

February 1977

the toastmaster



...But Will
They Believe
You?

letters to the editor



A Practical Evaluation

Congratulations to the author of "Mental Growth—Does It Ever Really Stop?" that appeared in the September, 1976, issue of THE TOASTMASTER.

I enjoyed reading this article and have circulated copies of it to many of my dear friends. The author has described the most practical way of evaluating yourself to determine whether or not you are still mentally growing.

I can confidently say that if our total membership read and practiced the author's method of evaluation, 90 percent of them would know how to improve themselves and get ahead in their profession. I am also certain that these people would never have to see a psychiatrist in their lifetime.

I just wish I could persuade the viewers of *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman* to read this article!

Sam Addanki, Ph.D.
Columbus, Ohio

Your congratulations should be directed to Robert P. Savoy, ATM, the author.—Ed.

Podium . . . or Lectern?

James C. Humes, in his article entitled "The Speaker As Advocate" (November, 1976), assures us that we "won't have to bang on any . . . podium."

I, for one, am quite glad of this because such an act would necessitate getting down on one's hands and knees to perform it. This would certainly be most undignified before one's audience. It would be akin to Mr. Khrushchev taking off his shoe and banging it on the desk at the United Nations Assembly meeting.

Perhaps Mr. Humes was thinking of banging on a lectern, not a podium.

S. J. Stenning
North Bay, Ontario, Canada

A Freudian Slip

Our club is a small one, boasting of 14 members at last count, and we meet twice a month. We are co-ed and proud of the achievements of each member—man or woman—inside and outside of the club. There are no chauvinists nor liberationists among us. We are *people*, learning from each other, as well as *giving* to and teaching one another.

Because we meet twice-monthly, we try to avail ourselves of the opportunity of visiting with neighboring clubs in our area. When we do so, we pre-arrange to have one of our members speak at the upcoming event or joint meeting, one member evaluate another speaker and one or more members participate in the Table Topics portion of the program.

We recently visited an all-male club, and it was quite an experience to say the least.

I had volunteered at the time meeting arrangements were made to participate as the Table Topicmaster. (I find that if I psyche myself into the task at hand, it seems a less formidable mountain to climb that if it had suddenly loomed before me.)

I began by telling an anecdote (imaginary) about each participant and, as I relinquished control of the lectern, handed the participant a paper bag. Each bag contained a common item used every day, such as a paper clip, a rubber band, a piece of cardboard, a thumbtack, etc. Each participant was to tell the audience in the next two minutes all the uses he or she could think of

for that item, no matter how ridiculous it might seem.

Hilarious? A funnier script couldn't have been written. But what really topped the Table Topics portion of the program was the manner in which control of the lectern was returned to me. It was quite obvious that this all-male club was quite unaccustomed to having a female Toastmaster in their midst on meeting night.

I was addressed as "Mister Table Topics Mistress," heard "Madam Table Topics Madam," "Uh, Miss Table Topics Mistress" and, yes, I will swear that I heard "Miss Table Top Mistress."

As is shown in our first manual, the leader of the Table Topics portion of the program is the Topicmaster (one word), so the proper designation would be "Miss" or "Madam Topicmaster."

So take heed you all-male clubs . . . and beware of this freudian slip!

Dorean Dunn
Deerfield Beach, Florida

Is This Easier?

The "metric myth" surfaced again in the December issue ("Learn to Speak Metric" by Allan G. Bluman, Ed.D.), along with a statement by the author that it's "really easier to do calculations in metric."

Forces such as loads, pressures, pushes, pulls, thrusts, suction and even weights, when determined by spring devices, should be expressed in "newtons." And "newtons" are obtained from their responsible kilogram masses by multiplying by 9.806—an ungainly number. Consequently, a simple tire pressure reading of 30 pounds will become 297,000—another ungainly number.

Is this easier?

Vernon Paulson
Omaha, Nebraska

"Letters to the Editor" are printed on the basis of their general reader interest and constructive suggestions. If you have something to say that may be of interest to other Toastmasters, send it to us. All letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity and must include the writer's name and address.

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL is a non-profit, educational organization of Toastmasters clubs throughout the world. First Toastmasters club established October 22, 1924. Toastmasters International was organized October 4, 1930 and incorporated December 19, 1932.

A Toastmasters club is an organized group, meeting regularly, which provides its members a professionally-designed program to improve their abilities in communication and to develop their leadership and executive potential. The club meetings are conducted by the members themselves, in an atmosphere of friendliness and self-improvement. Members have the opportunity to deliver prepared speeches and impromptu talks, learn parliamentary procedure, conference and committee leadership and participation techniques, and then to be evaluated in detail by fellow Toastmasters.

Each club is a member of Toastmasters International. The club and its members receive services, supplies, and continuing guidance from World Headquarters, 2200 N. Grand Ave., Santa Ana, California, U.S.A. 92711.



Dr. Ralph C. Smedley
Founder, 1878-1965

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toastmaster

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You're satisfied with the draft of your speech, practiced your delivery and have managed to come up with a catchy title. But now is a good time to ask yourself a question: Will the people in your audience really believe you? If you are giving a speech that tries to "sell" a particular point of view, the answer is probably not.

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Meet Someone Halfway

by

**Robert W. Blakeley, DTM
International President**



DURING one of those often “difficult” periods when a father and his son are learning to understand each other a little better, my son once left on my desk the following note: “Meet someone halfway. To communicate is the beginning of understanding.” You know something . . . that note is still on my desk, not just as a reminder of my son, but also as a thought to guide me through each day.

That same quote can be applied to the Toastmasters experience. In Toastmasters, we share the speaking experience together by communicating our thoughts and suggestions to each other, thereby stimulating personal growth and understanding. When we become part of that sharing process—when we meet each other halfway—we become part of a team molded into a cohesive organization, with the individual member supported by the club, the area, the district, the Board of Directors and our World Headquarters management team.

As you can see, it is imperative that all communications flow effectively in this channel.

For the most part, I think our club and district officers do a very good job of keeping us informed on what is going on in our organization. I see this in many of the club and district bulletins that find their way to my mailbox every day. Naturally, I feel a certain sense of pride when this kind of “sharing” is reflected, because I know we’re communicating.

Internal communication, in any kind of organization is always a challenge. So it might be worth the little effort it would take to look and find out how well we are being served in this regard.

But we also have another public we need to spend a little more time with in improving our lines of communication, and that’s our outside public. How do we meet them halfway? By letting them know we are Toastmasters, and proud of it. Frequently in this magazine, you read the reminder about wearing your Toastmasters pin: “Without it . . . you’re just another face in the crowd!” That’s so true. I often don’t feel fully dressed in the morning until I check to make sure that my pin is in the lapel of my suit. This habit of personal pride can go a long way in letting others know you, and what you represent.

Being known in your community as a Toastmaster is the most effective way I know of fostering growth of our program. Many times I hear that we are a “selfish” organization. Well, I don’t believe it. But if it is that way with some, it doesn’t have to stay that way. We can meet our communities halfway by becoming very involved with them, perhaps by conducting Speechcraft and Youth Leadership programs. In doing this, we are sharing the skills we develop in our club setting and, by example, others will be encouraged to achieve what we have been so fortunate to gain.

Example is the best way, but not the only way of communicating with the outside public. The placement of our *Silent Salesman displays (366)* in strategic locations is another, as well as the effective use of our *Communication and Leadership (99)* and *Introducing the Action People (100)* pamphlets, each of which provides adequate space on the back for the name, address and the telephone number of someone to contact in your area for more information about the Toastmasters program.

If you know you are ready to spread the word, and your club agrees, you may even want to stretch into guest appearances on radio or television shows, or even participate in civic activities. Each is a rewarding experience—a growth experience for us individually, and also for the organization as a whole.

As the note on my desk says: “Meet someone halfway. To communicate is the beginning of understanding.” Communicating with the outside public and setting an example of pride in being a Toastmaster will go a long way toward insuring that more people understand what we have to offer . . . and how we can serve our communities. □

...But Will They Believe You?

by
William L. Hennefrund

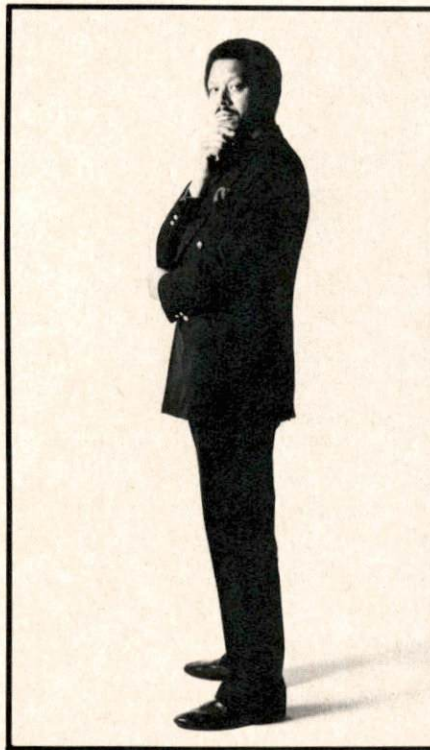
The problem of "credibility" is one you'll have to face whenever you speak to an audience. Fortunately, much can be done to make your presentations believable.

YOU'RE satisfied with the draft of your speech. You've practiced your delivery, and the tape-recorded playback sounds good to the ear. And you've come up with a catchy title—one that is sure to perk up the audience's interest at the start.

But now is a good time to ask a question: Will the people in the audience believe you? Will they accept some of those claims you've made? Will they have full confidence that you are telling the truth?

If you are giving a speech that tries to "sell" a particular point of view, the answer is probably not. For, increasingly, speakers have to face a new problem: audiences that are skeptical, even distrustful. Speakers, to their dismay, have found some of their favorite messages greeted with sidewise glances, a sudden epidemic of throat clearing or, worst of all, loud guffaws.

And little wonder. Numerous measurements of public attitudes have shown a drastic reduction of confidence in institutions, particularly business; and the larger the institution, the greater the skepticism. In a recent poll, nearly six of ten persons questioned said that "for the good of the country" many of the largest companies should be broken up.



Similar declines in confidence in government, the court system, law enforcement, labor unions—even organized religions—have also been noted. All this has made for audiences that are increasingly challenging—a difficult problem for the

speaker who wants to share his ideas and opinions.

Fortunately, much can be done to make your presentation believable. If you face the problem of "credibility," here are some points to consider:

1. *Be open and direct with your audience.*

Of course, every speaker believes he is being honest in his presentation of facts—that is, every speaker who *cares* about credibility. He'd be offended at any suggestion that he doesn't plan to tell the truth, without ulterior motives. Sometimes they do it to dramatize or to "liven-up" their material. More often, in their eagerness to present their case, they are led to exaggerate or to quote statements or figures out of context.

Philip Lesley, a veteran public relations counselor and an experienced speaker himself, puts it this way: "A speaker shouldn't try to put *anything* over on an audience by slanting or loading the material. At the first clue to the audience that you're trying to 'con' them, the speech is lost."

Even sentence structure can pose a trap in the "credibility" game. Make your points head on. If statements are hidden underneath convoluted phrasing

or heavily decorated rhetoric, an audience will sense some deception, even if they don't know exactly what it is you are or are not saying.

For example: "In terms of the conclusions drawn from the analysis of prior pay periods among individuals who were accustomed to biweekly pay periods, no appreciable benefit to employees or to the department was determined in the event of installation of a program to reduce the frequency of pay periods, regardless of opposing suggestions."

Tangled Syllables

All right. The verbiage is rolling, if nothing else. But the buried message, (Employees requested weekly pay periods. After studying the matter, we decided to retain the biweekly pay system.) needs explaining—and the audience suspects that something has slipped by too fast. Someone, once he has untangled the syllables, will want to know the extent of the study, the reasons for the decision. If a point needs such overblown language to stand up or to cover up, it should be discarded altogether.

2. Know both sides of the argument.

You may not have to deal with opposition arguments in the course of your presentation, but just knowing them will endow your statements with more conviction.

A securities industry speaker who gives 15 to 20 speeches a year on investment says, "I try to get across the point that a good investment climate is good for the country. But a lot of people in my audiences think investing is just another form of gambling. At first, that seemed preposterous to me, but I figured I'd better get to know all I could about that point of view. That effort has paid off. If anyone raises the point, I probably know more about gambling than they do, and I can convincingly make the distinction."

3. Make sure your audience knows you're an expert.

It isn't enough to know your subject; you must establish your expertise with the audience right at the start.

Sometimes the program chairman will offer a brief biography of the speaker. But just as often, the speaker will have to offer his own credentials. You can do it with a few phrases like, "In some

twenty years of counseling unemployed people . . ." or "Four years of study of this question convinced me that. . . ." And use specific, graphic illustrations.

When facing a skeptical audience, however, you'll want to call attention to your expertise on *both* sides of the question. Many government or business representatives use this to their advantage. "I've been in both business and government," they may say, "and I've seen this problem from both sides. And I've concluded . . ." Or "I've discussed and debated this many times with (name of someone who takes the opposite view), and while I respect his feelings . . ."

The point is, convey to the audience that you understand the opposition's point of view as well as your own.

