

The TOASTMASTER®

SEPTEMBER 2001

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Meet Alfred Herzing, DTM:
Toastmasters' 2001-2002
International President

•
Create Better Slide
Presentations

Playing Games

Learning through moments of enjoyment.



VIEWPOINT

By Ralph C. Smedley

Put On a Show!

A fine orchestra was playing – one of the famous “name bands.” The music was perfect – flawless in execution. But that was not all: Every band member was helping to put on a show.

The reputation of this band was built on style as well as on musical skill. The musicians not only played the notes, but also played them with characteristic form and style. You should have heard the cymbalist – he really caught the eye! “Clang! Clang! Clang!” went the cymbals, and every clang brought new movements. Shut your eyes and you missed half the music.

Those musicians had the right idea. They understood the importance of style and form and finish in their performance. They could have played the notes just as well without paying attention to movement of any sort. But they did not win their reputation by unimaginative performance. They made the music, but they did it with style.

Form is important in any work. Style and finish mark the difference between a novice and a master, whether it’s a baseball pitcher, a musician or a public speaker.

Primarily, the performer must deliver the goods. A pianist may ruffle his hair and jump halfway over the piano, but if he can’t hit the notes, he flops. The pitcher may wind up like a clock spring, but he has to split the plate or go to the bench. The speaker may be a veritable Astaire, but if he doesn’t have something interesting to say, he dances out of the picture.

You can’t hold an audience without a message. But the speaker who has the message, and delivers it with form and style, becomes more than just a talker. He becomes a real public speaker.

The first thing is to have something to say worth saying. That is the simplest essential. But for the speaker who’d like to progress beyond the novice stage, development of correct form and finish in delivery is just as important. Is what you have to say of such importance as to justify good delivery?

Compare the delivery of your newspaper with the arrival of a telegram. The newsboy tosses the paper on the lawn. Whether you get it before it blows away or is torn up by a playful pup is irrelevant to the boy. But when there is a telegram, the messenger rings the doorbell, demands a signature on the receipt and places the message in your hands with personal care. When he leaves, he knows that he has delivered – and so do you.

Maybe what you have to say is not worth good delivery. Then don’t say it! If you make it worthwhile, and give it appropriate delivery, your speech will carry double weight.

Spike Jones and his band could play the notes just as well without performing a single antic, but they would never have been a big name band if they had not learned to dramatize their performance and put on a show.

This message by our organization’s founder was originally published in the February 1950 issue of The Toastmaster.

The TOASTMASTER

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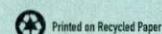
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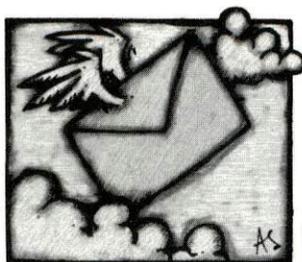
Toastmasters International empowers people to achieve their full potential and realize their dreams. Through our member clubs, people throughout the world can improve their communication and leadership skills, and find the courage to change.

The Toastmasters Mission:

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

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

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



LETTERS

BECAUSE I CAN

So many people ask me, "Why do you go to Toastmasters? Why do you do this 'public speaking thing' if you don't have a gun to your head?" I say, "I do it because I couldn't. And now I can."

Through Toastmasters I've gained confidence, built self-esteem and challenged myself. Now I can reach that unreachable star. Toastmasters met me halfway and held my hand until I found my success.

Janet Terban Morris, CTM — Norwalk Club 2785-53 — Westport, Connecticut

CONTESTS AREN'T JUST FOR WINNING

I look forward to each edition of *The Toastmaster* magazine. For the first time, I was nearly outraged by what I read in a Letter to the Editor. Walter McHugh (June 2001) essentially said that participating in Toastmasters contests does not make us better speakers and communicators.

In case there are others who, like Mr. McHugh, have totally missed the point of contests, let me point out that contests

- Force us to give our best or we'll lose.
- Force us to develop speech content that is unique rather than cliché.
- Retain membership because they give seasoned members something to strive for.
- Help build membership because visitors want to join the club where the winner is a member.
- Provide a unique opportunity to speak to different audiences.
- Give us the opportunity to grow as facilitators by being the Toastmaster or Chief Judge.

And these are just some of the benefits I thought of in less than two minutes.

Marty Dickinson, ATM-B • George Sutton Club 3942-26 • Aurora, Colorado

EXPAND EXPERIENCE

I read the letters in the June magazine as I prepared to compete in the Regional International Speech Contest. One letter urged us to return to the original and base premise of becoming better speakers rather than becoming contest winners. I agree that most people join Toastmasters to better their communication skills, but I suggest that competition and improving one's speaking skills are not mutually exclusive.

I joined Toastmasters to become a better speaker and leader. Since my first year, I've participated in speech con-

tests and that experience has led me to immense growth as a speaker. The program and manual speeches are a wonderful way to develop your skills, but contests offer different challenges – the chance to stretch for a goal. Moreover, contests have taught me that there are many ways to win beyond taking home a trophy. The skills I have acquired through my involvement in contests and the friendships I have made can never be taken from me. Anyone who takes the chance to learn a new skill is a winner.

Mark Haugh, DTM • Mutual Voices Club 3852-6 • St. Paul, Minnesota

HONORING A GOOD LIFE

Eulogies are likely the most difficult assignment a Toastmaster will encounter. I was very touched by the March issue. My father died in March 2000 and I read the March 2001 issue with its several articles relating to eulogies at the same time my family was remembering the one-year anniversary of my dad's death.

As the oldest child and a Toastmaster, everyone expected me to give the eulogy, assuming that it would be "easier" for me than anyone else! Although it was not easy, I feel that my Toastmasters experience aided me in honoring my father in a manner that would have made him proud.

When I was growing up, my father wrote poems for every special occasion. So that is how I gave the eulogy – in a poem! My tears swelled as I read the words, but I paused and persevered. Maybe the audience didn't notice my tears. But as I sat down, my daughter blurted out, "Mommy, you were crying while you talked about Grandfather." However, my mother was so touched, she had the poem framed.

Susan Kujawski • Toastmasters of Westfield Club 3187-46 • Westfield, New Jersey

SHOUT IT FROM THE ROOFTOPS

In the June 2001 Topical Tips, Jim Kiel said he would test his progress as a communicator by **not** telling everyone that he joined Toastmasters. My suggestion is to do the opposite. Tell the whole world right from the beginning that you have become a Toastmaster!

Perception and expectation are a reality in communication skills development. When your superiors, subordinates and peers know that you have taken steps to improve your communication skills, they will sense a subtle improvement in you in that area.

Even if you are still a diamond in the rough, and the polishing has only just begun, other people will perceive you as already a bit better and improving steadily.

G.K. Kim • ITC Bintang Club 1915-51 • Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



By Jean Shipos, ATM-S

A night in New Jersey's Trenton State Prison

Experiencing the Gavel Club

WE'D BEEN IN THE CLASSROOM FOR JUST FIVE MINUTES, WHEN the announcement came over the loud speaker: "Code 99! Code 99!"

"What does Code 99 mean?" I asked the khaki-clad inmate sitting next to me.

"That means we have to go back to our cells."

"But you just got here," I said. "That's prison," he answered.

We watched helplessly as the guard rounded up the inmates and herded them back to their cells. As visitors, we were led back through the long corridors and series of lock-downs, which we had passed just 15 minutes earlier. We waited in the visitors' area for an hour, virtually locked within the prison, until the "All Clear" was issued. We were free to leave.

With members of the Princeton Toastmasters club, I participate in Trenton State Prison's monthly Gavel club meetings. Attending these meetings has given me some insight into the difficult existence behind prison walls. I have learned that regardless of educational level or social status, all people have a basic need to communicate and be heard. I have learned how much these inmates, especially those serving long sentences, value education.

Leonie Infantry, immediate past president of the Princeton club, organizes the meetings, prints agendas, rounds up local Toastmasters to help, and literally drives everyone to the prison. The inmates have enormous respect for Ms. Infantry, as do I. They owe their club meetings to Leonie's unselfish commitment of time and energy.

Last year, the Princeton Toastmasters members were invited to attend an introductory joint meeting at the prison. A month later, when the Princeton Toastmasters returned for another meeting, one of the inmates said, "You came back! No one ever came back before!" The Gavel club meetings are a strange juxtaposition of relaxed civilian-clad Toastmasters against intense, khaki-clad inmates. Those attending represent a diversity of age, ethnicity and gender. Everyone participates. Gavel club speech evaluations are tough! The inmates don't sweet talk their way through evaluations. If a speaker is not energetic, does not demonstrate sincerity or clarity of thought, or does not reach the tough audience, then the speaker is told so. The speakers

are also extraordinary in their ability to reach their audience. The most difficult role of the meeting is that of Joke Master. I've rarely heard the inmates laugh at a joke. A repetitive theme expressed "inside" is that there isn't much to laugh about, so inmates don't laugh much.

For me, the most difficult part of the experience is gaining admission. All participants must be approved for entry one week before a meeting. Trenton State is a maximum-security site and once there, we carry nothing but our manuals and identification. After signing in and exchanging our IDs, which are held until our departure, for clip-on passes, we advance to checkpoint one. At checkpoint one, a security guard frisks the men, and with a hand-held metal detector, scans the women. (The first time I went through this, I thought I was going to hyperventilate.) At checkpoint two, a lock-down tunnel, a security guard seated behind bullet proof glass verifies each person's pass before we can proceed. At a third checkpoint, the guard inspects passes again, counts the number in our group, and verifies the count with guard number two. We walk past six helmeted, vested, and armed guards to the next corridor and continue to the fourth checkpoint, where we sign in and another door is unlocked. Finally, we climb a staircase to reach the guarded classrooms.

Surprisingly, the "Code 99" incident caused more disappointment than fear. Participation in the Gavel club meeting is a reward for the inmates and they must earn membership. For some, the club meeting is the one bright spot in an entire month. I repeatedly ask myself why I continue to return to the prison. A good part of my answer is simply a deep respect for Leonie. I did find another part of the answer on the night of Code 99. Watching the inmates being herded back to their cells, I experienced a deep sadness. It was watching the impact of lost freedom — the inability to make personal decisions, even one as simple as, "How long can I stay in this classroom?" There was one other thing. It was the single inmate who hastily ran around the room and, while shaking as many hands as possible, said, "Don't give up on us. Please come back." 1

Jean Shipos, ATM-S, is a member of ETS Club 5087-38.



Actors need Toastmasters training too.

Meet Famous Toastmaster Joe Conley

You may have seen actor Joe Conley's brief appearance as the "man at the dinner table" in last year's box office smash *Cast Away*, starring Tom Hanks. Or perhaps you recall Conley's best-remembered role as Ike Godsey, proprietor of the general store in the classic TV series *The Waltons* (1972-1981).

