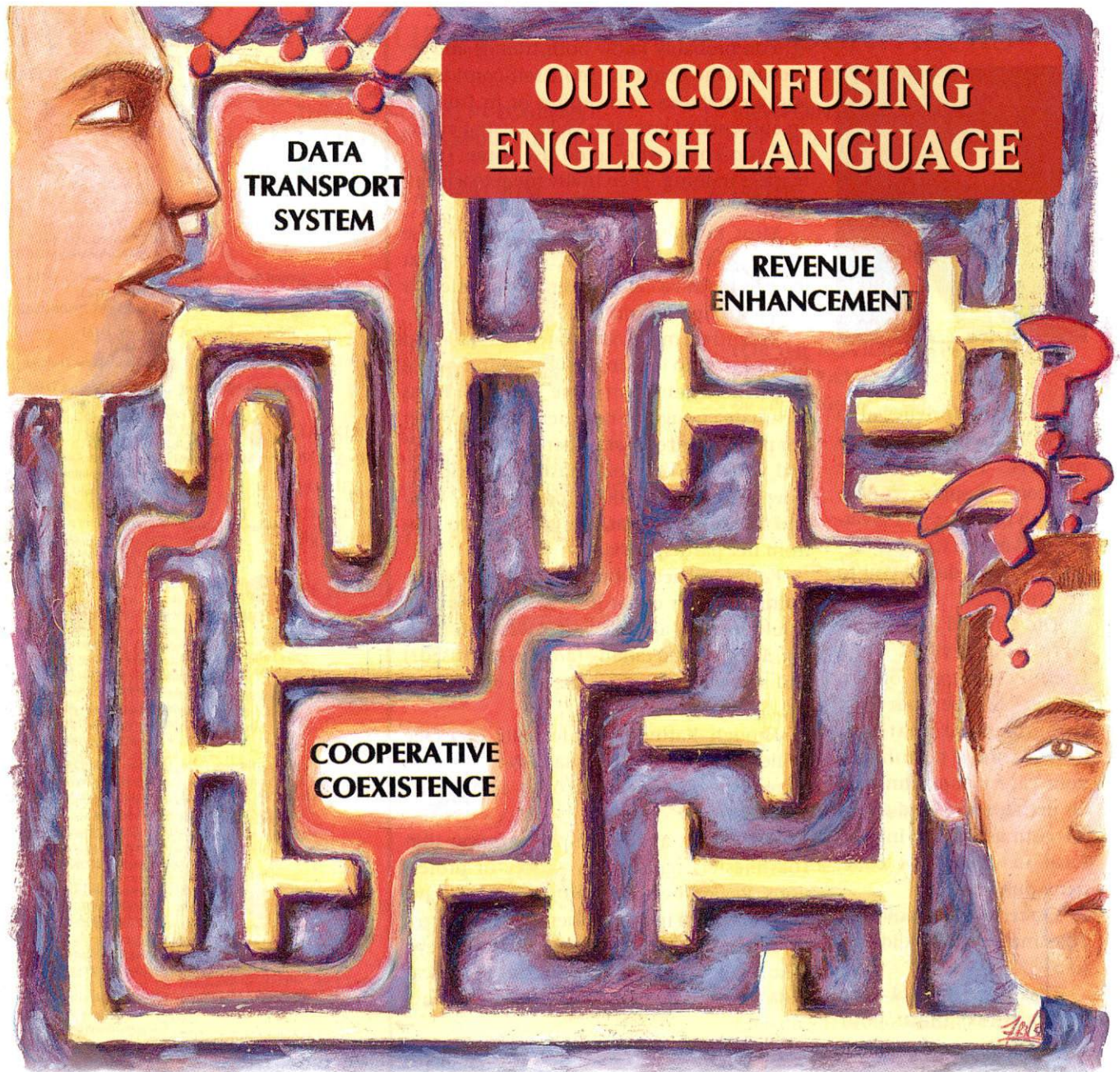


# the Toastmaster

february 1995



Beware of Doublespeak !

What Junk Mail Can Teach You About Speech Writing

## Are We a Privileged Few?



**W**e are all privileged to be involved in Toastmasters. Why? Because someone thought enough of us to invite us to a meeting and ask us to join.

Who introduced you to Toastmasters?

Did a friend ask you, or were you invited by a friendly stranger or co-worker? Maybe your boss recommended that you join in order to enhance your career opportunities? Or perhaps you read about a Toastmasters club in your local newspaper or company publication.

Once you discovered Toastmasters, why did you join?

Was it to control your nervousness, build your confidence or rid yourself of the fear of public speaking? Maybe you wanted an opportunity to practice English, learn to be a better listener or perhaps to overcome shyness.

Now that you are a member, how often do you return the favor given to you and invite a friend, co-worker or an acquaintance to visit your club? If your answer is seldom or never, why not?

You probably know both friends and associates who could use more self-confidence and are nervous in meetings or in front of an audience of any size. Make a list of everyone you know who could use some Toastmasters training. Then invite them to a meeting!

Most people join Toastmasters because someone invites them. Others go to great lengths to find a club. Let's make it easier for people to find us and join.

Recently, I met a new Toastmaster named Kathy Lee who is a singer with an incredible voice and a confident stage presence. I was fortunate enough to hear her perform. After her performance, I asked her the "how, why and what" of her Toastmasters experience. How had she heard about Toastmasters? Why had she joined? What does she hope to gain from her participation?

Kathy learned about Toastmasters while waiting for her car at the car wash. As luck would have it, a Toastmaster was also waiting. They started talking (are you surprised?) and she was invited to attend a club meeting. She went!

Though Kathy is comfortable on stage while she is singing, she said she joined to increase her confidence in other areas of her performance.

With Kathy as an example, we know that Toastmasters represent a variety of professions. Regardless of our profession, we have the privilege of helping others make a change for the better. Let's not be a privileged few. Take a cue from that Toastmaster at the car wash! Invite someone to your next meeting!

Pauline Shirley, DTM  
International President

# the Toastmaster

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## Letters

### WHAT IS IN A NAME?

When I first read Andy Jackson's article, "What's in a Name?," in the September issue, I thought it was a masterful piece of understated satire. After all, there he was, railing against the "silly" names of many Toastmasters clubs, only to belong to a club with the perfectly silly name "Two Notches"! It was only after re-reading the article that the fact set in that Two Notches refers to the road by which his club's meetings are held.

I agree with Mr. Jackson's overall comments. However, the fact that his club is located on a road with the perfectly ridiculous name "Two Notches" suggests that perhaps other clubs whose names may at first seem "undignified" are, in fact, perfectly sensible and logical.

I have found that a club's name is almost meaningless. What really counts is the quality of its members. As Shakespeare put it: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet..." (Romeo & Juliet).

Thomas W. Tripp, CTM  
Bonita Springs Club 6867-47  
Fort Myers, Florida

### TOP-NOTCH CLUB NAME

Oops. A name such as TNT, we're told, does not sound serious enough for a club ("What's in a Name?" by Andy Jackson). Then, in the same issue, an interview with International President Pauline Shirley reveals that she is a charter member of a club called...er...TNT. Baboom!

To Mr. Jackson of the Two Notch Toastmasters

Club, who thinks TNT is a good descriptor, but "juvenile" as a club name, may I muster all 44 years of my faulty middle-aged maturity and respond that TNT sounds like one top-notched name to me!

Jeanette Paul, CTM  
South Shore Club 7782-61  
St. Lambert, Quebec, Canada

### LOOKING FOR TV CLUBS

I would like to say "Amen" to the article, "You're On Candid Camera," (August) by Miriam Otte. Members of Districts 25 and 50 have the ability to broadcast their speeches by appearing on cable TV and inviting fellow Toastmasters to evaluate their speeches. TV Toastmasters tape a 60-minute program that is broadcast eight times during the next month.

I would like to contact other Toastmasters clubs that broadcast their meetings on TV to exchange tapes and ideas. Write me at: P.O. Box 201, Colleyville, Texas 76034.

Dan Parker, ATM  
TV Toastmasters Club 6338-25  
Arlington, Texas

### CONSIDER CUSTOMER SERVICE

I read with disbelief the article "Telephones Can Take Their Toll" by Joseph Pozzuoli (October). He finds it disconcerting that a client can "...intrude into my work without my permission" and "...consider himself entitled to my immediate attention." This is an amazing attitude toward good business practice and effective communication! The problem is not with the telephone or the client, but the writer.

It seems quite obvious that Pozzuoli's clients phone him because they are anxious and do not know what is going on. If they did, they would not "waste" his time with unnecessary calls.

An informed client is a happy client and he is entitled to immediate attention. After all, he is paying for the services rendered!

Be in control, Joseph. Phone the client before he phones you. Keep him informed at all times. You will be pleasantly surprised at the repeat business and commendations received.

Dick Percsy, CTM  
Sunrise Club 7264-73  
Perth, Australia

### PUT IT IN PERSPECTIVE

The author of "What If They Had Been Toastmasters?" (October) surmised that a few famous individuals would have been more successful had they been Toastmasters. Enough already! What hubris to assume that Ralph Smedley could have taught Moses how to be a better leader. Could Dr. Smedley have been a better teacher than Yahweh Himself?

The author goes on to say that Toastmasters training could have helped Emily Dickinson come out of her shell. That would have been a mistake. Her reclusive lifestyle contributed to the quality of her poetry. If she had been out and about, some of her greatest poems might never have been written.

This article is consistent with the other articles in the magazine. Throughout this

publication - in every issue - a great deal of homage is paid to Ralph Smedley. Yes, Toastmasters is a wonderful organization. Yes, I will benefit greatly from the communication and leadership programs. But let's keep this in perspective: Dr. Smedley had a good idea. It is not as if he found the cure for cancer or painted the Sistine Chapel.

Michelle Eiden  
Acorn Club 1068-28  
Royal Oak, Michigan

### HOLY MOSES!

What a refreshing perspective from Janet Whitcomb in her article, "What If... They Had Been Toastmasters." I applaud her cleverness in using historical characters to illustrate an eternal need for effective communication and leadership skills.

However, in the interest of accuracy, I encourage Ms. Whitcomb to return to the best "basic manual" of all time, and check out the story of Moses' life. He was not denied entrance into the Promised Land because of the incident noted in the article. Moses was denied that pleasure because he did not follow God's instructions in providing water for the Israelites during their wanderings (Number 20:11,12).

Thanks to Janet Whitcomb for giving us something different to consider. Articles such as these are the reason I look forward to our monthly magazine.