4. Raise questions yourself.

A powerful boost to your credibility can be achieved if you raise "opposition" questions yourself—particularly if the audience is aware of criticisms that have been made of your position.

"When you raise questions yourself, it shows you are fair-minded," says a New York banker who regularly faces groups of disenchanted stockholders. "It establishes that you are open-minded to criticisms and have thought them out."

Shades of Gray

But a word of caution: Having raised the question, do not proceed to contradict it flatly. This is particularly important if you are speaking to a general audience with diverse interests and attitudes. Casting an argument in terms of black and white is customary on television when the subject must be covered in thirty seconds; but public speaking involves shades of gray. Raise the opposition question, concede that it seems to have some validity, then give the arguments that outweigh it.

5. Prove it with numbers.

You will probably have an opportunity to use statistics in your speech. If so, use them with care. Figures tend to "prove" a case, but if you use too many people will tune you out.

Many speakers, faced with a need to use many statistics, try to avoid the problem by simplifying: "We just about doubled productivity." That approach by itself, however, hazes the subject.

You will gain in credibility if you use *exact* figures, and there are a number of ways of doing that. Your statement may be, "We just about doubled productivity—from 150 units per man hour to 294 units, 96 per cent to be exact—and I think that proves . . ." Another way is to use the rounded, simplified figure in the speech, then make available the exact figures in printed form.

6. Make your own survey.

Speakers often quote surveys and studies to support a point. But here's another device: Make your own survey. If the validity of your survey methods is clear, not only will your point be made convincingly, but also your talk will generate more audience interest. You will have contributed something new to the area of concern—something your audience has never heard before.

A Small Survey

You don't have to question many people; about twenty is enough. Just don't give the impression that your survey was nationwide. Depending on the nature of your question, you may have queried friends, neighbors, customers or total strangers. Your audience is going to listen when you say, "I wondered about (the subject) myself. So I decided I would ask several small-businessmen what *they* thought. And I think their answers will surprise you as much as they surprised me."

7. Cite authorities that are accepted by your audience.

It's a good idea to check quotations in your speech to make sure you've used the "most credible" authorities. Your arguments are obviously going to gain acceptance if they are supported by authorities whose opinions are respected.

Much depends on the audience, of course. A college or university audience is likely to be fairly sophisticated about the views of well-known professors and may have strong reactions to their opinions. For other audiences, citing a university "authority" will almost always gain credence. In a general way, bankers, economists, journalists, conservationists and "consumer activists" are currently riding a wave of popularity and acceptance. You can hitchhike on their credibility by quoting them.

8. *Invite questions from the audience.*

Speakers with a point of view to offer welcome an opportunity to answer questions from the audience; they regard it as still another opportunity to gain credibility.

But it's not easy to field questions from an audience—especially from a skeptical one. That's why an experienced speaker tries to anticipate every question that may be asked—and plan an effective response. Often, this effort will take almost as much time and care as preparing the speech itself. A speaker who is really prepared will have back-up data to cite for at least a few of his responses.

But what if you don't know the answer? Say so, forthrightly, and go quickly to the next question. What if the question requires a long, complicated answer? Answer briefly, in part, ask how many in the audience are interested in the matter and offer to discuss it with those people afterward. And if a question is on the hostile side, be sure not to show annoyance; after all, you invited questions, didn't you?

Keep Them Short

Above all, don't seize on an "easy" question as the opportunity to rehash your speech or to deliver a new one. Keep your answers short. That will enable you to answer as many questions as you wish—and will make the people in your audience feel that they are a part of your presentation.

When people become active participants in your "program"—not merely targets for your opinions—it's time to congratulate yourself. They may or may not agree with you, but they will give you high marks for integrity. And that, in these days of skeptical audiences, is no small achievement. □

William L. Hennefrund, a professional speech writer, has counseled executives of such organizations as UniRoyal, Irving Trust Company, American Telephone and Telegraph Company and the American Stock Exchange in planning their speech presentations. His numerous magazine articles on business subjects have appeared in *Nation's Business*, *Dun's Review* and *Institutional Investor*.

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Toastmasters conventions have always been education oriented, and this year's promises to be no exception. A full schedule of exciting and informative educational sessions have been planned—sessions that deal with *down-to-earth* problems, discussed by some of the foremost authorities in the field of communication and leadership from both within and outside of the Toastmasters International organization.

Here's a small sampling of what these speakers will be presenting in the field of self-directed growth and human development:

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- **The Human Side of Management**—Some innovative ideas on how to add that personal touch to all your relationships with employers, employees and other associates.
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Sounds great, doesn't it! Why not mark your calendar, arrange your vacation schedule and plan now to attend Toastmasters' 46th Annual Convention. (Registration and hotel reservation forms will appear in **THE TOASTMASTER** magazine.) It will be one of the best decisions you'll ever make.

See you in Toronto! □

1977—A Year
to Share and
Grow With...

Growth Through Sharing

Let us share with others the benefits we have gained for ourselves . . .
Dr. Ralph C. Smedley, Founder

5
POINTS



Millions need what Toastmasters can give. **GROWTH THROUGH SHARING** is your opportunity to share with others what Toastmasters has done for you. Take just a few minutes and think of all your friends, acquaintances and business associates who would both benefit from Toastmasters and enjoy the fun and fellowship. Throughout 1977, invite them to join you at a meeting. Show them how Toastmasters benefits them and they'll thank you for it by joining.

Perhaps an entire group of people you know or are aware of could benefit from Toastmasters by starting a club. Why not help them along? Building membership in your club or district takes these kinds of special effort and **GROWTH THROUGH SHARING** provides special recognition for Toastmasters.

10
POINTS



For the member, GROWTH THROUGH SHARING means:

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POINTS



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- Follow-up on the program with your own contests on the club, area, division or district levels.
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- Put Toastmasters Bumper Stickers (370) on your car. Install a Highway Sign (363) of the entrances to your community and put a Club Meeting Plaque (384) at your meeting place.
- Reprint the recognition forms in your club and district bulletins throughout 1977.
- Sponsor a new club in 1977. There are thousands of possibilities in your community, nearby towns, companies, governmental agencies and other organizations. You can receive **GROWTH THROUGH SHARING** credit for the members you've sponsored as well as credit toward your DTM award for sponsoring the club. In addition, your own club can receive DCP credit for sponsoring a new club.

You can grow as your club grows in **GROWTH THROUGH SHARING** all during 1977. Remember, **GROWTH THROUGH SHARING ends December 31, 1977, so the time to start is right now!**

Sharing Rules

1. All Toastmasters are eligible.
2. In order for the sponsoring Toastmaster to receive credit, his name must appear on the application (No. 400) of the member he is claiming. The new member must join in calendar year 1977, December new membership applications must reach TI World Headquarters by January 10, 1978, and credit must be claimed by the **GROWTH THROUGH SHARING** sponsor by January 31, 1978.
3. Recognition is based upon the number of new members who pay the member service fee, charter members and reinstated members. Transfers are not included.
4. Toastmasters participating in **GROWTH THROUGH SHARING** should use the **GROWTH THROUGH SHARING** Recognition Form provided. (This form will be reprinted periodically in **THE TOASTMASTER** magazine and in **TIPS**.)
5. Five **SHARING POINTS** are awarded for each five new members sponsored. Each **GROWTH THROUGH SHARING** participant may select the award(s) he is entitled to, but each **SHARING POINT** may be used only once toward one award. For example, 15 **SHARING POINTS** would be required to receive both the calendar (5 points) and paperweight (10 points), with 30 **SHARING POINTS** required to receive all three awards.
6. **PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE** and **PRESIDENT'S SPONSOR** awards do not include transportation, etc. to district conferences. Awards will be mailed if recipient is not in attendance.
7. Please allow 6 weeks for delivery of awards to U.S. addresses, slightly longer outside continental U.S.
8. Customs duties (or taxes) on awards are the responsibility of recipients.



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TOASTMASTER	NAME: _____		
	ADDRESS: _____		
	ZIP: _____		
	CLUB: _____	DISTRICT: _____	
NEW MEMBERS	_____	CLUB NO.	_____
	_____		_____
	_____		_____
	_____		_____
	_____		_____

DATE _____ SIGNATURE: _____

PRIZE SELECTED:
 CALENDAR (5 PTS.) PAPERWEIGHT (10 PTS.)
 TIE (15 PTS.)

Is Your Club Getting the "Plug" It Needs?

by
Bill Olcheski

Promoting your Toastmasters club is really very easy . . . if you know how to go about it.

THE successful promotion of a Toastmasters club is easy . . . if you approach it systematically.

Begin with an inventory of the available talent within your club. This inventory should be both oral and written and could begin at a club meeting, with questions addressed to those present. It should be followed up by having the members provide the information on cards which can become part of the club files. This written follow-up is important since it gives members more time to think about their answers. It also gives a second chance to those who might be reluctant to speak up at first.

Be sure to include the new members in this inventory. They can provide val-

uable input and will welcome the early involvement in club growth.

Here are some of the kinds of questions you should ask as you begin taking your inventory:

Who can write? Your fellow Toastmasters are learning to express their views before an audience. Find the ones who have a talent for putting such views in writing. Their skills could be used in the preparation of a brochure about club activities. They could write invitation letters to prospective members or columns for the club bulletin. Perhaps you have among your members a person who can edit the works of others. While all editors are not necessarily good writers, they are people who have the ability to scan the

work of others and make it easier to read. While you are identifying the writers and the editors, also find the people who can interview. Such people could be used as reporters for your publication, as well as for talking with current members to find out what attracted them to the club. This information will be useful in future recruiting drives.

Pictures can play an important part in club promotion. They can be used with news releases, placed on bulletin boards or made part of promotional brochures. This makes it important to include photographers in your inventory. Begin with a simple question: *Who has a camera and knows how to use it?* People who can sketch or draw would also be listed in this category. (A simple sketch can attract attention to your recruiting posters.)

Your inventory will help identify the "creative" people, those with the ideas. You also will need to identify the "implementers," the members who can take the ideas and put them to work. Often the creative people lack the interest or the patience to follow through on making the ideas work.

Member Contacts

The inventory also provides an opportunity to determine member contacts outside the organization that can help the organization grow. Begin by asking members to list the other organizations to which they belong. Perhaps they can invite members of those groups to check out Toastmasters. It might even be practical to schedule a demonstration meeting to which members of the other groups could be invited.

Some members may have friends in the media. This could make it easier to get publicity about your group into local publications.

As a final point in your inventory, identify the people who are willing to do the less glamorous jobs that are so important to club promotion. Find out, for instance, who can type. Filing must be done, phone calls made, materials mimeographed, envelopes stuffed and sealed. These jobs are important, and this should be made clear when the inventory is taken.

Once the available skills have been determined we reach the most important

part of the project—finding out who wants to do what. A member doing a job he enjoys will do a much better job than one he is pushed into. When asking members what they would like to do it is important to stay within the bounds of reality. The person who “would like to be editor of the publication” must have some skills in organizing material, some knowledge of printing methods, some sense of layout and a talent for processing the writing of others.

Outlining Your Goals

After the inventory is completed you are ready to begin club promotion. The first step is the outlining of goals. These must be both short and long term. Perhaps you want to add ten members during the next six months, or you may want to grow enough to subdivide the club in three years. But keep your goals at a realistic level. Every incoming president feels he is going to bring the club to new heights; but his term is often over before these goals are accomplished and he leaves the office frustrated instead of satisfied. If the goals are modest they can be met, and the club and its officers will experience greater satisfaction during the period.

As the talent inventory suggests, club promotion is indeed a club project. If one person tries to do it all, he gets all of the credit—plus the frustration, disappointment and irritation that comes when the other members are left with nothing to do but sit back and criticize. The wise club president will delegate and assign responsibilities. He will give each promotional unit the freedom to operate in its own fashion while, at the same time, keeping tab on its progress. This could be done through short reports as part of each business meeting. Special recognition should be given to any unit that makes major progress.

Community recognition should be part of the goal of every Toastmasters club. This ultimately is the best promotional material you can get, developing from your involvement in community activities and your cooperation in community programs. If your club provides a speaker for a group, then that group knows about Toastmasters—perhaps for the first time. This leads to inquiries, and

inquiries lead to members. The chamber of commerce in most towns is always on the lookout for luncheon speakers. Investigate this opportunity to reach an important segment of the business community. This same theme could be followed through with social and civic groups. Get the creative people in the club to work and you’ll come up with dozens of ideas.

Community celebrations are just one situation in which a Toastmasters club can get involved and get publicity and recognition. Suppose your community is having a centennial celebration. This would be a good time to have a speech contest with the history of the area being the required topic. The mayor or town council members could be invited to serve as judges. The contest could be held in the city council chambers, with the winning speech repeated as part of the centennial festivities.

Community Contacts

A county fair draws people from all segments of the community. Why not consider arranging a “Toastmasters Day” at the fair? The day could include a demonstration meeting or a speech contest. It would provide a good chance for the handing out of promotional material and would give you a good list of prospective members. This would also be a good time to arrange a humorous speech contest and allow visitors to the fair to vote for their favorite speaker. The “vote” slip would include space for the name and telephone number of the voter, as well as a place to check if they wanted more information about the Toastmasters program.

