to its interests and learning styles. Moreover, know your own strength and weaknesses. If a humorous and loose style doesn't come easily, it's a mistake to force it.

In planning his programs, John Stout often calls in many speakers and varies the format. Keeping each speech to a 30-minute limit, he says: "The shorter and more focused the topic is, the better it will be." Therefore, use a speech title such as, "How to Write an Effective Memo" rather than "Twenty-Seven Things a Manager Should Know." He says the speech should be flexible, offer different points of view (even if only one person is presenting it) and enough time for audience discussion.

So a seminar has to balance between trying to impress by telling everything you know (too much detail turns off an audience) as opposed to the superficial (repeating everything that's in the written materials).

### **LEARNING STYLES: BE ECLECTIC**

Keep in mind that each person will learn different things from the same presentation. Lectures, for example, satisfy those who learn best by listening (auditory learners). But visual learners and those who have to physically practice the information (kinesthetic learners) will tune out. Try to accommodate all three learning styles: some lecture, a few outstanding visuals and a chance for the attendees to practice the information through role play, discussion or exercise.

Imagine everyone in the audience with "So what?" written across their foreheads. Today's audiences are sophisticated and restless, so a three-hour presentation demands ingenuity to keep it lively and fresh. This doesn't mean a "dog and pony show" riddled with gimmicks, game playing or socializing. Actually, an energized speaker with excellent information and enthusiasm for the subject might find technical aids and physical interruptions distracting from the message. Still, there are times when something as simple as a child's building blocks can dramatically illustrate a point. Observe what works for other speakers. Check art supply stores for the latest materials and give them your own ingenious twist. Even kinesthetic learners will tune out of stale presentations.

### **LOCATION, LENGTH AND LAYOUT**

Even if a company has its own auditorium or training room, it's more effective to hold your meeting in another setting. In choosing a room, keep in mind that too much space intimidates. And while a tight space creates more interaction, it might feel claustrophobic. The purpose of the workshop can help determine the size of the audience. Gini Johnson, 3M's planning guru, breaks it down this way:

- Problem solving: five people or fewer.
- Problem identification: 10 or fewer.
- When you must have eye contact and rapport: under 30.
- Inspirational message: a cast of thousands.

Regardless of any reassurances, take time to see the room before your presentation. Experiment with table arrangements. Generally, a long rectangle is effective for up to 12 people. For a group of 8 to 10, a round table creates an open, sharing feeling – ideal unless you need a power-setting. U-shaped tables encourage active participation for 12 to 16, but for 20 to 30, the training department at Pillsbury recommends rectangular tables in a chevron-shaped arrangement.

An audience of more than 35 won't lend itself to the give-and-take of a seminar, and trying to bridge the gap between a speech and a seminar – such as promising a two-hour presentation for a group of 50 or more – is setting yourself up for disaster.

### **LIGHTS, CAMERAS...REACTIONS!**

Poor sound or lighting can kill your presentation – "good enough" simply won't do. So arrive early for a test run with the building's sound technician. Adjust the room temperature to slightly below average to ensure that everyone will stay alert. And if there's a breathtaking view of the mountains, seat your audience with their backs to that view. Regarding handouts, ask yourself whether each piece really adds to the learning process. Is it repetitious? Should you give it to the audience during the presentation or after? Keep in mind that simple messages in visually appealing formats reinforce your points and help make the learning last.

Should this become an annual presentation for a particular organization, follow Stout's lead. Mail announcements to prospective attendees two to three months ahead and follow up with a reminder mailing one month later. In the case of sales promotions, follow up with a phone call. Explain how your program is unique, why it's timely, how it will benefit this particular group, and why you are the person to conduct it.

Once you've developed and presented a first-class seminar a few times, you'll feel as comfortable as if you were at home with friends. Keep on top of your subject and the word will spread. People will seek you out, rather than the other way around. But beyond your newly added professional visibility, credibility and profitability is the immeasurable return of your own personal growth from every session.

You're already a speaker. Now get ready to be a seminar leader!



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**Dorrine Turecamo** is a freelance writer and consultant living in Edina, Minnesota.