Vickie Sigler, ATM-B  
Tlmasters 7432-44  
Lubbock, Texas



Has the “de-manned” for  
gender free speech finally  
gone too far?

by Marion Amberg

## LET'S LET FROSTY BE THE ODD MAN OUT

■ I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT “snowperson” is more than I can take. It didn't bother me when I was labeled a freshperson in my first year of college. And it didn't bother me when the newspaperman changed his type to newspaperperson. Nor did it bother me when I was told to “take it like a person.” I am one, after all. But snowperson? Now, that's got my goat.

And I'm not the lone person out. Just ask any waitperson, cleaning person or person about town. Everyone's being personed to death.

The “personing” of America all started in the late '60s when war was declared on “man” words. Equal words for everyone became the cry of personkind, and before long “man” words were being converted to “person” words. Person came out of the closet; man went in.

It was all quite personable at first. Spokesmen began speaking as spokespersons. Chairmen evolved to chairpersons, then evolved again – meetings are now chaired by chairs in chairs. The average man became his/her own person, and the man of few words was silenced by a person of few words.

Clergymen changed their collars to clergypersons, and the company man became the company person. No longer did the tax man cometh, but the tax person did. Receptionists stopped manning the front office; they now person it. We even started looking at each other person-to-person.

De-manning the English language didn't end there. The man-in-the-moon became the person-in-the-moon; man's best friend,

person's best friend. Sandperson sandbagged the sandman. Even the gingerbread man got cooked. He now pops out of the oven as a gingerbread person.

Boogeyman fell down a personhole, and no man-sized job was too big for a right-hand person. Councilmen and salesmen turned in their nameplates for councilperson and salesperson. Even the garbage person personified personkind.

The common person booted the common man, and the thinking person soon outsmarted the thinking man. No man is an island literally became reality, and even though all men are created equal, it's a gentleperson's agreement that only the best person gets the job.

And then there's Mr. Snowperson.

Will it end there? How could any reasonable person think so? **T**

*Marion Amberg* is a freelance writer living in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

### Attention:

## Traveling Toastmasters!

**W**ant to attend Toastmasters meetings while you're on vacation or taking a business trip? World Headquarters is pleased to provide you with a list of clubs in a specific city or cities. Just call, write or send a fax to our Membership Department with your request.





for the novice

■ ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AND dramatic speeches ever made by a U.S. President was the one delivered by Franklin Delano Roosevelt following the attack on Pearl Harbor that brought the United States into World War II.

But did you know that the first sentence of that speech as originally written by FDR was not the introduction he used when he delivered the speech? Here is the first version:

*"Yesterday, December 7th, 1941 – a date which will live in history..."*

Here is how he delivered the speech to Congress and the American people:

*"Yesterday, December 7th, 1941 – a date which will live in infamy..."*

# The Persuasive Power of P.O.V.

By Len L. Keeler, CTM

The first version included a simple statement of fact: this was a date that would live in history. In the second version, by exchanging the word "history" with "infamy," FDR gave the speech an extra "charge" – the element of personal passion and judgment. The difference is what I call the "power of P.O.V."

## WHAT IS P.O.V.?

In the world of film and television scriptwriting, the acronym "P.O.V." means "point of view." Scriptwriters use the term when they want the camera to show a scene from the point of view of the drama's character.

We've all seen suspense or action-oriented films where it seems as if we're in the car careening over a cliff or running through

the underbrush to escape danger. That's a P.O.V. shot. It's dramatic – it holds our attention and it puts us "into the action."

P.O.V. can be a dramatic communication technique in other ways as well.

## COMFORT LEVEL

How comfortable do you feel expressing your point of view in conversation with others? I know there have been times when I've hesitated in revealing my feelings and beliefs when I thought they might conflict with those of someone else.

There are benefits, however, to expressing ourselves on issues we feel strongly about. First, it lets others know who we really are. It gives them an insight into our thoughts and personality they might not have otherwise. Also, if we don't express our personal point of view, who will?

If our objective is to persuade others, having a strong sense of our point of view and the power to express it is vital.

When we "take a stand" on a particular issue of topic, our listeners sense that commitment and appreciate it. Our extra level of enthusiasm enlivens the topic.

## CAPTURE THE POWER

Here are several steps that will help you capture the power of P.O.V. in your speeches and personal communications:

► **Care about your topic.** The first step is to believe what you're saying. I've seen the most quiet members of my Toastmasters club literally light up a room when they speak on a topic they really feel passionate about.

Have you ever noticed that when a speaker really cares about the topic, it makes you and the rest of the audience care too?

One word of caution: be careful not to step on the feelings of those in your audience who may disagree with your point of view. If you can address their ideas and attitudes as well as your own, you'll be more persuasive. And never be a "demagogue" – a speaker who tries to manipulate listeners by appealing mainly to their emotions or prejudices.

Dare to share your point of view with your audience – they might like it!

► **State it emphatically.** Don't bury your point of view somewhere in the middle of your speech. State it right up front! That way you'll never leave audiences wondering, "What's the point?"

And don't apologize for feeling strongly about your topic – convey your conviction with robust vocal style and precise gestures.

► **Back it up.** When you put the power of P.O.V. into your speech, it comes with an extra responsibility: your audience will expect you to back up your statements with



ILLUSTRATION: RICK STROMOSKI

facts, data and proof. This gives you an excellent opportunity to use visual aids.

Try putting together a simple chart with figures backing up your claim. Or pass out a copy of an article, highlighting quotes or statistics that support your points. Every piece will help you gain credibility with your audience.

► **Illustrate your point.** Evidence alone, however, won't do the job completely. You shouldn't rely on logic alone to carry your message – don't forget to appeal to the heart, too.

Present your listeners with the human side of your proposal. Tell them how the problem you're discussing affects of a typical human being. Your own personal experience can be a powerful motivator. If you

have some first-hand knowledge of the problem, let the audience in on it.

► **Call for action.** Finally, don't leave the audience hanging. Give them something specific to do about the problem you've described.

Close your speech by encouraging them to take action, now!

#### PUTTING P.O.V. INTO PRACTICE

Here are some examples of some of the types of speeches that will allow you to incorporate P.O.V.:

► **A topic of broad general interest.** How about a speech on how to improve the public school system or merits of foreign aid or about the importance of communication in a relationship? A speech on one of these topics would be relevant and well-received in any Toastmaster club.

► **A topic of local or community interest.** Why not talk about how your city could do a better job controlling crime? Or about how your town should have more parks and less office buildings? Or the lack of good opportunities for singles to meet the right kind of people in your community? Topics of local concern are bound to attract interest.

► **In Table Topics.** The next time you come forward for Table Topics, use your topic as an opportunity to speak your mind. Starting with a statement of a strong point of view gives your impromptu talk a clear direction and sense of organization.

So the next time you make a speech, why not make it about something you really believe in? The next time you come forward for Table Topics, why not take a definite stand on the subject at hand, and state it with authority and conviction? I promise it will lend an extra level of excitement to your club – and to your speeches. **T**

**Len L. Keeler, CTM**, is a member of Wry Toast Club 4063-12 in Temecula, California.

*"Have you ever noticed that when a speaker really cares about a topic, it makes you and the rest of the audience care too?"*

There is no

EGG

in

EGGPLANT –

our confusing English language



8

by Krystyna Szawelski, ATM

Have you ever wondered why there's no egg in eggplant, no ham in hamburger and neither pine nor apple in pineapple? Why English muffins did not originate in England, french fries from France or Danish pastries from Denmark? And why sweetmeat is made from fruit while sweetbread has no bread, isn't sweet, but is made from meat?

These are some of the idiosyncrasies of the English language mentioned in Richard Lederer's book *Crazy English*. Although English is the most commonly used language in international mail, telephone calls and books, it remains one of the most confusing languages.

With approximately 400,000 words in everyday use, English has the largest vocabulary of any language. This gives English speakers greater diversity in word choice and a wealth of synonyms. For example, as Toastmasters, we may speak, pronounce, articulate, vocalize, express or deliver our speeches. When we evaluate, we may appraise, judge, assess, analyze, criticize or scrutinize each other's performances. In Table Topics we might be nervous, afraid and terrified or appear confident, calm and composed – and the Grammarian may find us uhm-ing, ah-ing, er-ing, or uh-humming! In short, English has a word for every occasion.

The flexibility of the English language means that we can switch between passive and active tenses and not only say "I gave a speech" but also "the speech was given by me" – a construction that is impossible in any other language.

An English word also can act both as a noun and as a verb – take "a drink" and "to drink" for example. In questions of familiarity we don't have problems like the French do with their various suffixes to accord with the status of the person being addressed. In English we simply say "you."

The linguistic diversity of the English language can baffle those attempting to decipher it. No other language has more words spelled the same way, yet pronounced differently. Taking the letter combination "ough" for example, we have at least seven different ways of pronouncing this: cough, bough, through, enough, tough and thought.

In spelling there are around 40 different sounds and more than 200 different ways of spelling them. The "sh"



sound is found in champagne, shoe, sugar, passion, ocean and ambitious. And the word "four" contains the letter "u," though it is omitted in "forty."

One of the best examples of the complexities of the English language lies in the difference between American English and British English. George Bernard Shaw once said, "England and America are two nations divided by a common language." It has been argued that the two countries have grown apart so rapidly that the day might come when they won't be able to understand each other. This is illustrated by the story of the American lady newly arrived in England, where garbage collectors are known as dustmen. She wakes up one morning to find three burly men on her doorstep announcing that they are

her dustmen.

"Oh," she said, "I won't be needing your services because I do my own dusting."

In everyday speech around 4,000 words are used differently in America and Britain. Some variations are well known – the British say lift instead of elevator, biscuits instead of cookies and petrol instead of gas. British crisps are U.S. chips and french fries are British chips. But other differences may confuse the unwary visitor. English people bathe their wounds but not themselves – they bath themselves. While Americans would bathe in a bathtub an Englishman would bath in a bath.

And if this isn't confusing enough, in Britain the Royal Mail delivers the post and not the mail while in America the postal service delivers the mail and not the post. Public schools are private schools in Britain and squash is a drink, not a vegetable.

So which is the true lingua franca – American English or British English? Words the English criticize as Americanisms, such as "fall" (which is no longer used in Britain – they say "autumn") and "gotten" (they say "got") and "trash" (they say "rubbish") were in fact used by Shakespeare and were common in Elizabethan England. Loan as a verb rather than lend is labeled as an Americanism by the British when in fact it was used in England eight centuries ago.