When a community has a “clean-up, paint-up” campaign, the Toastmasters clubs again have an opportunity to jump on the promotional bandwagon. Club members could be volunteers to speak in behalf of the program. They could appear before civic or social groups, or even on radio or television. In each case, it is important to be sure the speaker is identified as a member of the local Toastmasters club.

While you’re out scouring the community for new members, don’t overlook the recruitment possibilities within your own sponsoring organization. Often,

particularly among older clubs, the tendency is to get a club established and then look for new members outside the sponsoring organization. This could mean overlooking one of the best possible sources of prospects.

Each member should be encouraged to bring a guest to the meeting. Certainly asking each member to bring in one new member a year is not an unreasonable goal. Competition is helpful in this area. Members should be encouraged to compete in recruiting campaigns, and there should be prizes for those with the best results.

Showing Off

Husbands, wives, girlfriends and boyfriends can also play a part in promoting your club. Installation meetings and similar functions should always include an invitation to the spouse or date. This gives the member a chance to demonstrate his speaking skills and shows the visitors some of the benefits of club membership—giving them a valid reason to encourage their friends to get involved in the Toastmasters program.

Another fertile area for Toastmasters promotion is in the schools. Club members can make presentations before school assemblies about the art of public speaking. They can serve as judges in school speech contests and can present the awards to winners of such contests. The club may even want to design an award of its own—which could be a simple certificate—for use as prizes in such contests.

Young speakers grow into adult speakers and into prospective members for your group. So don’t overlook this vast potential.

Yes, club promotion can be easy. It begins with finding out the help you have available—and then putting it to work. □

Bill Olcheski opened his own public relations firm three years ago after 25 years as a working newspaperman, serving the last eight years as editor of *Federal Times*, a Washington-based newspaper for government employees. A past president of the Knights of Columbus Club 1273-36 in Arlington, Virginia, he is the author of *Beginning Stamp Collecting*.

Speak With Sense, Not Sexism

by
Della A. Whittaker
Club 3323-36

It's been three years since the so-called women's liberation movement invaded the three Toastmasters clubs in which I am a member. During this time, I have become especially aware of our male Toastmasters becoming a little ill-at-ease as they have come to accept the idea of cultural sexism. I have also found that, in trying to avoid these "sexist" terms, they have often been inconsistent in what they call female Toastmasters.

In my three-year association with

Toastmasters, I have been called everything from "Madam Toastmaster" to "Toastmistress" to "Mr. Toastmistress." These inconsistencies occasionally reflect overkill; after all, even non-sexist words get changed. Uncertain Toastmasters with similar problems can resolve them by simply turning to an etymology book and studying the histories of the words that disturb them. This will not only bypass the "sexism" problem, but also help them get on to their main purpose in Toastmasters—to learn to communicate effectively.

All too often, I have seen many male Toastmasters wrestle with this same kind of problem, finally saying, "He . . . she . . . I mean, he or she. . . ." Grammatically, one does not have to say or write, "Every speaker will announce the name of his or her speech" or "her/his speech" or, worst of all, "S/he will announce the name of"

This last example comes from ignorance of the etymologies of *she* and *he*. *She* comes from the Old English *seo*, meaning the feminine grammatical gender of the article *the*, which was originally a demonstrative pronoun to mean *this one*. Such gender nowadays is rare in English, although it is required in the Romance languages.

He in Old English was the pronoun for the male of the species, and *heo* was the pronoun for the female. But *heo* soon dropped out of use, and *seo* replaced it. So, etymologically speaking, do not use *s/he*. Be grammatical, not political; use *he* and avoid ridicule.

Just as often, some Toastmasters occasionally stammer over the word *chairman*. Some want to use *chairwoman* instead, or even *Madam Chairman*. That's as contradictory as *Mr. Chairwoman*. What such use tells the audience is that the speaker is uncomfortable; the Toastmaster wants to tell his audience something much more important than that.

In *Paradise Lost*, John Milton punned that "woman is woe to man." Etymologically speaking, he was wrong. *Woman* comes from the Middle English *wifmann*, meaning female human being.

That word came from Old English *wif*, meaning wife and woman. And this came from the Germanic, meaning the "veiled one" or "the vibrator," probably because a woman's veil vibrated while she talked.

In old English, the word *man* did not necessarily mean the male of the species, but a person or human being. So using the title *chairman* is perfectly acceptable for everyone.

I would like to digress here to warn against sexist overkill. The word *human* does not come from the Germanic *mann*, but from the Latin *homo*. The root *hum* means earth, soil or ground, and appears in *humus*, *humble*, *exhume* and *chameleon*. So as you can see, there is no reason to change.

Finally, some people insist that *-er* is a masculine ending, as in *teamster* and *engineer*, and that *-ess* is feminine, as in *seamstress* and *actress*. But a *spinster* is not a man, and a *mattress* is not a woman. Toastmasters should be reasonable about their choice of words.

Etymologically, the Latin *major* and Old English *mickel* or *much* developed into our word *master*, meaning "great." So the *master* was the great person. Through a vowel change, *master* became *mister*. More recently, from the Middle French, *maistress* became *mistress*, to mean the female who is great. Although French distinguishes grammatical gender for every noun, English does not.

One does not announce the *speakeress* of the evening and, similarly, need not add *-ess* to every noun addressing a female. So as you can see, there is no reason to use sexist overkill, no reason to change our organization's name to "Toastpersons International" and, above all, no reason for any of us to be known as anything other than a Toastmaster.

All of us must reasonably consider our purpose for being together. Don't quibble over words that evolved from suspected cultural sexism into politically sexist terms. Study modern meanings of words and learn to speak confidently at your Toastmasters club meetings. In short, speak with sense, not sexism. □

There's More to Conversation Than Just Talk

by Barney Kingston, ATM

"Unless you are a professional speaker, the odds are pretty good that for every talk you are called on to deliver, you will participate in a couple hundred conversations."

At one of our recent club meetings, a member got up and gave a talk on "The Art of Conversation." After he had finished and sat down, he found his evaluator to be quite critical of the purpose of the talk. The evaluator wanted to know why the speaker chose to talk about training in conversation, especially in his own Toastmasters club. The inference was that everybody knows how to engage in conversation. "And," he concluded, "since we're in Toastmasters to learn how to be more effective communicators, let's not waste time in learning how to converse!"

Needless to say, a few of us disagreed with those comments.

Faster Feedback

In the first place, if conversation isn't communication I don't know what is. Furthermore, a speaker can tell how well he is communicating with his audience through the type of feedback he gets, either through their interest and actions, their questions during the question-and-answer period or by what people say to him after the talk is over. With conversation, you get that feedback right away! Whether you're talking to your wife and kids at the dinner table or with the boss and associates at the office conference table, you know *right away* how well you are communicating!

So there should be little doubt that training in effective communication should have its place in a Toastmasters club. After all, unless you are a profes-

sional speaker, the odds are pretty good that for every talk you are called on to deliver, you will participate in a couple hundred conversations. Being a good conversationalist then, is one of the greatest assets anyone can have. So let us review some guides to more effective conversation.

• **Stimulation is the Key**—If you're talking about baby's first tooth, Tom's first girl friend or your wife's craving for corn beef hash as a midnight snack, you're engaging in "idle conversation"; subjects like these are just conversation starters. You may break the ice by asking a friend to talk about his vacation in the Bahamas, but you'll both be swimming in boredom if that's all there is to discuss. To have a meaningful conversation involves subjects or topics that are controversial! When everybody agrees with you, what is there to talk about? Did you ever notice that, at the after-meeting beer sessions, there is a direct correlation between the amount of beer quaffed and the kind of subjects discussed: the more controversial the subject, the *less* beer consumed? When you come home with a head on, you can bet it was because the beer was more stimulating than the conversation.

• **Don't Be Disagreeable**—A few years ago around Christmastime, some good friends of ours invited my wife and I and another couple to their home for dinner. After a marvelous meal, topped off with some Christmas carol singing,

the conversation got off on the subject: "Is the permissiveness theory of Dr. Spock the best way to raise kids?" Everybody seemed to agree that permissiveness was best, that the more freedom a kid had the better for his future development. Everybody but me, that is.

It was my contention that permissiveness leads to shallow relationships, gives young people a false sense of values, tears down family relationships, promotes bad manners and, in general, brings out the worst in young people. Helen, the wife of a long-time friend, was furious with me. She called me every vile name she could think of and accused me of being narrow-minded and a typical "Archie Bunker creep." She kept up this harangue for about ten minutes. Finally, she picked up a book and threw it at me. I guess you would have to say she did not share my viewpoint on permissiveness!

Everybody looked at me, expecting at least a small explosion. But all I said was, "Helen, there are two principles involved in good conversation. First, that you have a stimulating topic to discuss. And second, by all means don't hesitate to disagree if you feel so inclined—but *don't be disagreeable about it.*" Once a conversation becomes disagreeable two things happen: the conversation usually ends and, quite often, so does the friendship.

• **Two Conversational Taboos**—Almost any subject is fair game for a

spirited conversation, but not everything. There are two subjects that should be avoided like the plague—religion and politics. These are personal, intimate propositions. You believe what you believe of religion for reasons almost impossible to explain. And however you arrived at your political affiliation and thought, it is doubtful if anybody can get you to change. If you have any doubt about reconciling political or religious differences via the conversational table, just cast your eye on the world scene: Northern Ireland, the Mideast struggle between Israel and the Arabs and the school busing problem in this country are just a few of the endless struggles that come to mind.

● **Keep the Subject On Track**—How many times have you found yourself sitting around a table, with almost everybody contributing to the conversation, when one of the “left outs” suddenly says, “Who do you think is going to win the Super Bowl?” You can’t say, “Bill, can’t you see we’re discussing why Reagan is sure to be the next President? Who the heck cares who is going to win the Super Bowl?” That’s a good way to lose a friend, and maybe ruin a conversation. Why not say, “Bill, that’s a great topic to bring up. But could you hold off on the Super Bowl for a few more minutes?” There is a time when it is best to tactfully change the subject!

● **Avoid Engaging in Personalities**—Suppose the subject you are discussing is “What is obscene?” One after another, everybody around the table has expressed his opinion on the subject. But suddenly there is a heated outburst by one of the fellows at another. “Oh come on now, Joe, what kind of a jerk are you to say there’s nothing obscene about a naked girl giving you a rubdown in one of those massage parlors? To any sane man that’s just another form of prostitution; just because you get your kicks playing in a manure pile doesn’t change the odor.” Once a conversation enters the “personalities phase,” if it isn’t stopped quickly, there’s almost sure to be some kind of destructive ending or fight. The best way to avoid further difficulty is to change the subject, pick another topic of conversation and don’t say

anything further for a few minutes to either of the battlers directly.

● **Be a Good Conversational Host**—When you are hosting a gathering of friends at your house, don’t think this means you will also host the topics for discussion. I have a friend who makes no bones about it. He tells me he always has a list of subjects on tap to discuss. I asked him how he knows what topics to choose and he told me he picks subjects he thinks will interest each couple invited. Whether he knows it or not, he’s treading on dangerous ground.

What happens if he picks a subject that may interest one couple but be anathema to another? What happens if nobody is really interested in the topic our good host chooses? The key to being a good host is to pick the right couples to start with, people who have something in common with the others. It’s all right for the host to get the conversation going with something that really interests him and see what develops. It’s all right, too, for a host to ask a question of some kind of expert to get something started. “Ed,” you may ask, “how did you get your golf score down from 102 to 78 in one year?” Then let Ed take over.

If all your guests are sitting around a table it is best to let them decide what they want to talk about. It is most embarrassing when a well-meaning host, anxious to engage a shy person in the discussion, asks a question that the shy person may not be able to answer. Remember that there are some people who cannot converse very well at the start of a party, but once they feel comfortable with people around them, they’re off to the conversational races. Remember, too that there are people who have difficulty expressing themselves in a crowd, but have little or no problem talking to one or two people. This is why a good host, as soon as possible, breaks up the dinner and lets his guests break up into little groups in different parts of a living room or patio, with each group talking about its own interests. (And there is nothing in the conversational book that says each host must participate with each group; there are times the host can be a wet blanket—particularly where young people are concerned.)

● **Speak When You Have Something to Say**—There are people who think the way to shine as a conversationalist is to speak up as often as they can, with no fear of dominating the conversation—particularly if they don’t agree with a point of view expressed. But there’s a middle ground here.

Yes, to keep a conversation going you need knowledgeable people; but you don’t want to dominate the conversation by your brilliance to the extent that you scare off all the others. The way to do this is to say, “I agree with Tom, and I’d like to give you some proof that he’s right.” Tom will love you (of course), but you’ll win the other guests over, too, because you are complimenting somebody else. The idea is to add to the discussion of other speakers—not to grab the spotlight all evening.

Too many people seem to think that, in order to impress everyone at the table, they must be seen and heard often—even when they don’t really have anything worthwhile to say. If you have something worth saying, even if you had said more than the others at the table, go ahead and speak up. But don’t forget that there are two parts to a good conversation: those who speak and those who listen. The guests who listen are getting just as much, maybe even more, than those who do most of the speaking. So if you are sitting at a table and notice that everyone around you has been contributing to a discussion, don’t feel you must add your two cents to a topic that you really know nothing about.

