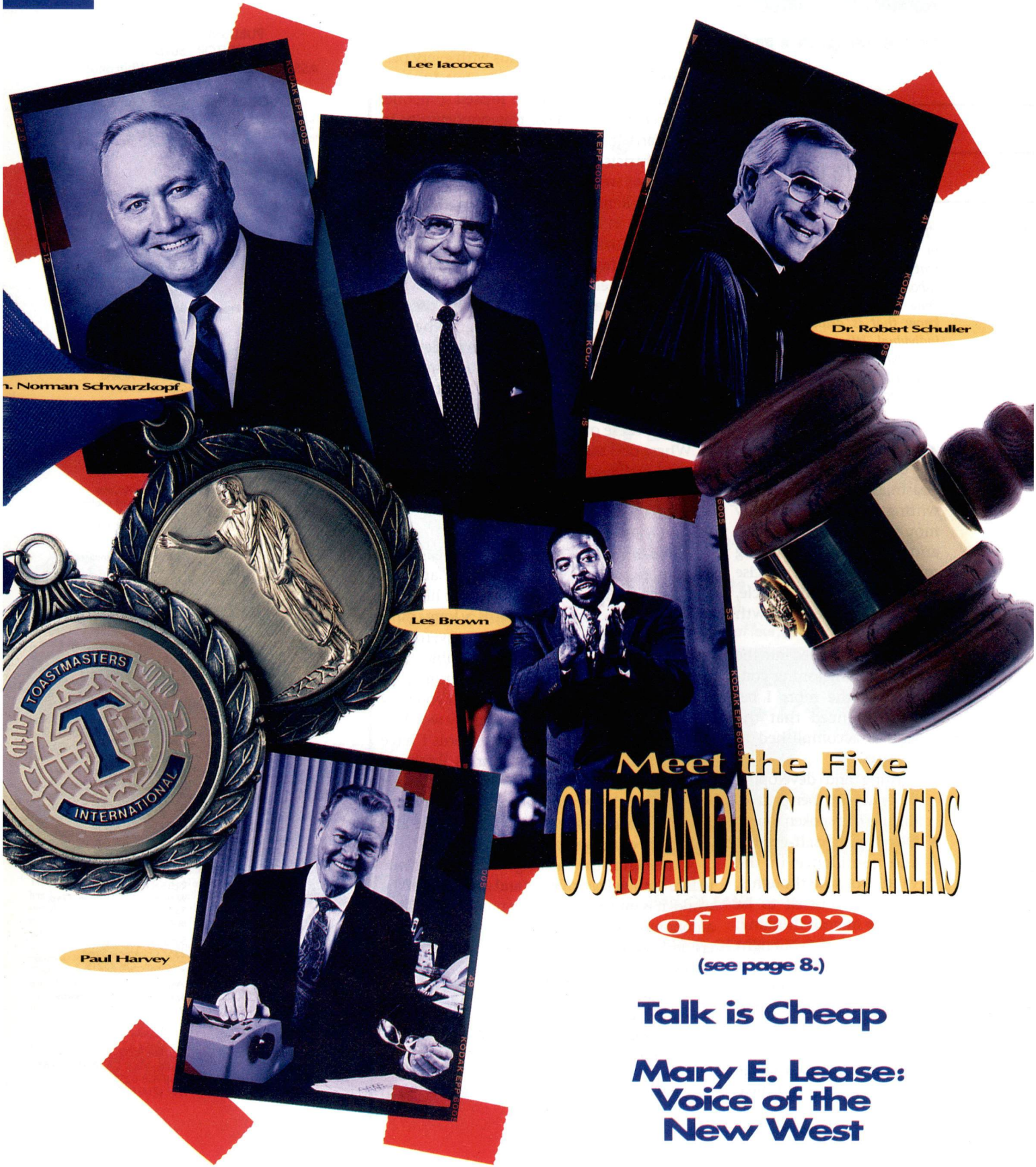


THE TOASTMASTER

AUGUST 1992



Lee Iacocca

Norman Schwarzkopf

Dr. Robert Schuller

Les Brown

Paul Harvey

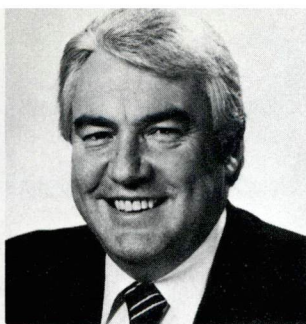
Meet the Five OUTSTANDING SPEAKERS

of 1992

(see page 8.)

Talk is Cheap

**Mary E. Lease:
Voice of the
New West**



viewpoint

A YEAR OF LIVING FULLY

"Toastmasters is based on belief in the individual...Many organizations ask the individual to subordinate himself to the group. Ours is the only organization I know that is dedicated to the individual. We work together to bring out the best in each of us and then we apply our skills to help others."

DR. RALPH C. SMEDLEY

One of the great privileges of being President of Toastmasters International is writing this column every month. The task of writing and rewriting, of putting my thoughts into a concise five hundred-word article, has been a great growth experience.

The more I delved into the subject of "unleashing your potential," the more I became convinced that the process is accomplished in three ways:

- Writing and developing thoughts, and then presenting them in spoken form.
- Developing self-esteem and confidence in the validity of your thoughts.
- Allowing yourself to be flexible in your thinking; acknowledging your right to be wrong. (Winston Churchill once said: "I have never developed indigestion from eating my words.")

Another great privilege has been my travels. I have

met so many excellent Toastmasters! My goal was to personally shake hands with every person attending each conference, but I regretfully admit that I no doubt missed someone. I'd therefore like to take this opportunity to offer heartfelt thanks to everyone I met this year in districts 48, 35, 62, 61, 39, 49, 5, 46, 56, 22 and 8, as well as during the Region 1 Conference in Reno, Nevada, and the Region II Conference in Irvine, California. Each of the wonderful Toastmasters I met has added to my life. Both my wife, Grace, and I will always treasure the memories of this year.

It is said that Benjamin Franklin used to meet his friends with this greeting: "What has become clear to you since we last met?" In response, I would say that it has become clear to me – after a year of living the Toastmasters experience to the fullest – that we all must ask ourselves these questions:

- Where do I stand as a leader?
- Am I prepared for the challenges ahead?
- Do I have the confidence and self esteem to prevail in my area of service?
- Do I think and act for myself?

Answering these questions is not easy. It's even more difficult to deal with the answers and strive to change those you don't like.

Unleashing your potential is a long, difficult process and it does not happen overnight. Sometimes progress is imperceptible, and sometimes it involves disapproval from your peers or others who would like to tell you how to think. But the results are infinitely worth it.

My fervent hope is that the words I have written and spoken in my year as President have inspired at least some Toastmasters throughout the world, to realize their potential and emerge as leaders – both inside and outside of our organization.

Considering the challenges we will continue to face both as Toastmasters and as citizens of the world, it is imperative that we produce qualified, autonomous leaders who are independent thinkers and possess a healthy confidence in themselves and in the people they lead.

JACK GILLESPIE, DTM
International President

THE TOASTMASTER

PUBLISHER Terrence McCann
EDITOR Suzanne Frey
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Janet Whitcomb
ART DIRECTION Paul Haven Design
TYPOGRAPHER Susan Campbell

TI OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Founder Dr. Ralph C. Smedley, (1878-1965)

OFFICERS

President Jack Gillespie, DTM
P.O. Box 1497
Winnipeg Manitoba
Canada R3C 2Z4

Senior Vice President Bennie E. Baugh, DTM
4607 Ordinary Court
Annandale VA 22003

Second Vice President Neil R. Wilkinson, DTM
10711 Bears paw Drive E.
Edmonton Alberta
Canada T6J 5E1

Third Vice President Pauline Shirley, DTM
501 Woodshire Lane
Herndon VA 22070

Immediate Past President A. Edward Bick, DTM
7172 Grantham Way
Cincinnati OH 45230

Executive Director Terrence J. McCann
Toastmasters International
P.O. Box 9052
Mission Viejo CA 92690

Secretary-Treasurer Frank Chess
Toastmasters International
P.O. Box 9052
Mission Viejo CA 92690

DIRECTORS

Carol Blair, DTM
R.R. #2
Millet Alberta
Canada T0C 1Z0

Evelyn-Jane Burgay, DTM
2335 Alpine Avenue
Sarasota FL 34239

Dorothy O. Chapman, DTM
1222 San Juan
La Junta CO 81050

Terry Daily, DTM
17 Lawson Drive
Chatham Ontario
Canada N7L 2R1

Dick Fath, DTM
9100 Ashmeade Drive
Fairfax VA 22032

Lloyd A. Gavin, DTM
1213 Cedarbrook Way
Sacramento CA 95831-4405

Jon R. Greiner, DTM
821 Kleemann Drive
Clinton IL 61727

Len W. Jury, DTM
Box 4400
Auckland
New Zealand

Ginger I. Kane, DTM
3921 Almondwood Court
Concord CA 94519

Michael E. Martin, DTM
6707 Shore Island Drive
Indianapolis IN 46220

Richard L. Peterson, DTM
1549 Arona Street
St. Paul, MN 55108

Frank Poyet, DTM
1328 Bobrich Circle
Las Vegas NV 89110

Larry J. Prickett, DTM
9740 Alfaree Road
Richmond VA 23237

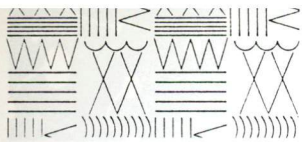
Denny Saunders, DTM
2517 S. Columbia Avenue
Tulsa, OK 74114