Though *The Waltons* lasted nine years, that pales in comparison to the 30-plus years Conley has been a Toastmaster. An ATM, he joined in 1970 and is a member of Van Nuys Burnt Club 914-52 in Tarzana, California.

Acting and reading from a script is one thing, but creating your own material is quite another, Conley says. "I felt that I needed training, not only in writing speeches but also in presenting them."

During the run of *The Waltons*, Conley put his Toastmasters training to good use when called on to do public speaking for the American Cancer Society. "I was a spokesman for about five years, all over the country – including North Carolina, Virginia and Arkansas," explains Conley. "As a matter of fact, the thank-you plaque I received from Arkansas has then-Governor Bill Clinton's signature on it."

As another public speaking example, Conley points to awards shows (such as the Oscars and Emmys). "Some people are very accomplished. They appear and sound intelligent, and actually make a very sensible speech. It has an



opening, a body, and a close. Those are some of the things you learn as a Toastmaster – and after a while you almost do it involuntarily. If you are a successful public speaker, you build a security around yourself. You feel comfortable in front of people."

In Conley's opinion, the most important part of a successful speech is preparation – which can be accomplished fairly easily with a trip to the local library or, more conveniently, by browsing the Internet.

On his own ability, Conley comments, "If someone puts a microphone in front of me and says 'Speak,' I believe I could

handle the situation, no matter what it is. However, I would handle it better if given time to prepare."

After preparation, Conley suggests practicing your speech. "Record the speech and then listen to it," he says. "You may discover that it didn't come across nearly as well as you thought it should, so you scratch it out and start all over again. This proves the old saying about the motion picture business: Great scripts are not written – they are rewritten."

By the same token, "You can't rewrite forever. The magic is knowing when to stop, knowing that you can spend only so much time writing a script."

When Conley was a spokesman for the American Cancer Society he was provided with some speaking materials, "but I still went out and got my own," he says, "because



Joe Conley, top left, as "Ike Godsey" and the Waltons.

"If someone puts a microphone in front of me and says 'Speak,' I believe I could handle the situation, no matter what it is."

– JOE CONLEY

the material I was given may have been used by a previous speaker."

When speaking, whether at your local Toastmasters club or for a national charity, Conley feels "naturalness is one of the most important qualities. Everyone has his or her own style of standing and using their hands. Although you can change those things, I do think being natural will always work best."

After all these years Conley continues to speak before his local Toastmasters. In fact, the title of a recent speech was "The \$20 Bill." He explains, "I took a little piece of something that really happened to me and created a whole speech around it."

In paraphrased form, Conley said in his speech, "I found a \$20 bill on the floor of a convenience store. I thought it might belong to somebody who really needed it. I was fourth in line, so I stood there holding the \$20 between my index finger and my thumb, waiting for someone to claim it. Finally it was my turn to pay for my purchases — and at that very moment a woman came running into the store and said, 'Did anyone find a \$20 bill? It's my last money.'

"I felt so proud that I could say I found it," says Conley. "That portion of the story actually did happen

– but I needed a conclusion. So, the conclusion (made up) was that I paid for my items and walked outside. A man wearing a suit approached me and asked if I was the gentleman who found the \$20 bill. I told him that I was and he asked me to follow him to a van, which contained recording equipment. He then said what I went through was a staged event, and that he was part of a new TV program. The program wanted to show my experience of finding the \$20 – as opposed to others who might find \$20 – and viewers would then vote for their favorite segment.

"The man asked me to sign a release to appear on the program, but I told him I preferred not to. He said I might win a lot of money, but I told him that I didn't want my generosity compared to somebody else's and then possibly getting a reward for it. So I said, 'Thank you very much, but I don't wish to participate.'"

Quite a story, indeed, from a man who's been telling stories so long. After all these years as a Toastmaster, Conley still is perfecting his speaking skills. "My club is so pleasant that I'll never quit."

Robert Rusk is an entertainment industry writer living in Seaside, Oregon.

Take Control of Your *Destiny*

Newly elected International President Alfred Herzing, DTM, is looking forward to his term in office. He has served on the Board of Directors since 1995 and been an active Toastmaster for 16 years. He knows the organization inside and out and will serve as its highest ambassador, promoting the benefits of club membership to anyone he meets.

Professionally, Herzing is an Information Technology Director for Beckman Coulter, Inc., a medical instruments manufacturer in Fullerton, California. Along with the support from his wife, Margie, and 12-year-old son, Adam, President Herzing credits his many career advancements to the skills he has gained as a leader in Toastmasters. "I believe firmly in the power of the Toastmasters program to change lives," he says. But to be successful, he points out, we have to take action and volunteer to speak. We gain little by simply observing the program. Consequently, Herzing has chosen a relevant motto for his term in office: "Take Control of Your Destiny." He quotes author and publisher Kobi Yamada: "We each have two lives – the one we're given and the one we make."

Presiding over a network of 8,800 clubs with 179,000 members in 70 countries, Herzing is determined to make the best of his year as President and reach an ambitious set of goals related to organizational growth and quality.

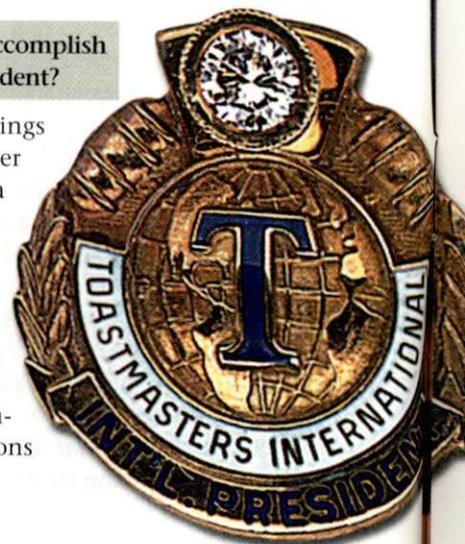
Q: Why did you select your theme "Take Control of Your Destiny" and what is its message?

A: I wanted a simple phrase that would act as a constant motivator to our members and leaders, a reminder to take action toward their goals. Outside of nature, nothing happens on its own. To make your

dreams and goals come true, you must take action. So many members join, set a goal to earn their CTM, and then wait for their clubs' Vice Presidents Education to schedule them for a speech. "Take control of your destiny" means that you will prepare *now* for your next speech. Then if there is a last-minute cancellation at your next meeting, you are ready to step in. "Take control of your destiny" means that as a leader you will follow up with those you serve. And doing this will ensure that you achieve your goals.

What do you hope to accomplish during your term as President?

I am focusing on three things this year: 1) Every member a CTM, 2) Every club a Distinguished Club, and 3) Every district a Distinguished District. Of course if our clubs and districts want to be President's Distinguished, that is fine with me! And I include the areas and divisions in the district goal.



my



**What do you mean by
“Every member a CTM”?**

Every year we bring 60,000 new members into Toastmasters International. Yet we issue only about 16,000 CTM awards. Only 25 percent of our new members seem to be achieving their CTMs. I would like to see every member set a written goal to earn his or her CTM by June 30, 2002.

What if a member already has earned a CTM?

I encourage every member to set a written goal for an educational accomplishment. If you already have your CTM, then how about earning your Advanced Toastmaster Bronze, Silver, or Gold? Or you may work toward the Competent or Advanced Leader awards.

Why is CTM so important?

I think CTM is important because it is the first level of accomplishment in Toastmasters. It shows the world that you not only were brave enough to step outside your comfort zone and join a club, but you are a step ahead of

the average Toastmaster and made it to the first level. CTM is also critical because it opens the gate to the larger world of Toastmasters. After your CTM, you can continue your progress as a speaker by working in the advanced manuals. I call them the “fun” manuals because they are specialized and allow you to pursue your interests. As a CTM you also can branch out and work toward your Competent and Advanced Leader awards. CTM shows you and the world that you are progressing in the Toastmasters program.

What’s your goal related to club membership?

The most important meeting in Toastmasters is the club meeting. That is where the Toastmasters program is delivered. All clubs go through cycles of growth and decline. That’s why we must vigilantly work on building

our membership. I believe that if we aren't growing, we are dying. Toastmasters International sets a minimum standard of 20 members per club. This is the number a club needs to operate efficiently and avoid member burnout. But let's think beyond minimums, let's "Think 22 in 2002"! I am asking that each club hold at least one membership-building campaign during this year. Are you listening Vice Presidents Membership?

You are asking area governors to do something special this year. What is it?

I am asking all area governors to charter at least one new club in their respective areas this year. Our area governors are some of the hardest-working officers in Toastmasters. They are key to the success of their districts. I know they are very busy. For that reason, I am not asking them to personally sponsor new clubs, but rather to ensure that it happens. For example, they can locate opportunities for new clubs, recruit sponsors and mentors during club visits and follow up on the chartering process. If you would like to create a legacy, let your area governor know that you want to help when he or she visits your club.

You keep mentioning written goals. Why are written goals so important?

Many people do not even have a goal. So the first step is to decide what you want. But to give your goal power, write it as a positive affirmation – such as, "I am a CTM by June 30, 2002." When you write down your goal, you give it life – you make it firm. And by writing your goals on a card and carrying that card with you, you can refer to the card regularly to keep you focused.

Why is "Distinguished" so important?

Toastmasters is the only organization I am aware of that places the member at the top of its hierarchy. Our club officers are there to serve our members. Our district officers are there to serve the club officers. "Distinguished" means that we are meeting the needs of our customers (our members). A Distinguished Club provides a positive learning environment where members can build their communication and leadership skills. If members are joining the club and earning educational and leadership awards, then the club is meeting the members' needs. In the same way, a Distinguished District helps existing clubs to serve their members in membership and educational goals, while building new clubs so more people have the

opportunity to experience the power of Toastmasters. As I said earlier, if we aren't building, we are dying.

What is the power of Toastmasters?

Toastmasters is an incredibly powerful program. This program is transforming members every day in clubs all around the world. I have seen how our members gain self-confidence through active participation in our program. I have witnessed multiple transformations from introvert to extrovert. Smart people with something to say now feel comfortable expressing themselves. It frustrates me to see Toastmasters squabbling over minor details that take them away from the realization of what a wonderful, powerful tool they have in their hands.

How did you join Toastmasters?

I am lucky that the Toastmasters opportunity was very easy for me to accept. I am grateful my company had a club that met during lunch. I was already at work, and I did have to eat! As a guest, I didn't know about the benefits that would come to me by joining. But because it was convenient, I went. And I was impressed by the caliber of the people participating in the meeting. Besides, after being called "honored guest" by everybody who got up that day, how could I not join?!

"We each have two lives – the one we are given and the one we make."

– KOBI YAMADA, AUTHOR

What is your view on corporate clubs?