America has also introduced expressions that never existed in Britain but are now in common use. Bill Bryson in his book *The Mother Tongue* explains how the British do something on a "shoestring" when the English word is shoelace. Britons also talk about "the 64,000 dollar question," "looking like a million dollars" and having a "megabucks salary." And they "step on the gas" although they fuel their cars with petrol!

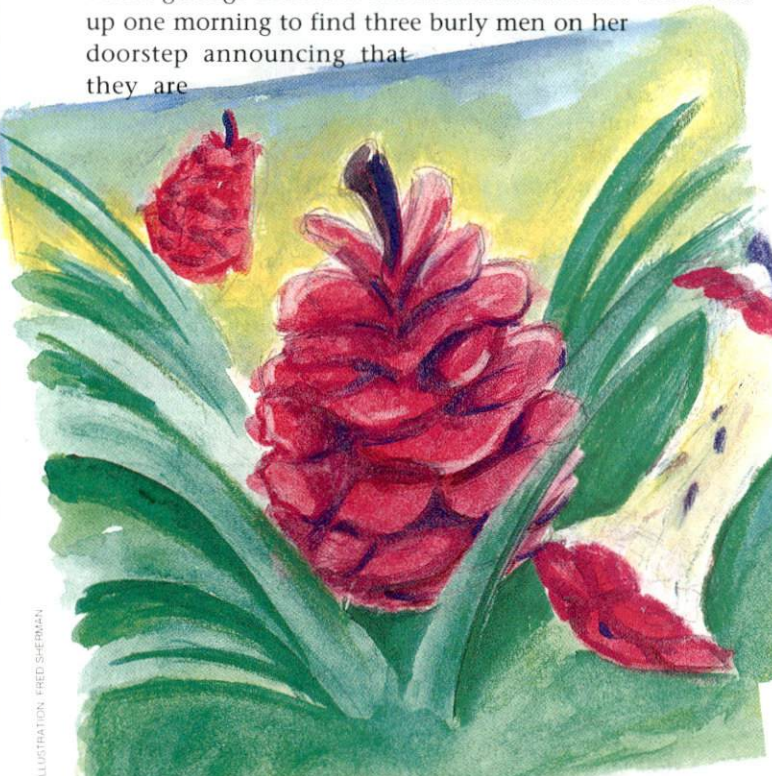
American spelling has been adopted in some instances in Britain – for example, the word "jail" instead of the previously used "gaol" and "airplane" instead of "aeroplane." But the British have clung to the word "programs" instead of "program" except when it is slotted into the computer as a disk.

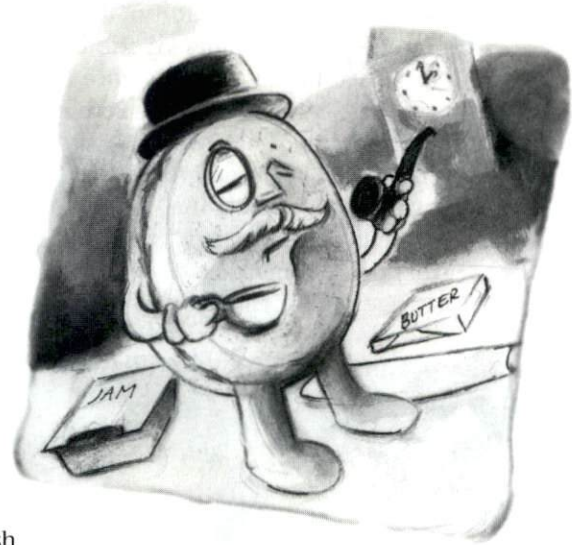
The British have kept the "u" in words such as colour, humour and labour yet dropped it in coloration, humorist and laborious.

But although Oscar Wilde claims that "the English have really everything in common with the Americans except language" the two languages really are not that different. The British have endowed the Americans with some of their vocabulary and the Americans have introduced new expressions to the British.

Language is a living thing and the English language is continually changing and evolving. Environmental awareness has brought us new words such as ecotourism and

ILLUSTRATION: FRED SHEPHERD





toxic racism. Some linguistic changes have been short-lived: We seldom make Schwarzkopfian comments or tell someone to scud off since the ending of the Gulf war, but since then the economic recession has popularized terms like corporate downsizing, deployment, paradigm shift and empowerment.

If language is a living thing then the English language with its ever changing and ever growing vocabulary seems to be more alive than ever. One can't help but marvel at a language where, in the words of Richard Lederer: "Hot dogs can be cold, darkrooms can be lit, nightmares can take place

in broad daylight and hours, especially rush hours and happy hours, can last longer than 60 minutes!"

*Krystyna Szawelski, ATM*, is a member of Diablo Club 4160-57 in San Ramon, California.

# SAY WHAT?

■ Now let's take a look at several familiar English words and phrases that turn out to mean the opposite of – or something very different from – what we think they mean.

*A non-stop flight.* You'd be wise never to board one or you're apt to go into perpetual orbit and soon run out of both peanuts and booze.

*I really miss not seeing you.* Whenever anyone says that, the listener is tempted to respond, "All right, I'll leave." What the speaker meant to say was, "I really miss seeing you."

*A near miss.* In reality, that's a collision in our sometimes not-too-friendly skies or on a California interstate wrapped in fog. On the other hand, a *close call* is actually a *near hit*.

*I'm speaking tongue-in-cheek.* If you spew forth your English that way, how can anyone in the world ever understand you? Even when you take your tongue out of your cheek, you still might have trouble saying what you mean and meaning what you say.

*Watch your head.* We keep seeing this sign on low doorways all over the place, but no one has yet figured out how to comply with such a directive. Just try watching your head or biting your teeth and see what happens.

*The announcement was made by a nameless official.* If parents acted responsibly at all, everyone should have a name, even government officials. Surely what we mean is, "The announcement was made by a unnamed official."

*I'll follow you to the ends of the Earth.* Let the word go forth to the four corners of the world that ever since Columbus, we have known the Earth doesn't have any ends.

by Henry J. Pratt

*Preplan, preboard, preheat and pre-record.* When you get right down to it, people who do such things are simply planning, boarding, heating and record-

ing. Who needs all those pretentious prefixes.

*A hot cup of coffee.* Here again, our English is in hot water. Surely, what we mean is a *cup of hot coffee*.

*Keep a stiff upper lip.* Whenever we face disappointments or are afraid, it's important to keep both our lower and upper lips from quivering. Why be so partial?

*I got caught in one of the biggest traffic bottlenecks of the year.* The bigger the bottleneck, the more freely the contents of the bottle flows through it. To be true to English metaphors, we should say, "I got caught in one of the smallest bottlenecks of the year."

Why, except for our King's English, must all *shrifts be short*, all *lucre filthy*, all *bystanders innocent*, and all *bedfellows strange*? To say the least, surely a few *shrifts* are too long, and a lot of hard earned money is squeaky clean.

In our relationships with our bosses, we should try not to *vent our spleens*, but considering our total bill of health, why play second fiddle to our lungs, livers and kidneys? Likewise, why must it be that only our minds are *boggled* and never our eyes or hearts? Instead of just *casting aspersions* why not try hurling or lobbing them?

Yes, indeed, the English language is inconsistent, but isn't it fun to pause occasionally and sift through all this word and phrase wreckage? Whenever we do, we can't help but come up with more puzzling questions than answers, along with a few grins and some real belly laughs.

**S**peeches on tough technical subjects, from the latest tax laws to the future of nuclear power, seem almost guaranteed to send your fellow Toastmasters nodding into their dinner salads. Nothing is as boring as an expert droning on about some technical issue of interest to only about five other people in the audience.

Yet nothing is quite as rewarding to listeners as a speech that relates new and thought-provoking information. More importantly, many issues that strike with emotional impact – from the future of the space program to the pros and cons of healthcare reform – really require that listeners gather some basic technical knowledge as a prerequisite to making an informed decision. For Toastmasters trying to persuade audiences on complex issues, attempting to share special expertise, or simply looking for a new speaking challenge, the extra effort required to master speaking on technical topics is well worthwhile.

Technical communications experts Michael Cloitre and Terry Shin suggest five ways to make technical topics more interesting and valuable to audiences: streamline ideas, emphasize the human dimension, use metaphors,

tell stories, and help the audience participate in developing understanding.

## Streamline Ideas

Experienced speakers know that the most difficult topics are often those they know the most about. After all, squeezing 10 years of background and experience into a five-to-seven-minute speech requires some difficult choices.

The wise technical speaker limits the scope of the speech to a single central purpose and recognizes that this purpose must be adapted to the needs, interests and background of the audience. In explaining the effects of the Clinton health-care reform plan, we need to consider: Are audience members most interested in how healthcare reform will affect their individual budgets? Are they small business owners who worry about how insurance requirements will affect their bottom line? Are they young people raising a family or are they nearing retirement age? As technical speakers, we keep the audience's interest by gearing our message to "news they can use."

by *Wende M. V. Hawkins, CTM*

Make technical topics less tedious by gearing your message to "news they can use."



ILLUSTRATION: RICK STROMOSKI

# Talking Technical

At the same time, the effective technical speaker simplifies – even oversimplifies. A Toastmasters speech is no place to discuss minor exceptions, remote possibilities, obscure connections or intradisciplinary quarrels. While smoothing away complexities may feel uncomfortable at first, your audience will appreciate the effort. Rest assured that the listener who truly wants to know exactly how to apply the provisions of Section C, sub 8.43, paragraph 2 of the tax code will not hesitate to ask questions after the speech!

## Emphasize the Human Dimension

Whoever said, “Man is the measure of all things” understood technical speaking. Every topic – from the different procedures for refining oil to the federal government’s method of creating each year’s budget (how are those for boring topics?) – exists because *people* make it exist.

Emphasizing the human dimension starts with thinking about how understanding your topic serves the audience’s needs. But it also means thinking about how people out-

side the audience are involved in the issue – as heroes, victims, villains or beneficiaries. People are interested in hearing about the character and actions of other people: that’s why gossip is so fascinating! Human interest can lend excitement to a topic as dry as how to build a new computer system. This is exactly what author Tracy Kidder was able to do in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *The Soul of a New Machine*, where the reader is led through the complexities of computer hardware and software by a host of exciting and eccentric characters, ranging from commanding, indefatigable manager Tom West to petite, energetic secretary Rosemarie Seale. When we introduce the audience to interesting people who care passionately about the topic, we encourage the audience to care, too.