● **Conversation vs. Speaking**—In the same vein, I’ve recently noticed that a great many Toastmasters are lousy conversationalists. Toastmasters are seldom shy or reticent at a conversational table. And when everyone at the table is a Toastmaster, it’s often survival of the loudest! Because of this, Toastmasters tend to dominate conversations where the other guests are just ordinary people. We’re so used to running for the “best speaker” award that we tend to continue this competition at a table of hapless conversation guests.

It seems to me that the least we can do is to give non-Toastmasters at a conversation table a handicap. Let the other

guests hold the conversational spotlight for at last five minutes! Remember that the big difference between conversation and public speaking is that no one wants you to cover all aspects of a subject in conversation, just a phase or a part of a topic. Good conversation requires each guest to let as many of those at the table who want to speak on a subject be heard. When you find yourself speaking at a table for more than three or four minutes at a time, it means you are dominating the conversation.

Now there are times when it may not be your fault—when you are obviously so authoritative on a subject and such an interesting and entertaining speaker that the other guests may actually want you to continue. Despite this boost to your ego, it is still best if you will resort to some sort of gambit to get the others into the conversation. You could, for example, get everybody's reaction to some idea you have. Say you have been talking at length on the general subject that former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had become a liability to the United States and should have been replaced. If it is apparent that everybody agrees with you, there is hardly a reason for continuing this line of discussion. So at this point you might say, "Who would you have liked to have seen as secretary of state? My personal choice would have been Charles Percy because both the Arabs and Jews like him, and he might have been able to resolve the Mideast problem. But you've heard enough from me; I'd like to hear who you all think would have been the best choice for the job?"

● **How to Correct a Speaker** — A few years ago I found myself involved in a unique situation. My host's wife said it was Abraham Lincoln who told a woman who had written him that he did not subscribe to her point of view, but would defend with his life her right to think as she did. Nobody at the table said anything, so I assumed they all agreed with this statement. So I corrected the speaker by saying, "Wait a minute! Almost everyone knows it wasn't Abraham Lincoln who said that, but Voltaire. That's one of the most famous quotes in Bartlett's book. How could you possibly be so wrong?" Needless to say, I

was never invited to that house again, and lost a good friend. I had been right, of course, but I had committed the cardinal sin of humiliating our host. Later on I learned that at least half of the people knew she was wrong, but kept quiet. There is a way to correct a speaker, but it really calls for tact.

Let's suppose I had another chance in the same situation. I could have said something like, "Mary, I'm glad you brought up that famous quote. I've heard it attributed to several people besides Lincoln. Just last week I heard a speaker say that quote was made by Voltaire. I wonder what you all have heard?" There are two ways you can look at this kind of situation. You can keep quiet and figure who cares. After all, what harm can be done if the speaker is wrong? But if you realize how embarrassing this kind of thing might be in a critical situation for a friend, you can see it really is best to correct an error as quickly as possible. But remember to do it tactfully.

● **Women vs. Men Speakers**—In the old days it used to be that, at the end of a dinner, the women would go into the kitchen and have their conversation while the men would adjourn into the living room and, over brandy and cigars, carry on with the important subjects only men understood. But that was in the old days! Today, there are as many women going to college as men, and their role in every area of business and the government is constantly expanding. The gals may still knit on occasion, but not at the conversational table. And woe to the man who doesn't take them seriously.

In today's world, you'll find women conversationalists to be as articulate as men; and you'll see many of them in our own Toastmasters clubs. But remember this: There is one kind of woman you must never find yourself disagreeing with at a table of guests in your house or anywhere else. No matter how fatuous her statements may be, no matter what nonsense she prattles, no matter how silly her remarks at the table may be, never—repeat—never disagree with her. I'm talking, of course, about the all time, world champion conversationalist—your wife!

There's another part to this equation,

Start'em Laughing

A joke, an anecdote, a laugh-loaded one-liner! Effective speakers have been using the technique of humor for centuries. And you can use the same technique, with predictably good results.

The only problem is you can't use the old stories, the ones they've heard before, the ones that refer to a different time or set of circumstances. You need humor that's fresh, that's new, that relates to today's events and today's tastes.

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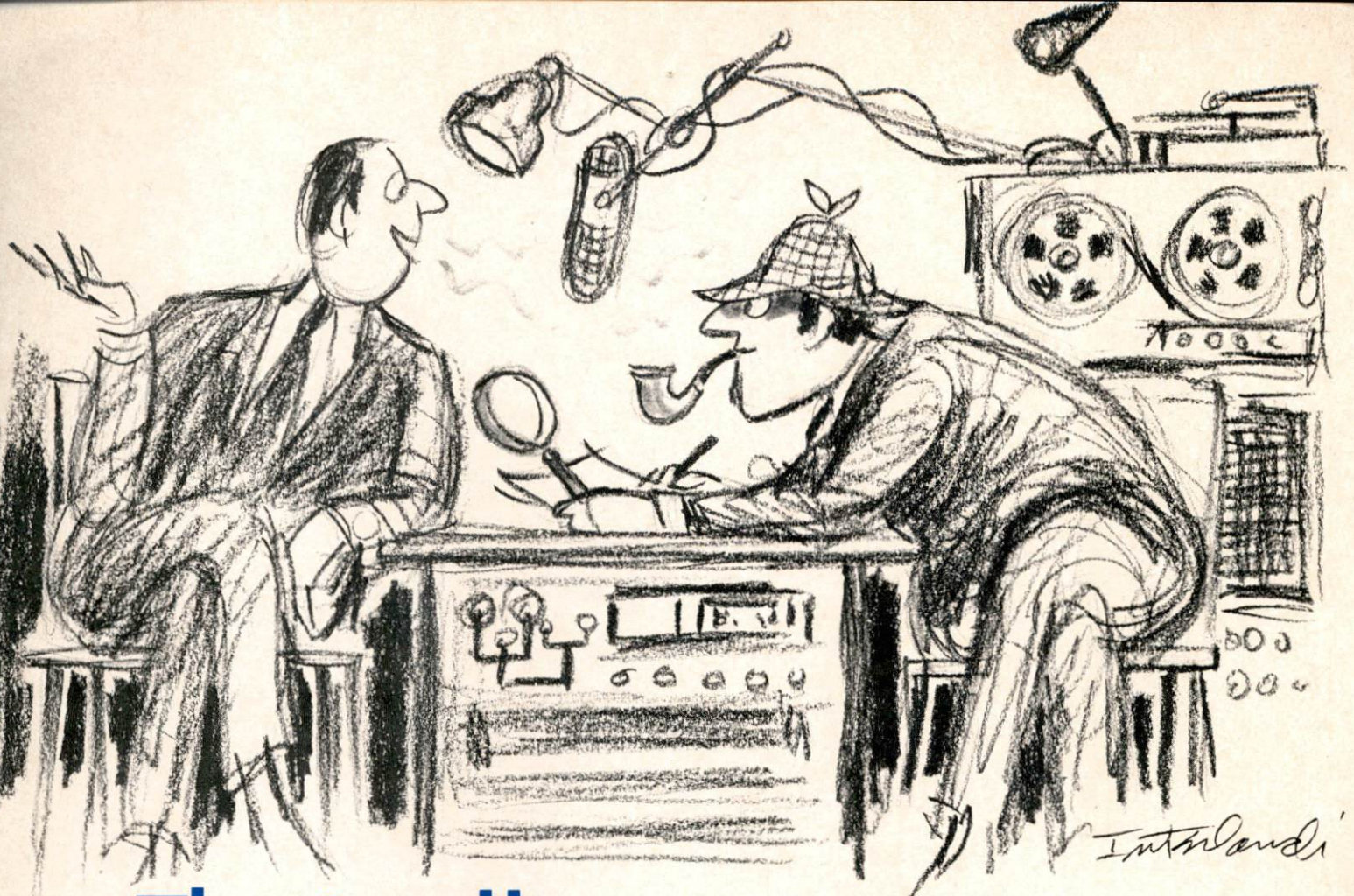
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however. While you must never publicly disagree with your wife during a conversation, you must never agree with her either. That's right, if you back your wife up in anything she says, she may begin to think that she is on the wrong side of the issue. I know the last time we had guests over, my wife, Elaine, gave me instructions on how to act. "And please," she said, "if any of the guests compliment me, the dinner, the decorations, the food, don't agree with them; say nothing."

So as you can see, there is a certain amount of art involved in our daily conversation. All you have to do is follow some of these simple guidelines I have given to you.

But just remember one thing: In any kind of conversation where your wife's involved . . . mum's the word. □

Barney Kingston, ATM, is merchandising director for *Salesman's Opportunity* magazine. He is a member of Speakers Forum Club 371-30 in Chicago, Illinois, and is a frequent contributor to *THE TOASTMASTER*.



THE INTELLIGENT INTERVIEWER

Knowing what to ask and how to ask it can save you money and headaches when hiring, promoting or problem solving.

You've undoubtedly seen the television show on which three individuals claim to be the real John Jones. A panel of celebrities is given a brief biographical sketch of Jones and his exploits. By asking questions each panelist tries to ferret out the real Jones or trip up the pretenders. Later, each signifies his choice of which interviewee was telling the truth. After a tension-building moment, the real Jones stands up.

While this game is just for fun, the interview scene is replayed for keeps

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by
LAWRENCE R. O'LEARY

thousands of times daily, often costing companies—small and large—thousands of dollars in hiring and promotion mistakes. Personnel professionals, line managers, small businessmen, volunteers, credit managers, police officers and social workers all conduct individual interviews with John Joneses. They place a lot of emphasis on a little interviewing, which forms the basis for judgments on hiring, promotion, eligibility for loans, scholarships and welfare payments. The interview is also a useful tool

for counseling employees and for discovering a departing employee's candid views via the "exit" interview.

About 99 percent of the decisions to hire involve this lifeblood of a business—the interview. Unfortunately, interviewers don't have the immediate "you were right—you were wrong" validation that their celebrity counterparts enjoy. And the techniques they use often belie the seriousness of the task.

A recent Wall Street Journal article revealed some colorful examples:

- One executive insists on inspecting the glove compartment of an applicant's car "to see if it's a mess."
- A top New York executive often dumps a glass of water into the lap of

stodgy applicants to see how they react in stress situations.

- A client of a Chicago executive recruiter refuses to hire anyone who holds the railing going up the stairs, figuring that's a sign of poor health.

- The head of a midwestern concern stands five feet seven inches and won't hire anyone taller than he is.

- And if an applicant has played football, one businessman always rates quarterbacks over tackles.

You'd think these interviewers were playing a game, not the celebrities. Although it's hard to believe that a normally hardheaded businessman would operate this way, too many do—at their own expense. And, to make matters worse, many U.S. businessmen now so fear violating the law against bias in hiring or promotion that they make no attempt to go after the information they need for an intelligent decision. Thus has evolved one of the great fictions of modern business—that talking is interviewing.

So how can you improve your interview style so that you're doing your best to match the right employees to the right jobs? Here are a few guidelines that can save you some headaches, both legal and financial. Remember that the discrimination laws in the U.S. apply even to Mom—the co-owner of a Mom and Pop store—when she wants to hire a stockboy. And she too wants the best employees she can get.

Some Painful Groping

Some preparation is a must. Conducting an interview without preparation is not unlike a surgeon entering the operating room before examining the necessary X-rays. Both procedures may be successful, but time will be wasted and the inevitable groping may be painful.

While I'm not advocating hours of painstaking work, I am suggesting the interviewer acquaint himself with a detailed job description and take a few minutes before the interview to review the application. This review allows him to form a portrait of the applicant and to react to unusual elements in the candidate's background. He will thus not miss facts the candidate is giving him during the interview while trying to catch up on

the application information—which he should already have read.

And surprisingly enough, probably 50 percent of the errors made in predicting job success based on interviews result from the interviewer not knowing what qualities a candidate should possess to do the job well. How do you learn about a job you've never performed yourself?

The Job Description

Easy. Ask people who are performing or supervising the job to think of employees in the past who did not perform well. Be quick to point out that you're not looking for names but specific behaviors and attitudes that will explain why a person failed. Talk with more than one person if you can and talk with them individually. If you run your own business, you can list the qualities of employees who filled your needs best—and worst. The same reasoning applies when you're looking for someone to promote within your organization: Know what you're looking for and prepare a written job description.

Beware of going overboard here, however. Once when I was serving on a committee to award college scholarships to high school seniors (all with excellent grades), one of my fellow committeemen asked only one question of each candidate: "Were you a member of the Scouts?" When we voted, he rated the former Scouts "good" and the others "less than good."

While membership in the Scouts is one benchmark—and certainly indicates that you know what you're looking for as an interviewer—to consider it the only effective predictor of merit is a gross oversimplification. Some people may even consider it a negative indicator for some jobs. Whether positive or negative, however, this man put all his eggs in one basket—and perhaps denied a deserving student a chance at a college education.