Richard A. Skinner, DTM
Waters, Div. of Millipore Corp.
34 Maple St.
Milford MA 01757

Sandy Vogele, DTM
2367 Chickasaw Street
Cincinnati OH 45219

Alan Whyte, DTM
41 429 Paseo Padre Parkway
Fremont, CA 94539

To Place Advertising Contact: P.O. Box 9052
Mission Viejo CA 92690 USA
Toastmasters International (714) 858-8255
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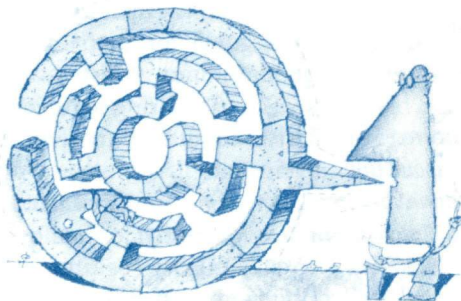
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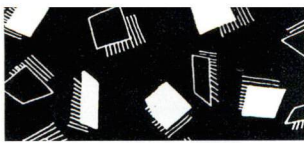


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l e t t e r s

CAJUN COMMUNIQUÉ: PARLEZ-VOUS FRANÇAIS?

To the best of our knowledge, our club is unique in that it is the only French-speaking club in the United States. We have a membership of 27 dedicated Cajun French-speaking Toastmasters. Our only problem is that we have no clubs to compete against – in French, that is.

We would love to hear from other French clubs. Being American, we are all fluent in English, and as Louisiana Cajuns, we speak French, although most of us do not read and write it very well. (Our speeches are written in English and delivered in French.)

Giving speeches in French is more than an opportunity to learn to speak better – it is a way of preserving our culture.

ALLEN SIMON, CTM
LE TOASTMASTER DE LAFAYETTE, 6704-68
ROUTE 2, BOX 168
MAURICE, LOUISIANA, USA 70555

LET'S PRACTICE WHAT WE PREACH

Thank you for producing a first-class journal of informative articles.

I'm concerned about the suggestions for written evaluations in our manuals. Whereas the manuals and recent articles in this magazine instruct us to use a "praise/instruct/praise" format, many written evaluations end with a negative. For example, the evaluation of the No. 2 assignment on page 13 in the Speechcraft handbook:

- "What impressed you the most about the talk?"
- "What impressed you the least about the talk?"
- "Offer suggestions for improvement."

Why end on a recommendation, not a commendation?

Finally, my "closing point of praise": I believe *The Toastmaster* is an asset when it comes to both gaining and keeping members. When it came time to renew his membership dues, a Toastmaster temporarily on our inactive list (due to work commitments) said: "Of course I'm renewing. I would hate to miss the monthly Toastmaster magazine. I look forward to reading it."

We appreciate the support and high interest it provides.

ALISON LAVICK, DTM
CHATSWOOD COMMUNICATORS 5323-70
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

MORE ON CD COLLECTION OF SPEECHES

It was with great interest that I consumed every article in your May issue. A job well done, to be sure!

The piece titled "Demos-thenes: An Enemy of His Audience" was especially interesting to me because of the biographical note about its author, Tom Laichas, and his work with Rhino Records' CD collection of "Great Speeches of the 20th Century."

I have been searching for a tape of great speeches for a long time, and would welcome a review of that or similar collections in the magazine.

MATTHEW BERTRON
F. R. O. G. CLUB 6357-46
BAYSIDE, NEW YORK

Editor's Note: *We have received quite a few inquiries about this collection. It can be obtained from Rhino Records / 2225 Colorado Ave. / Santa Monica, CA 90404. The collaborator of the recordings, Tom Laichas, is presently writing a series of articles for this magazine*

profiling some of the speakers featured in the "Great Speeches" collection. This month's article, "Mary Elizabeth Lease: Voice of the New West," will be one of many published in these pages. Mr. Laichas is interested in hearing from Toastmasters regarding particular speakers they'd like profiled in the magazine. You may contact him through the Publications Department at World Headquarters.

THE 20-HOUR TOASTMASTER

Your April issue contained an article called "The One Minute Toastmaster," in which the author suggested spending 15 to 20 hours of preparation time for each Toastmaster speech. He also suggests rehearsing the speech at least eight times daily for a week.

I find this not only unrealistic, but counter-productive, because of the enormous time burden. As a longtime Toastmaster, I can honestly say that our club would have trouble coming up with three speeches a year if members had to certify 15 to 20 hours of preparation!

While I recognize that individuals vary greatly in how much time they spend on any project, I have a real problem with using up to 20 hours as a guide for preparing a good 6-minute Toastmasters speech. (Preparing for a contest is admittedly more time consuming.)

My concern is that in our effort to motivate members to give quality speeches, we might scare them off. In my experience, once a topic is chosen, a good Toastmasters

speech can be created in two to five hours.

To keep things in perspective, I wonder how long it took Abraham Lincoln to prepare the Gettysburg Address. Do you really think he practiced it 60 times?

CLASSEN GRAMM, ATM
COURTHOUSE CLUB 1886-5
SAN DIEGO, CALIF.

REGARDING HUMOR

I'd like to respond with an "Amen!" to Carol Richardson's column "Humor is More than Mere Joke Telling" (June). While I don't always wholeheartedly agree with all her articles, I definitely do on this one. Humor certainly is a difficult subject to write about. And the more we analyze it, the more frustrated we become, as we realize its subjective nature and that "there is so much we don't know." Humor is similar to love, motivation and relationships in this respect.

Contributing to the difficulty regarding the topic is that "innocent" humor appears to be out of fashion. People seem to like their humor with barbs, or with "a message." If it doesn't put anybody or anything in a bad light, it's seen as dull, old fashioned and even suspect: There must be *some* attack being made, some hidden message!

Leslie Gibson's guide to "Destructive Forms of Humor" in the same issue could use more precise definitions, but confirms my point that not all humor is laughable.

DICK PROSSER, CTM
BERKELEY CLUB 3609-57
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA



**TOASTMASTERS OFFERS
FREEDOM OF TOPIC,
FREEDOM OF FORMAT –
AND FREEDOM TO FAIL.**

By Gordon G. Leggat, ATM-S

Exercise Your Point of View

■ By virtue of our individual personality, upbringing and experiences in life, all of us have a point of view. Most of us have opinions. But only some of us are willing to publicly express those opinions.

Take some time to observe a Toastmasters meeting, and you'll see that the most effective speakers are those who aren't afraid to "go public" with their opinions and feelings. And there are payoffs: Those Toastmasters who easily share of themselves participate with little or no hesitation and seem to have less difficulty preparing a manual speech or tackling Table Topics.

When you have a chance to express yourself, do so! For instance, I've watched fellow club members consistently win at Table Topics because they were willing to expose their beliefs to public scrutiny. And just a few weeks ago one of our newest members won the Best Speaker award with her second manual speech because the Ernest she spoke about, with great earnestness, was her cousin Ernie.

While each speech in the Toastmasters manuals have a specific purpose, they focus not so much on *what* is said, as on *how* they are delivered.

This emphasis is both practical and logical. For instance, how a photograph is cropped, and where it is mounted, help determine its quality and impact. Likewise, specific words and how they are enunciated can make a difference in whether a listener decides to agree or disagree with the thesis being propounded. And although we may wish to deny it, a speaker's manners, deportment and dress often have more lasting impact on an audience than his or her ideas. In other words, what I have to say is less important than how convincing I sound when I say it.

Advertising professionals learned long ago that people buy the sizzle, not the steak. So if you are worried about coming up with speech topics – don't be! Concentrate instead on finding a new slant on an old idea and focus on how to best present it.

My experience as a journalist has taught me two things: 1) I am a poor judge of the value of my own work, and 2) having an "angle" or point of view turns average material into something worth delivering or printing. For example, I once combined several items originally written for a small publication into a larger, more comprehensive article for a different magazine. When I submitted this "old" material to the editor, along with updated photography, she said it was the best she'd received all year. But all I had added, aside from the artwork, was an angle tying a few seemingly disparate items together: my point of view.

Since Toastmasters is a voluntary, self-help organization, I decided to use my club as a platform for experimentation. Some of my experiments have worked and most have failed – but all of them have taught me something.

Toastmasters makes us better speakers, and sometimes even more proficient writers. But our Toastmasters experience also should make us more willing to gamble, and teach us not to take ourselves too seriously. This, in turn, will make us better individuals.