## Use Metaphors

Metaphors, similes and analogies are among the most powerful tools available to a technical speaker. Metaphors,

similes and analogies are used to relate the unfamiliar to the familiar – by emphasizing similarities between something the audience already knows and something new, we can make the new familiar.

Metaphors compare two things: “You and I may go to the chiropractor when we slip a disk, but when the earth gets out of alignment, we have an earthquake.”

Similes compare two things using “like” or “as”: “An atom is like a little solar system, with negatively-charged electrons orbiting around the sun consisting of neutrons and protons.”

Analogies are simply more extended metaphors or similes. “To understand how computers think, consider what one would have to go through to do something as simple as tying your shoes. Each step requires a yes or no decision: shall I put my index finger on the knot to hold it steady? Shall I move my wrist a fraction of an inch to tighten the lace? Shall I change the angle of my hand so as to loop the lace? Actions that are automatic and unthinking for us may require several hundred instructions for a computer to accomplish them. Scientists who try to use the computer to understand human reasoning are hoping to get down to just the level of thought: to understand how we learn to combine hundreds of tiny acts into a single purposeful action.”

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***“A Toastmasters speech is no place to discuss minor exceptions, remote possibilities, obscure connections, or intradisciplinary quarrels.”***

## Tell Stories

Corporate storytelling expert Peg Neuhauser points out that stories make information not only more memorable, but also more believable. Stories engage listeners through exciting characters, suspenseful plots, and colorful language.

Storytelling is not limited to talking about the people who made the decision or discovery. Using a technique called “personification,” we can tell stories in which objects act as heroes and villains. You may recall this method from those embarrassing fifth-grade “personal hygiene” films in which the happy little sperm went on a trip to find the egg of his dreams! Silly though it may have seemed at the time, personification – treating an object as if it had the characteristics of a person – can be a powerful way to keep an audience involved in the fate of a scenic river, the passage of a bill, or the progress of a blood cell through the body. One well-known example of this method at work is

Isaac Asimov's *Fantastic Journey*, in which the characters are shrunk and sent on an epic journey through the human circulatory system.

## Audience Participation

It's hard to doze over your lamb chops when you're doing something. While not for the faint-hearted speaker, audience participation can be an effective means of making a topic come alive.

The simplest and most basic method of involving the audience is to give listeners something to imagine, remember, or silently respond to. The speaker might ask listeners to imagine themselves as 6 inches high, to recall how it feels to wake up from a nightmare, or to think about how they would respond to a choice between creating jobs or reducing the deficit. Storytelling, metaphors and rhetorical questions all work here.

At a more advanced level, the speaker can provide handouts that trace a progress, asking the audience to follow along. At the most advanced level, the speaker can actually give the audience something to do: a puzzle to work out, an opportunity to ask questions, even a specific role in the speech. In a well-planned program, the speaker may be able

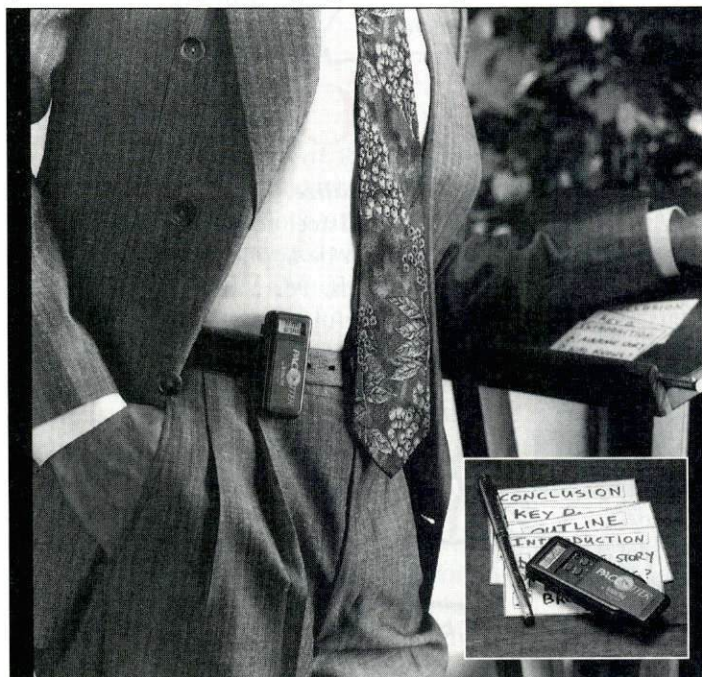
to distribute puzzles beforehand; a club could even schedule a special meeting in which several speakers provide exercises and speeches about a common, complex topic.

By streamlining information, emphasizing the human dimension, using metaphor, telling stories and generating audience participation, we can engage our audiences' interest in even the most complex topics. The Toastmaster who wants examples of these five techniques in action can turn to a number of resources. I particularly recommend the writing and television programs of James Burke (*Connections*, *The Day the Universe Changed*), Carl Sagan (*The Dragons of Eden* and others) and Isaac Asimov (*Fantastic Voyage* and numerous nonfiction books on science and literature).

As our world becomes increasingly complex, the ability to debate timely issues and communicate vital "background" information becomes increasingly important. The technical speaker soon learns that achieving perfect clarity requires as much artistry and effort as developing an emotionally moving style – but the informed audience is more likely to stay persuaded after the last evaluation of the evening is over. With lively delivery and the use of these five techniques, the technical expert can become the most interesting speaker on the program! **T**

*Wende M.V. Hawkins, CTM*, is a member of Midway Club 383-6 in St. Paul, Minnesota.

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By Phil Theibert

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# They Laughed When I Sat Down To Write

(people love quizzes, hate tests). "Postage-free" beats "postage-paid." With upscale customers use "complimentary," not "free." "Do you make these mistakes in English?" beats "Are you afraid of making mistakes in English?" And always include a "P.S." – 80 percent of all direct mail recipients read them.

You can use the same kind of psychology to make sure your own memos are read. Here are some corporate writing tips that can be found in your direct mail:

**Emphasize control.** "The Optima Card puts the right person in charge of your interest rate. You." People want to be in control of their lives. For a

memo or speech: "This seminar puts the right person in charge. You."

**Tap into fear.** A great headline: "I'll never lose my job. I'll never lose my job..." It tapped right into my sense of security (and fear of insecurity). In a memo, you could ask, "What is the one mistake that could ruin us?" Or simply begin by saying, "Protect yourself."

**Promise to unlock a puzzle.** "The Deaf Hear Whispers" compels you to read on. For a letter to your sales force: "How I doubled my client list in one evening."

**Promise exclusivity.** "Quite frankly, our credit card is not for everyone. And everyone who applies for membership is not approved." If it works for them, it can work for you. "I'm sending this to only a select few."

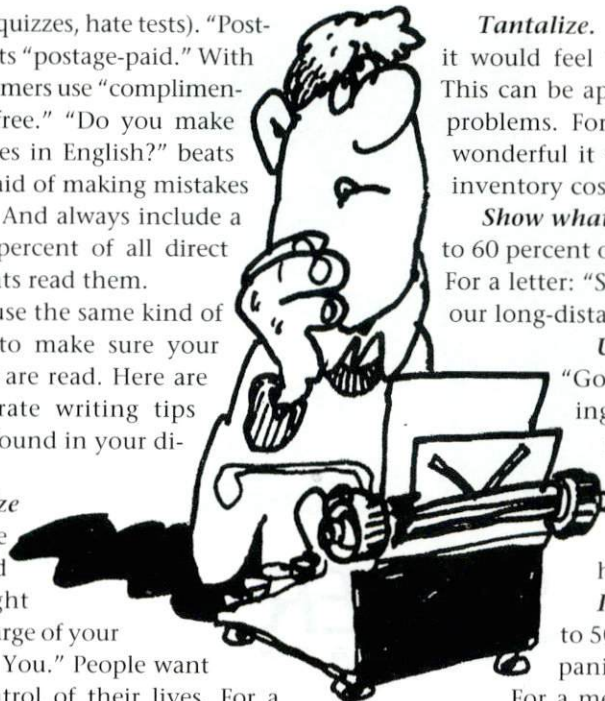
**Tantalize.** "Think how wonderful it would feel to walk without pain." This can be applied to most company problems. For a memo: "Think how wonderful it would be to reduce our inventory costs."

**Show what's in it for me.** "Save up to 60 percent on the books you order." For a letter: "Save up to 60 percent on our long-distance calls."

**Use headline grabbers.** "Golf pro banned from using new 'hot' ball; flies too far." To announce a training program: "Learn to use a computer in less than an hour."

**Paint a picture.** "Listen to 500 dolphins shrieking in panic as they gasp for air." For a memo: "Listen to 500 an-

Junk mail provides the best writing course in the world. Try these tips for catchy speech openers.



gry customers screaming for refunds unless you..."

**Stress convenience.** "Never waste another evening returning videos. We pick them up." Tell your employees how you can make their lives easier. To promote your travel desk, write: "Never stand in line for another ticket."

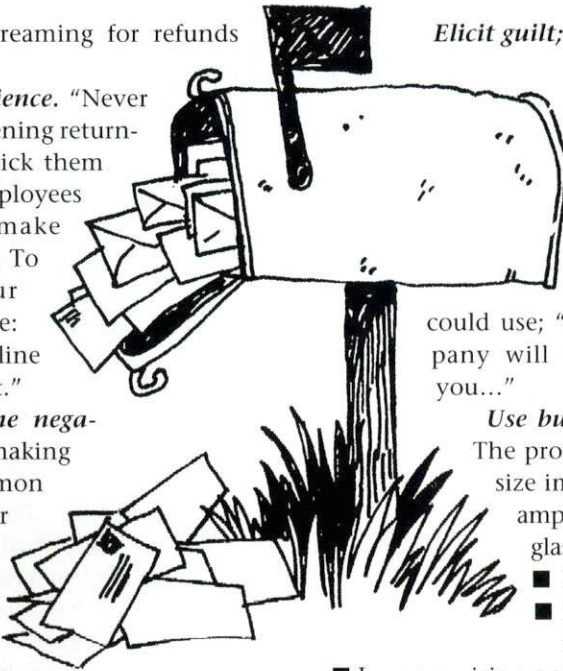
**Emphasize the negative.** "Are you making these seven common mistakes in your golf game?" In your office, ask: "Are you making these seven common mistakes in your entries?"

**Play on underdog appeal.** Remember the brilliant ad, "They laughed when I sat down at the piano"? People love underdogs who succeed. Use: "They laughed when I ordered 100 new..." or "They thought I was nuts when..."