Once you've done the preparation and are into the interview, *let the interviewee do most of the talking*. Respected studies have shown that 57 percent of interview time—which, after all, is supposed to get the information from the applicant—is taken up by the interviewer's talking. Only 30 percent is devoted to the inter-

viewee's remarks, while 13 percent is silence. You should be constantly aware of this strong pull on the interviewer to talk.

How do you encourage a candidate to tell you about himself? During your questioning maintain an open, friendly attitude that puts the person at ease. The interview should be conducted in a quiet place free of distractions, where the interviewee feels he is talking only to you and cannot be overheard.

Research has demonstrated that of four interviewer reactions to an interviewee's comments—agreement, paraphrasing, silence, disagreement—the first two increase a candidate's talkativeness, the second two decrease it—substantially. So while you may want to maintain an objective demeanor with all candidates, don't be fooled into thinking that the best way is to be cold and aloof. If you're pleasant and agreeable with each, you're being just as objective as if you act like a computer. And you'll have more data to analyze.

What to Ask

Open-ended questions are often a boon here. "What did you think of your last job?" usually sparks a richer response than "Did you like your last job?" A checklist is handy so that essential points are covered—past performance, reasons for leaving other jobs, preparation for promotion. (You can take comfort in psychologist's findings that about 90 percent of the information an interviewee provides is correct. Lying about qualifications is seldom a serious problem.)

And don't worry that probing questions will offend a candidate or make him feel bad. It is more unfair to him to omit a question that's troubling you as an interviewer (For example: "Why have you had four jobs in the past three years?") than to sweep it under the rug without giving the applicant a chance to explain.

Lastly, wrap up the interview by allowing the candidate to comment freely on anything else he feels he should by indicating to him what will happen next in the selection process. Should he call you next week? Will you write him? Without committing yourself, you can also indicate how he fares against other

candidates. The wrap-up is only a common courtesy, but in the rush of day-to-day business it's often forgotten.

What can and cannot be asked in an interview? While U.S. laws (mainly the 1964 Civil Rights Act as amended by the 1972 Civil Rights Act) make it illegal to discriminate against minorities, specifics may change with court decisions. Two principles apply, however: Are the questions job-related? Do they disproportionately "select out" minorities?

For example, the question "Have you ever been arrested?" appears to be job-related, but in New Jersey it's illegal to ask during a job interview. Why? More blacks have been arrested and in some cases this is done during a mass roundup of young blacks. The employer *can* ask "Have you ever been convicted?" This question gets to the point without unduly penalizing the black applicant.

Since the Equal Opportunity Commission was charged with watchdog duties in 1964, its budget has burgeoned from \$2.5 million to \$50 million in 1974, reflecting its increased activity. Taboo are questions about membership in specific organizations; they're considered contrivances to establish ethnic or political ties. Obvious questions about race, reli-

gion or ethnic origins are frequently illegal, if not in poor taste. This is also true of pre-employment photos.

But in spite of what may seem like many restrictions, the interviewer can do his job well if he keeps the principles of the law in mind. You need not—and should not—be overly concerned about interviewing minority members. If you are, two negative things can happen. The interviewee is uncomfortable because the interviewer is uncomfortable. Or the interviewee perceives an uneasiness and tries to use it against the interviewer to get the job—"I wasn't going to apply to your company because it has the reputation of being discriminatory." Don't fall into the trap either way.

A Harmonious Operation

Interviews can also be useful in the conduct of day-to-day business in addition to hiring and promoting. By making the "counseling" and "exit" interviews part of your management arsenal, you'll glean information and support that will make your operation more efficient and even harmonious.

The reluctance to give feedback about a subordinate's work—positive or negative—is one of the big stumbling blocks of effective working relationships in

organizational life today. Many times when a subordinate petitions for a review of his dismissal, for example, his continuation on the job has been upheld because his superior failed to document and inform him about his performance problem. The superior has no evidence of poor performance or the steps he may have taken to correct it.

So what can a supervisor do? He can use the counseling interview with troublesome employees *before* the problem leads to dismissal.

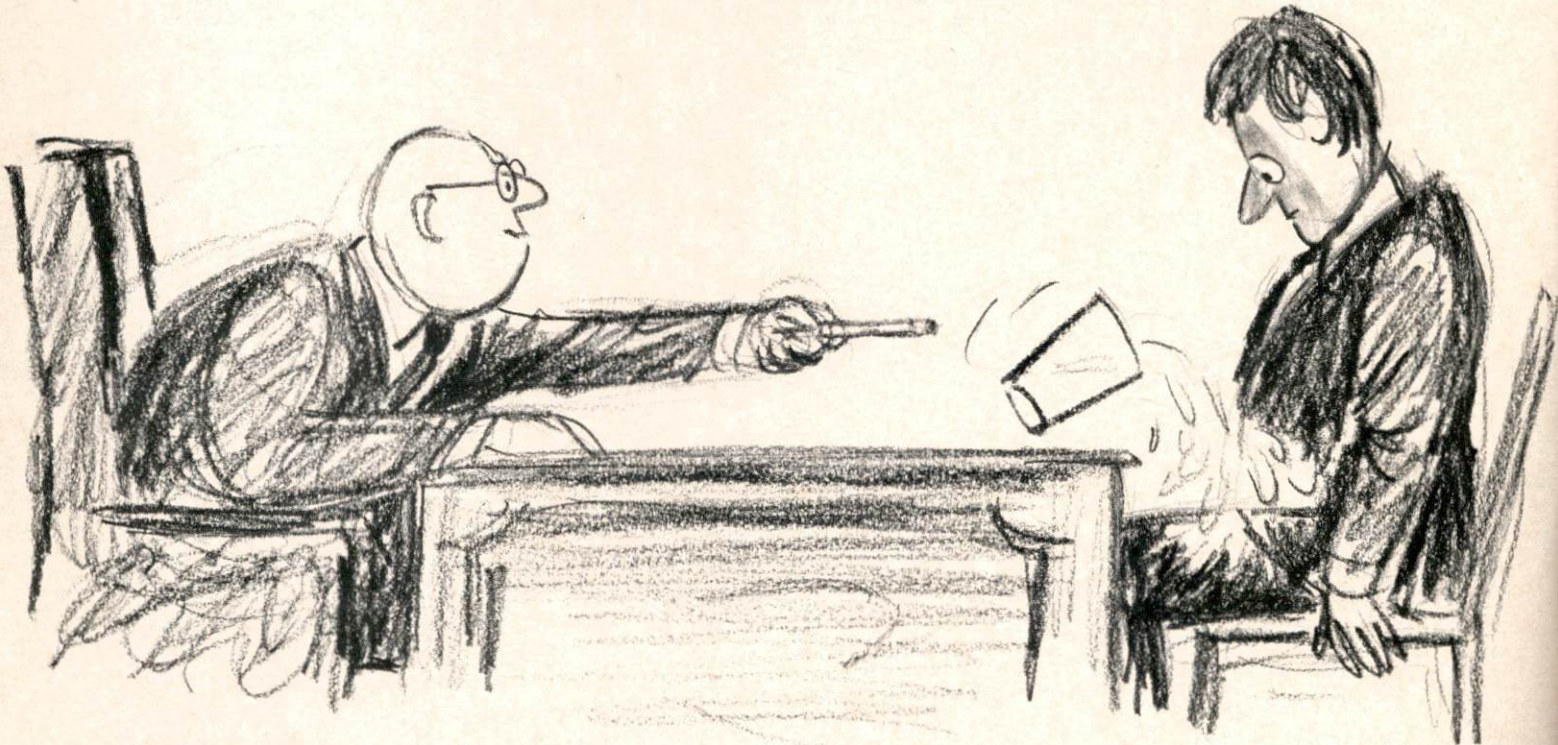
Counseling interviews are guided by five points:

- A review of the subordinate's duties and how they relate to the objectives of the group.

- An emphasis on the subordinate's responsibility to accomplish his objectives and tie them to those of the group.

- Specific examples of unsatisfactory performance—tardiness, slowness of work, uncompleted projects.

- An examination of the subordinate's solution to the problem through a frank though amiable discussion with him or her. Here again, the techniques of positive response (agreement, paraphrasing) should be applied to draw out the employee's comments.



• A record of the talk that specifies the date, the problem discussed and its solution signed by the employee and the supervisor. A report may be this simple: "Major points: Reasons behind the employee's coming in twenty minutes late three times were discussed. It was agreed that automobile would be repaired or an earlier bus taken to insure arrival at work on time."

Or it may deal with more complex issues: "Major points: Employee's method of making suggestions was discussed. Supervisor emphasized the importance of suggestions but pointed out the critical nature of those made by the employee. Employee indicated that these were made positively. They agreed that more effort would be made to offer alternate solutions when criticisms are leveled."

Business Objectives

Far from using a counseling interview to beat a subordinate over the head, a supervisor should focus on business objectives: "Our department has a problem meeting its work goals." "Can you tell me what you think is wrong here?" "What would you recommend as a solution?" Allowing a subordinate to contribute to a solution insures that it will have his strong backing.

The basic five-step approach reduces guilt feelings on the part of supervisors, too, who often worry about being too harsh. By carefully talking out a problem in a businesslike manner, everyone feels there has been a fair hearing, and the subordinate may indeed come up with a better way of doing things.

Positive feedback, which can be given via the counseling interview with a different emphasis, is too rare. "My boss never tells me when I'm doing a good job," is a common complaint of subordinates when they comment about their supervisors on anonymous and standardized surveys. Even though psychology has demonstrated the effectiveness of positive reward, management has yet to use it well to increase worker efficiency.

And when an employee resigns it's in your best interests to find out why and to elicit candid opinions from him or her about the company's operation. If you've experienced a "drain" of competent people through resignations, the "exit" inter-



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view can help you get to the bottom of the problem.

A stumbling block, of course, is generating candor on the part of the departing employees, who may be looking for another job and want to keep a positive reference. An employer can assure an interviewee that his candid remarks will not affect his references, but you still can't be sure that the employee will even then reveal his true feelings. No sure-fire way exists to convince him that he'll be in the clear by telling the truth.

The "After" Interview

Perhaps the best solution is to conduct the interview *after* the former employee is safely ensconced in his new job. He then has little to fear in making his feelings known. A letter can be sent if the new job is out of town, and follow-up phone calls will persuade even the most procrastinating to reply.

And with that I'll stage an exit of my own, secure in the knowledge that the techniques for successful interviewing

outlined here can work for you as they have for me. They're based on the findings of behavioral science and my own experience as a professional interviewer. But if you still feel the need to apply some bizarre test to flush out the real John Jones, here's my prescription: Take two aspirin, read this article again and see me at my office in the morning. During our interview I'll spill water on your vest, race outside to scrutinize the glove compartment of your car and grill you about why you weren't the quarterback of your high school football team. And, of course, I'll never discover the real John Jones inside you because he'll have the good sense to go even deeper into hiding.

Happy interviewing! □

Lawrence R. O'Leary, Ph.D., is an industrial psychologist, college professor and personnel consultant to police and fire departments, businesses and government agencies. He is the author of *Interviewing for the Decisionmaker* (Nelson-Hall Publishers, Chicago, 1976).

toastmasters action



The Alpha Club: They Help Each Other

JEFFERSON CITY, MO — Two years ago, **District 8's Mack Stewart** received a call from a counselor at the Missouri State Penitentiary. Several of the prison inmates had heard about the Toastmasters, he told Mack, and wanted to know if he would help them start a club. Mack, who now serves as District 8's Lieutenant Governor for Missouri-North, quickly agreed. Within a few months, the Alpha Club (named by the inmates for the first letter of the Greek alphabet) 1408-8 was operational . . . and boasted a membership of 40!

Since its inception, the club has had 123 members. Of the 80 who have been released, only two have had to be returned to prison. "The last meeting a fellow attends is geared entirely toward him," said Stewart, in an article (by Lois Daniel) that appeared in the August-September, 1976, issue of *Senior Power* magazine. "He gets a chance to say good-bye and to tell what his plans are. The last thing the members say is, 'Don't you let us down.' They're proud of their

club's record and don't want one of their members to have to come back.

"Toastmasters International is proving to be a wonderful rehabilitation vehicle," he continued. "It's just amazing to see what a change comes over the fellows. You can be almost sure their first speech will be about their 'bum rap.' The next speech isn't quite so bad, and by about the fourth speech they are beginning to get into some real thinking because the members evaluate each other's speeches and they don't want to hear about bum raps.

"One time a new member was making the traditional first speech. He was soured on everything. He hated lawyers, he hated judges, he hated policemen. Finally, the president said, 'Look, if you haven't got any more to talk about than that, maybe you better sit down and try again some other time. We hear all we want to hear about bum raps out in the yard. We want to hear something different in here.'

"A couple of months later that same fellow came to the meeting with \$10.00, his entire month's wages for working in the license plate shop. He said, 'I want

FAN MAIL—District 8's Mack Stewart and his wife, Laura Mae, read Father's Day mail from inmates and former inmates of the Missouri State Penitentiary—most of them beginning, "Dear Mom and Dad." A parolee, now in Michigan, writes, "Tell the guys to keep on communicating their best selves to everyone, including themselves. (Photo by Lois Daniel.)

to donate this to the treasury. We need the money and I want to apologize to you fellows for the first speech I tried to make.' ”

That kind of attitude, that kind of spirit and enthusiasm, has made the Alpha Toastmasters a truly unique club. With the help of Mack Stewart, they have turned their lives around and adopted a motto we could all benefit from.