Toastmasters has shown me the three steps to take toward a higher level of perception:

- Do it your own way, but be prepared to take the criticism – deserved or not.
- You are entitled to your opinions, and to making them known.
- Your point of view is unique to you, but remember that others may have a different perspective.

Last of all, never forget that Toastmasters is a safe place to express yourself.

Gordon G. Leggat, ATM-S, is a member of Club 1617-60 in Belleville, Ontario, Canada.

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Brightening up the

ICEBREAKER

**Frozen with fear
over your first speech?**

**Use these tips
and expect
a warm reception!**

by Tamra Orr

WEEKS HAVE PASSED. YOU'VE SURVIVED a few Table Topic questions and you have listened and learned from other members' speeches. But now it's *your* turn – time for your Icebreaker speech.

The Icebreaker is appropriately named, as it actually “breaks the ice” between you and your apprehensions while letting your audience learn more about you. As your first prepared speech, the Icebreaker focuses on the topic you know best – yourself. This beginning speech will give your listeners a chance to know you as both a speaker and an individual. It can make a lasting impression, so you need to plan your words wisely.

Just like Snoopy, who begins all of his stories with the popular cliché, “It was a dark and stormy night,” so many new Toastmasters begin their Icebreaker with, “I was born...” This line is almost guaranteed to disappoint your audience. As with the other speeches you will prepare in the future, the Icebreaker needs an attention-getting opening line. Consider the lure of these possibilities:

- “My life has been one adventure after another.”
- “I changed my whole personality when I was 35.”
- “Three marriages have taught me a lot about myself.”
- “I teach people how to save lives.”
- “Few people know the real me.”

Opening statements like these will draw your listeners' attention far more than the typical recitation of dull statistics about when and where you were born. You can still include information like this in your speech, but illustrate it with details and make it meaningful instead of dull. Few people will remember that you have four children; everyone will remember quintuplets. Few will recall that you were born in Ohio; most will remember the fact that your birth took place in an elevator stuck between floors. After you have grabbed your audience with that first line, follow it up in a clear way. If you've led a life full of adventure, list and briefly describe two or three experiences, time permitting. A startling opening statement without interesting follow-up will only leave your audience feeling cheated and frustrated.

Give sparkle and personality to your speech by telling solemn, poignant or amusing anecdotes as they fit. If you lost your sibling in a car accident and it changed your life, you might share that. If you've had an especially

embarrassing moment, you might choose that. Fill out each point of your speech with supportive stories. Tell your listeners that the reason you enjoy skydiving today is because of the endless jumps from your grandparents' hayloft years ago, or that your good sense of humor is from living with a veteran practical joker.

Look for the unusual in yourself. Many people think of themselves as boring and end up giving an equally boring Icebreaker. Yet every person is unique, and if you look hard enough, you can find elements about yourself that others will find interesting. Ask yourself some of the following questions and then brainstorm a few answers, remembering to eliminate the commonplace and keep the intriguing:

- What is important to me in life and why?
- What are my hobbies?
- Where have I travelled?
- What have I ever gotten in trouble for?
- Why do I live in this state today?
- What do I like to talk about most?
- What is my greatest strength/weakness?
- Why did I choose my current profession?
- What am I an expert on?

These questions and others can lead you to finding unusual aspects of your personality and your life.

If you still are unable to come up with enough material, ask your friends and family what they think is special or different about you. Try to incorporate their ideas into your speech even if you don't necessarily agree with their impressions. For instance, you might say, "My friends think that I am very outgoing, but actually I feel quite shy," or "My parents think I'm destined to be a concert pianist, but I'm looking in a different direction."

In your Icebreaker, you might choose to share with your audience who you were, who you are and who you hope to be in the future. This can give them a broad scope of your background and ambitions. For example, you might say, "I was a withdrawn child, but I'm coming out of my shell now, and plan to be a professional speaker for my company within two years." Show your audience (and sometimes even yourself!) how you have grown and changed and where life is taking you now. This can give your speech direction and focus.

Many speakers find the Icebreaker particularly challenging because they feel they'll sound hopeless if they list all of their negative

traits – and conceited if they list all of their positive ones. If you only emphasize your good characteristics, or your bad ones, or try to fit them all in, your speech will be awkward and off kilter. Your speech needs to strike a balance. If you are describing your talents, for instance, you could say how you have a knack for singing, but also for losing things. Balance your negative and positive traits, and rest assured that each of your fellow Toastmasters also has a number of both – it's part of being human. Use the natural nervousness that you feel with your first speech to liven up your words. If possible, channel your tension into appropriate hand gestures and body movements. You can even incorporate your feelings into your speech by stating how you are not usually a nervous person or, conversely, that shakey hands and wobbly knees are your trademark under stress. Statements like these can then be followed up with details and anecdotes.

It may seem that you will never get all of this information into a four- to six-minute speech, but most new speakers are astonished at how fast they get through all of their material. Your tension will compound this by making you talk faster than usual. Use the techniques listed here to brighten up your Icebreaker, then write out and practice more material than you think you'll need. If you run low on time, leave out a story, but if you need more information, have it ready on hand. Your Icebreaker speech is a very important one for several reasons:

- 1) It gives you that first taste of how to write and deliver a prepared speech;
- 2) It will, in turn, garner you some valuable evaluation feedback to help you improve your skills; and
- 3) It will introduce you in a formal but effective manner to the members of your Toastmaster group.

In fact, a frequent side benefit of this speech is finding other members who share your interests or hobbies.

The Icebreaker is your official first step on the Toastmasters Communication and Leadership Program. Let it be a positive step for you and your audience. Approach it with confidence and direction and introduce yourself as the unique individual you are through a bright, professional and memorable speech. **T**

Tamra Orr is a former member of Warsaw Club 2632-11 in Warsaw, Indiana.

"A frequent side benefit of this speech is finding other members who share your interests and hobbies."

by Suzanne Frey

Meet the Five

OUTSTANDING SPEAKERS

of 1992

POLL SHOWS TOASTMASTERS
ADMIRE THE COMMUNICATION
SKILLS OF CELEBRITIES.

Aside from their celebrity status, it may not seem that these five men have a lot in common. But according to all the Toastmasters who responded to our poll regarding "Outstanding Speakers" last fall, they do: All have sonorous voices, expert delivery and captivating messages. In short, when they talk, people listen.

Last fall in the November *Toastmaster* magazine, we announced the Outstanding Speakers Program and asked Toastmasters to nominate whom they consider to be "the five best public speakers in the world today." They had to be selected from five different categories and meet certain criteria. Nominees were chosen for their achievements or contributions in the following areas:

1. Degree to which the person's success in any given field can be attributed to his or her communication skills.
2. Amount of influence on public opinion.
3. Demonstration of leadership in any given field.
4. Service to the community, state or nation.
5. Commitment to a cause, product, idea or business.
6. Ability to affect change.
7. Dedication to improving the lives of others.

Needless to say, the responses varied greatly! Still, the final selection was easy because so many of you voted for the same persons. All we had to do was make sure the final candidates qualified, tally the nominations and contact those receiving the most votes. As it turns out, the most popular speakers all happen to be male and prominent U.S. personalities. Here are the results of Toastmasters 1992 Outstanding Speakers Program:



"I flourish where the action is. I like hands-on responsibility. If it works, give me the credit. If it doesn't, I'll take the rap."

Lee Iacocca

- Commerce and Government category: **Lee Iacocca**, retired chairman of Chrysler Corporation.
- Government category: **General H. Norman Schwarzkopf**, military commander of the allied forces in the 1991 Persian Gulf war.
- Inspirational or Motivational: **Dr. Robert Schuller**, positive thinking guru and minister of California's famous Crystal Cathedral.
- Educational or Social: **Les Brown**, motivational speaker and former three-term Ohio legislator and community activist.
- Mass Media and Arts: **Paul Harvey**, ABC radio and television news commentator.

LESSONS FROM THE EXPERTS: DETERMINATION

What can Toastmasters learn from these five Outstanding Speakers? Aside from their communication skills, these men can teach a thing or two about determination. Without it, they would surely not have achieved levels of success most people only dream of. As mass media nominee Paul Harvey says, the only way to reach your goals is to "get up when you fall down." He should know; he's been broadcasting his opinions since his teens and now is the most listened to network radio personality in the country, with 23 million listeners tuning in to his three daily syndicated news programs.

Through sheer determination and force of personality, Chrysler Chairman Lee Iacocca overcame his humble immigrant origins to penetrate the upper echelons of the American automobile industry. And Robert Schuller, whose relentlessly positive message of "possibility thinking" is based on his own experiences in building a congregation and vast religious empire from scratch, says this of his own success: "When faced with a mountain, I will not quit. I will keep on striving until I climb over it, find a path through it, a tunnel under it, or simply stay and turn the mountain into a gold mine."