**Ask provocative questions.** "When an employee gets sick, how long does it take your company to recover?" For a memo: "Are our pumps costing more to operate than they should?"

**Use the "barker" technique.** "Call your friends...check your fuse box...and get ready to rock...because we're bringing the world's loudest, most awesome..." Those people are excited! Show passion and excitement in your letters. "This company is about to take off like never before!"

**Appeal to curiosity/greed.** "If you think you could never get a boat, a car and a trip for \$22.50, think again." For a memo: "If you thought we can't earn \$100,000 with this new product, think again."



**Elicit guilt; stress urgency.** "In the 10 seconds it took you to open and begin to read this letter, four children died from the effects of malnutrition or disease." Ow! Right to the heart. Perhaps you could use; "In one week our company will waste \$10,000 unless you..."

**Use bullets.** People skip-read. The pros use bullets to emphasize important points. For example, when selling driving glasses they write:

- Beat headlight glare.
- Drive through blinding rain.
- Increase vision and safety.

P.S. Don't throw away that direct mail! It'll beat any writing course you ever took.

Reprinted from the April 11, 1994 edition of *The Wall Street Journal*. T

**Phil Theibert** is a speech writer for a large Western utility in Phoenix, Arizona.

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# Be Heard:

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# How to Get People to Listen to What You Have to Say

**Do people often interrupt when you're talking? Are your comments sometimes ignored? Do you feel inadequate when it comes to expressing your ideas in a business meeting? Would you like your verbal contribution to be taken more seriously at work? At home? In social settings?**

The way you talk is as unique as you are. And that uniqueness should be encouraged. Your voice and speech pattern are part of your identity. But, as with everything else about you, if it isn't working for you it can and should be changed.

Think about it: You go on a diet when extra pounds put your self-image at risk. You join Toastmasters when public speaking scares you. And you learn relaxation techniques when stress begins to interfere with aspects of your life. So if you feel that you aren't really being heard, why not change the way you present yourself verbally?

Following are speech habits and patterns that typically hamper a person's ability to communicate effectively:

- Phrases like "I think," "I guess" and "sort of" make you seem unsure about what you're saying.
- Filling your conversations with extra words, sounds and phrases, such as "you know," "know what I mean?" and "uh," minimize the impact of your message.
- Frequent use of pet words and phrases like "well," "clearly," "anyway," "the fact is," "if you ask me" and "on the other hand" make your speech pattern predictable and uninteresting.
- Rambling on without getting to the point causes people to lose interest in what you're saying.
- Answering a question in a questioning tone makes you sound uncertain. For example, if your boss asks, "When can I expect that report on my desk?" and you answer, "This afternoon?" it's as if you're asking his permission to bring it to him at that time instead of telling him when you'll finish the report.
- Speaking before gathering your thoughts. This results in being much wordier than necessary – a real turn-off for most listeners.

- Succumbing to speech-related habits such as: constant throat clearing, covering your mouth with your hand, swallowing and making smacking noises, lip licking and lip biting. When conversing with someone displaying one of these habits, it's hard to get past what's going on with the hands, lips or tongue and concentrate on the content of the conversation.
- Monopolizing a conversation. Even the best listeners want a chance to speak during a conversation.
- Repeating yourself. Some people do this for emphasis. Too much repeating, however, makes you seem like a school teacher who's talking to the class dunce.

We sometimes laugh nervously when we aren't exactly sure about what we've just said or how it might be taken. Sometimes inserting nervous laughter after statements becomes a habit, one that says to others, "I don't take myself very seriously so don't pay attention to what I say."

The words we choose and our personal speech habits aren't the only things that make the difference between being listened to and being ignored. Another major factor in our effectiveness as communicators is the way our voice sounds and how we use it.

According to Susan Colla, who teaches vocal performance techniques in Ventura, California: "Many times people don't enjoy talking because they don't like how they sound. They don't like the feel of their voice when they talk. They might say what they have to say very quickly because it's uncomfortable for them to speak, and to do a lot of talking is very taxing."

Some men and women speak at too high a pitch, too quietly, too fast or they sound like mush mouths. Straining to hear or understand someone is tiring. People soon lose interest when listening becomes an effort.

But why talk about the sound and tone of the voice – that's not something we can change, is it? The good news, experts say, is that we can. Colla says, "We teach ourselves to use the speaking voice we use and there are exercises and techniques to help us develop a better speaking voice – one that is taken seriously and that others will enjoy listening to."

Learning to control and become comfortable with your voice will positively affect your whole presence during a presentation, whether it be at a Toastmasters meeting, in a business setting or at a job interview. You'll feel more confident and be more relaxed and thus, more well-received.

A common mistake many of us make, Colla says, is to hurry our speech: "Often people, when they have the floor, feel like they'd better say what they have to say while they have the opportunity. Maybe they don't think they're holding the audience's attention so they'll speak very quickly. They should know that their speech is more impactful when they speak more slowly and enunciate."

We usually aren't aware of our speech habits and voice tone, however, unless we hear ourselves like others do. That's why experts suggest taping your voice while engaged in conversation and then listening to yourself critically. Place a tape recorder in the center of the room when you're talking to a family member or friend. This will help you judge whether you're speaking too loudly or softly in comparison with others. Is there someone you particularly like listening to? A friend or celebrity? Pay attention to how they speak and use words.

Once you've discovered which of your speaking habits you want to change, begin working on one or two of them throughout the day. Correct yourself on the spot each time you mess up. Remember that it took years of practice to develop your current speech pattern, so it will take time and practice to achieve the changes you want.

Following are seven tips to help you be heard:

1. **Maintain eye contact when talking or listening.**
2. **Mean what you say and say what you mean.** People will stop listening to people who habitually make empty promises or empty threats.
3. **Use positive speech.** No one enjoys listening to someone who speaks negatively all the time. Check your word usage. If you habitually use words like "shouldn't," "can't," "don't," "never," "angry," "bad," "hate," "afraid" and "fear," make an effort to change them to words like, "can," "will," "accept," "love," "good" and "faith."
4. **Use fewer "buts."** The word "but" tends to negate any statements preceding it. As an example, "I love her to pieces, but she has a very sharp tongue" or "She has a beautiful face, but she sure is fat."
5. **Don't overdo the truth and honesty.** Avoid these phrases, "If you want my honest opinion" (Are your opinions usually lies?) and "To be honest with you" (Are you usually dishonest?).
6. **Check your sentence structure.** The active voice makes a stronger sentence. Instead of saying "Your speech can be improved," say, "You can improve your speech." Rather than "The ring was given to me by Joe," say "Joe gave me the ring."
7. **Appearance is important.** Whenever you are giving a speech or participating in a business meeting, job interview or promotion interview – anytime you'll be "on" – wear something you know looks good on you and you'll be immensely more relaxed. The less you have to worry about during a business presentation or a social event, the more successful you'll be.

Your eyes may be the window of your soul and your hair, your crowning glory, but the way you speak is what pulls everything together to create an image. And you have the power to present any image you want. **T**

Patricia L. Fry is a member of Pro Speakers Club 7256-33 in Ventura, California.



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**A**t a recent meeting, a Toastmaster delivered a speech that was well-received by everyone in the audience. Except for his evaluator. The Toastmaster had used the word "toilet" in the speech. This single word so completely offended the evaluator that he tuned out the rest of the speech.

In everyday conversation, we hardly even think about how we're using our words. Yet, as Toastmasters, we must. The wrong word can destroy a speech, but the right one can leave a lasting impact on the audience.

Try the following steps, and discover what a difference one word can make.

**Listen to others.** Everyone has a unique style of speaking, shaped by where the person grew up, his or her peers, and level of education.

Observe other people's everyday conversation. Notice how they put sentences together and what kind of words they use. There may be something you can use that will appeal to a particular audience. Or you may even discover a word or phrase you should avoid because your audience won't understand it.

Listen also for the things you don't like. Perhaps someone uses a word crutch like "you know." Maybe it's just the way a particular word is used. If it annoys you, it probably annoys someone else also.

**Read! Read! Read!** You don't have to read the latest bestseller or a classic novel. Just find something that appeals to you and experiment. No matter what book you select, you will learn something.

For instance, a writer has to target his article or book toward a specific reader. A book aimed at children wouldn't use college level vocabulary. Reading will help teach you to know your audience. Just find something that appeals to you and experiment.

**Listen to yourself.** It's important for you to know what your audience hears. Have someone tape your speech. Wait a week so that it's not fresh in your mind, then listen to it.

Look for word crutches. Once you identify them, you can work on eliminating them.

Watch out for flowery words. Do you remember an example of this from your

reading? You probably came across a writer who used a lot of adjectives to describe something. If you use too many in your speech, you'll probably bore your audience and sound pompous. Or worse still, you may alienate them. A listener shouldn't have to use a dictionary to understand your speech.

by Linda Adams

# Make Those Words Count

Concentrate next on making subtle changes in the way you use words. For instance, compare the following sentences and decide which sounds the most powerful:

*We need to stop littering.*

*We should stop littering.*

*We must stop littering.*

It's amazing what a difference a single word change makes! Yet, those subtle changes can heighten the impact of your speech.

You only have a few minutes to get your point across. Every single word counts. Learn how to use words effectively by listening to yourself and to everyday conversation. Read books and magazines. You'll find yourself armed with a powerful tool that you can use to turn a good speech into a dynamic one. ①

Linda Adams is a member of Fort Lewis Club 690-32 in Fort Lewis, Washington.

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For better or worse,  
trite expressions are  
here to stay.

**W**orn-out clichés, trite expressions and tired analogies – all three can conspire to doom an otherwise respectable speech. Do as you please, but for me, I try to avoid them like the plague.

By using clichés too liberally, you become your own worst enemy. It's like shooting yourself in the foot, or cutting off your nose to spite your face. It usually results in an unmitigated disaster.

I've hesitated in the past to speak out on this important issue because I too was a frequent dispenser of clichés, and to criticize others would have been like the pot calling the kettle black. But now that I've gotten the situation under control, I have some simple advice to offer.

First thing to do after writing a speech is to go over it with a fine-tooth comb looking for banalities. If you try that and it doesn't work, remember that it's better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all. But above all else, do not quit, because quitters never win and winners never quit.

Another suggestion for those struggling with clichés is to get in touch with a friend who can provide moral support – someone you can count on when the chips are down. The person I call in such situations is Dan, an old

high school friend. He and I go way back, and I know him like the back of my hand. Dan is a college basketball coach, but unlike most other coaches, he's not much given to clichés.