Alpha's motto is, "We help each other." □

Toastmaster Claims Record for Reading . . . and Reading . . .

ORADELL, NJ—There seems to be some weird kind of record for everything nowadays, from hopping on a pogo stick to kissing to swallowing live goldfish. Well, there's going to be another one . . . and this one involves a Toastmaster.

Wayne M. Bowers, a member of the Ridgewood Club 2639-46 in Ridgewood, New Jersey, claims the record for reading (yes, reading!). For more than 20 months, Wayne was able to devote 12 hours a day in pursuit of this noble distinction. In over 7,700 hours, he has already completed more than 530 philosophy books. During this time, he has compiled 15 journals and more than 3200 pages of notes. "And," Wayne adds, "I have an additional 72 books on the shelves that I plan to complete very shortly."

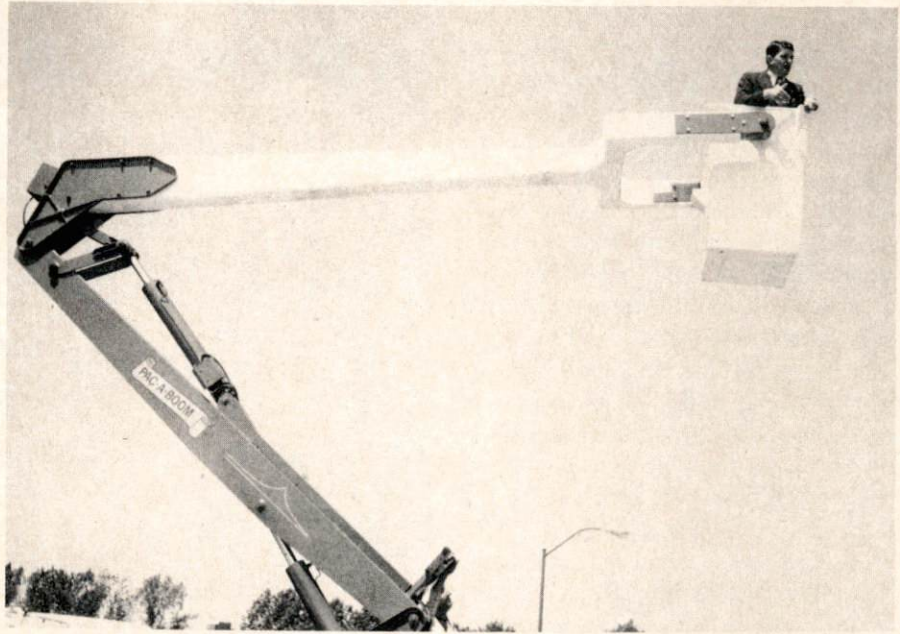
So what does a person do with this kind of record?

"I believe it to be something quite unique," adds Wayne, "and wish to submit it to the Guinness Book in London. I have the necessary witnesses and testimonials and now seek the clippings asked for by Guinness of the claimed record."

Now . . . are there any goldfish swallows out there? □

They Call Themselves the Toastmasters Hatchery

NORFOLK, VA—How would you like 70 to 80 new members per year in your club? Sound like an impossible dream? Well, it isn't! The **Armed Forces Staff College Club 2865-66** in Norfolk, Virginia, enjoys exactly that situation. As a matter of fact, they call themselves the "Toastmasters Hatchery."



UP IN THE AIR—District 35 Governor R. Dik Buntrock, DTM, is hoisted into the air to give his report as general evaluator for the Kettle Moraine Club 2098-35 in Kewaskum, Wisconsin.

The boom hoist, which was supplied by a club meeting guest, was used to lift each club speaker and evaluator 20 to 30 feet in the air to shout out their presentations. By the time Governor Buntrock was put in the air, a good-sized crowd had gathered to hear a scream or two. As a result of this innovative programming idea, the club added several new members.

The club is sponsored by the Armed Forces Staff College, which is an intermediate professional educational school for mid-career officers of all services. The college teaches two classes per year, each of which is attended by 270 officers and civilians for a period of 22 weeks. In addition, there are a total of 15 Allied officers in each class from Australia, Canada, France, Germany and the United Kingdom. Many of these gentlemen have been Toastmasters over the years and many are still active in clubs around the world.

According to William M. Carrington, ATM, District 66's Lt. Governor-East, the mission of the college is basically to conduct a course of study in joint and combined operational planning.

"One of the objectives of this course is to teach decision-making and effective communication," says Mr. Carrington. "This means speaking, listening and thinking. Toastmasters is a perfect vehicle for accomplishing this goal, and many students and faculty members seize this opportunity for self-improvement." □

During the first week of each college class, the club holds an orientation luncheon for the new students. Faculty members, who form the nucleus of the club, tell the Toastmasters story, along with many of the District 66 officers. Approximately 100 potential members attend this orientation and, invariably, 35 to 40 decide to join.

But, you may ask, what happens to these Toastmasters at the end of the Armed Forces Staff College course? Do they leave Toastmasters after a short six-month exposure to it?

"No!" says Mr. Carrington. "Club records indicate that over 70 percent continue their Toastmasters participation at their new duty stations. We, ofcourse, encourage this and provide each departing member with the names and locations of clubs in the area he is transferring to."

Yes, the Armed Forces Staff College Club could truly be called a "Toastmasters Hatchery." Each year, they begin the training of 70 to 80 people—people who travel all over the country, and all over the world, to continue their Toastmasters experience. □

FOR several years prior to 1976, the word began to grow about "it"—the big event—the 200th anniversary of the United States of America. There was some activity in preparation, but for the most part there was only talk about the big day. With only a few months to go, the pace quickened and grew evermore frantic until the day arrived. At last, July 4, 1976, and the nation celebrated from border to border, coast to coast. The bands played, the people cheered and the symbol of the American heritage was saluted countless thousands of times by her patriotic sons and daughters. Then it was over, twilight closed on the last few acts and it was gone. Most people looked around, shrugged their shoulders and expressed the question foremost in their minds: "Now that it's over, what?"

You may wonder at this point if you have picked up the wrong magazine. After all, what has this article to do with Toastmasters? If you stop and think a moment, you may remember when that same question was asked by yourself, or by other members of your club.

The first time you asked it was probably after your fifth or sixth manual speech. The stage fright had been conquered and the basics were now well understood. "Now that it's over, what else do I have to look forward to?" may have been the phrase you used. What else? I'll tell you.

Building Blocks

Take the time to understand the importance of all your manual speeches. Remember that each speech acts as a building block in your speaking development. Five or six speeches have merely prepared you to continue into the finer aspects of speech preparation and presentation. There are still many roads to travel to the final destination.

The next time you probably thought about that question was when you had completed that monumental last speech of the Communication and Leadership Manual. "Wow! Now that it's over, what?" You have worked on all the basics, made speeches memorable and said it like you meant it. What else could there possibly be to learn? Plenty!

Take time to review the Advanced

A "How to" Feature

Now That It's Over, What?

by

Ray Floyd, ATM

Communication and Leadership Manual. Read through it to learn how to prepare an after-dinner speech, a written speech or perhaps discover the fine points in the use of visual aids. What else is there to do? Much more awaits you as you continue your work within the Toastmasters training program.

At long last, you have finished both manuals. Obviously there are now no new mountains to climb, no new challenges to accept. Wrong again!

What about trying to qualify for the Able Toastmaster award? It sounds simple enough. Let's see:

1. Completion of both Communication and Leadership manuals . . . check!
2. Three years' continuous membership prior to application . . . check!
3. Three speeches before an outside audience . . . oops! (You mean I have

to speak before a *strange* crowd? You gotta be kidding! Oh well, what else?)

4. Must have served as a club officer . . . oh-oh!

Let's take the last two, one at a time. There are many opportunities for you to speak before non-Toastmasters groups, such as the Boy Scouts or, perhaps, your child's PTA meeting. Besides these, there are many local organizations that are always looking for speakers to enlighten or entertain (or both) during their meetings. Put some of that fine education into practice, and be sure to let them know you are a Toastmaster. Spread the word and let them see the reality of our training!

Now that you have completed those outside speeches, it's time to look at the last one again (must have served as a club officer). All clubs elect six officers for terms of six or twelve months. That means that you have had six to twelve chances to serve as a club officer for *every year* you have belonged to Toastmasters! Sure, you haven't had time; you've had work conflicts, play conflicts, etc., etc. But just maybe you've run out of excuses (yes, excuses) and it's time to take a serious look at which of those club positions you would like to serve.

A Big Responsibility

All of the positions available in the club are important, and each requires serious effort if the club is to continue to function as an entity. No officer can shirk the duties assigned without the loss being felt by the entire club membership. With this in mind, obtain a copy of the *Club Officers Manual* (1310), read about the various duties of each officer, decide which office you wish to serve and then contact your club's Nomination Committee. They will be happy to hear from you!

So now you are an ATM! Again the question may come to mind, "Now that it's over, what?" Don't worry, you still have just scratched the surface of things you can do within the Toastmasters program. Look for a moment at the requirements for that top prize—Distinguished Toastmaster. Forget the five speakers bureau speeches, the time requirements and the fact that you must first be an ATM (those can be achieved *relatively* easily).

Look instead at the other requirements:

1. You must have served as a Speechcraft coordinator in the past two years.
2. You must have served as a Youth Leadership coordinator in the past two years.
3. You must have helped to form a new Toastmasters club or saved a low-membership club.
4. You must have sponsored five new members in the past year.
5. You must have served as a district officer.

The last item is probably the easiest to complete—all you have to do is convince the members of your area, division and district that you have the ability, interest, time and spirit to direct their Toastmasters activities for the coming year. Well, perhaps it's not quite that simple, but it can be achieved with the proper direction and effort on your part.

Learn About Yourself

The number of officers that fall into this category include area governor, division lieutenant governor, lieutenant governors for education and administration and district governor. With such a variety of positions to be filled, and the simple fact that dedicated people are hard to find, you should be able to satisfy this requirement and learn much more about yourself and about Toastmasters on the district level.

Items 3 and 4 can often go together. In the process of forming a new club (or saving an existing one), you will normally sponsor several of the new members. As a result, the two requirements have been fulfilled. However, take time to learn about forming a new club. The experience is a tremendous one, as you see the club through its formative meetings and charter application until, finally, the club gains recognition from World Headquarters.

You will pour many hours into that infant organization trying to settle on a name, meeting time and place, the constitution and bylaws, and the membership itself. Organizational meetings, elections, referendums—the list goes on and on. However, in the moment of acceptance of *your* new club by World Headquarters, you will feel pride that comes so seldom to each of us. It's not

easy to form a new club, but with the material that is supplied and determination on your part, that new club can become a reality. From this, you have forged one more link into your chain of events leading to that coveted DTM award.

Without a doubt, the final two requirements for your DTM are the most fun-giving of all. In both the Speechcraft and Youth Leadership programs, you are providing a look to outsiders of what Toastmasters is all about. While the Speechcraft program is closely aligned to providing new members for existing clubs (or perhaps the nucleus of a new one), the benefits derived by you and your fellow members are many. Besides being able to prepare speeches and presentations for the Speechcraft participants, you are also able to listen and learn from them. Each of them will bring a wealth of new ideas and views into your club, so be prepared to gain from them as much as—or more than—you have given.

To most of us, Youth Leadership is where it's really at. Through the activity of helping today's young people learn good speech development techniques and proper meeting management procedures, you are helping to guide the adults of tomorrow. It is a great experience to watch these youngsters grow from their first uncertain movements to those of a skilled practitioner in a few short weeks. The transformation is amazing, exciting to watch and rewarding for you and your fellow club members. Again, World Headquarters can provide the necessary material and information for both the Speechcraft and Youth Leadership programs. Take the time to obtain the guides and learn more about these opportunities.

Once you have reached this plateau—that coveted DTM award—you still have many avenues within the Toastmasters program to explore. Besides the district officers previously mentioned, there is the secretary, treasurer and other such offices that always need capable people to fill the needs of the district. But why stop there? Beyond the district there are similar openings even within International itself. Yes, even the goal of Presi-



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dent of Toastmasters International is within the grasp of each of us, if we so desire.

Beyond officer training, have you ever had a Top Ten Bulletin at your club or district level? If not, why not? Try your hand as editor, and attempt to reach that high level. What about a Distinguished Club or President's Top 40 Club? Each of these award-winning levels requires the efforts of a dedicated coordinator. Need something to do? What about a speakers bureau within your club, area or district? As I had mentioned previously, there are many organizations looking for outside speakers. Why not form your speakers bureau, fill these engagements and provide many speaking opportunities for yourself and your fellow Toastmasters?

I believe that if you look at all of the opportunities that are available to you within the Toastmasters program, you will have little justification to ask that one fateful question. As you look at it through the many friends you will have made—through the many experiences you will have had—the question of “Now what?” will never stay long on your mind. After this, you will always have some kind of answer. □

Ray Floyd, ATM, is a member of the Pompano Fashion Square Club 3299-47 in Pompano Beach, Florida. A frequent contributor to THE TOASTMASTER, he is currently assigned as an Advisory Test Administrator in IBM's Systems Assurance Lab in Boca Raton, Florida.