Accepting a call in 1955 from the Reformed Church of America to establish a church in Orange County, California, Schuller arrived in Garden Grove with \$500, the prospect of a \$4,000-a-year salary, and an electric organ bought on credit. Resolved to put "strong wings on weary hearts," he put his "possibility thinking" into practice by renting a drive-in movie theater near a major freeway, built his first altar and a 15-foot cross, and placed a newspaper ad stressing the slogan, "Worship as you are/In the family car."

Les Brown is another self-made man whose powerful motivational messages are based on personal experience. A Detroit, Michigan-based, professional public speaker of national prominence, he was born into poverty, adopted by a single woman of little education and financial means, and branded a troublemaker and slow learner in school. Later, possessing no formal college education but a dogged determination, he landed jobs as disc jockey, community activist and radio

station manager. When fired from a job as radio talk show host for speaking out against police brutality, Brown parlayed his resulting political visibility into a run for a seat in the Ohio state legislature and served three terms, then quit to start his own business as a motivational speaker.

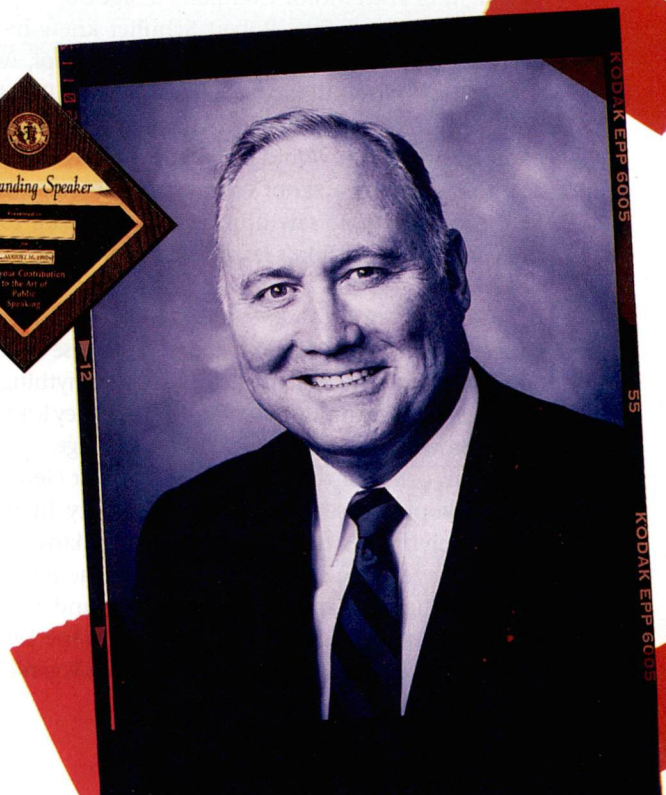
EARLY VISIONS OF FUTURE CALLING

An indication of these men's grit and willpower is the early age by which they had a clear vision of their own future. Paul Harvey, for example, was a champion orator in high school, who at age 14 took a volunteer job as a gofer at a radio station in Tulsa, Oklahoma. "I hung around the studio every minute I wasn't in school, so I think they put me on the payroll to limit my hours," Harvey once told the *Saturday Evening Post*.

Les Brown tended to live up to the stigma put on him by the school as educationally mentally retarded until an 11th-grade drama teacher told him that "someone else's opinion of me didn't have to be reality." He then set out to make up for lost time and decided "to become a walking encyclopedia,"

"If it ever came to a choice between compromising my principles and the performance of my duties, I know I would go with my moral principles."

Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf





"Faced with a mountain, I will not quit. I will keep on striving until I climb over it, find a path through it, tunnel under it, or simply stay and turn the mountain into a gold mine."

Dr. Robert Schuller

reading four books a week and becoming influenced by the positive prose of Norman Vincent Peale. With a dream to become a disc jockey, he turned his life around by working through the ranks from janitor to deejay. And this was only the start of his career!

By the time Lee Iacocca graduated from high school, he had already decided to become an automobile company executive. As a college freshman, he confidently predicted, "I'm going to be a vice-president at Ford before I'm thirty-five."

Missing his goal by only one year, Iacocca became vice president of Ford Motor Company at age 36.

As early as age five, Robert Schuller knew he wanted to become a minister. And Norman Schwarzkopf, while still at the United States Military Academy at West Point, predicted "not only that he would lead a major American army into combat, but that it would be a battle decisive to the nation," according to Schwarzkopf's former roommate, retired general Leroy Suddath. "He saw himself as a successor to Alexander the Great, and we didn't laugh when he said it."

INTEGRITY

Other than their determination and success, these five Outstanding Speakers share one trait that, more than anything else, earns them respect as communicators and leaders: they lead by example. As Les Brown says, "You have to *be* the message."

Again, consider the example of four-star General Norman Schwarzkopf. He served two tours of duty in the Vietnam War, receiving his third Silver Star for risking his life in an effort to save some of his men from a mine field. His experiences in Vietnam made him a modest and compassionate Commander in Chief of the allied forces in the 1991 Gulf war, loved and respected by his troops. "He's a legend over here,"

an air force sergeant stationed in the Middle East was quoted as saying. "All the guys in the field love him."

He has said that he'd rather resign his commission than compromise his principles. "If you are a member of the military, you don't really have much choice as far as pursuing the war or not. If it ever came to a choice between compromising my moral principles and the performance of my duties, I know I would go with my moral principles."

Widely regarded as a corporate folk hero, Chrysler Chairman Lee Iacocca was able to rescue Chrysler Corporation from bankruptcy by skillfully negotiating a federal loan and cutting operating costs in half. When instituting a \$2 per hour salary reduction for all employees, he set an example by cutting his own salary to \$1 a year and other executive salaries by 10 percent. He even gave the United Auto Workers president a seat on Chrysler's board of directors.

"Iacocca was able to get people to cooperate because they believed in him," a Wall Street auto analyst told the *New York Times*. "He was able to rally the forces."

Iacocca's willingness to accept blame in times of adversity also contributes to his popularity. As he said in his bestselling book, *Iacocca: An Autobiography*: "I flourish where the action is. I like hands-on responsibility. If it works, give me the credit. If it doesn't, I'll take the rap."

He did precisely that in December 1987 when Chrysler Corporation was charged with disconnecting odometers in test cars that had been driven up to 500 miles and then sold as new. In a *Chicago Tribune* article, he owned up to the practice in trademark, no-nonsense fashion: "Did we screw up? You bet we did." He quickly rectified the problem and compensated the owners of the test-driven cars with \$500 and extended warranties.

Paul Harvey's distinctive voice, his ability to paint Norman Rockwell pictures with words, and his colorful and opinionated commentary on life in the American heartland has made him one this county's most listened to spokesmen of what he

Continued on page 12

SPEAKING TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

All five of our Outstanding Speakers were asked to answer the following questions. All except Paul Harvey responded. So here are some public speaking tips from four experts:

1 What do you consider to be your greatest strength as a speaker and communicator?

Brown: "My ability to read an audience and establish instant rapport."

Iacocca: "I take the time to be well prepared. I believe what Ben Franklin once said, that 'It is better to go before a group naked than unprepared.' Too many people think they can wing it. The audience finds you out in a hurry."

Schuller: "My honesty: I have to be truly honest, believing what I say."

Schwarzkopf: "Sincerity and candor."

2 If you could improve one aspect of your speaking style, what would that be?

Brown: "To enunciate more clearly when I get excited and quicken my pace."

Iacocca: "Knowing when to stop."

Schuller: "Make more direct eye contact with the audience."

Schwarzkopf: "Nothing much. However, sometimes I become so enthusiastic about my subject that I might intimidate my audience."

3 Which do you consider to be the best speech you've ever given? Where and when was it delivered?

Brown: "A speech at the University of Illinois at Chicago, on Tuesday, April 7, 1992 to an audience of 10,000 people of various ages."

Iacocca: "A speech to the American Bar Association's annual convention in San Francisco in 1987."

Schuller: "I've given so many sermons, I couldn't possibly pinpoint a specific one. I consider my most successful speeches to be those when I have positively influenced people's lives."

Schwarzkopf: "My extemporaneous send-off to troops of the 7th Corps. as they departed Saudi Arabia and returned to Germany after Desert Storm."

4 Have you had any role models when it comes to public speaking? If so, who?

Brown: "Anthony Sweeting, Zig Ziglar, Rev. Ed Graham, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Paul Harvey"

Iacocca: "Winston Churchill"

Schuller: "Presbyterian Pastor Dr. Raymond I. Lindquist, and Professor John R. Mulder."

Schwarzkopf: "Douglas MacArthur."

5 What do you consider the single most important element of an effective speech?

Brown: "Believability of the speaker and message."

Iacocca: "The message. Dale Carnegie was right: Tell them what you're going to tell them. Tell them. Then tell them what you told them."

Schuller: "Honest emotion that heals the human heart."

Schwarzkopf: "Integrity."

6 What would be your first advice to anyone wanting to become a better communicator?

Brown: "Listen!"

Iacocca: "Be yourself; don't try to be someone else. Practice a lot. Talk straight to your audience. Always ask them to do something."

Schuller: "Make sure that the ego is replaced by a passion to honestly help hurting persons."