Not that Dan and I see eye to eye on everything. His philosophy regarding sports is that winning isn't everything – it's the only thing. I don't entirely agree. I've always felt that it's not whether you win or lose; it's how you play the game.

In any event, Dan's the guy I call, as I did this past week while struggling with this essay. The conversation went something like this:



ILLUSTRATION: RICK STROMOSKI

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# Calling All Clichés

by Stephen K. Lindley

*"I didn't give up!*

*I put my head to the*

*grindstone, and after*

*a while, sure enough, all*

*of the clichés were*

*weeded out of the text."*

**Me:** "Dan, I'm caught between a rock and a hard place. Can you help me out?"

**Dan:** "No sweat. A friend in need is a friend in deed. I'm all ears."

**Me:** "OK, I'll lay it on the line. Problem is I'm trying to write this article for *The Toastmaster* and can't divorce myself from these hackneyed phrases, try as I might. I'm about ready to throw in the towel.

**Dan:** "Steve, put on your thinking cap and listen carefully. You have to lay off those awful clichés. It's not easy, I know – they're a dime a dozen – but it's what separates the men from the boys."

**Me:** "What'ya mean, jelly bean? Please explain, Lois Lane."

**Dan:** "Look, I know you're not the sharpest tool in the shed, but you don't have to be a rocket scientist to understand that people don't want to read that rubbish. Now it's getting late and you don't want to burn the candle at both ends. So hit the sack, sleep like a baby, and then get up at the crack of dawn to work on that article. Well, got to run... see you later alligator!"

Dan made it sound as easy as pie. I went to sleep planning to rise with the sun, for I'm convinced that the early bird catches the worm (only rarely do I burn the midnight oil). At the sound of my alarm, I sprang out of bed like a bat out of hell. I sat down to work on the article, but it was too early for me to think straight, to get my bearings. In the morning, my mind is as slow as molasses on a cold winter's day. I couldn't make heads or tails of it.

But lo and behold – I didn't give up! I put my head to the grindstone, and after a while, sure enough, all of the clichés were weeded out of the text. When finished, I was as proud as a peacock and happy as a lark. It just goes to show that it isn't the size of the dog

in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog.

Some may say that clichés don't present much of a problem and that I'm making a mountain out of a molehill. I beg to differ. Overworked clichés are perhaps the most serious menace to Western civilization since Adam was a lad. Everyone and his brother uses them.

Imagine the horror if President Clinton had begun his State of the Union Address: "My fellow Americans, we stand today at a critical crossroads, facing unchartered waters and ominous clouds. I dare say that our future hangs precariously in the balance, as we're perched here on the brink of a precipice..." We would be the laughing stock of all English-speaking people. America's prestige would drop like a rock in water.

Others may argue that clichés are as American as apple pie, and that they're here to stay, for better or worse. They should know that there are only two certainties in life, and the use of clichés is not one of them (for the record, they are death and taxes).

With all due modesty, I can say that, by writing this cliché-free essay, I've proven wrong the great British literary critic and writer, Havelock Ellis, who once remarked: "You cannot avoid using clichés, not even in the act of condemning them." Little did he know. **T**

**Stephen K. Lindley** is a member of Postprandial Club 3259-65 in Rochester, New York.

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■ IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS A WORD. A word existing since the dawn of time, shaping the lives of people throughout history, surviving flood, famine and the ravages of human evolution, giving form to the formless void – and proving itself time and again indispensable to both public and private speakers alike.

And the word was *uh*.

*Uh* is a useful word, its importance not at all, *uh*, diminished by its, *uh*, size. It serves

by Barry Kepp

Whatever planet you're on or from, if you're trying to get a point across (and botching it up as well as anyone else), *uh* is a way of grabbing your head internally and saying, "What the heck do I wanna say next? – without, of course, tipping off any unsuspecting listeners.

**ASSERTIVENESS INC-UH-PACITATION**

When a person feels powerless, *uhn-confident*, or like a spinelessly worthless waste of

# Uh-wareness

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Never underestimate the power of *uh* – it's a piece of verbal dynamite!

many purposes, not the least of which is to rekindle our collective *uhn-conscious* social nostalgia by making *uhs* all sound like cave dwellers. But its usefulness extends well beyond that, touching not only on the historical, but on the rhetorical, allegorical and metaphorical as well. In short, it's a powerful word. This little keg of dynamite must be used correctly, as outlined below, to avoid disastrous social repercussions and international incidents.

**VERBAL THOUGHT-BUBBLE FORMATION**

When talking, a person often needs to pause for station identification and contemplation. *Uh* facilitates this nicely, allowing one to gather thoughts for the next verbal folly-*uh*, volley. You can almost see the bubble over the speaker's head, a frantic jumble of words flashing like a jungle of neon signs. It's a pit stop in the communication race.

Actors forgetting their *di-uh-logue* sometimes choose this recourse. In the movie *Forbidden Planet*, Walter Pidgeon uses this marvel of ancient linguistic science no fewer than thirty-nine times. And why not? He portrays a linguistics scholar! (Sophisticated joke or bad acting? Rent the video and keep a pen handy.)

good protoplasm and DNA, he or she commonly retreats into hushed communication and sweaty palpitations. This, in turn, triggers the activation of the *uh-drenal gland*, which begins secreting *uh-drenaline* – the substance which, *uhn-like* its more well-known counterpart, is responsible for impeding coolness, calmness, and collectedness. The result can be pretty *uh-gly*: "Uh, I was wondering, *uh*,...if you had considered *my-uh*...request for *uh*...raise?"

**INTELLIGENCE MODIFICATION**

Sometimes, because of the societal pressures of conformity and normification, the brightest person in the world will still use this two-lettered wonder like it was goin' outa style, in an attempt to fit in and blunder with the majority of the species. A college professor stopping at a service station, for example can easily exhibit a degree – and I don't mean a Ph.D – of hesitation at the simplest question:

**Mechanic:** What kinda car ya got?

**Prof:** Uhhh, uhhh Volvo.

**Mechanic:** What's wrong with it?

**Prof:** Uhhhh, Idono.

(Note how *uh* can be cleverly disguised as the indefinite article, *a*.)

#### FABRICATION COMPENSATION

There are two signs that jointly indicate when a person is lying. The first is failure to maintain consistent eye contact – or *ocular shiftification*. The second is the *d-less duh*.

**Wife:** *You wanna go out and eat with the Sheltons, dear?*

**Husband:** Oh, uhhh, I'd love to, babe, but-uh, I'm not really feeling good and uh,... I'm kinda tired, so-uh, I think I'll, uh...fix the-uh...sink!

(*But-uh, and-uh, so-uh, and the-uh* are recent additions to *the-uh* English language.)

#### ANXIETY MODULATION

When a speaker is nervous or anxious, the *monosyluh-bic* miracle can release that anxiety a bit-like a pressure valve on a hot-water heater. This is referred to in the *literuh-ture* as a *conversation-uhl belch*. Or, in the case of a public lecture, a *presentation-uhl glitsche*.

**Toastmaster:** *And looking out at all these smiling faces tonight, uh, takes me back to my days at San Quentin – uh, San Antonio University, where I gave my first speech about the joys of, uh, forensics.*

#### CONVERSATION DOMINATION

These are the marathon talkers, the motor mouths who somehow fail to *uhn-derstand* that a conversation is a two-way exchange of information, not a one-way inundation. Mistaking the word *di-uh-logue* for *monologue*, they use the itinerant interjection to reserve their space in their ongoing soliloquy, letting you know they're about to speak some *more!* These irritants are dyed-in-the-wool combatants in the battle to be *uhn-derstood* – a hard battle to win, especially with control freaks like this.

The abundance of *uh* in the vocabulary of the average *Uh-merican* is *uh-scending* at an *uh-larming* rate – directly proportionate, though not exclusively bound, to the illit-

eracy rate. Indeed, many *uh* Rhodes scholar has been known to *uhn-wittingly uhn-dulate* back and forth from lucid eloquence to *uhn-conscious, uh...uhh...uh-bomination* of the language (known as *cerebration dislocation*). The conscientious *conversationuh-list* or savvy speaker can become *uh-ware* of this tendency, and *uh-tempt* to *uh-lay* it at every turn.

One final caution: In *uh-ssessing* one's own communication style for the presence of this stumbling block, it's important to *uh-void* confusing the word *uh* for the word *um*. While commonly thought to be synonyms, the two have nothing to do with each other. *Um* is, in fact, a corrupted form of the Sanskrit word *aum* which, depending on the time of the year, means variously, "Do you know the way to San Jose?" "I'm With Stupid," and "Can't we all just get *uh-long*?"

In *uh-ddition*, here are some tricks you can use to *uhn-train* yourself from this *uhn-fortunate* behavior. Whenever you feel an *uh* coming on:

1. **Do an *intern-uh-lized* mental scan.** "Think before you speak."
2. Take a deep breath or two.
3. **Remind yourself that**, contrary to the dictates of your low self-esteem and the well-founded opinions of everyone on the planet, **you *are* intelligent** – and it's okay.
4. Tell the truth.
5. **Muster up all your self-confidence into a single thought**, and focus it into your throat. You're bound to either express yourself more clearly, gag in the effort, or utter a sound so hideously garbled as to frighten the living daylights out of anyone who might have challenged what you were trying to say.
6. Speak in sentences of fifty words or less.
7. Finally, repeat after me:

*The Uh-mancipation Procluh-mation:*  
"I'll never say *uh uh-gain*." T

**Barry Kepp** is a writer living in St. Louis, Missouri.

***"Uh is a way of  
grabbing your head  
internally and  
saying, 'What the  
heck do I want to  
say next?'"***

When that oafish official hits you with some convoluted, nonsensical phrase, fight back in plain English.

**A** government worker in Australia decided it was time for a raise. So he summoned all his courage and asked his boss, a high-ranking official.

The boss said: "Because of the fluctuational predisposition of your position's productive capacity as juxtaposed to government standards, it would be monetarily injudicious to advocate your requested increment."

The staff person said, "I don't get it."

Responded the official: "That's right."