I am a product of a corporate club, so these clubs are very special to me. Corporate clubs open our organization to a whole new audience that would not otherwise be inclined to attend an after-hours meeting. I do think we need a mix of corporate and community clubs as they both serve our current and potential members. I also find that members of corporate clubs are just as willing to serve as district officers when the benefits of serving are explained to them.

OK, so what are the benefits of being a district officer?

Boy, I set myself up for that one! Once you step beyond the club, a totally new and wonderful world of Toastmasters opens up to you. In my opinion, the best position in the district is that of area governor. This is because they get to work directly with the clubs. Take all your positive experiences as a club officer and expand them by an order of magnitude. That is what you get as a district officer. You learn at a whole new level: How to build a team, how to delegate, time management, and

how to be a leader. All of these skills are very much in demand in the workplace and you can develop them as a district officer. I always find it amusing when I hear members say they are running for higher office because they have gained so much from Toastmasters that they want to give something back. I know from personal experience – at every level in this great organization – that you get back much more than you give. So as you move along the leadership ladder, you will continue to gain more and more. Without my Toastmasters leadership experience, there is no way I would be where I am today professionally.

What has kept you active in Toastmasters for so many years?

There are many reasons. The main reason is the members. I am so impressed with the caliber of person who joins Toastmasters. Most people are uncomfortable with public speaking, and they do nothing about it. Toastmasters are my heroes because they are willing to step outside their comfort zones to improve themselves. I enjoy every meeting I attend. I find that I always learn something new, am entertained, or am given something to think about. Finally, I recognize that only by remaining an active member can I maintain the skills I have developed over the years. I must remain active to remain sharp. And I still have much more to learn!

What do you see as the growth potential for Toastmasters International?

The growth potential for Toastmasters is incredible. We need to open our minds and hearts to the opportunities

in front of us. Even in Founder's District, the oldest district in the world, the opportunities for new clubs are virtually limitless. We can grow to 100,000 clubs and beyond because we'll always fill a universal need.

Why do you think leadership development is an important aspect of the Toastmasters program?

Today's world seems to be short on leaders. I am proud that we have made leadership development a key part of the Toastmasters International educational program. Toastmasters International is one of the top developers of leaders in the world. Our members take these leadership skills and apply them not only in their clubs, but also in their professions and in our communities. I encourage all our members to take advantage of the outstanding leadership development opportunities within Toastmasters. If you haven't yet been a club officer, become one. I also encourage you to become an area governor. It will change your life in a positive way!

If you had one message to every Toastmaster, what would it be?

Destiny has brought you to this spot. Destiny has presented you with this fantastic opportunity called Toastmasters. What are you going to do with this opportunity? I urge you to set a written goal and Take Control of Your Destiny. Take action and make your dreams come true!

Are You **GOOD ENOUGH** to be a **PRO?**

*Toastmasters' Accredited Speaker Program
is now accepting applications for 2002.*



The Accredited Speaker Program is designed to recognize those Toastmasters who have attained a professional level of excellence in public speaking.

To qualify, you must be an Able Toastmaster or Advanced Toastmaster Bronze and a member in good

standing of a Toastmasters club. You must have completed a minimum of 25 speaking engagements outside the Toastmasters club environment within the past three years. Then, you must pass a rigorous two-stage judging process.

Those Toastmasters who earn the prestigious title of Accredited Speaker will receive widespread recognition both inside and outside Toastmasters International. They will have taken the steps that can launch them on exciting careers as professional speakers.

Only a handful of Toastmasters have what it takes to become Accredited Speakers. If you think you're one of them, write to World Headquarters for details on how to apply.

The deadline for the 2001 Accredited Speaker Program is November 1, 2001.



CAN WE TALK?

By Richard Shute, CTM

A lesson in courage from my
10-year-old granddaughter.

A Turtle Named Boppa

If you've seen the movie, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, you may remember this scene near the end of the film: Indiana stands on the precipice of a deep chasm, which separates him from the Holy Grail he seeks. He must face his fears, take a risk, and step out in faith that a bridge will be there. Indiana takes a step and, to his great relief, the bridge indeed appears under his feet. If we are to realize our potential, we too must face our fears, examine our limiting beliefs and step out in faith, risking that the support will be there when we need it.

Fear is a powerful and paralyzing force. It keeps us from living richer, more meaningful lives. It can be a bigger handicap than many physical disabilities. Several years ago, my grandmother passed away. I had written a short farewell to her. Our minister encouraged me to read it at the memorial service, but I was too fearful to do this even in front of my own family. That is one of the reasons I joined Toastmasters. I didn't want to go through life imprisoned by my fears about public speaking.

What about the potential that lies within each of us? Despite your fears and negative beliefs, don't you have moments when you imagine yourself achieving a cherished goal or dream? I have those moments. Yet, most of the time I have this limited idea of who I am, or can be. Being in Toastmasters has caused me to examine these limiting thoughts. My old self says, "You don't speak in front of groups. You hate being the center of attention. Forget the gestures and voice variation. It's not you!" But is that familiar, limited self really all I am, and is it written in stone? I don't think so. Those fears and beliefs may have kept me safe in the past, but they also confined and restricted my life. It is time to take appropriate risks and to grow.

When he was young, actor James Earl Jones was embarrassed by his stuttering voice. Can you imagine

that? This is a man sought not only for his acting skills, but for his deep resonant voice alone: "This is CNN." Could any other voice have been Darth Vader in the *Star Wars* movies? What the world would have missed if he hadn't realized his potential! What will it miss if you and I don't make an effort to realize ours?

I'd been a Toastmaster for just two months when I ended up as one of the speakers at the annual club banquet. The last thing I remember is our president, Alan, asking for volunteers for the Humorous Speech Contest and a club member saying, "Come on people, that's what you're here for!" I thought she was right and I volunteered. What in the world possessed me? The night of the banquet, I was beyond fear – sheer terror is more like it. This image came to my mind: I'd gone for a couple of challenging hikes in the hills (my first two speeches), and now I was attempting to climb El Capitan, a sheer rock wall rising 3,000 feet in California's Yosemite National Park.

All of this brings me to the subject of baby turtles and a lesson from a child. My 10-year-old granddaughter, Sarah, is one of the lights of my life. We have a special relationship because she and her mother lived with us the first six years of her life. Since she first started to talk, my wife has been "Nanna" and I have been "Boppa." The night of the banquet I had to take Sarah to meet my wife when she got off work. I'd been rather short with Sarah before we left, trying to get her moving. We were on the freeway driving into town when I attempted to justify my attitude to her. "Honey, Boppa's really nervous because I have to give a speech tonight." She replied, "Don't be nervous, Boppa. Just believe in yourself. I believe in you 'cause you're my Boppa." With that vote of confidence she cut right to my heart. The lesson was not over yet.

You've heard the expression, "From the mouths of babes?" She paused, and while I was still preoccupied with my terror, I heard her say, "Just imagine you're a baby turtle." I'm worrying about passing out – or worse, boring everyone to tears – and she's talking to me about turtles.

"A baby turtle?" I asked, wondering where she was going with this.

"Yeah," Sarah said, "a baby turtle. They have to cross the sand, and go over the rocks and sometimes they fall, or get eaten by the birds. But *they never give up 'cause they have to get to the ocean.*"

Now my brain stopped. I felt as though something greater than both of us was teaching me through Sarah. What an appropriate metaphor. She was right; I was a baby turtle!

As I sat at the banquet table that night, nervously waiting for my turn to speak, I thought of the turtles

and how I too had to get to the "ocean." I am happy to report that I was not "eaten by the birds." In fact, to my amazement, I went on from there to place first in the area and division contests, eventually winning a second-place trophy at the district finals.

Each week at our meeting, I have to face my fears and look at the beliefs that hold me back. Whether I win an award at our meeting or at a contest, is secondary to me. Every time I get up to speak, I feel a small victory. Every improvement in my skills is an expansion into my potentially greater self. The lesson is sinking in. If I want to grow, I have to risk. If I want to reach the Grail, I must step out in faith. And if I'm going to swim with the giant sea turtles, I've got to cross the beach.

T

Richard Shute, CTM. is a member of Southsiders at Unity Club 14-9 in Spokane, Washington.

Expanding Your Comfort Zone

By John Peck, ATM-S

Like most members, I joined Toastmasters to become more comfortable when giving presentations.

The Toastmasters programs have greatly helped me accomplish my goals. I have learned and benefited from every evaluation I've received.

Eventually, I've become comfortable making presentations in front of club members as well as colleagues. I've gained a well-earned feeling of accomplishment. But how often do we stretch ourselves to expand our comfort zones beyond job and club requirements? Since I have become a Toastmaster, I have developed the confidence to seek opportunities to expand my comfort zone. Let me share three such opportunities:

1 I volunteered to give the sermon at my church on two occasions during the past couple of years. The pastor was going to be away and needed a replacement. I am ordained by my denomination as an elder, but standing in the pulpit is not expected of lay people.

Once I even arranged for a fellow Toastmaster, who was a member of the congregation, to formally evaluate my sermon as a manual speech. Talk about a different type of audience! Both of my sermons were well-received and have led other members to challenge themselves in a similar manner.

2 I participated in an amateur comedy contest, with eight other amateurs at a local comedy club. Because I participated on short notice, I didn't have an opportunity to invite other Toastmasters to take part or attend.

The contest was a benefit for a charitable organization I had previously supported. I hadn't been in a comedy club for 15 years, but I had always been curious about the art of stand-up comedy, so I decided to give it a try.

Each comedian was given a five- to seven-minute time limit. Sounds familiar? We were told the microphone would go dead after we had spoken for seven minutes.

I didn't win the contest, but I had a great time. My presentation was well-received. I will definitely participate in this event again.

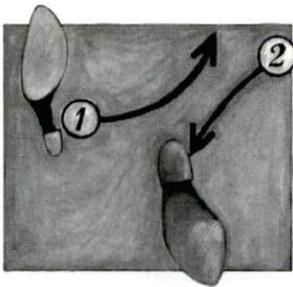
3 A third instance of expanding my public-speaking comfort zone occurred as I was preparing a slide presentation for an international conference. At the last minute I had to change the presentation to benefit an unexpected secondary audience. Toastmasters training helped make this spontaneity possible.

Like most presenters at this conference, I prepared a slide presentation – only to learn upon arriving at the site that the session was being audiotaped. Individuals who would purchase the tapes, but who weren't at the conference, would not have access to my slides. So, with little notice, I changed my presentation to a more descriptive oral version of my slides. Because the change may not have had the intended impact on my primary audience – people who were actually at the meeting – I doubt that I would make a similar adjustment should such a situation arise again.

The three experiences I have shared confirmed my belief that there is always room for personal growth. Almost daily, we are confronted with wonderful opportunities, sometimes disguised as problems. As Toastmasters, we should never become too comfortable with our skill level. Rather, we should look for new doors that we can walk through to broaden our comfort zones. The opportunities are there for the asking.