Schwarzkopf: "Do it! Have confidence in your material and, therefore, you will have confidence in yourself."

The 1993 Outstanding Speakers nomination form will be published in next month's issue of the magazine. We encourage all of you to watch for it and let us know which speakers you admire the most.

Myth # 3: When speaking, Mark Twain could "wing-it".

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It usually takes me three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech. -Mark Twain



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calls "political fundamentalism." But he occasionally swerves from his rightward leanings and defies pigeonholing: He publicly opposed the Vietnam war and supported the Equal Rights Amendment. It's this intellectual honesty, coupled with his insistence to write all of his own copy – including commercials – and only promote products on the air that he believes in, that his listeners recognize and appreciate.

Whatever Harvey endorses sells, and sells well. He takes seriously the responsibility of doing his own commercials. "I can't imagine convincingly selling anything that I'm not enthusiastic about myself." So before endorsing a shoe manufacturer, for example, he buys a couple of pairs of shoes and wears them for a few weeks.

SPEAKING SKILLS

Success, integrity and leadership skills aside, what Toastmasters who nominated these five men as Outstanding Speakers of 1992 most appreciate about them is their public speaking skills. As one network executive has commented about Harvey's news reports: "Whether you agree or disagree with that man, you listen to him!" Harvey's Administrative Assistant June Westgaard says: "He seems to have a way of saying what others don't know how to put into words."

Paul Harvey's advice on public speaking is straight-forward: "First have something to say that is worth hearing, and everything else will take care of itself." He obviously does have something to say, because in addition to his books and syndicated radio shows and newspaper columns, he gives about one speech a week to organizations eager to pay \$30,000 for the privilege of hearing him in person. This fee makes him one of the most highly paid speakers in the country.

His unique approach is described in the 1986 *Current Biography Yearbook* as "An American original...delivering a provocative and entertaining tabloid newspaper of the air in a style of homespun eloquence that is inimitable, marked by melodramatic inflection, courtly pacing, riveting pauses, and staccato riffs." He opens each of his broadcasts with "Hello Americans. This is Paul Harvey. Stand by...for news!" and ends with the signature, "Paul Harvey...G'day," delivered with a rising inflection. In between is a 15-minute mix of news bulletins, human interest features, jokes, trivia and editorials – all delivered in his rhythmic, sincerely passionate style.

Harvey is seldom at a loss for the right word. In fact, he invents new ones when he sees fit. Among the terms he has

contributed to the language are "guesstimate," "trendency," and "snoopervision."

Having done his share of television work in the past, he now avoids that medium because of its emphasis on externals. "I have never seen a picture, film or TV show which moved me as much as the eloquence of the spoken word has," he says. "It just seems that when you want your words weighed carefully, anything the listener is watching is going to be a distraction."

Lee Iacocca enjoys speaking on topics related to national economic policy and the auto industry, and his speaking services are eagerly sought by a variety of audiences. According to one auto industry expert, "The words fall from his lips ready to be Xeroxed."

Iacocca credits his ninth-grade teacher with awakening in him a talent for writing and public speaking. In college he wrote for the campus paper, and when his career shifted from engineering to sales, he promptly enrolled in a Dale Carnegie course to sharpen his communication skills. The main tribute to his success as a communicator is how he was able to raise support for his cost-cutting measures on behalf of Chrysler from labor, management and suppliers alike, plus secure a \$1.2 billion loan guaranteed by the federal government. The fact that he paid back the government loan seven years early helped restore the credibility of Chrysler Corp., as did his successful television

"You don't get in life what you want; you get
in life what you are."

Les Brown



*"First have something to say that is worth hearing,
and the rest will take care of itself."*

Paul Harvey

commercials, in which he pointed a finger at viewers and challenged them: "If you can find a better car, buy it!"

Robert Schuller won oratorical prizes in college and was a valued member of the debate team. And in seminary, he won first prize in preaching delivery. No stranger to Toastmasters, he spoke at the 1978 International Convention as the recipient of a Toastmasters' Golden Gavel award. The growth of his congregation since 1955, when he preached from the top of the Orange Drive-In-Theater snack bar, is largely a result of Schuller's theatrical presence, oratorical flair and inspiring message. Today, his "theology of self esteem" reaches millions of people weekly with his internationally syndicated "Hour of Power" ministry, whose goal is to "Find a hurt and heal it, find a need and fill it," and is typified by upbeat slogans such as "Tough times never last, but tough people do"; "Turn your scars into stars"; and "Put a soul in your goal."

To theological purists who accuse him of being shallow, Schuller responds that he is not "narrow casting," or engaged in dialogue with specific individuals, but rather "broadcasting to a mass audience that includes "those people who are flipping dials...in pain, and dying." In 1989, he became the first non-Soviet pastor ever invited to speak on Soviet television. By September 1990, the Soviet government asked him to start a monthly television program there called "Heart to Heart."

The sense of humor and adept communication skills of General Norman Schwarzkopf were evident to all who watched television during the Gulf crisis. Exercising tighter control of media access to front-line war positions than had been customary in previous U.S. wars, Schwarzkopf nevertheless earned praise from the media for his skill at conducting press conferences. Said Don Browne, executive vice-president of NBC News: "He's very good. He's a guy that comes across as being in charge, very competent, a guy at the top of his game. He's very direct. He doesn't dance around a question. If he doesn't know the answer, he says so."

Typical of the general's wit and wisdom is this response in a *New York Times* interview to criticism for his perceived lack of enthusiasm at the prospect of war with Iraq to liberate Kuwait: "I don't consider myself dovish, and I certainly don't consider myself hawkish. Maybe I would describe myself as owlish - that is, wise enough to understand that you want to do everything possible to avoid war - that once you're committed to war, [you're] then ferocious enough to do whatever is necessary to get it over as quickly as possible in victory."



Known as "The Motivator," Les Brown is famous for his rapid-fire disc jockey style that is peppered with maxims like, "You don't get in life what you want, you get in life what you are." Whether broadcasting inspirational talkathons on public television, leading seminars in Fortune 500 board rooms or lecturing in prisons and schools, he exhorts his listeners to "take control of your own destiny," "surround yourself with quality people," and "set goals beyond your comfort zone."

Brown, however, maintains that positive thinking alone is not enough, and that there is a difference between his philosophy and that advocated by the likes of Schuller and Norman Vincent Peale. "Life just is not that simple," he says. "Thinking positively is very important, but in order to get a larger vision of yourself, you have to have some goals that will take you beyond your comfort zone, that will challenge you. And you must engage in a process of personal and professional self-mastering, because whatever is happening to you on a personal level will show up in your professional performance."

It is clear that Toastmasters Top Five Speakers of 1992 have a lot to offer in terms of communication and leadership skills. Toastmasters International is proud to salute these five men for their impact on the art of public speaking. **T**

Suzanne Frey is manager of the Publications and Public Relations Department at World Headquarters and serves as editor of *The Toastmaster* magazine.

The ABC's of Handling the

by Marjorie Brody

DON'T LET THE QUESTION-AND-ANSWER period ruin your next presentation. All too often, the impact of a dynamic speech is marred by a weak performance during the Q&A. Because it is last, this closing section is often what the audience remembers best.

Problems are usually the result of poor planning – or no planning at all. While the question-and-answer period cannot be scripted as precisely as the main presentation, here are some “ABC’s” of a successful Q&A for your consideration.

“A” IS FOR ANTICIPATE

Anticipate who will be in your audience, what questions they will ask, and why they will ask them. This is not as difficult as it seems. Lawyers routinely do this when preparing witnesses, and the staff of politicians do it before a press conference or debate.

Remember that people don’t only ask questions to get information. Sometimes they want to challenge the speaker, show off what they know, impress friends and colleagues, or simply participate in the process. By trying to understand your audience in advance and knowing their interests, you can be prepared with information and responses that help to reinforce your message.

As you learn how to make the Q&A section work for you, you’ll want to encourage audience participation. While we’d like to think

that the absence of questions is a result of the speeches we have just given, this is rarely the case. An inspiring speech should inspire questions. If not, chances are the audience is overwhelmed, confused, bored or shy. Many are afraid to be the one to ask the “dumb question.”

Of course, the first step in eliciting questions is an exciting presentation. But that alone isn’t always the answer. People are often embarrassed and afraid to make fools of themselves. It is your job as band leader to anticipate this response and get people out on the floor.

Make sure your voice and body language are inviting when you ask for questions. Call on someone who may be wavering, afraid to raise his arm more than halfway. Let people know you’re glad they asked. Be pleasant, and repeat the question to make sure everyone heard it.

Anticipating the audience’s interests helps us to encourage questions and provide the right answers.

“B” IS FOR BREVITY

Sometimes speakers are so well prepared they forget the importance of brevity. Yes, you should anticipate questions and prepare a multitude of back-up material. But don’t use your entire arsenal all at once. You may need to put aside some reserve material for a follow-up question. Even more importantly, you run

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QUESTIONS,
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the risk of losing your audience. People may politely sit through a boring presentation, but they rarely have any hesitation about sneaking out during a long-winded Q&A.