Like the staffer asking for a raise, many people are dumbstruck when trying to understand the language used by bureaucrats. Increasingly, more officials are telling it

## BEWARE OF DOUBLE DOUBLE

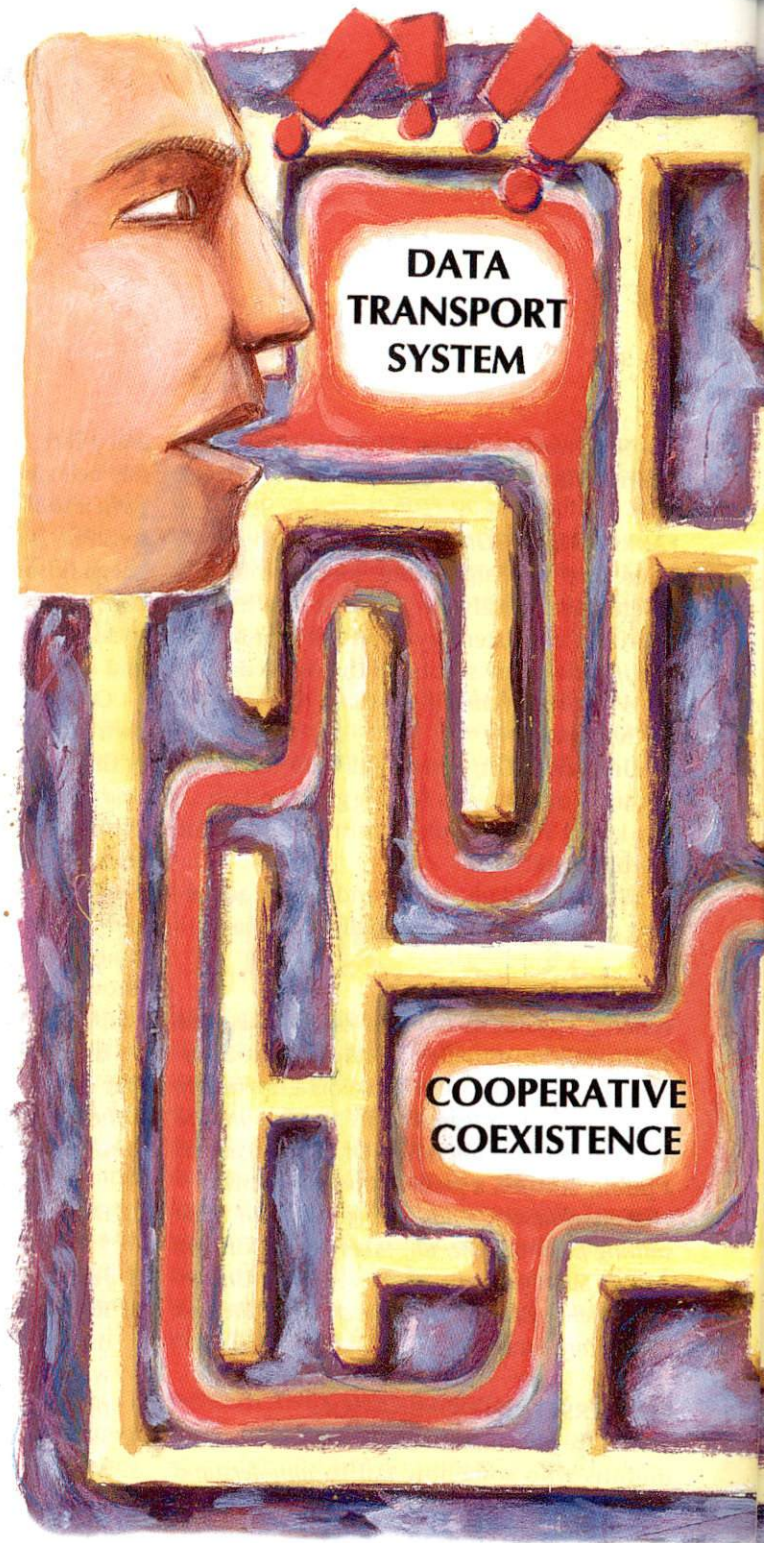
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like it isn't. Unclear language, known as "gobbledygook" often says one thing but means the opposite.

Yearly, organizations of English teachers release "Doublespeak" awards that mark some of the worst – and most confusing – misuses of the English tongue. For example: "One year, an airline hid the crash of an expensive airplane and the deaths of three people by listing the crash in its annual report as an "involuntary conversion of a 747," says William D. Lutz, who is chairman of the Committee on Public Doublespeak and an English professor at Rutgers University. "Involuntary conversion means losing

as asset through no fault of your own. The meaning is clear to lawyers but not to most laymen."

The committee on Public Doublespeak was formed in 1971 by the National Council of Teachers of English and is devoted to encouraging people to speak and write clearly. Each year, the organization hands out two awards: The Orwell Award goes to the person or group who has consistently employed honest, easy-to-understand language; the Doublespeak Award goes to those who have used the most misleading, self-contradictory or evasive language.





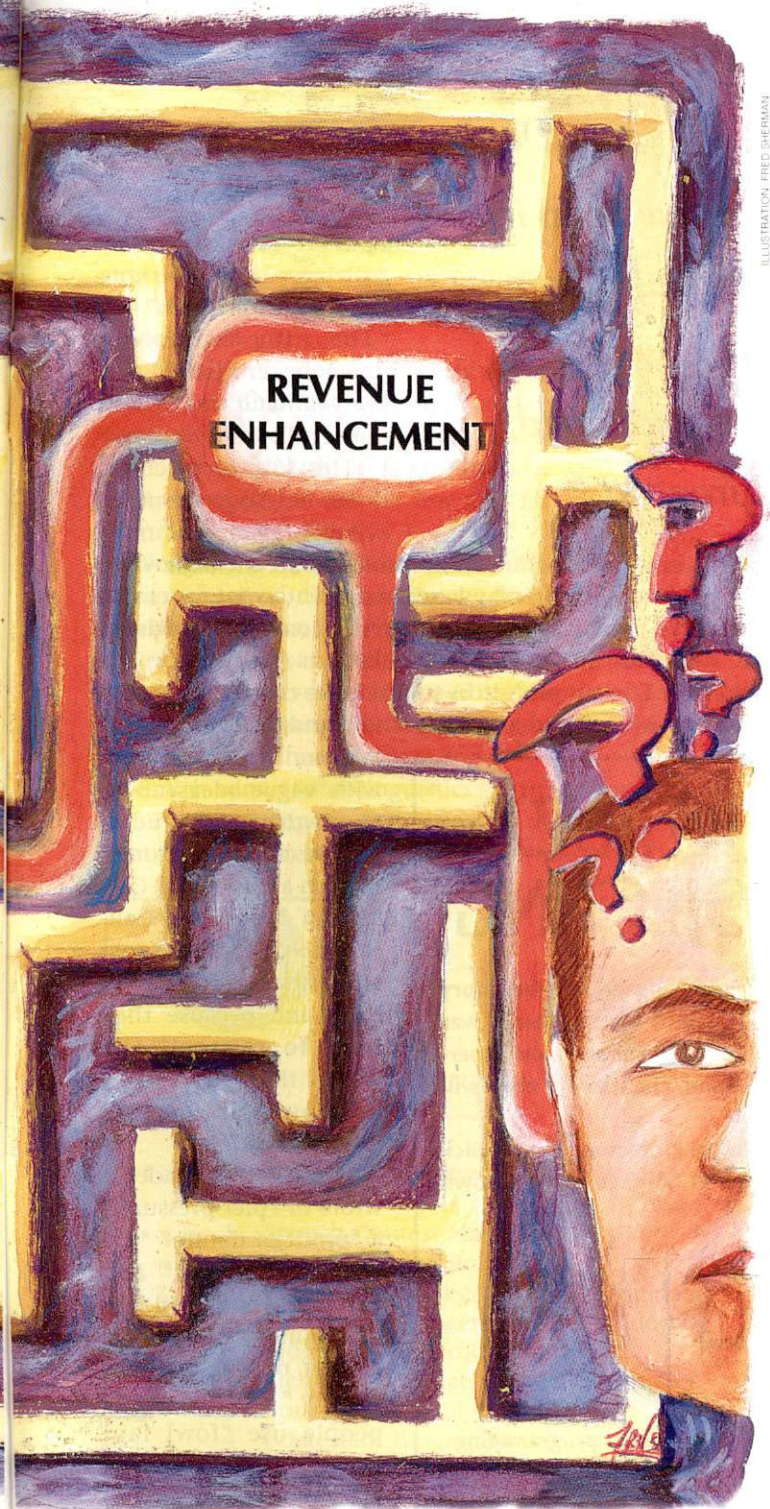


ILLUSTRATION: FRED SHERMAN

with a nine megaton nuclear bomb) “a very large potentially disruptive re-entry system.”

Why do people resort to doublespeak? One reason, says Dr. Lutz, is that “doublespeak covers something up or puts a better face on a bad situation. So instead of a tax increase, we hear from Washington, D.C. news about ‘revenue enhancement.’ Cemeteries advertise ‘pre-need arrangements.’ And in one hospital, patients don’t die, instead they suffer ‘negative patient care outcome.’”

Sometimes doublespeak can be almost impossible to decipher. For instance, check-out clerks who work less than forty hours at one supermarket are now “part-time career

***“Doublespeak covers something up or puts a better face on a bad situation.”***

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Doublespeak is something like the concept of “double-think” (“war is peace,” “death is life”) and “newspeak,” expressions coined by British author George Orwell to show how language can wear a false face.

Past winners of the Doublespeak Award have included the U.S. State Department (for replacing “kill” with “unlawful or arbitrary deprivation of life”), Yasir Arafat (for saying “The PLO does not want to destroy Israel. It is precisely because we have been advocating co-existence that we have shed so much blood.”) and a Colonel in the U.S. Air Force for calling a Titan II missile (which is tipped

associate scanning professionals.” Spoiled fruit and vegetables at the same store are “distressed produce.” California no longer has emergency vehicles; instead, “major incident response units” arrive at accidents and fires. Junk yards are hard to find, but you might come across “auto recyclers who deal in predismantled, previously owned parts.” And used cars no longer are used or even “pre-owned” – they are billed as “experienced automobiles.”

“I see doublespeak as the deceitful abuse of language used to hide, mislead, and cover up,” says Richard Coe, an English professor at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia, and chairman of the Canadian Council of Teachers of English. “Doublespeak pretends to communicate but does not. It can make the bad seem good while evading responsibility. It is language which prevents thought.”

Consider the message of the North Korean doctor who once declared there were no prisons in his nation, only “labor reform camps for ideological reeducation.” Or the economists who no longer complain about recession but calls dwindling consumer purchasing power “a period of advanced negative economic growth.” And here’s a classic: A Rolls Royce spokesman in England insisted that his cars

**"A Rolls Royce spokesman in England insisted that his cars do not break down. 'Occasionally,' he explained, 'they fail to proceed.'"**

do not break down. "Occasionally," he explained, "they fail to proceed!"