## Facts on file

■ Clubs often ask World Headquarters for copies of old club membership rosters or club officer lists for use in planning special events such as anniversary celebrations and membership building campaigns, etc.

Because more than three million people have been members of our organization, it's just not feasible or practical for World Headquarters to keep this information on hand. Your club should make a copy of each membership roster it submits to World Headquarters and place it in its permanent records. Your club will then have a complete membership history to use as a resource when the need arises.

World Headquarters does have charter membership rosters and charter officer lists for most clubs. Your club may order a copy for \$5.00 from the Education Department at World Headquarters. T

## SPRING UPDATE FOR NEW MEMBER KIT

■ Toastmasters' New Member Kit has an up-to-date look. The kit, sent to every new Toastmaster when World Headquarters receives an Application for Membership, features redesigned manual covers with contemporary graphics. Each kit also includes a brochure describing the educational program, as well as a Member Achievement Record allowing members to track their progress through the program. The new kit is packaged in a durable envelope rather than a box, and no longer includes a binder. T



# RECOGNIZE YOUR ACHIEVERS IN STYLE



Recognition is an important part of the Toastmasters program. By offering recognition at each meeting, you encourage members to set and achieve higher goals and you recognize their efforts. You also encourage others to achieve.

Most clubs give awards such as "Most Improved" and "Best" speaker, evaluator, Table Topics, etc., at each meeting. Some clubs purchase trophies from World Headquarters for each award and present the trophies to recipients at each meeting.

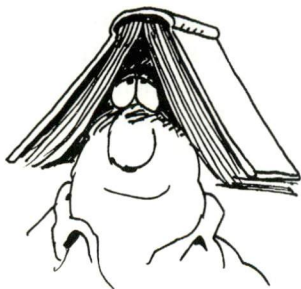
In some cases, recipients are permitted to keep the award for that evening only, or maybe even until the next meeting. This has the obvious drawback that on occasions when recipients either don't attend the next meeting or forget the trophy, the club cannot present that award at the meeting.

Clubs may consider using alternative ways to recognize these "best" or "most improved" members. Pages 36 and 37 of the 1992 Supply Catalog list ribbons, buttons and mini certificates available just for this purpose.

Ribbons are 2" x 8" and custom printed in gold (\$.50 each). Buttons are 3" diameter, white with blue lettering (\$.85 each). Mini-Certificates are 4" x 5 1/2" and cost \$.20 each. Shipping charges are extra.

Many Clubs prefer recognizing their members with these awards. They are affordable, attractive and, best of all, recipients can keep them! See the 1992 Supply Catalog for details. T

## Do Officers Have Their Handbooks?



■ Do your club's incoming officers have their handbooks? Toastmasters International now has handbooks for the President, Vice President Education, Vice President Membership, Vice President Public Relations, Secretary, Treasurer and Sergeant at

Arms. These handbooks are invaluable to officers; they contain information that will help them carry out their responsibilities efficiently and effectively.

If these handbooks have been misplaced, you can order replacement copies

from World Headquarters. A set of all seven handbooks (Catalog No. 1310-H) costs just \$8 plus postage/handling (California clubs add 7.75% sales tax). (See ad on page 11 in this issue.) T



# YOUR 1992-93 OFFICER CANDIDATES



■ Here's your introduction to Toastmasters International's 1992-1993 Officer Candidates. In August, you'll have the opportunity to vote for the candidate of your choice while you're "playing" at the International Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Candidates were nominated for the positions of President, Senior Vice President, Second Vice President and Third Vice President by the International Nominating Committee. The Committee's selection is presented here in accordance with Article VIII, Section I of Toastmasters International's Bylaws.

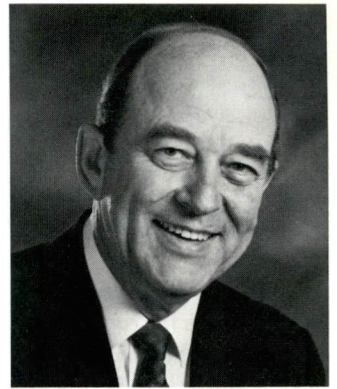
The Officers will be elected on Thursday, August 20, during the International Convention.