Be brief, clear and to the point when you answer questions. Then keep moving. Gear your answer to the interests of the majority of the group and the decision maker. Explain that you want to allow enough time for everyone to have the chance to ask questions. Invite people to discuss further details with you after the presentation.

"C" IS FOR CONTROL

Controlling the question-and-answer period is essential to its success. But your approach must be subtle, so you don't appear like a schoolmarm or drill sergeant.

You've already established some control by specifying when the audience can ask questions. If necessary, you might also want to outline what types of subjects are appropriate for discussion.

Again, politicians are experts at controlling Q&As and can turn even hostile questions around to their advantage. Certain tricks they've learned to perfect are:

- Rephrasing the question before answering it.
- Using the question as an opportunity to reinforce their views on the issue.
- Diffusing hostility with humor or a short anecdote, rather than getting defensive.
- Talking about aspects they do know if they don't know the exact answer on a subject.

This also means avoiding apologies and not making up answers that can be proven wrong. They also thank the respondent for raising a good issue, and promise to look into it further. Then, to maintain credibility, it's important to follow up.

- Not making it apparent that someone is "getting to them" and not letting situations get out of hand. Otherwise the audience will vent its annoyance on them rather than on the stage hog or bully.

Controlling the Q&A demands preparation, some finesse in dealing with people, and practice. By anticipating questions, keeping answers brief and controlling the situation, our question-and-answer sessions can be the fitting finales that the speeches and presentations we work so hard to prepare deserve.

According to two popular clichés, "the only dumb questions are the ones not asked" and "there are no dumb questions, only smart answers." However, most speakers will tell you that, invariably, questions will be asked that betray an audience members inattention. These "ABCs" can't help you avoid unfortunate questions, but they can help you keep your answers smart.

Marjorie Brody is Professor Emeritus at Bucks County Community College and a frequent keynote speaker and author on topics related to communication.

"People may politely sit through a boring presentation, but they rarely have any hesitation about sneaking out during a long-winded Q&A."

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by Charles Spence



COMEDIAN Groucho Marx reportedly once asked an airline stewardess: "Is it alright if I smoke a cigar?"

"You may if you don't annoy the ladies."

"I didn't know I had a choice," Groucho quipped. "In that case, I'll annoy the ladies."

When misunderstanding is intentional, it's comedy. When accidental, it's tragedy.

Communication is like radar. You send it out, it bounces a return, and you analyze it to see what you have. Communication always evokes some kind of reaction, even if it is nothing more than a dumb look. For those merely wishing to convey information, that kind of reaction is of no concern. On the other hand, some communicators want specific reactions from their audiences, such as anger or indignation, which they generally hope will translate into donations and votes.

Let's call the first kind—conveying information only—Declarative Communication (DC); the second—requesting reactions—Active Communication (AC). This keeps you up-to-date on new buzz words. That way you can be both DC and AC current.

However, reaction may be different from what the sender intends. Like the doctor telling the newly rich woman her upcoming operation would be easy. "We'll give you a local anesthetic," he said.

"Not on your life," she protested. "I'm rich now and want the best. Give me an imported anesthetic." The doctor spoke from his point of view, using a term familiar to himself but not necessarily to a lay person.

PLACE EMPHASIS IN THE CORRECT PLACE

Emphasis, or the lack of it, can create confusion. Take this simple sentence: "I never said your speeches exceed time limits."

Which of the eight possible meanings did you receive from this sentence? Yes, I said *eight*. Emphasize a different word each time and the meaning changes. Emphasize "I," for example, and the intent of the sentence is that someone else said it. Stress "never" and the speaker denies the charge. "Said" implies it could have been written. Stressing the word "your" could mean I spoke of someone else's speeches, but to stress "speeches" implies I could have meant phone calls, opening announce-

Talk is Cheap:

IT'S THE MISUNDERSTANDING THAT GETS EXPENSIVE.

Declarative Communication has three steps:

- the message is created and understood by the sender;
- it is transmitted, and;
- the message is received.

Active Communication has five steps:

- The sender determines the desired reaction the message should bring;
- the message is created in a manner to generate that reaction;
- it is transmitted;
- the message is received, and;
- the sender evaluates reaction.

ments, or some other act. Now try individually emphasizing the three remaining words. See what I mean?

Emphasis is vital when speaking, but often confusing in written communication. Without proper lead-in information and correct sentence structure, the reader may induce the incorrect meaning.

USE BLOCKS FOR BUILDING, NOT FOR BARRIERS

Even persons eager to hear your message may miss out if you are not careful as you lead them along. A dejected suitor bemoaned his fate. "She left me after I spent a fortune on her face." "You mean you paid for plastic surgery?" his friend sympathized. "No, I fed her in expensive restaurants."

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID POVILAITIS

When a speaker starts down one track and suddenly switches, communication ends.

A speaker trying to teach communication said decisively, "Let's examine the blocks to building good communication." The audience began thinking of building blocks with the words "building" and "blocks" so closely spoken. "The first of these blocks," he continued, "is indifference." And with that, the talk derailed and the audience was lost in confusion over whether the blocks were for building or for setting up barriers.

If I told you that Walter Winchell, a rapid-fire newspaper and radio gossip columnist, was a premier example of a person who could coin new words, what sort of feeling would you feel? If you had been listening closely, you'd no doubt feel derailed. After all, coining new words has absolutely nothing to do with the lead-in phrase discussing Winchell's rapid-fire speaking. So, to be understood, keep compatible thoughts together.

BUILD A VOCABULARY AND USE IT

The example of barriers and blocks focuses on the need to use the precise word for the meaning. Accountants would never accept books that almost balance; musicians would not tolerate a note almost on key; employees would not accept a pay check "close enough" to the amount due. Yet most people are content to use words and sentences that are almost accurate.

Take the words "evening" and "night." Close enough? But consider the difference if you say "She entered the room wearing a beautiful evening gown" or... "a beautiful night gown."

There are about 800,000 words in the English language. Somewhere in there you can find the exact one to convey what you mean. Amble, shuffle, saunter, pace, tramp, march, wend, strut and stroll are just a few of the words relating to walking. Each has its own subtle meaning.

IF IT LOOKS RIGHT, MAKE SURE IT SOUNDS RIGHT

What *reads* correctly, doesn't always *sound* correct. Take this advertisement for a soft drink, for instance. In written ads, the copy pleads: "Buy our root beer in bottles or in convenient cans." Spoken, it becomes "Buy our root beer in bottles or *inconvenient* cans."



Now consider the case of a salesman who wrote letters to customers that declared: "We are all most appreciative of your business." Speaking this on the telephone it comes across as "we are *almost* appreciative of your business."

Need I say that written speeches should always be read aloud before presenting them to an audience?

SLASH THE TRASH AND KEEP IT SIMPLE

Creation of the universe is told in Genesis in only ten words. The Ten Commandments, which many think are the only essential rules for life, consist of just 297 words. Abraham Lincoln made one of the most eloquent speeches of all time using a spare 266 words. And the United States Bill of Rights delineates basic freedoms in 463 words. Still, many communicators believe they must embellish their speeches or writings with fancy words and phrases.

Effective communication comes from writing, editing and rewriting; killing the words that to the author seem so dear. This requires time.

The following story is attributed to various prominent speakers but most often associated with President Woodrow Wilson. When asked how long it takes him to prepare a ten minute speech, Wilson answered "Two weeks."

"How long for a one hour speech?"

"One week."

"How long for a two hour speech?"

"I'm ready right now."

As a speech writer, I figure a minimum of one hour's writing for each minute of speech. For a 20 minute speech, I spend 20

hours of writing – and this doesn't even include the research!

Clear speaking and clear writing start with clear thinking. Some executives will not accept from a subordinate a memo longer than one page, the logic being that if a concept cannot be told in crisp, distinctive and descriptive terms, it's not ready to be told at all.

Unnecessary words slow the flow of communication. Try substituting terms like "in view of the fact" with "because;" "I was not informed of the fact that..." with "nobody told me," or "in the foreseeable future" with "soon."

A regulation enacted by a federal agency has one sentence containing 110 words. When this pompous, stilted verbiage is cut, the sentence says: "Don't leave unless you have enough fuel

"It is better to keep silent and let people think you are a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

to get you where you want to go.”

PLACE THE MODIFIER CLOSE TO THE WORD IT MODIFIES

The office bulletin board held a memo:

“There will be a short department head’s meeting Thursday at 10:00 A.M.” One employee shrugged and walked away. “That lets me out. I’m six feet two.”

Misplaced words give misplaced meanings. Interesting examples of misplaced words are abundant. A newspaper report stated that “John Doe was convicted of robbing two elderly women in Superior Court.” If he was dumb enough to commit a robbery while in Superior Court, he should be convicted! What the reporter intended, although one can never be sure, is this: “In Superior Court today, John Doe was convicted of robbing two elderly women.”