The Seven Deadly Speakers

by
Paul J. Cathey

We've seen them all before in our clubs, areas and districts. They're the ones with whom we've suffered and yawned for years. And now it's time to recognize them for all they've done!

It's time, fellow Toastmasters, to recognize those among us who have truly mastered the art of boring speech.

Too many awards have already been given for speech excellence. The moment has come to turn the coin over and honor those with whom audiences have suffered and yawned for years—the seven deadly speakers.

Selecting the men to receive these awards has not been easy. Every year the crop of lack-luster speakers seems to mushroom. However, after careful analysis the competition has been narrowed down to this steller group of vocal zeros. How many do you recognize?

Surely somewhere in your travels you have come across *Benedict Blah*. He's the master of the trite, the oracle of the obvious. Every time-worn cliché, every hackneyed expression, every tired tru-



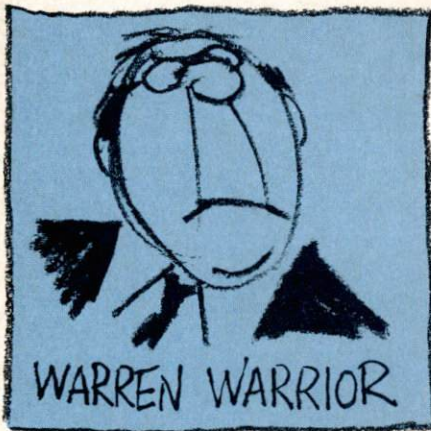
ism comes back to fitful life in his speech.

"Mr. Toastmaster and fellow Toastmasters," says Mr. Blah, "'Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.' We've all heard this advice, but how many of us follow it?"

"When it comes to health—the subject of my talk—too many of us burn the candle at both ends. We forget the most important thing to save for our old age is ourselves.

"Too often we put off until tomorrow what we should do today. But we can't afford to overlook either one. We've also got to think about the future which, in my opinion, still lies ahead."

And so on, *ad infinitum*. If there's a single new idea or freshly-minted phrase in Benedict's talk the audience is likely to fall asleep before stumbling over it.



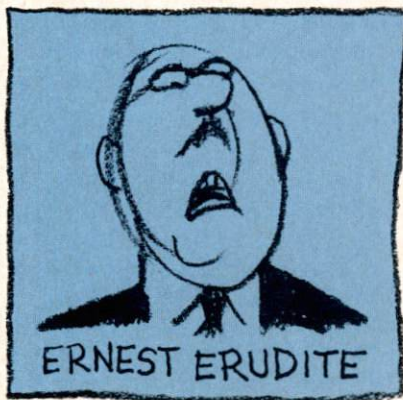
Benedict may be monotonous, but at least he's hardly controversial. Not so *Warren Warrior*, who comes equipped with a built-in chip on his shoulder.

Warren always has a pet peeve or a grudge he's been harboring for years. At every speech opportunity he trots it out and pounds away at an audience which he undoubtedly shell-shocked many talks ago.

"Modern educational methods are a farce," screams Warren. "I've been observing trends in the teaching profession for more than 25 years. I challenge any man in this room to show me where we've made any advances that were really advances. I've told you before what's wrong with grammar schools. And—while I know, Ed, that you're a high school teacher—there's just so much 'hocum' in secondary education that we've got to expose it.

"And I dare . . ." Mr. W. is a charter member of the group born to incense an audience and put it on edge. But, of course, after years of this kind of baiting and inane finger-pointing, few bother to listen.

Ernest Erudite doesn't argue with his



audience—he lectures them. Ernest is a self-styled expert in just about everything. After other speakers finish he often likes to supply information they omitted or correct facts they misinterpreted.

But his great moment of glory comes when he stands forth as an oracle in his own talks.

"Few people," begins Mr. Erudite, "really understand what socialism is all about. These sources (he points to a huge stack of books he brought to the lectern) trace just a few of its significant trends. But to really understand this economic force we've got to go back to the Middle Ages. After establishing our guideposts, we can see where they authors have unfortunately gone off the track.

"Now back in the 1500's . . ."

The learned Ernest is actually a frus-

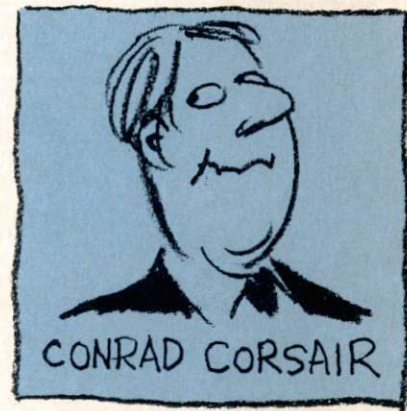


trated teacher. He forgets that school's out and Toastmasters, while interested in educational talks, prefer them served with a little seasoning and humor.

This brings us to *Randy Risible*—the humor hunter. Randy comes to the meetings not only to speak. He also plans to send his audience into gales of laughter at his assorted *bon mots*, anecdotes and rib-ticklers. Unfortunately, he fails on both counts.

There isn't an ounce of speech organization in Randy's style. He's only stringing together a mixed assortment of jokes—usually well-aged, and all too frequently, bawdy.

"Don't take life seriously," Randy tells his audience. "It has its ups and downs just like an elevator. And that reminds me of the drunk who squeezed into an elevator at the last second, and



after standing with his back to the door looking at all the passengers, he said, 'I guess you're wonderin' why I called this meeting.'

"No reaction, eh. Okay. How about the lawyer who was seen with a step ladder. 'Where are you going?' said a friend. 'I'm taking my case to a higher court,' the lawyer answered."

Randy can go on all night—and often does. The only switch that may turn him off, sometimes, is the sound of laughter.

Conrad Corsair is a case of deceptive packaging. He's not what he seems to be. Without beating around the bush, let's admit he's a vocal pirate.

Whenever Conrad reads a good magazine article, hears a clever expression or listens to a good speech, he files the material away in his mental treasure chest. Unlike others who borrow, he never credits his source or bothers to adapt the material. He just grabs it lock, stock and barrel, and makes it his own.

Discussing government, he may go on this way with the parenthesis indicating the true authors of the statements.

"Fellow Toastmasters," he states, "do we realize how truly unique is our



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wonderful United States government? Government by the consent of the governed is the most difficult system of all (Adlai Stevenson). Yes, democracy is a difficult kind of government. It requires the highest qualities of self-discipline, restraint, a willingness to make commitments and sacrifices for the general interest, and it requires knowledge (John F. Kennedy).

"Yet democracy is not a political caucus, obtaining a fixed term of office by promises and then doing what it likes with the people (Winston Churchill). And our democracy is eternally changing. No society can make a perpetual constitution, or even a perpetual law. The earth belongs to the living generation (Thomas Jefferson)."

Sylvester Smooth is the speaker everyone hates. He is too patently perfect to be true, and he isn't. Voice? Sylvester has a honey-smooth baritone, replete with pitch, modulation and emphasis.

Appearance? He's a handsome six-footer with the ease of manner of a TV commentator. Gestures? Sylvester flows

as gracefully as a ballet dancer following a computer programming. Eye contact? His glance is the glance of an eagle—straight and true.

Yet there is something wrong about Sylvester. His speech is meticulously memorized and patters on just like a recording. It's bland, melodious and dull.

The audience keeps waiting for Mr. Smooth to stumble, come to life or show signs that he's human. Whatever Sylvester discusses, his audience ignores. They are too busy watching a performance and waiting for the missed cue.

If Sylvester Smooth is over-organized, *Larry Labyrinth* is hopelessly unorganized. His delivery may not be too bad but he wanders all around his subject—like a moth around the flame—coming close but seldom making contact.

"Fellow Toastmasters," says Larry, "communciation has to be a two-way street. We're not getting through if the other fellow isn't plugged in. Many telephone conversations are a waste of time. And this is a shame.

"Alexander Graham Bell's invention was a great boon to humanity. Bell developed it at—urr, urr, getting back to communication. We all tend to hear only what we want to hear. And we have trouble with semantics. My mental picture of a word is different from yours.

"We don't even react the same way to a TV show. Almost all the programs I've seen. . . ."

Larry has a point somewhere in his speech. But he himself can't communicate in a straight line. He's lost, and so is his audience.

Advice? What advice can we give



these men? Obviously all of them are much too full of themselves to think about the audience and its needs.

We might tell Benedict Blah to throw away his first seven ideas, reject the first five phrases that come to his mind. Warren Warrior should be reminded there's more to life than strife. He might even try a speech using some of Randy Risible's humor—the best quality jokes.

Randy, on the other hand, should junk the humor at least for a while and try being serious. Don't make every talk a lecture, we should tell Ernest Erudite. Your speeches, too, will benefit from a selected use of humor and warmth.

Sylvester Smooth needs to think more about the true meaning of his message and give it from his heart. He should cut loose his puppet strings and try for more naturalism. Conrad Corsair is urged to be himself and use his own material. It's homegrown, but it's wholesome.

And Larry Labyrinth must work to develop an adequate, short speech outline, put it on paper and stick to it, avoiding distractions.

It's difficult giving help to these speakers because—while it's horrible to contemplate—there can even be crossbreeds of the seven types. Some may combine two, or even three, of the defects in the same speech. Randy's humor with Larry's wandering discourse, for example. Or the triteness of Benedict Blah with Ernest Erudite's tendency to preach. When a double-deadly speaker takes the lectern, the audience is really in trouble.

When you prepare a speech, think of the audience—not yourself. After all, they've got to listen. Speech is a vital part of life. It should be novel, controversial but not caustic, refreshingly humorous, free from sermonizing, original, sincere and logical.

Make your speeches lifelike. Don't become a deadly speaker. □

Paul J. Cathey is a member of the Jenkintown Club 2684-38 in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania. Mr. Cathey is senior news editor of *Iron Age* magazine and has, over the years, been a frequent contributor to THE TOASTMASTER.

How to Plan a Successful (and Enjoyable) Conference

by
J.O. Winter, ATM

There's really no secret to setting up and running a successful conference. It's simply a matter of following a few basic steps.

How many of you have started for a particular conference and, as you were driving down the highway, found yourself wondering why you were going? Worse yet, how many have caught yourself on the way home wondering why you went in the first place?

If you've ever experienced this sensation, it should come as some comfort to you to realize that you are not alone—thousands of people go through the same kind of agony each year. Why? Because they have, at some time or another, had a bad experience with a conference before; and although they don't relish the thought of attending another one, they feel they must—because of some outdated "professional" or "moral" responsibility.

Of course, we all can learn from our

experiences, as well as from examples—both good and bad—of others. And I suppose that if we have the proper attitude, we can make a bad conference into a great learning experience. But isn't it much more fun when we are given the opportunity of having good experiences and of learning from good examples?

That's why it is so important for everyone to understand the mechanics of setting up and running a successful conference. Whether we plan one for our community, our business or for our club, area or district meetings, there's really no secret to it. It's simply a matter of following a few basic steps.

The first item necessary for a successful conference is a good agenda. What is an agenda? The agenda is what you are supposed to accomplish. Are there reso-

lutions to be passed? Are you forming future plans? Are you directing the work of others? Are you expending monies? What is the reason for the conference in the first place? What do you plan to get out of it, what do you plan to give the conferees and what do you plan to do to further the organization under whose sponsorship the conference is being given? These questions will form the agenda.

But let's give some further consideration to another agenda item—the hidden agenda of the people who are going to attend the conference. Why do they want to come to conference? Do they want to give their input, give advice to others, lend their experiences to others, help other people in the conference, help the organization, help or criticize the leaders? Do they have some frustrations which they might want to vent?

How Many Are There?

Be sure adequate consideration is given to these hidden agendas. Find out how many hidden agendas there will be and write them down. When you write out your invitations or send out your meeting notices, remember to keep both agendas in mind, but emphasize the hidden agendas.

Conferences that happen infrequently should be announced some eight to ten weeks in advance. The first notification should just be an announcement, saying that a conference is going to take place, the reasons why and the major work to be accomplished.

Then, in four to six weeks before the actual meeting, another piece should be sent out reminding everybody that the conference is occurring, and why. This piece should be a direct invitation to the conference and should include a fairly complete agenda. It, again, should be written in consideration of the major hidden agendas of the persons being invited and should contain a return mailing piece that people can fill out, indicating their intention to attend the conference.

The last notification of the conference should be sent out ten days to three weeks before the conference actually takes place. A full agenda should be included, as well as the answers to why they should be there. Again, a return mailing should

be included so that the people you are inviting can indicate whether they intend to participate.

If the conference is one that occurs several times a year, such as an executive committee of an organization, the elaborate announcement specified above is not necessary. An invitation two to three weeks ahead of the conference is sufficient, especially if the dates of the conference have been announced and been decided upon at the preceding meeting. Even in this kind of an invitation, however, be sure to remember the hidden agendas of those people you expect to attend.