It is the duty of all Clubs to participate in the vote, either through their representatives at the Convention or by proxy. All members are urged to give careful consideration to the qualifications of each candidate.

#### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE:**

Tom B. Richardson, DTM, Chairman; John F. Noonan, DTM; Helen M. Blanchard, DTM; Renate Daniels, DTM; Jim Green, DTM; Irwin Selig, DTM; Evan A. Hass, DTM; Ted Randall, DTM; John C. Sleeth, ATM; Doris Anne Martin, DTM; James R. Dawson, DTM; Richard Stacey, DTM.

(Additional nominations for International Offices may be made from the floor at the Annual Business Meeting. International Director candidates will be nominated at the eight Regional Conferences to be held this month.)



#### **FOR PRESIDENT**

Bennie E. Bough, DTM, Senior Vice President, Second Vice President, Third Vice President, International Director from 1983 to 1985 and 1977-78 District 36 Governor. A Toastmaster for 28 years, Mr. Bough is a member of Springfield Club 1792-27, Advanced Speakers Club 4036-27, and Crown of Laurel Club 77-36. Under his leadership, his District received the Distinguished District Award. Mr. Bough is a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, the American Management Association, and the American Legion. He also is a charter member of the North Virginia chapter of the Retired Officers Association. He is employed as Senior Staff Officer in the Directorate of the Defense Security Assistance Agency, in the Office of the Secretary of Defense in Washington, D.C. He holds a B.A. degree in foreign affairs, an M.A. degree in international relations, and a Ph.D. in international relations. He has served on his church's council, and has been Vice Chairman, the highest elected lay leader. He lives with his wife, Kathi, in Annandale, Virginia. They have two children: Kristopher and Sara.





### FOR SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

**Neil R. Wilkinson, DTM**, Second Vice President, Third Vice President, International Director from 1978 to 1980, and District 42 Governor. A Toastmaster for 20 years, Mr. Wilkinson is a member of Excell-Orators Club 8090-42, Southern Lights Club 3689-42 and Wild Rose Club 5374-42. While serving as District Governor in 1977-78, the District was recognized as a Distinguished District. Mr. Wilkinson was District Toastmaster of the Year in 1976 and Club Toastmaster of the Year three times. He is the Immediate Past President/CEO of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors. He has taught speech courses at the University of Alberta. He hosts "Toastmaster Talk," a weekly TV cable show. Mr. Wilkinson was "Marketer of the Year" for the Edmonton Chapter of Sales and Marketing Executives International in 1987, and received the Gestetner International President's Outstanding Performance Award five times. Mr. Wilkinson is President/Owner of Barcol Doors in Edmonton where he lives with his wife, Jean, who is a CTM at Fun Speakers Club 3146-42. They have three children: Sharon, Carey and Blair.



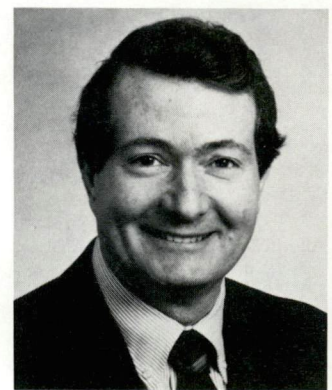
### FOR SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

**Pauline Shirley, DTM**, Third Vice President, International Director during 1988-1990 and District 25 Governor in 1986-87. A Toastmaster for 11 years, Mrs. Shirley is a member of Lone Star Club 7787-27, TNT Club 4533-25, Reston/Herndon Club 3660-27, Roving 49ers 6590-25, and the Preston Persuaders Club 5569-25. While serving as District Governor, District 25 was honored as a President's Distinguished District, and also received the President's Club Extension Award in recognition of chartering 34 new Clubs. She was voted Area Governor of the Year and was District 25's Outstanding Club President. Her other activities include membership in CREW, the American Institute of Parliamentarians, participation in the United Way Speakers Bureau, the International Association of Assessing Officers and a Troop Organizer in the Girl Scouts of America. She was twice honored as Beta Sigma Phi Woman of the Year. Mrs. Shirley is Executive Manager at the Sherman R. Smoot Corporation of Washington, D.C., and resides in Herndon, Virginia, with her husband J.D. They have two children: Terri Marie and John.