Observes Lutz: "At the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., the word "peace" has been done away with. Instead, there is "a state of permanent pre-hostility." War has become "violence processing." Today's soldiers are never outnumbered, but they might "operate in a target-rich environment." And enemy nations no longer are invaded by parachute at night; what the army does instead is a "predawn vertical insertion." The U.S. Department of State doesn't understand "kill," but it does comprehend "arbitrary or illegal deprivation of life."

Other times, double-speak turns into something resembling a foreign tongue. Author James Boren, a former official in the State Department and author of *Fuzzify*, a book about bureaucracy, reports that some officials have created their own words. For instance:

- ▲ **Legalay** – to delay a decision or action by requiring a lawyer's opinion.
- ▲ **Mobiate** – to execute a 180-degree turn of policy while appearing not to be making any change at all.
- ▲ **Bloatate** – expanding or puffing up a report.

But doublespeak isn't confined to the State Department. Jack Smith, a long-time columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*, collects written examples of malapropisms, misplaced modifiers and assorted solecisms, all of which add to the crushing burden of double-speak. For instance, "Poland was dismembered peace by peace..." "To

combat secularism, all marriages should be consummated in church" and "The hills were worn down by eroticism" – a "very difficult way to wear down hills," Smith says.

This loss of precision in our language seems inevitable, given our most popular modes of communication. Gone are the days when people communicated by letter and spent evenings curled up with a good book. Today, the telephone and television are the main media of communication. And, despite the efforts of English professors to teach the correct usage and meaning of words, many high school and college students

venture into the world with vague ideas about clear writing. Says Judith Ramos, an instructor of English at Moorpark College in Moorpark, California: "Because most students don't like to read, and because they tend to misspell the words they hear, they unknowingly create doublespeak."

Thus, Ramos' students wrote of "pier pressure," a "profit of doom," "my pears and myself" and the "route of all evil." In their minds, senators "are chosen on the basis of senility," and too many people use "fowl language." (They probably cluck their tongues a lot.)

Yet there are ways to combat this destruction of the English language. Anne Davis Toppins, associate professor in the College of Education at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, fights doublespeak in the classroom by insisting her students write out business themes with as many

## SYSTEMATIC BUZZ PHRASE PROJECTING

If you want to fight back and purposely engage in obfuscatory scrivenery, a chart – credited to several bureaucrats – was devised to help you pen true doublespeak. Though most supervisors will have no idea what you mean, chances are none will ask, and all will be impressed.

To use the "Systematic Buzz Phrase Projector," simply pick a number from each column, say, "917." Then just jot down the words opposite those number.

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3
0. integrated	0. manpower	0. options
1. total	1. organizational	1. flexibility
2. systematized	2. monitored	2. capacity
3. parallel	3. reciprocal	3. mobility
4. functional	4. digital	4. programming
5. responsive	5. logistical	5. concept
6. optional	6. transitional	6. time-phase
7. synchronized	7. incremental	7. projection
8. compatible	8. third-generation	8. hardware
9. balanced	9. policy	9. contingency

One civil engineer secured a summer job by selecting buzz phrases "017" and "100" to help compose the following unquestioned memo to his boss: "Mr. X currently is assisting civil engineers in the flood control district in the development of a 'balanced organizational projection' in preparing background research and related drawings, which will provide the district with 'total manpower options.'"

one-pulse words as possible. To demonstrate how understanding rises as multi-syllable words drop, she rewrote the U.S. pledge of allegiance:

"I pledge my troth to the flag of the states that are joined in this land and to the form of rule for which it stands; one large state with trust in God, not to be split, in which all can be free and for whom the law is just."

Pointing out the ludicrousness of doublespeak is another method that often works. "A great deal of doublespeak can be changed with laughter expressed through letters and telegrams," Dr. Lutz says. "For instance, one university changed the name of its 'department of human kinetics' back to 'physical education' when I ribbed them about it."

Smith adds, "Some linguistics say the language is always in a state of change and what you say or write doesn't make that much difference. But look at the way 'podium,' some-



thing on which you stand, and 'lectern' something on which you lean or place notes, are often misused. A journalist wrote in *The New York Times*, 'He pounded on the podium,' so I saw in my mind's eye a speaker on his hands and knees pounding on a floor.

"The hope for the language lies in writing which uses less pretentious words and, above all, words to which we know the meaning."

And, more often than not, the more concise, the better. For history shows that writing that uses short words endures because we need not work so hard to grasp the meaning. After all, would people today remember Ben Franklin with such warmth had he written: "Nothing in life is certain except revenue enhancement and negative patient care outcome?"

**Charles Downey** is a freelance writer from Fawnskin, California.



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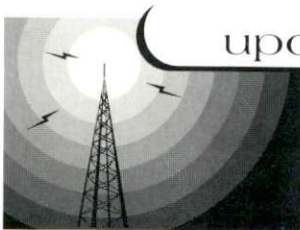
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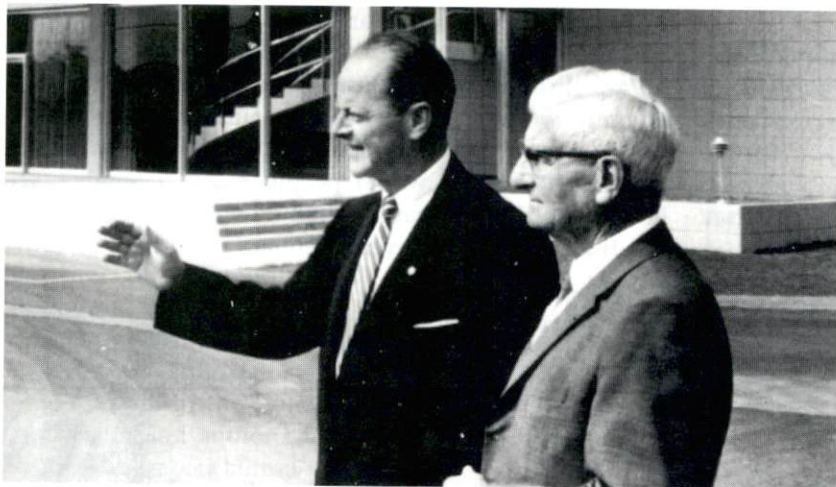
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## IN MEMORY OF FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Maurice Forley: 1910-1994



Maurice Forley (left) and TI Founder Ralph Smedley at the dedication of the organization's first headquarters building in 1962.

■ DURING THE PAST 70 YEARS OF ITS EXISTENCE, Toastmasters International's headquarters operations have been led by four Executive Directors. This past November, the second man to hold that position, Maurice Forley, died after an extended illness at the age of 84.

Throughout his lifetime, Maurice Forley served in a number of distinguished positions. Born in Indianapolis, Indiana, on September 9, 1910, he graduated from Yale University and Northwestern University School of Law. Forley began practicing law in Indiana and Illinois, and eventually was licensed to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States. In the years leading up to World War II he held several government positions in Washington, D.C., and during the war was an officer in the Judge Advocate General's Department of the Army. After the war he served as executive assistant to the mayor of Los Angeles and later became Director of Human Relations for Hunt Foods, Inc.

Forley joined the staff of Toastmasters International in 1956 as an Administrative Counsel and Editor of *The Toastmaster* magazine. When Executive Director Ted Blanding resigned in 1958, Forley was appointed to

that position by the Board of Directors. (Blanding served as the first Executive Director for 13 years; prior to that time, the founder of Toastmasters, Dr. Ralph Smedley, led the organization in the position of Executive Secretary.)

During Forley's time in office, Toastmasters International experienced notable growth and change. Among the highlights of his administration: membership increased by one-third, 12 new districts and two new overseas councils were added, and the first World Headquarters building was planned, constructed and dedicated. Forley also was instrumental in a number of program advancements, including the establishment of Gavel Clubs and club speakers bureaus. In addition, he was an associate professor of speech communications at what is now California State University at Fullerton, California; wrote a number of articles for periodicals such as *Reader's Digest* and *Law Journal*; compiled Dr. Smedley's book, *Personally Speaking*; authored his own book, *Public Speaking Without Pain*; and was profiled in the 1966 edition of *Who's Who*.

Upon his resignation as Executive Director in 1967, Forley said, "It has been a demanding and exciting job, and I have enjoyed all of it. I shall cherish my long and close association with Dr. Smedley, and value the friendship of the officers, directors, members of our staff and the many friends all over the world I have gained from the work."

Forley and his wife, Joi, spent a number of years in Mexico before retiring to Tucson, Arizona. Visitors to World Headquarters in Rancho Santa Margarita, California, will note that his name is engraved in granite at the front of the building. But perhaps his most enduring memorial will be the legacy of leadership and commitment that Maurice Forley gave to Toastmasters around the world. **T**



The following listings are arranged in numerical order by district and club number.

### DTM

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

- Joel D. Sweeney, 9168-U
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- Floyd R. Negley, 2531-3
- Laird Gutteresen, 9055-3
- Craig Koontz, 895-5
- William P. Vacca, 7991-5
- Lisa Anghileri, 253-7
- Robin Adams, 1597-7
- Gary S. Shumway, 290-12
- Marilyn Mitchell, 8691-12
- Stan Cottrell, 3412-14
- L. Mac Tillman, 5852-14
- Michael W. Hall, 6290-14
- Simone Copeland, 8257-14
- A. L. "Bill" Laxton, 973-21
- Jim Barton, 3081-21
- Wayne Alexander Cooper, 9740-21
- Midge Cameron Mitchell, 970-33
- Alberto Guerrero Barba, 4276-34
- Cheryl Ann Kuzyk, 3146-42
- Aleta L. Peterson, 3489-42
- Ronald Kitt, 6233-42
- John W. A. Cooper, 6279-42
- Bart Arbutnot, 5691-44
- Lucy Mullen Ball, 2895-46
- C.C. Fridlin, 3963-48
- Sharon Chandler, 8047-60
- Jerry W. Davenport, 6048-63
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- Stephen Linnington, 3751-64
- Frank P. Connelly, 2661-66
- Erich R. Freiburger, 5868-70
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- Patricia A. Spotanski, 4553-26
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- Tony Brown, 6667-30
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- Rollie Johnson, 4541-47
- Edward L. Kitchens, 915-50
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- Lisa Powell, 2905-8
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- John M. Goris, 160-9
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- Earnie Gray, 4101-16
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