T

John Peck, ATM-S. is a member of Yawn Patrol Club 3306-62 in Lansing, Michigan.



HOW TO

By Mary Menke, CTM

Make Table Topics User Friendly

You've just been offered a new job that has the challenge you want and the salary you deserve. But one thing is holding you back – you'll have to make presentations to coworkers and perhaps even to associates outside the company. The thought of speaking in front of a group has always terrified you. So you make the only logical decision possible at this point. You accept the job, and you join Toastmasters.

Many people join Toastmasters for just such a reason. But you will soon discover that Toastmasters does more than just empower you to give prepared speeches in front of others. You'll also learn to speak extemporaneously by participating in Table Topics.

This "thinking on your feet" is a process many people find difficult. It requires the ability to quickly gather your wits and prepare a response. It's easy to understand why some Toastmasters say Table Topics is their least favorite part of the meeting. However, it does not have to be as intimidating as it sounds.

When called on to be Topics Master, you can do your part to make the process easier for you and your fellow club members by following a few simple guidelines:

1 Choose your topic(s) wisely. Check with the meeting's Toastmaster ahead of time to see if there is a special theme and then coordinate your topic to go along with it. If there is no theme, think about what you would like to discuss: Have you read any interesting newspaper or magazine articles, or taken part in any special activities

or events lately? What time of year is it? Is there a holiday coming up, or is it time to start planning summer vacations? If something piques your interest, rest assured that others in your club are interested too.

Always stick to noncontroversial subjects. Remember what your parents taught you: Never discuss politics or religion! It is not appropriate, for example, to ask which candidate will get a member's vote. Your objective is to get club members to talk, not to start an argument! If you are determined to talk about politics, ask a broader question, such as, "How do you think the political process will evolve over the next 20 years?"

2 Consider members' interests. If you're a man who is a sports aficionado and whose club is made up mostly of men, you may be inclined to choose sports as your topic. There is nothing wrong with doing so; many women are sports enthusiasts too. However, it might be wise to have an alternate question or two handy for those members, male or female, who aren't "into" sports. In fact, it is always a good idea to have alternate questions handy, regardless of the main topic.

3 Keep your questions brief. When you are on the receiving end of a Table Topic, it is challenging enough to be asked to discuss something you may not have given much thought to until that very moment. As Topics Master, don't complicate matters by taking too long to ask the question! Introduce the subject, and get to the point quickly.

4 Ask the question (or give the topic for discussion) before addressing a specific Toastmaster. This is one of the cardinal rules of Table Topics, but one that many Toastmasters forget. Maintain the element of surprise by calling on Toastmasters at random. Saying the



Toastmaster's name first allows that person to begin formulating his or her response while you are still asking the question. Saying the name last causes everyone in the group to pay attention to the entire question because they don't know who will be chosen to speak.

Another cardinal rule: Before the meeting starts, determine which Toastmasters are scheduled to be speakers or evaluators. You don't want to call on them for Table Topics until all non-speakers have had the opportunity to participate.

5 Lighten up. Table Topics need not always revolve around serious issues or be especially thought provoking. Ask about favorite TV shows, movies or books. Get personal and ask, "What is the funniest (or strangest, or most exciting) thing that ever happened to you?" Ask if they have a hobby or special interest and how they would explain it to a novice. Keep in mind that although you may be the only gourmet cook in your group, your fellow Toastmasters will at least have a favorite dish or restaurant to expound on. Ask them to explain what it is about that particular food or restaurant that makes it

their favorite. Or turn the question around and ask about their least favorites.

6 Have an adequate number of questions or topics prepared. If your club allots 20 minutes for Table Topics, plan to have about 15 questions. It is better to have too many than too few. If you find yourself running out of questions before time is up, it is acceptable to repeat some questions; however, mix up the order so participants won't know what's next.

When you are on the receiving end of Table Topics, there are also some things you can do to make the experience less stressful:

■ **Pay attention.** When the Topic Master takes her place at the lectern, direct your attention to her. Fight the temptation to daydream; you'll never know when you will be called on.

■ **Breathe.** When you are called to speak, stand up, take a breath and address the club: "Madame Toastmaster, fellow Toastmasters and guests." Then repeat or paraphrase the question: "What do I consider to be the strangest thing that ever happened to me?" These brief "stalls" allow your mind's computer to start sifting through all your life experiences to formulate a response.

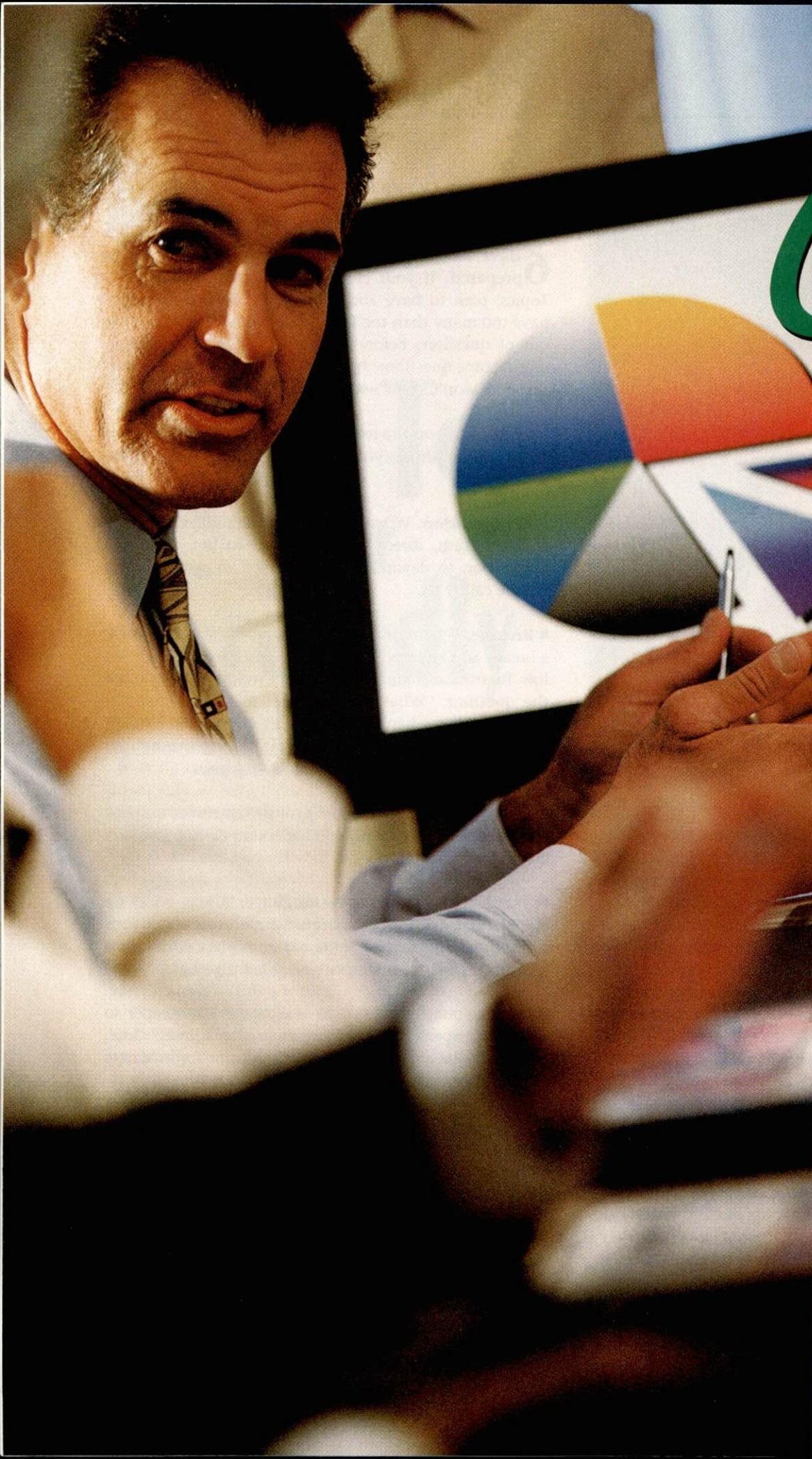
■ **Direct your response to the group.** Remember to speak slowly and talk to everyone in the room; do not just look at the Topic Master.

■ **Think about your body language.** Relax, stand up straight and don't let your arms dangle aimlessly at your sides. Use gestures to accent remarks, or place your hands in front of you, with your fingers laced together.

■ **Watch your time.** Keep an eye on the Timekeeper so you don't speak less or more than the allotted time. When you finish your response, thank the Topic Master and sit down.

Taking part in Table Topics, either as Topic Master or as a participant, is important to developing your communication and leadership skills. You may decide that impromptu speaking is still not your cup of tea. Or you may find that you have a knack for it and begin competing in Table Topics contests. Either way, following the above suggestions will help you become a more confident and competent speaker. **1**

Mary Menke, CTM is a member of South County Club 1957-8 in St. Louis, Missouri.



Create Better

***A**s a Toastmaster, you may have to give a speech using slides. When you create it, what should you do? What shouldn't you do? These tips will help you create a professional slide presentation – even if you're not a computer guru.*

reate etter Slide Presentations

Simple tips to help you shine
during your next presentation.

BY LINDA ADAMS, CTM ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY EYEWIRE

■ **COLOR:** Color is a powerful tool. A simple color, whether it's text or a graphic, can instantly convey a message far more effectively than simply writing out the same information. For example, you have a chart that displays dollars for different fiscal years. Numbers in red will immediately tell the audience that there is a loss for that year.

Of course, if you're giving a presentation for your company, you may prefer to incorporate the company's color scheme into the presentation. That may earn you some bonus points!

Your first choice to consider is your slide's background color. This is the most important color in your presentation because it can affect how the audience reacts. Be sure to consider the environment in which you'll be giving the presentation when selecting your background color.

If you're using a laptop computer and projector, take into account whether or not the room will be lit. An easy way to understand how much impact this has is to watch your TV with the room lights on and then off. You'll see how much certain colors stand out in different light.

If the lights will be off, use a dark background to minimize contrast. Experiment with finding colors for the text that will be easy on the eyes. For instance, a black background with yellow text is too harsh.

If lights are on or if you are using an overhead projector, a lighter background is a better choice. Again, there is less contrast to tire your audience's eyes. With an overhead projector, a lighter background will help the audience make the transition when you have to change transparencies.

Finally, when selecting any color combination, consider audience requirements. Many people have vision impairments such as colorblindness. My father, a Toastmaster in California, is colorblind. A friend invited him

to visit a Web site he had designed, using red text on a black background. To my father, it was just a black screen. He couldn't read any of it!

Problem color combinations to watch for are red/green, blue/black, brown/green, blue/purple, red/purple and red/black. Many of these colors are in the same value and will tend to blend. Even people without any vision impairment may have trouble reading the text. So, when selecting colors, consider your content, your environment and your audience.