### FOR THIRD VICE PRESIDENT

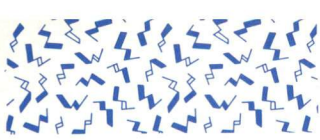
**Earl Chinn, DTM**, International Director during 1988-1990 and 1986-87 District 5 Governor. Mr. Chinn is a member of RB Filibusters Club 5528-5, Rancho Bernardo Club 112-5, Excelsior Club 699-5, Tastemasters Club 6812-5, and Healthmasters Club 6907-5. During his term as District Governor, District 5 was recognized as a Distinguished District. Mr. Chinn was chosen Area Governor of the Year for 1983-84. He attended the United States Naval Academy, and while serving in the Navy, he was decorated with the Legion of Merit with Combat V and received three Air Medals. He participates in the activities of many organizations, including the American Legion, the American Cancer Society, Retired Officers Association, the VFW, and the Navy League. He also is a member of the American Society for Training and Development and the National Speakers Association, serving on the NSA San Diego Chapter Board of Directors. Mr. Chinn is a professional speaker and resides with his wife, Eleanor, in Poway, California. They have five children: Scott, Kelly, Sherill, Carol and Steve.



### FOR THIRD VICE PRESIDENT

**Ian B. Edwards, DTM**, International Director during 1988-90 and 1984-85 District 20 Governor. A Toastmaster for 15 years, Mr. Edwards is a member of Executive Club 335-19, Johnston Club 4165-19, Professional Achievers Advanced Club 8132, and Los Oradores (bi-lingual) Club 7987-19. During his three years in top District office, District 20 was honored as a Distinguished District each year. Mr. Edwards was chosen Area Governor of the Year in 1980-81 and was Club Toastmaster of the Year in 1982. He obtained his B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees from the University of London (England) and his Ph.D. degree in genetics from North Dakota State University. He has spent 26 years in genetic research in North America, Europe and Africa, and is currently a Worldwide Crop Research Director for Pioneer Hi-Bred International. Mr. Edwards was elected to two terms as Chairman of the National Wheat Improvement Committee (1985-91), and serves on the Governor's Task Force on Volunteerism and the President's National Research Initiative on Food, Agriculture and the Environment. He resides in West Des Moines, Iowa, with his wife, Patricia, and daughter, Julie.





# HALL OF FAME

## DTM

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

Patricia A. Carson, 231-F  
 Norman Terry Riggs, 4211-1  
 Carol Fenwick, 49-4  
 George J. Hartmann, 2539-5  
 Janice Marie Robinson, 6296-5  
 Thomas Daugherty, 4081-11  
 Richard D. Yost, 290-12  
 Elaine McEver, 3411-14  
 Billie J. Jones, 719-15  
 Bryant A. Gillham, 3689-18  
 Vard E. Marguglio, 1325-19  
 Joanne S. Connelly, 759-20  
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 Linda Ann Sharp, 6416-28  
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 Dwight L. Davis, 3318-25  
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 Steven A. Bard, 2582-47  
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 Wayne W. Warren, 5834-14  
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 Walter L. Lowe, 1367-16  
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 George Drugovich, 4260-33  
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 Rita Hopper, 3331-47  
 Joseph L. Hatton, III, 3466-47  
 Howard Pieper, 3235-48  
 Vishnu R. Khade, 919-53  
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 Mary Beth Bruce, 3951-30

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 James C. Ronning, 6974-36  
 Thomas F. Fleming, 2946-37  
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 Toufik Rouame, 5645-60  
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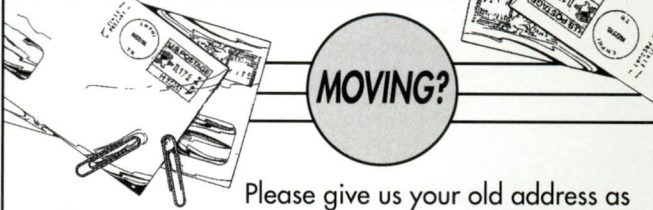
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