The physical arrangement of the conference should be considered next. A conference of four, six or eight people naturally would be meeting around a square or round table. The person running the conference would allow control to slip from one person to another without any consideration as to who is actually controlling the conference. In such a situation, the control will come back quite naturally to the chosen conference leader.

As the number of people in a conference expands, you'll find that a round table of this size cannot be housed in the rooms available for most conferences. The round table becomes oblong, and you now have a "head" and a "foot" of the table. This arrangement helps designate the conference leader.

The Vice-Chairman

At this time, the conference leader should pick, if it is not a voted situation, the vice-chairman of the conference. When this person is picked, choose someone who will be well respected by the conferees, such as a former president of the organization, a former director, a retired minister or a former governor. This person should sit at the foot of the table.

It might seem ungainly that the vice-chairman is at quite a distance from the leader, but this helps the vice-chairman take the part of the sergeant-at-arms by welcoming late arrivals. This also gives him the opportunity to direct the attention of the conference away from the leader at times of embarrassment, paper shuffling and the myriad of things that go

on at a conference that has not been planned.

As the conference becomes larger—up to 40 or 60 people—this oblong table is no longer available. Then, a U-shaped or, preferably, a rectangular table arrangement is used, shoving together the number of tables necessary to allow everyone to be comfortable at the conference. (If staff personnel will be required to give reports, the table should be large enough to allow these people to take their places at the front part of the table as they move in and out of the conference room.)

The vice-chairman of the conference still remains at the foot of the table and may designate someone close to the door to be an informal sergeant-at-arms. Quite frequently, the treasurer of the organization should also affix himself at the lower end of the table, to help establish a point of control. The secretary, on the other hand, must stay close to the conference chairman at the head of the table. Finally, the persons making various formal presentations on the agenda should also be located at the head of the table. (You might think that I am spending an awful lot of time on the physical facilities of a conference, but proper physical facilities allow proper conference control without being noticeable to the people attending the conference.)

The next two items to be concerned with in the physical facilities are the position of the clock and the door. Is there a clock in the room? If possible, have the clock removed. If not, position the conference table so that the chairman of the conference is not sitting directly under the clock. (Everyone is aware of the passage of time when looking at the chairman sitting under the clock.)

A Quiet Exit

The foot end of the table should be located close to the door so that the vice-chairman or sergeant-at-arms may leave the room to disseminate information to other people in the facility, to obtain personnel for various staff committee reports and work out other necessary arrangements for the conferees, such as their sleeping accommodations, luncheon and dinner arrangements, along with transportation requirements when the confer-

ees are coming from distant cities.

The agenda, which should have been mailed to the conferees ahead of time for their perusal, should be made up without the times allotted to each item shown. The chairman, however, should place opposite each item on his agenda the times that he is going to allot for the discussion of each item, in order to see to it that the conference does not drag.

As the conference starts, the chairman should instruct all personnel to speak from a sitting position. This is very important because it makes everyone equal; no one will be looking down on another person when they are speaking. A little later on, I will tell you how this can operate to the conference chairman's advantage.

If this is a first conference of a group, everyone should give their name and a short biographical sketch of themselves. Everybody should be asked at the beginning of all conferences what their concerns might be and why they came to the conference. This will allow you to pick up a few additional hidden agendas. And since definite concerns of people to be answered by the presenters will be brought out, each presenter should note the concerns that fall into his area and if at all possible, answer those concerns.

The Positions of Authority

As stated before, there are natural positions of authority around a conference table; the first being the head, which is on one of the shorter sides of the rectangle; the next being the foot of the table and then the four corners. People that attend conferences frequently—people who are interested in guiding a conference—will generally sit at or near one of the four corners when they are not the conference chairman.

Conferees, in many instances, can assume a position of authority in the conference by asking for action by his fellow participants. Occasionally, you will find a person making a speech of persuasion, and standing up to do so. This is not according to your instruction, but many people will do it anyway, either consciously or unconsciously. If you desire, you can eliminate their positions of authority—or at least reduce them—through one of several actions.

The chairman can again assume authority by ignoring the speech of one of the conferees or by ignoring a call of action by one of the conferees in one of several ways: First, the chairman may say that we have spent enough time on this particular item—that we must move on to the next item on the agenda. (“We will come back to decide that item at a later time.”) The second thing a chairman might do is call a recess for coffee in the morning or for soft drinks in the afternoon.

If, however, a motion has been properly made and properly seconded, action should be asked by the chairman. If not, the conferees will suspect manipulation and will definitely be on the side of the conferee calling for the action.

When a speaker stands up, thus assuming a role of superiority through his body language that the conference chairman does not want him to have, the chairman may stand up also. At best, this action puts the chairman back in charge of the conference, directs attention away from the conferee and, at least, divides the authority for a moment.

If the challenge to the conference continues, however, the chairman may put the dissenter in charge of a committee to report to the conference at a later date. You might also suggest that he, in conjunction with one or two other people in the conference, retire to form up a position statement or form a statement during the luncheon break. In other words, put him in a position where he has to be on your team.

Answer the Questions

As the items on the agenda are being filled and presentations are being made, be sure that all concerns of all the persons around the table are answered. When answers are not forthcoming from those making presentations, find out who around the table might be able to answer the concerns. If no one can be sure to find out who, when and how that concern is going to be answered, take a positive step so that the people at the conference will recognize that the answer will be forthcoming.

Furthermore, as the conference is ending, review all the items on the agenda in your mind. See that the conferees have

attended to all of these items to the extent necessary for future actions and that those people performing these actions are informed. Also, be sure a time schedule has been set.

Next, ask for comments again from the floor, allowing everybody to talk that wants to. The hour is generally getting late and normally comments will be few. If necessary, set the time and place for the next meeting.

Last, but not least, let's go back to the dissenter. Ask him and his colleagues if they have a written report to submit to the conference. I put this last because, if the report or the actions required are not in the best interests of the organization, placing this last on the agenda gives it the least amount of attention. At best, it can expect to be referred again to committee, referred to the next meeting of the conference, tabled indefinitely or, at the worst, acted upon without favor.

Frequently you will find an item being discussed at great length because no one wants to vote on it. The people in the discussion will begin to repeat themselves. At this point, the chairman should stop the discussion, requesting that the conference move to the next item on the agenda, with action to be taken on the item in question later in the conference.

Time to Think

Normally, it is well to take this item up again after a recess or luncheon break. This will give the conferees an opportunity for informal discussion over coffee or lunch. If a conference is being held for more than one day, however, these items can usually be acted on the following day. This helps people formulate the action they want to take. Then, when the item is again brought to the floor, quick dispatch should be made of it, with the conference chairman either asking immediately for a vote without discussion or asking for consensus of the conference.

In Toastmasters, for example, we very rarely ask for consensus. Normally we ask for a voted action. However, consensus is a good device to use in an informal situation to keep members of an organization unified. A vote is often a devious mechanism and allows the minority to recognize each other.

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When the conference chairman uses this ploy to the good of the organization, it is used properly. When he uses it to enforce his own opinion and not the opinion of the conference, the opposite can be said. When this happens, the chairman will lose leadership of the conference.

So the next time you find yourself driving home from a conference, I hope that you can look on it as a satisfying and enjoyable experience. And when you come to that fateful day when you find yourself actually in charge of a conference, I would also hope you would remember and use the suggestions outlined in this article. When you do, you'll be well on your way to making your conference a happy, successful occasion. And that's the way it should be. □

J.O. Winter, ATM, is a member of the Hi-Noon Club 1165-11 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. A manufacturers' agent selling material handling equipment in the Fort Wayne area, he served as District 11's Northern Division Lieutenant Governor for 1976.

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new clubs

691-F MISSION VIEJO

Mission Viejo, CA—Fri., 7:15 a.m., The Brig, La Paz Road (768-8177). Sponsored by Orange Breakfast 3822-F.

729-F JACOBS ENGINEERING

Pasadena, CA—Wed., Jacobs Engineering (449-2171, ext. 269). Sponsored by Ralph M. Parsons 2151-52.

3582-3 GROGAN GREEN VALLEY

Green Valley, AZ—Thurs., 8:00 a.m., Cragy East, Abrego Ave. Sponsored by Aztec 2531-3.

3140-4 POWER

San Francisco, CA—Wed., 11:30 a.m., Main Tower, 221 Main (768-2351). Sponsored by Bechtel 1771-4.

1245-7 SWAN ISLAND

Portland, OR—Wed., 12:05 p.m., Jamoke Landing, Sir Winton Room, 4525 N. Channel Ave. (283-8124).

2293-7 WARM SPRINGS

Warm Springs, OR—Wed., 11:45 a.m., Community Center (555-1161, ext. 43). Sponsored by Redmond 468-7 and Bend 2999-7.

3736-18 WESTINGHOUSE TWILIGHTERS

Baltimore, MD—Thurs., 7:00 p.m., Westinghouse (247-1578). Sponsored by Westinghouse Gaveliers 3160-18.

2974-23 BUMBLE BEES

Albuquerque, NM—Thurs., 6:30 p.m., Royal Fork, Eubank Ave. (296-1058). Sponsored by Beta Aloosters 2524-23.

642-29 SPEAKEASY

Bay St. Louis, MS—Thurs., 11:30 a.m., Room 146, Bldg. 1100, National Space Technology Labs (641-1686 or 688-3086).

2918-33 CHATELAINES

Atwater, CA—Wed., 7:30 p.m., Chamber of Commerce, 1020 Cedar (358-7580). Sponsored by Atwater Dynamic 3131-33.

886-36 SOUTHERN RAILWAY GREEN LIGHT

Washington, D.C.—Mon., 12:30 p.m., Southern Railway Co., 920 15th St., N.W. (628-4460/2371). Sponsored by Silver Spring 1314-36.

3809-36 POWERMASTERS

Gaithersburg, MD—Tues., 12:00 noon, Bechtel Power Corp., 15740 Shadygrove Rd. (948-2700). Sponsored by Bechtel Power 222-36.

3746-37 WINSTON

Winston-Salem, NC—Tues., 1:30 p.m., R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., 30th St. (468-4178). Sponsored by Mercury 2864-37.

3372-39 DELTA

Stockton, CA—Wed., 12:00 p.m., Eden Park Inn, 1005 N. El Dorado St. (478-6440). Sponsored by Greater North Stockton 64-39.

2616-46 MBL

Newark, NJ—Fri., 12:00 noon, Mutual Benefit Life, 520 Broad St. (481-8322). Sponsored by Leroy F. Schellhardt, ATM.

2967-53 WESTPORT

Westport, CT—Wed., 8:00 p.m., Westport Library, Main St. (226-9264). Sponsored by Park City 1065-53.

774-54 DANIEL WEBSTER

Canton, IL—Wed., 7:00 p.m., Parlin-Ingersoll Library, 205 W. Chestnut (647-2553). Sponsored by Lincoln-Douglas 1196-54.

2557-73 NORTH ADELAIDE

North Adelaide, South Aust.—Mon., 6:30 p.m., Australia Hotel, 62 Brougham Place (08-2967895).

3077-73 TALKABOUT

Perth, Western Aust.—Tues., 6:30, Grosvenor Hotel, 339 Hay St. (092-395969).

2844-U BAYANIHAN

Manila, Philippines—Sun., 4:00 p.m., Pius XII Catholic Center, UN Ave. (27-43-27 or 61-65-45). Sponsored by Tamaraw 1164-U.

anniversaries

30 YearsJay A. Whitfield 446-9, Ellensburg, WA
Blackhawk 444-19, Waterloo, IA
Roseland 432-30, Chicago, IL**25 YEARS**Lynden 626-2, Lynden, WA
Will Rogers 1032-16, Oklahoma City, OK
Battle Creek 1027-62, Battle Creek, MI
Roanoke 1011-66, Roanoke, VA**20 YEARS**Chinatown 2296-4, San Francisco, CA
Jackson 2319-7, Medford, OR
NWSC Crane 2339-11, Crane, IN
Flickertail 581-20, Bismarck, ND
Nechako 2046-21, Kitimat, B.C., Can.
Deadwood 2239-41, Deadwood, SD
Gaveliers 2311-46, Kenilworth, NJ
Oakville 2245-60, Oakville, Ont., Can.
Lachute 2259-61, Lachute, Que., Can.
Heriot 2302-61, Drummondville, Que., Can.
Sphinx 2215-64, Winnipeg, Man., Can.**15 YEARS**Cal-State 1733-5, San Diego, CA
High Noon 2676-6, Rochester, MN
Marine Corps Supply Center 3379-14,
Albany, GA
Peace Garden 3152-20, Bottineau, ND
White Sands 3422-23, White Sands Missile
Range, NM
Circle T 3093-42, Medicine Hat, Alta., Can.
Frontier 3381-42, Swift Current, Sask., Can.
Big Country 3418-42, Moose Jaw, Sask., Can.**10 YEARS**Speak-Easy 3588-19, Dubuque, IA
Western Electric 565-25, Shreveport, LA
Pikes Peak 3044-26, Colorado Springs, CO
Western 2451-37, Charlotte, NC

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12. Who Do You Think You're Talking to?
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16. Speak From the Other Side
17. But Are They Buying?
18. On Playing Tennis
19. On Preparing a Meeting
20. How to Make a Speech