■ **CONTENT:** When I was in the Army, presentations were commonly used for training. They were designed so that a private could easily give the presentation by simply reading the information on the transparency. Military officers took this idea a step further, earning the unflattering nickname "PowerPoint Rangers" by putting all information, no matter how insignificant, on the slides. This resulted in some very confusing slides.

The content of your presentation should enhance your speech. You want your audience to glance at the slides, and then return their attention to you. The more time they have to read the slide, the greater their chance of losing focus on your speech.

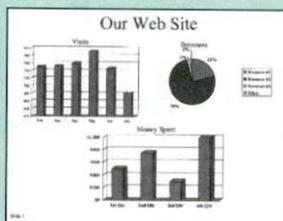
A good way to know if you're putting too much detail on a slide is if you have to start shrinking text to make everything fit. Instead, review what you've written and edit it. Often changing a sentence from passive to active voice will shorten it.

Bullets are a good way to convey information in an easy-to-read list format. The eye is naturally drawn to bulleted text, so take advantage of it. Use no more than six bulleted items per slide, two lines each. That doesn't sound like much, but remember that the slides are supporting only what you're saying.

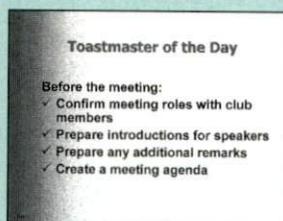
Guide to the Slides

By Linda Adams, CTM

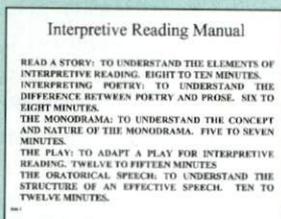
SLIDE ONE: This slide contains too much information. Charts were reduced in size so they all would fit on one page. Most audience members would be unable to read those small-type fonts. A better choice is to break this up into three separate charts.



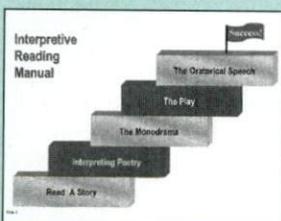
SLIDE TWO: A simple use of bullets to help support the speech. The bullets give only basic information; the speaker will provide more details.



SLIDE THREE: The content is typed in all capital letters, making it difficult to read. Also, too much information is given, making the lines run together. This lists only five items, but the detail and the capital letters make it seem like a lot more.



SLIDE FOUR: This slide uses graphics to convey the same ideas as Slide Three does. The audience can glance at the slide and immediately grasp the concept.



Longer passages of text may actually have a negative effect on your audience. How many times have you started reading a book, come to a long paragraph and skipped over it? Keep your audience's attention by keeping text short.

Text should be typed in upper/lower case, like the text here, with capital letters only where they are normally used in a sentence. Although it may be easier to type everything in all capital letters, it's not easier for your audience to read it. Additionally, in today's Internet culture, many people feel that using all capitals is akin to shouting.

Also avoid using a lot of underscored or italicized text. This is very difficult to read, especially from a distance. To highlight a passage of text, it's better to use a different color.

Finally, make sure that your font size is large enough – at least 24 points – so that everyone in the back of the room can clearly see the slides.

■ **GRAPHICS:** Another great way to enhance your presentation is with graphics and animation. Sometimes a picture can evoke an emotion and help illustrate a point.

Presentation programs come with their own images, plus you can find many more on the Internet. Microsoft, for instance, has a large collection available to Office users. Clip art collections can be purchased from any software store.

The images themselves should relate to the slide content. Don't put a graphic in just to fill space. Nor is it necessary to put an image on every slide. Consider colors of the image, as well. They should blend well with your color scheme – and your content. If you're talking about money, the image on your slide should feature colors that suggest profit.

Animated GIFs (Graphic Interface Format) are available for some of the later presentation programs. These can add interesting aspects to your slide. But use them sparingly. One animated image on a slide is effective; five will make your audience dizzy.

■ **PROOFREADING:** Now that you have selected your colors, typed in your content and added your graphics, it's time to proofread. Too often, presentations are given with glaring typographical and spelling errors. When using an overhead projector, with the image magnified 100 percent, any error will stand out!

In preparing for your presentation, read it out loud at least three times over a period of several days. Pay close attention to the following hot spots:

✓ **Style consistency** – Verify that the presentation style is consistent throughout. For instance, you may have inserted a slide from another presentation, and the

titles are in blue while the titles in the rest of the presentation are red. For a professional look, be consistent.

- ✓ **Mistakes in titles** – We can focus so much on slide content that it's easy to overlook a typo in the title. But the typo likely will be the first thing your audience will notice.
- ✓ **Bullets** – Do not end bullets with punctuation. Scan for periods, semicolons or commas you may have typed in and delete them.
- ✓ **Commonly confused words** – Make sure you have properly used words such as, its and it's; too, to and two; and their, there and they're. Also remember, it's "a lot," not "alot."
- ✓ **Acronyms** – You may know what a particular acronym means, but a member of your audience may not. Define all acronyms.
- ✓ **Omissions** – Take care not to omit a parenthetical or quotation mark.
- ✓ **Web site addresses** – If you use a Web site address in your presentation, verify that it is the correct one.
- ✓ **Numbers** – Check each number, digit by digit.
- ✓ **Names** – Verify the spelling of any name. When I was stationed in Washington, D.C., a prestigious newspaper there made the embarrassing mistake of spelling the new post commander's name wrong.
- ✓ **Punctuation** – If you know you're weak in punctuation, get a good guide.

MISCELLANEOUS STUFF

As you make final preparations for your presentation, keep these points in mind:

- If you're using a laptop with your presentation, take time to view what you have prepared in slideshow mode to avoid problems that weren't evident in the edit mode. For instance, if you want to have a photograph dissolve in automatically, you may have to hit the space bar to start the animation.
- If you are showing the presentation using an earlier version of the software program, be sure to verify that everything translates properly. Bullets, in particular, may not convert. In one presentation, bullets that looked great in the newest version of the program turned into question marks in an earlier version!

■ If you plan to hand out printed copies, make sure you print a sample first to see how it looks. I had to fix a slide for someone because it didn't look the same in print as it did on the screen; there was some additional text that didn't appear in the slide show. As it turned out, someone had inexplicably typed some text in white. Although it didn't show up in the slide show, the program printed it on the handouts anyway.

■ If you're giving the presentation elsewhere and have to take disks with you, make more than one disk. You never know when something will go wrong, and it can't hurt to have an extra copy.

■ If you're distributing a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation electronically, make sure you check the file's properties before sending it anywhere. Select File and then Properties. Fill in the information, especially adding your name and contact information in the comments section.

■ Finally, allow yourself at least one minute per slide and two minutes for more complicated ones. You may have to plan extra time for audience questions.

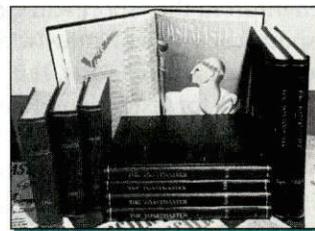
Not one of the tips I've given you is about doing fancy things with a computer program. Simply use color, content, graphics, and other common-sense steps to create the best presentation you can. Once you start practicing these tips, it won't take long for you to shine during your slide presentation. **T**

Linda Adams, CTM, is a member of G.U.T.S. Club 5986-27 in Arlington, Virginia.

Looking for Back Issues of *The Toastmaster*?

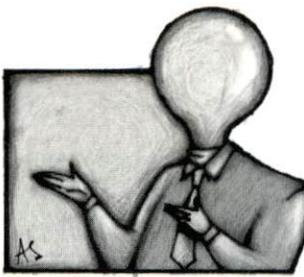
Missing some issues of *The Toastmaster* magazine? Need issues for research? Want additional magazines to help publicize your club? We have the solution!

In volumes dating back to 1957, many years' worth of *The Toastmaster* magazine are available from TI's Orders Department. Handsomely bound in hardcover, each book contains a full year's issues. (Catalog No. 1215-V; \$30.00 ea.)



Individual back issues of *The Toastmaster* are also available for the price of postage for non-issue specific requests. If you would like a specific issue, the cost is \$1.25 per magazine.

Please call the Orders Department at (949) 858-8255 or order online at www.toastmasters.org.



Soapbox Debates

Soapbox debates are a simple way to add a memorable new dimension to your club's meetings, membership drives, and members' speaking skills. The following system has been developed by Aldergrove Toastmasters in British Columbia, Canada. Several neighboring clubs have tried our debates with great enthusiasm.

Picture the scene: It is 2,000 years ago in a typical Roman village marketplace. As business slows, an orator mounts one of the steps around the marketplace and passionately expounds on whatever is dear to his heart. Quickly, another orator mounts another step to debate the proposal. These debates became so popular that the Roman word for "marketplace" became our word for "place of debate" – a forum.

Now fast-forward to today's Hyde Park, London. This venue for public debate has no convenient market steps. Instead the speakers bring their own steps in the form of a readily available platform. The platform of choice is the soapbox.

In both cases the speakers recognize two key advantages of standing taller than their audience. First, they can be seen, even if the audience is standing. Second, they benefit from the "sports-car effect." If you have ever sat in a sports car you will know what I mean. Sitting in the car gives you no more skills, but you still feel like you could go a whole lot faster than your normal safe driving speed.

Climb up on a soapbox, your confidence blossoms, and yes, you feel like one of those Roman orators.

An actual soapbox is a bit rickety for casual Toastmasters use, so in our club we use what we have dubbed the "Toastmaster Standard Soapbox." It is two square feet and only six inches high. Low enough for safety, but fine for the sports car effect.

I have had the pleasure of watching numerous normally unexpressive speakers (including beginners) become

Step on a box and speak your mind.



instant foot-stomping arm-waving audience-reaching orators. All it took was a six-inch high soapbox and the debate system that is explained next.

THE SOAPBOX DEBATE SYSTEM

The key objective is to give two speakers at a time the opportunity to rabble-rouse. The audience are the rabble, so they need to be primed. Do this by splitting the audience (and the speakers) into two teams. Then they know who to cheer for. Remind them of the history of soap-

boxes, early uses for rotten fruit, and Abraham Lincoln's quote about preferring speakers who "act like they are fighting bees." For large groups, appoint a couple of cheerleaders to exhort their teams to give vocal support.

As the speakers get better, heckling will be OK. In the early stages, the best support is clapping, table-banging, and verbal encouragement like "go team," "hear hear," etc. The best reactions from the other team are nonspecific noises like "no way," "unfair," "no" and even gentle boo's. This may seem contrary to some of the fundamentals of Toastmasters, but in fact the noise is one of the things that help the speakers reach beyond their normal boundaries.