Another told of a man being burned as he ran from a fire in his pajamas. As Groucho Marx would have said: “How the fire started in his pajamas, I’ll never know.”

Careless placement of words produces absurdities: “He rode into town on a horse wearing a white hat and leather boots.” What a ridiculous way to dress a horse!

“Only” is one of the most frequently misplaced words in the language. “You only pay \$14.95 for the lunch” scares me. I only pay, yet I get nothing in return

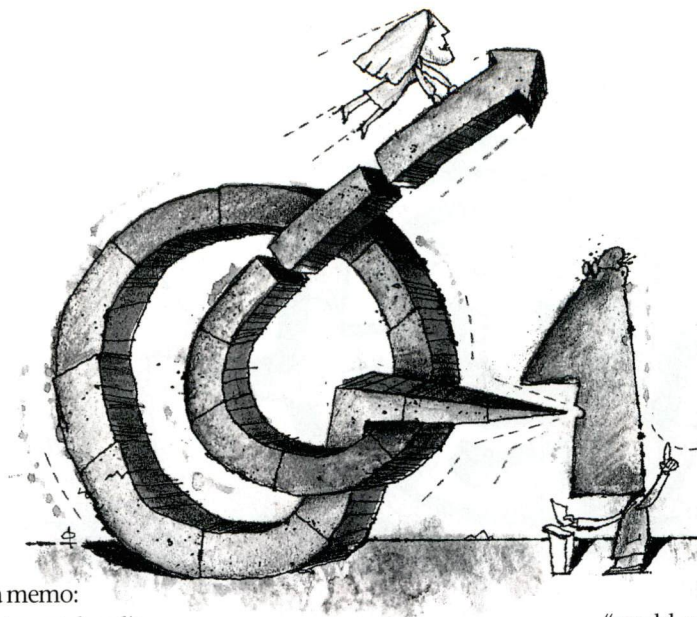
To stress the low price, make it “You pay only \$14.95 for the lunch.” But say “You pay \$14.95 only for the lunch” means extras are not included. For clarity’s sake, words must be in the correct order.

CREATE THE RIGHT MOOD FOR YOUR MESSAGE

The mood of the speech is determined by what reaction a speaker wants. Short, clipped sentences excite. Action verbs stir emotions and signify immediacy. Want to excite an audience to quick action? Talk in short action sentences. On the other hand, carefully sculptured sentences comprised of leisure words and overflowing with descriptive adjectives create a calmer tone that produce a more restful mood. Speakers must determine in advance what mood will be best for receiving their message.

A passenger on an airliner rang for the cabin attendant. “If it isn’t too much trouble, I’d like to have a glass of water, please.”

“Certainly, sir. I’ll be glad to bring it, but this is the tenth glass of water you have requested.”



“I know. It’s just that I want to ask for a little at a time in a calm manner so as not to disturb the mood of the other passengers.”

“How,” asked the attendant, “could asking for water disturb the mood of the other passengers?”

“I’m trying to put out a fire under my seat.”

WORD CHOICES INFLUENCE REACTION

A thought can be expressed in several ways, depending on the reaction sought by the communicator. “You’ve got a face that would stop a clock” conveys a different message than, “When I look at you, time stands still.”

Words and expressions open or close minds. “Wrong” is one of the strongest mind closers. Persons will admit to not having enough information, or not having time to understand a point, or, sometimes, even to errors in judgment. But “wrong?” Never!

Words are like people. Some are liked, some disliked. Here are some words that create negative thoughts: failure, mistake, inferior, stupid, complain, liar. Now, notice how much more positive you feel about these words: confidence, winner, cooperate, pleasure, correct, easy, results, love.

When you prepare a speech, report, memo or other communication, summarize it in one or two sentences. If it’s difficult or impossible, you probably haven’t a clear idea of what you are saying. All the extra words in the final presentation should explain, amplify and verify the basic theme.

The rules mentioned here comprise half of the communicating process. The other half is listening. These rules are not so much for your benefit as they are for that of your audience. Don’t expect them to unscramble poorly conceived and prepared messages.

Perhaps Abraham Lincoln had the best advice for those who won’t prepare properly: “It is better to keep silent and let people think you are a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt.”

Charles Spence, a former Toastmaster and public relations executive, is now a freelance writer and reporter in Washington, DC. In his work he has written many speeches for executives in the federal government and the private sector.

“Clear speaking and clear writing start with clear thinking.”

YOUR 1992-93

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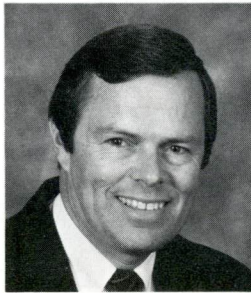
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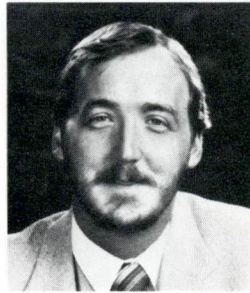
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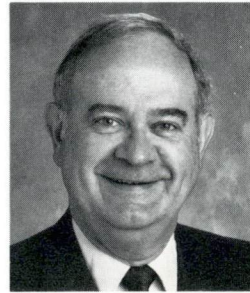
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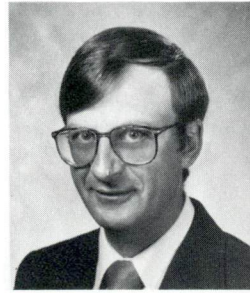
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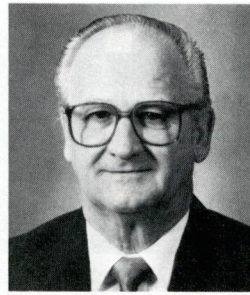
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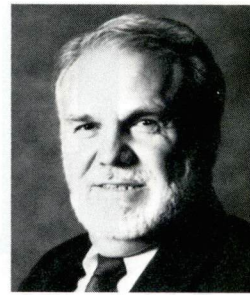
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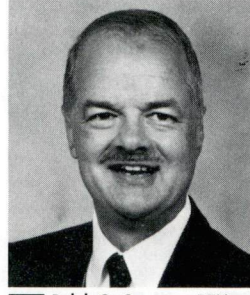
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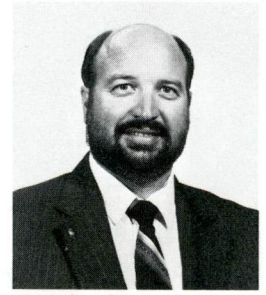
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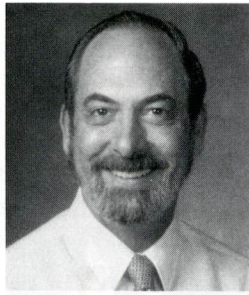
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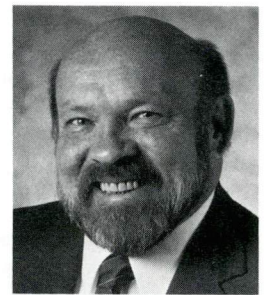
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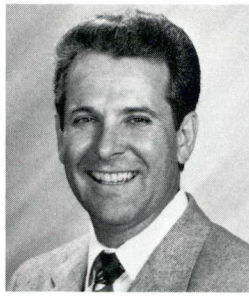
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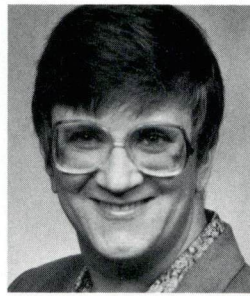
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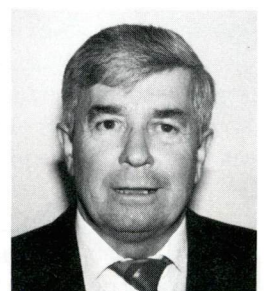
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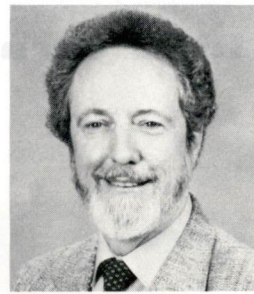
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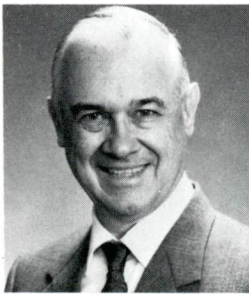
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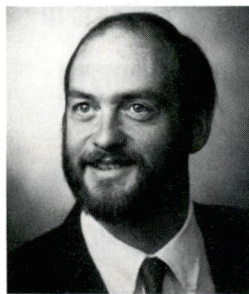
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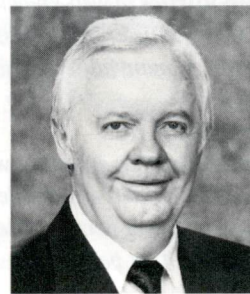
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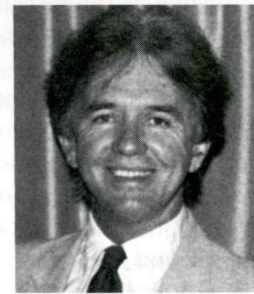
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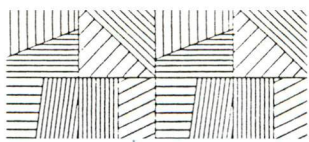
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THE CASE OF THE

MURDER MYSTERY

M A S H

Super sleuth your way to memorable meetings.