In its simplest form, just choose a topic for each pair and toss a coin to see who goes first. Let the person who goes first also choose whether to speak for or against that topic.

I have found one minute to be the best time per speaker. It is enough time to make a point, but not so much that the energy falls if someone runs out of things to say. Give the timer a small bell for 45 seconds and a big noisy bell or gong for 60 seconds. This all adds to the noise, and besides, a bell or a gong is a fantastic device for stopping those speakers who have a habit of running red lights. Just think energy.

Try to avoid serious topics, because then the speaker may take the general noise to heart. The best topics are outrageous ones that everyone knows are just for fun.

TOPIC SUGGESTIONS

- Men's Liberation... it's time.
- Kissing and cuddling should be banned in school hallways.
- Our Toastmasters meetings should be held at midnight.
- Cooking and table manners should be a compulsory school subject for boys.
- Cars should be banned from... (select a downtown area).
- Charities should be allocated different one-month periods in which to collect money.
- Toastmasters conferences should be held only in small towns.

VARIATIONS

There are several ways of running the debates. In addition to the basic format above, try the following:

- Have only one topic, with speakers succeeding each other. As each speaker steps down, the new speaker

takes the previous speaker's place to listen to the other team and prepare a rebuttal.

- Set a theme relating to the venue (such as "Animals as Toastmaster mascots"), then let the audience call out an animal for the speaker, who then must explain why that animal would make a better mascot than the mascot chosen for the previous speaker.
- Select judges and set up scales of justice to award points to speakers and determine winning debate teams. As it is not necessarily a sit-down task, judging has to be very simple.

Have three or more judges, each armed with a pocketful of candies.

Points are:

- 1 point: Audience involvement / reception
- 1 point: Delivery: volume / eloquence / enthusiasm
- 1 point: Content: logic / relevance to previous speakers' argument / originality
- 1 point: Bonus for exceptional effort or "just because."

An emcee goes to each of the judges after each pair of speakers with a container to collect those speakers' "points." The container with each team's points can then be left in front of each team's soapbox or perhaps set on a scale to show which team is in the lead. It is best not to make it obvious how many points each speaker received, just the total weight as adjudged by the scales. At the finish the candies can be used for speaker prizes or a feast in the car on the way home.

EQUIPMENT

Our boxes are 2ft x 2ft x 6in. We call them Toastmaster Standard Soapboxes. Make two boxes. With only one box, the speaker can feel a bit isolated.

LAST THOUGHTS

In the heat of the debate, it is important to remember that we are Toastmasters, so the other team should be treated with respect and dignity. Name-calling, ridicule and personal attacks are unacceptable.

At the club level, an evaluator will help increase the participants' skills. In the public arena, an evaluator may or may not be appropriate. 1

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From Speaking to Talking to Debating

Toastmasters in
Kathmandu,
Nepal, debate
local issues.

By Chris Whitehouse, CTM

So, you're good at delivering prepared speeches and impromptu speeches – but can you do both at the same time? Can you respond to hecklers or answer questions from the audience at the end of your speech? Are you able to respond to issues raised by an earlier speaker at the same function? In Toastmasters we learn how to deliver prepared speeches to polite audiences – but how prepared are we for speaking in a debate?

Kathmandu Toastmasters Club, in that faraway Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal, has just launched a debating club. “Well, that’s not a big deal,” I hear you say. But please note that Nepal is a democracy only 10 years young, and the concept of debate is fairly new. Nepali people are naturally averse to confrontation and are brought up to be wary of questioning authority, whether that is within the family, at school, or within the political

arena. To stand up in front of colleagues and friends and say, “No, I don’t agree with you; you’re wrong!” takes a great deal of courage. And to be able to argue one’s case convincingly takes a great deal of skill too!

Our club currently has 30 members (28 Nepalese and 2 expatriates) and meets twice a month. But recently, on the first Tuesday of each month, we’ve added a bonus meeting: We debate a topic. We normally debate a subject being mentioned in the newspapers – one might say our topics are typically topical – relating to concerns of special interest to Nepal. For example, our first debate discussed the idea of paying child workers in Nepal a minimum wage. The next debate discussed whether abortion should be legalized.

With three people on each team, arguing for and against the motion, with a chairman for the evening, a ballot/vote counter, a timer and an evaluator, the debate is not very different from a regular Toastmasters meeting. The difference is

Tips for Successful Debating

Appel to your audience’s analytical skills as well as their emotions. Good speeches in debates are hard-hitting, using the whole artillery available to the speaker. Facts, statistics, emotional appeal, drama, humor, gestures, eye-contact. These are all weapons that the speaker can use to win over the audience.

Listen carefully to the speeches given by the others from your team, so you can build on (not just repeat) their arguments. If they have built the foundation of your argument, you should start on building the walls! Listen also to the opposing team, to enable you to include in your speech responses to the challenges they have made to your position. Also if you can identify weaknesses in your opposition’s logic or arguments, then use your speech to reveal these weaknesses to your audience.

Anticipate what the opposition team will say: “Now I know that our friends over there will try to argue that abortion should be legalized because otherwise the illegal and unsafe abortions will continue, but if you think about the issue carefully, you will realize that . . .”

Ask questions the opposing side will not be able to answer! (“If you are planning to legalize abortion, how will you stop XXX from happening?”)

Don’t be angry or rude. Anger and impoliteness will (a) alienate your audience, and can often elicit a sympathy vote for the opposing team, and (b) is against the rules of debate (see below)!

Use your time effectively. Don’t waste your time (and your audience’s time) telling people how happy you are to have the opportunity to speak, etc. Use your time well. If you finish earlier than your time permits, then that is better than meandering on. Since you are speaking to the chairman, do not use the standard introductory ‘Mr. Presiding Officer, Mr. . . .’

Finally, enjoy yourself! If you are enjoying speaking in the debate, the audience will enjoy listening to you. And if they enjoy listening to you, they are more likely to agree with your arguments.

CW

that the speaker speaks impromptu, yet prepared at the same time. The good debater responds to arguments raised by the opposing team and also anticipates their arguments. The three speakers are speaking as a team and have to develop their strategy with that in mind. They must decide which team member will address which of the many arguments supporting their case – at the same time, each speaker must try to win over (persuade, inspire) the audience.

To succeed, the speakers use all their Toastmasters skills. Their arguments are well-organized and planned; they make maximum use of vocal variety, appropriate gestures, eye contact, posture, humor, persuasiveness, inspiration, knowing the audience, keeping to time. Meanwhile, they also speak impromptu, responding to arguments offered by the opposition, or to audience reactions.

And what an advertisement for Toastmasters! Our debating club in Kathmandu is still very young, and members are learning the ropes of debating. But once we feel we are good enough, we want to bring in eminent guest speakers to join our debates. We hope this will interest our news media in publicizing our club and in further exploring and covering local issues.

We believe that lively debates will encourage guests to visit our club, and that once they've experienced the benefits of Toastmasters, new members will come flooding in!

Kathmandu Toastmasters Club may be a small club in a small country, but we hope to have a great influence! **1**

Author's Note: *Sometimes we feel isolated out here, and The Toastmaster magazine seems to reflect little of the internationalism of Toastmasters 'International' (in the June 2000 issue, all letters and articles were from US citizens and Canadians only). How about forming regional support groups? For example, are there any Toastmasters clubs in Asia who would like to have a joint meeting? If so, send an e-mail to our club president Ravin Lama (ravin@asia.com) or Chris Whitehouse (chrisw@mos.com.np) – we'd love to hear from you!*

Chris Whitehouse, CTM, Vice President Education, Kathmandu Club 8112-U.



Rules of Debate

Good debates will often have highly charged and emotional speeches from speakers who strongly believe in what they are saying. In recognition of this, there are a certain number of rules all speakers should follow:

- The chairman has ultimate authority. He/she can stop a debate, stop a speaker, or evict from the room any person from the audience or among the speakers.
- All speeches are addressed to the chairman, and should begin "Mr. Chairman" or "Madam Chairman." If reference is made to other speakers, the third person must be used (He/she...), and the person can be referred to as "my friend here" (on my team) or "my friend over there" (on the opposing team). No impolite references can be accepted ("my fat friend over there"), nor can personal details about other speakers be revealed, however relevant to a speech ("My friend over there is suggesting that abortion should never be allowed, but do you know that his wife's sister had an abortion?")
- All speakers must keep to the point, and not deviate onto another topic.
- Speakers cannot use unexplained jargon or specialized words in the hope that the other side will not understand them; nor can they use as an argument a truism or circular argument – "abortion should not be allowed because it is illegal (or wrong)" –

"abortion is currently illegal because it is wrong, so, because it is wrong, it should be illegal."

- A speaker must correctly quote what the opposing team said. If the opposing team said abortion should be legalized because some women will have illegal abortions, then you cannot quote them as saying that they feared all women would have illegal abortions.
- In the final summary by the team leaders (in which the speakers speak for two minutes, before the voting takes place), no new points can be brought up. Only arguments already discussed in the main speeches (*not* arguments offered by audience members, or in response to audience questions) can be mentioned in the summaries.
- Timing: the timekeeper will indicate when there is one minute remaining, a half minute remaining, and when the time is up. The speaker must try to stop before the time is up. The speaker will be forcefully silenced by the chairman 10 seconds after the time is up.
- If the opposing team feels that a speaker is breaking one of the rules, he/she may rise and interrupt, by saying "Mr./Madam Chairman!" The timekeeper will halt the stopwatch from this point until the speech is resumed. The chairman will either accept or reject the complaint and advise the speaker accordingly. (In fact, speakers are advised that too many interruptions can spoil the flow of a good debate, and they may find it more useful to raise the complaint during their next speech.)
- And finally: the chairman is always right! The decision of the chairman is final.

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Playing Games

Learning through moments of enjoyment.

One day last February, in front of 50 Toastmasters gathered for our district's Education Day, I announced something personal. Something not many Toastmasters knew about me: I love to play games – board games, card games, video games, team activities, contests and game shows on radio and TV. I particularly enjoy games of strategy and those that test knowledge and skill.

I made my announcement because, as coordinator and Toastmaster for Education Day, I wanted to combine two of my primary interests – Toastmasters and games. Our Education Day offered two of the *Building Your Thinking Power Success/Communication* modules titled "Mental Flexibility" and "The Power of Ideas."

I thought we could flex our mental muscles with an Icebreaker exercise based on *The Match Game*. You may remember this American TV game show, which originated in 1962 and became popular with the 1970s version. Various versions have appeared on TV screens – sometimes as reruns – from time to time since then. Our Toastmasters exercise was based on the version in which two contestants tried to come up with "fill-in-the-blank" answers that matched those of six celebrities. The contestant

with the most matches won the round and had a chance at grand-prize money in The Super Match.

Our Toastmasters group was asked to print their answers on 4" x 6" cards. Then they mixed and mingled throughout the room, finding their matches and introducing themselves.

How would you fill in this blank? "It was so cold in the Valley last night, the Jolly Green Giant's _____ turned blue"? (Remember those Green Giant canned vegetable commercials? Ho, ho, ho!). About six groups formed, each with a different answer. What a powerful demonstration to show there is more than one answer for any question or problem! What was your response? Here are a few answers that were given: knees, nose, peas and other vegetables, ears, lips. The favorite answer? Niblets.

You can use games within many Toastmaster activities. I have used well-known games or modified versions of them for Table Topics sessions, educational workshops, club and district officer training, summertime club meetings, conferences and club social activities, including Friday Fun Nights. Games are both informative and fun. They foster team-building, and they create shared memories for game participants as well as for audience members. Here are a few I have tried with great success, along with others yet to be played.

Note: While the object is to learn through enjoyment, some people take game-playing seriously or may be unfamiliar with the game being introduced. So review the rules before the game begins or go through a few practice sessions. The prizes can be as simple (and powerful) as bragging rights, or presentation of certificates or other "fabulous" prizes.

BY CINDY PAVELLA, DTM ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY EYEWIRE

Several Web sites provide details, rules and game history to help you to play and learn with your fellow Toastmasters: <http://gameshow.miningco.com>; www.boardgames.com; www.uproar.com and www.qwertyuiop.co.uk/gs.

TABLE TOPIC GAMES

1 Guesstures – A Milton Bradley board game in which two teams guess what object or action a Toastmaster is demonstrating – through gestures only; no words are spoken. The harder the word is to guess, the higher the point value. How would you act out these four words before time runs out? Trombone, hitchhike, antlers and facelift. Too easy? How about the harder level: Pumpkin, spy, molar, and electricity? *Charades* from Pressman is another game for practicing nonverbal communication skills.

2 Reverse Pictionary – the opposite of *Guesstures* and *Charades*; the speakers use their voices but cannot use gestures. This game promotes active listening skills. The Topics Master collects pictures of simple objects such as a star, flower, kitten, house, kite. Club members draw a picture based on verbal directions given by a Toastmaster. For example, if the object is a kitten's face, the directions might be something like: "Draw a large circle in the middle of your paper or put two smaller circles in the upper part of the circle with a slight space between." The club members can't ask questions or confer with each other. It's amazing to see how creative some people can be in giving directions – and how different pictures can be drawn when following the same directions!

3 Hangman – a great way to increase vocabulary. *Wheel of Fortune*, the TV game show and board game by Hasbro, is based on *Hangman*. A Toastmaster selects a word or phrase. Lines and spaces are placed on the board for each letter in the word or phrase. Contestants or the audience take turns calling out letters to fill the blanks. The first person to guess the word or phrase and provide a definition or explanation wins. Can you come up with an answer to this puzzle? Hint: It's a familiar Toastmasters name. _ _ _ N N _ _ c _ _ _ _ I _ _ S (Answer at the end of this article).

4 Password – This word-association game show made its debut in October 1961, spawning a variety of spinoffs, along with a board game by Endless Games. Two teams of two people each play. One person from each team is given a word (password) in secret. He or she must give a similar or descriptive word to his or her partner. If the partner guesses the password, the team wins; if not, the other team can try. Some teams can guess the password with one try; sometimes it takes several rounds before the password is revealed. Can you guess the password from these clues – onlooker, court, accident, spectator? (Answer at end of this article).

5 Taboo – a variation of *Password*. In this board game, you get your team to guess the secret word, but you cannot use the five Taboo clues. For example, if the secret word is kitten, how would you describe the word to your team without using the words meow, cat, purr, furry, or animal?

6 Who said that? – This is a variation of the 1950s TV game show *What's My Line?* Several board games, including *Who Knew?* by Great American Puzzle Factory and *It's Anybody's Guess* by Talicor, are variations on the theme. One quotation is selected for the Table Topics session. Each respondent selects from a list of possible persons and explains why that person could have made that statement. At the end of the session, the group determines the winner by casting votes as to who was most convincing. The winner doesn't necessarily have to have represented the correct speaker!

You try this one: Who said, "If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door"? Benjamin Franklin, Bob Villa, Oprah Winfrey, Milton Berle, Jimmy Carter, Golda Meir or Henry Ford? (Answer at end of this article).

These are the games I am eager to try next:

7 Mad Gab – A board game by Patch. *Mad Gab* lets you play with enunciation and pronunciation of words. In this game, it's not what you say; it's what you hear. Say out loud the words, "Ask Rude Arrive Her." Can you hear "a screwdriver"? If so, you won!

8 Zobmondo Game by Hasbro – Picture the ridiculous and hilarious scene as you and your Toastmaster friends debate a question such as: "Would you rather have five bottles stuck on each of five fingers of your hand or a bucket stuck to your foot for a year?" The discussions prompted by *Zobmondo* encourage everyone to participate on every turn. 1500 questions.

9 Fib-or-Not? by Gather Around Games – This is good for stretching the imagination while preparing Table Topics or prepared speeches. This game includes 150 subject cards that provide a basis for telling a story. Listeners try to guess whether the story is true.

And let's not forget games available from the Toastmasters Supply Catalog:

10 Stand Up and Speak! – A twist to Table Topics. Includes 155 cards, each with a Table Topic, plus blank cards to make up your own topics. Three categories: verbal, sentence completion, and nonverbal Table Topics. Catalog #1316.

11 Stand Up and Speak II – Each card has a graphic image that should trigger a response from the par-

ticipant. Images range from a first-place ribbon to a fire truck to the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Includes blank cards so you can add your own images. Catalog #1317.

12 Table Talk – Every card in Table Talk presents an interesting general fact, then pops a terrific Table Topics question. Catalog #1318.

TEAM GAMES ARE FUN AND EDUCATIONAL

These require preparation as well as time to conduct them. Each is available in board-game format or on the Internet. You could play the actual game, but developing and playing a Toastmasters-related game is more fun. I suggest you borrow or purchase a board game, especially if you are unfamiliar with the concept or the rules. This should also help if you need inspiration in producing Toastmasters-related games.

The game boards can be reproduced on overhead transparencies or through computer projection, using software such as PowerPoint. Helpers would include a timer, judge, scorekeeper, emcee or Toastmaster. Necessary materials include scoreboards, timing devices, contestant bells or buzzers.

■ **Toastmaster Family Feud** (or in the UK, **Family Fortunes**)

– In this game, two competing teams of five people try to find the answers to survey questions. The first survey question is revealed to the teams; the head of each “family” or team tries to give the most popular answer in order to control the question. Answers are then given by each team member to arrive at all survey responses. If three members give an incorrect answer, their team strikes out. The other team steals the question and could win the round if they reveal a survey response. If the stealing team fails to give a correct survey response, the first team wins the round. The team that reaches the designated point value first, wins.

For our Spring Conference’s Friday Fun Night activity, I compiled a list of 30 questions addressing a variety of Toastmasters subjects. Here are just a few of the survey questions:

- ▶ Name a speech project in the C&L manual
- ▶ Name a club officer role
- ▶ Name a district governor
- ▶ Name an occupation represented by many Toastmasters.

■ **Who Wants to be a Million Dollar (district or club Officer or Toastmaster)?**

– Past District 65 Governor Donna Sokolowski introduced this variation of the game show, *Who Wants To Be a Millionaire?* when she trained division governors at the Region VI Conference. A contestant progresses through 15 questions, choosing one of four possible answers. The twist is that the player sees the four choices before deciding

whether or not to answer. If the player decides to answer but is stumped or unsure, he or she has three lifelines to rely on: Ask the audience, phone a friend with a 30-second time limit, and 50/50 (where two of the four responses are removed, leaving the correct answer and an incorrect answer).

For example, a \$200 question would be: The chief judge of a speech contest selects all the following except a) the winner; b) the tiebreaker judge; c) the timer; d) the counter. Need a lifeline? The answer is at the end of this article.

■ **Toastmaster Jeopardy** – This cerebral TV game show debuted in 1964 and is still going strong. Contestants are given the answers and must come up with the questions. Categories of topics are developed with five questions that increase in difficulty. Single, double and final Jeopardy questions can be played by three contestants or in a team format. How would you do in the category Toastmasters History? The \$100 answer is “It was first printed in April 1933.” The \$500 answer is “The year Toastmasters opened membership to women.” (Answers at the end of this article. Remember: All responses must be in the form of a question.)

Try it, you’ll like it! Here is the bonus question: Who said, “We learn best in moments of enjoyment”? (Answer at end of this article).

I’ve shared here a few of my Toastmasters games. Why not try one? Or develop your own? **1**

Cindy Pavella, DTM, is a member of Troy Club 2357-28 in Troy, Michigan.

ANSWERS (TABLE TOPICS GAMES)

3. Jo Anna McWilliams, International President of Toastmasters
4. The password is “witness.”
6. Milton Berle.

Responses to questions in article:

- Who wants to be a Million Dollar officer? — Correct response: (a) The chief judge of a speech contest selects the tiebreaker judge, timer and counter – but not the winner.
- Toastmasters Jeopardy correct responses:
 - What is *The Toastmaster* magazine?
 - What is 1973?
- Bonus Question: Toastmasters founder Ralph C. Smedley.

The 6 Cs of becoming a champion.

Learning to Separate Yourself From the Pack



The author receives his second place trophy from Toastmasters President Jo Anna McWilliams, DTM, at last years International Speech Contest.

You've decided to compete in the Toastmasters International Speech Contest. You've won your club, area and division contests. At each level you've competed against two, maybe three, other speakers and you've come out on top each time. Now you are in the District finals, a contest in front of 200 people. If you're a man, you're wearing your best dark pinstripe suit, a light shirt and power tie. Your shoes mirror your reflection. Likewise, if you are a woman, you're wearing your best suit. Your makeup and hair are perfect. You go to your pre-contest meeting at a major hotel. You enter the room and before you are seven or eight other contestants – who are dressed just like you.

But that's OK because you're ready to stand out from the crowd with "the speech." This is the speech of your life! Your speech will motivate and inspire everyone in the room. Your speech is going to score a perfect 100 on the judges' ballots. The contest begins and you soon learn that each contestant's speech is the speech of his or her life! Each performance inspires and motivates the audience. You sit back and you watch and you listen and you say to yourself, "This isn't going to be easy."

As a veteran of at least 30 speech contests, I have experienced the above scenario quite a few times and often wondered, "How can I be the one to stand out from eight terrific speakers? How can I make myself No.1 in the minds of the judges? *How can I learn to separate myself from the pack?*"

The answer is simple. As a boy, when I wanted to learn how to hit a baseball, I watched Roberto Clemente. When I wanted to learn how to throw a football, I watched Joe

Namath. And when I wanted to learn how to shoot a basketball, I watched Jerry West. I can do the same thing as a speech contestant. I can watch videotapes of the World Championship of Public Speaking. I can watch videotapes of those speakers who have learned to separate themselves from the pack.

As I have been watching videotapes of past champions, I have observed that while each champion has a unique quality, they also share similar characteristics. I call these characteristics "The 6 Cs of becoming a champion." Those characteristics are confidence and courage; coordination and conversation; and concentration and connection.

CONFIDENCE & COURAGE

The first World Championship video I ever studied was the 1993 contest Otis Williams won with his speech, "It's Possible." Otis was striking in his confidence. His very presence seemed to be saying, "It's going to be very difficult to beat me today," as he took the stage and smiled at the audience. Otis climaxed his speech with a quote from U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt:

I choose not to be a common man. It is my right to be uncommon if I can...It is my heritage to stand erect, proud and unafraid; to think and act for myself and face the world boldly and say, 'This I have done.'

At that moment, I felt as if I were no longer watching Otis but Theodore Roosevelt. Everyone watching the tape with me let out a "Wow!" and I knew at this moment that Otis Williams had won the contest.

In 1999, Craig Valentine won the World Championship with his speech, "The Key to Fulfillment." Craig stood out with his courage – the courage to tell the audience of his troubles and to trust the audience with that knowledge. How often, as a member of a club, have we seen a new member join, go through 10 speeches and realize that we have learned absolutely nothing about the new member during that time? One of the first things I learned, as a speech contestant, was that you never leave the audience empty-handed. What you give the audience is a piece of yourself. You're showing your trust of the audience by revealing a part of yourself and saying, "Hey, I'm just like you!" This isn't easy. In fact, it takes a great deal of courage, and in 1999 Craig was rewarded for doing this.

COORDINATION & CONVERSATION

Mark Brown's 1995 winning speech, "A Second Chance," is the perfect example of the coordination between sight and sounds, movement and voice. Everyone remembers Mark singing a tune from the movie *Beauty and the Beast*. Those who study the videotape will see perfect coordination between Mark's vocals and the movement of his body. He acts out a scene from the movie. When he asks the audience: "Has someone heard your best roar?" he doesn't just ask the question. He rears up his back, like a lion ready to attack, and bellows out the word "roar."

Willie Jones in 1997 and Brett Rutledge in 1998 offered perfect examples of a conversational approach. At one point, Brett is having a conversation with himself. In his speech "My Own Little World," Brett focuses on the use of imagination and tells the audience of the difficulty he had in school with his mind wandering during math class. He brings the audience into his imagination and the conversation between himself as *Star Wars'* Obi Wan Kenobi and his nemesis, Darth Vader:

Darth Vader: "When we last met, Obi Wan, I was but a student. Now I am the master."

Obi Wan: "Only a master of evil, Darth."

Darth Vader: "Is that so? Tell me this then, what is the square root of 25?"

With one line, Brett brings us back to the reality of his math class. It is through this humorous conversation with himself that Brett connects with the audience and brings us into his own little world.

In 1997, Willie Jones ("A Warm Boot") connected with his audience immediately with his opening sentence regarding the letter he received from AARP and his experience with turning 50 years old. Throughout his speech, he is conversational and he ends his presentation by hav-

ing the audience take part in the conversation by saying the word "boop!"

CONCENTRATION & CONNECTION

In the 2000 finals of the District 46 International Speech competition, I used a flashlight to illustrate the point of my speech. I was fortunate enough to win the contest. Afterward an audience member said, "I don't remember what you said, but I will always remember that flashlight." I learned from David Nottage and Morgan McArthur the value of getting the audience to concentrate on a single object or a single theme.

In 1994, Morgan McArthur's "Stuck in a Bucket" speech prompted the audience to concentrate on a bucket. Morgan used a bucket to have the audience focus on the point that sometimes we're "stuck in a bucket" and have to make a change in our lives.

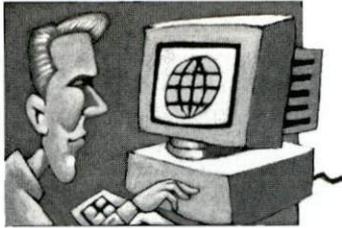
In 1996, David Nottage had his audience concentrate on a single theme, "Get Up!" David continually reinforced the theme of never giving up by humorously acting out his childhood experience of failing to learn to ride a bicycle, with his mother behind him screaming, "Get Up!"

Once again, Willie Jones' presentation is a prime example of connecting with Ed Tate's winning speech at last year's international speech contest. Tate connected with his audience through humor and continually reinforced that connection through little stories the audience could relate to.

Ed Tate's speech, "Just One of Those Days," humorously relates an experience to his audience. He connects with the audience in his first sentence and reinforces that connection in his last sentence. Every contestant who watched him (and I was one of them) knew that Ed had separated himself from the pack.

Otis Williams, Morgan McArthur, Mark Brown, David Nottage, Willie Jones, Brett Rutledge, Craig Valentine and Ed Tate: All of these speakers had a unique quality that helped them win the World Championship of Public Speaking. They also have many qualities in common: their confidence in themselves, the courage to trust the audience, the coordination of movement and voice, their conversational approach, prompting the audience to concentrate on a single object or theme, and their ability to immediately connect with the audience and to maintain that connection throughout the speech. These are the qualities, demonstrated by champions who stand out from the pack. 

David Romanchick, ATM, is a member of Morristown Club 3540-46 in Flanders, New Jersey. He won second place in last year's World Championship of Public Speaking.



**Make technical presentations fun
for your audience and yourself.**

Don't Be a Technophobe!

SPEAKING ON TECHNICAL SUBJECTS IS CHALLENGING. I FIRST discovered this when, en route to my ATM, I tackled the "Technical Presentations" manual. Those five projects taught me a lot. Completing them prepared me to speak on

technical subjects for my employer. Though I'm still learning about the content on which I speak and the process of presenting technical material, I've come to enjoy "doing" technical content. If you've avoided technical presentations, don't. The fun is where the challenge is! Here are some insights I've gained on technical presentations:

- While it's always good practice to know as much as you can about an audience, with technical material, advance knowledge of your audience is make-or-break. Introducing people to new information is like repairing plaster. Any tradesman will tell you that a patch applied to crumbly plaster will, itself, soon crumble. To hold, a patch must connect to existing, solid plaster. Likewise, information that doesn't connect to things your audience already knows won't stick.

- Metaphor and analogy are good ways to connect to an audience's existing knowledge. Could you "see" the plaster patch in the paragraph above? The same connection can happen in the minds of your audience. But to make that connection, you must pick your metaphors carefully. Draw parallels only to things you are sure most audience members have experienced. Test your analogies and metaphors in advance with a range of friends. Parallels you perceive as intuitive may not be so apparent to others.

- Technical presentations are almost always improved by props or other visuals. Often, you can use the actual object you are talking about. Sometimes, though, the complexity of real objects obscures, rather than clarifies, your message.

- Technical material is usually high density. Never forget that dense information can take a while to "sink in." You've been studying your content for a long time, but it's new to your audience. Don't expect the audience to grab your message instantly. Put lots of "sink-in time" into your presenta-

tion. Instead of delivering big ideas, one right after another, alternate dense material with lighter, more familiar, or even repetitive content. Understand that some of the material you present during that time may be lost (the audience will be busy absorbing your last big point) but overall you'll achieve better retention of your core content.

- Find a way to give your information a narrative thread and, if possible, dramatic motion. Humans are wired to learn from stories. Sequence counts. People don't grasp, or remember, unconnected chunks of information. If your material can only be presented as a series of bullet points (I call those presentations "a string of beads"), you owe it to your audience to find – and reveal – the string. If you just hand out loose beads, the necklace your audience makes may not be the one you intended.

- Dramatic motion can be as simple as, "They said it couldn't be done, but we did it and let me tell you how." That kind of tension holds an audience because they want to see how the story turns out.

- And finally, never forget that your audience is made up of humans. Those people in the chairs may be specialists (accountants, engineers, computer scientists, etc.) but they are also humans. They are in the room to hear your technical content, but they will respond to your humanity. Learn how people learn. Use that knowledge to anchor your content to things the audience already knows. Metaphor activates the audience's imagination; analogy ties your ideas to those they already own. Make your material concrete; help the audience "see" it with props or demonstrations. And always, always, understand that you are talking to humans. Engage them with a story and give them a narrative thread to hold their attention. They'll go home with your technical content; they'll invite you back; and you'll have a lot of fun. **T**

Chuck McConnell, ATM, is an association executive and a member of Palmetto Baptist Medical Center Club 6426-58 in Columbia, South Carolina.



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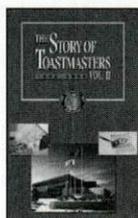
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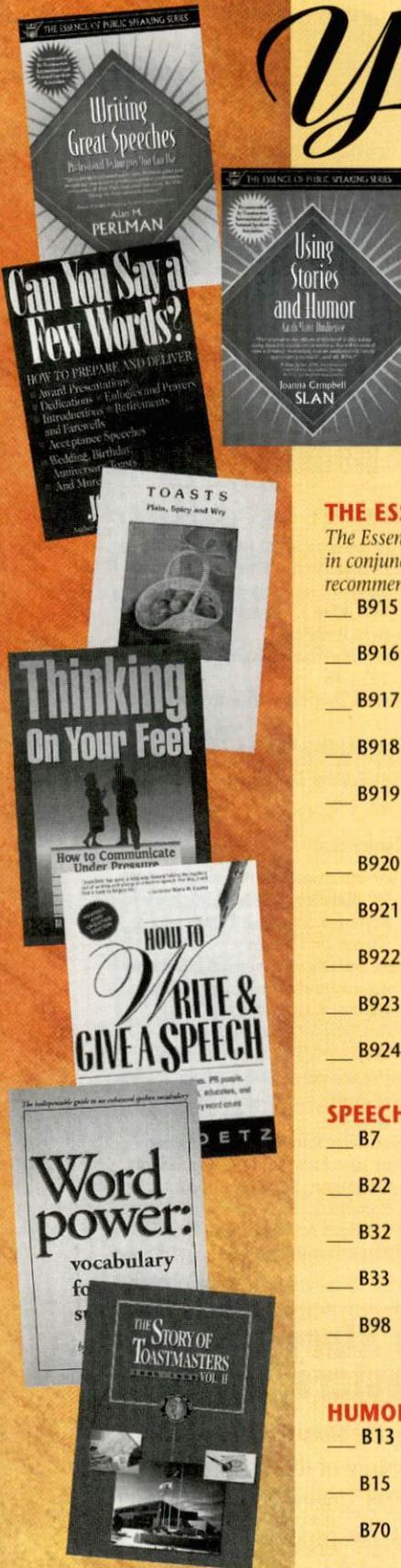
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