■ It was a confirmed case of vegetable violence. Famous Hollywood producer Chip Ruffles died from a poisoned potato while dining at his favorite French restaurant, Chez Hey. Nearly everyone at the restaurant that night was a suspect, from the chef, Phillippe Pringles, to the valet, Will Parkett.

No, this is not a plot from an old Sherlock Holmes film – rather, it is a Toastmasters meeting with a twist. At this meeting, the podium was an elegantly set dinner table, speeches were testimonies by cast members and witnesses, and the Toastmaster was a trenchcoat-clad police investigator named Inspector Pomme de Terre.

By spicing up a routine meeting, members of California's Mercury News Toastmasters Club had a lot of fun and served guests an enticing taste of Toastmasters. With a cast of creative members, any club can do the same – all that's needed are a few costumes and a basic plot.

For "The Case of the Tainted Tator," members had randomly selected characters at a previous meeting. They also prepared 2-3 minute speeches about what they thought happened the night of the murder, based on a

brief story outline and character description. The characters included:

THE VICTIM:

Chip Ruffles, a well-known Hollywood producer. He was the head of Ruffles, Inc., a conglomerate that owns many different properties.

THE SUSPECTS:

Laura Scudder, an actress who had been promised many acting parts by Ruffles but never got them. She was dining with Ruffles in the last hope of getting another part.

Hash and Mashie Brown, a couple whose son, Spuds, was killed during the construction of Ruffles Center, a new convention center built by the victim. They were dining at Chez Hey the night of the murder.

Pierre Au Gratin, the maitre d' who wanted to purchase Chez Hey before Ruffles bought it.

Chef Phillippe Pringle, the chef at Chez Hey whose recipe for Quail-On-A-Stick was stolen by Ruffles and marketed nationally by a new chain of Pail-O-Quail restaurants.

by Jennifer LaFleur, CTM



Murder She Wrote:
 From left – Mashie Brown,
 Dr. Hackett, Lum P. Gravy
 and Laura Scudder.

"BY SPICING UP A ROUTINE MEETING, MEMBERS OF CALIFORNIA'S MERCURY NEWS TOASTMASTERS CLUB HAD A LOT OF FUN AND SERVED GUESTS AN ENTICING TASTE OF TOASTMASTERS."

Julian Fry, the waiter, also an actor who lost out on parts that Ruffles promised him.

Lady Lee, the English playwright whose idea for "Guys and Walls," a musical about construction workers, was stolen by Ruffles. She was dining at Chez Hey and heard Scudder suggest to Ruffles to try the baked potato.

THE WITNESSES:

R. Ida, a restaurant patron, who heard the waiter suggest to Ruffles that the baked potato would go with his poached squid.

Lum P. Gravy, the vegetable delivery person. He heard Chef Pringle complaining about Ruffles eating in the restaurant.

Joyce Hackett, M.D., the physician who performed the autopsy on Ruffles and confirmed he died from eating a tainted tater. She's also a co-owner of Chez Hey and does not get along with Au Gratin or Pringle.

Will Parkett, the valet who saw Au Gratin snub Ruffles at the restaurant entrance.

After the witnesses and suspects gave their testimonies, they were cross-examined by guests and other members who voted on the outcome. The result? The murder was allegedly perpetrated by Mercury News Food Editor, Sam Gugino, acting the part of Chef Pringle.

Although a mystery meeting can boost interest in a Toastmasters Club, the meeting must be carefully planned. Every participant is important to the story, so attendance is a must. To entice visitors to attend, our club publicized the event by putting up a series of posters around the Mercury News building. The first one pictured a baked potato and the words: "Tell-Tale Tainted Tater? Check it out September 12." Another was styled to resemble a horror movie poster promoting the cinematic screamer, "Vulgar Vegetable Violence." The final playbill featured a picture of Alfred Hitchcock along with details about time and location. We ended up with a number of curious guests that day, many of whom eventually ended up joining the club.

If your members are too busy to script their own mystery meeting, you can check out some of the mystery games sold at toy stores; they can easily be adapted for a club meeting. But whether you write your own script or buy it in a box, this kind of meeting will help any club dying for a little zest. **T**

Jennifer LaFleur is a member of Mercury News Toastmasters Club 4707-4 and works as a research analyst for the San Jose Mercury News in San Jose, California.

MARY ELIZABETH LEASE:

VOICE OF

THE NEW WEST

by Tom Laichas

At a time when women couldn't vote, Mary Lease's speeches helped build a party, reform a government, and nearly win her a seat in the U.S. Senate.

July 4, 1892: Omaha, Nebraska. Ten thousand men and women filled the city's Coliseum to witness a rare spectacle: the birth of a new political party. In just a year's time, the Populist party had won election after election in the South and West. Now it seemed a certainty that the corrupt, incompetent and callous old politics were on their way out. In mock sorrow for the Democrats and Republicans, delegates sang a new anthem: "Goodbye, My Party, Goodbye."

Suddenly a woman approached the podium. Seeing her, the crowd bolted up from its seats and cheered. In a voice that reached every delegate, she delivered the line she had made famous during the spring campaigns:

"The people are at bay! Let the bloodhounds of money beware!"

The crowd exploded, shouting wildly for "Our Queen Mary," the "Joan of Arc of Kansas."

Mary Lease had spoken.

Don't leaf through your high school history textbook and expect to read much about Mary Lease. She's there, all right, described blandly as "one of the Populist Party's most important public speakers." But that's an understatement. In the 1880s and '90s, she was among the most popular and effective orators in the United States. Using her skills, she became among the first women to enter law, journalism and party politics. She worked to organize the Peoples' Party and, even after that party's disastrous 1896 defeat, her lectures helped persuade Americans to enact much of its platform. If there was ever anyone who owed a career to public speaking, it was Lease.

From the beginning, the odds were against Mary Lease. Her father, Joseph Clyens, was an Irish rebel wanted by British authorities. He put himself out of their reach by emigrating to the United States in the early 1850s. Starting with nothing, Clyens managed to buy a small farm; even so, he remained – as one biographer put it – “desperately poor.” When the Union offered bounties to army recruits during the Civil War, Clyens grabbed the opportunity. So did his two sons. In a year, all of them were dead.

Despite the family’s difficult financial position, young Mary finished high school at 16 – this at a time when just one of ten boys or girls earned a high school diploma. From there, she went to work, earning her keep as a teacher. But Mary was appalled at teacher salaries, and so she organized one of the first teachers’ unions in the country. When that union was broken, however, she decided to try her luck in the West. Leaving her mother and sister behind, Mary took the train to another teaching job in Kansas. Two years later, she married Charles Lease, moving with him to a homestead on the Kansas Plains. There they lived in a sod hut, poorer than her father had been. In the end, debt, dust and drought forced them to abandon the farm to their creditors. Mary Lease was twenty-one.

Mary, Charles, and their small children moved: first to Dennison, Texas, then, after another failed effort to work a farm, to Wichita, Kansas. In both Dennison and Wichita, Charles Lease clerked at a pharmacy during the day. Like many 19th-century women, Lease raised her children and kept house, but also found time to visit other women, often joining them for charity and church work.

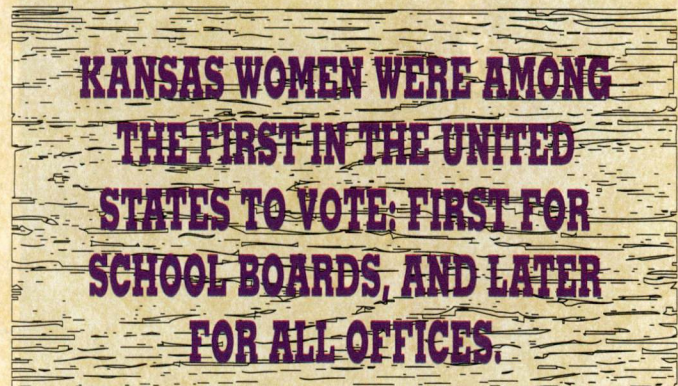
An important issue for these women was prohibition of alcohol. For many it seemed a matter of self-preservation. Drunken husbands could beat their wives and children with impunity, and divorce was next to impossible for a woman to obtain. Even the non-violent alcoholic husband could lose his job and leave his family destitute.

Not surprisingly, Lease delivered her first speeches to local women on behalf of the temperance movement. Those early speeches weren’t easy. While preparing for one, Lease recalled, she was taken with a terrible stage fright: “A worse-scared creature you never saw.” But she found that her voice and her conviction could move a crowd.

With a growing family and multiplying bills, Lease decided to parlay her education and voice into something few women of her time could even consider: a legal career. Balancing her studies with her domestic work demanded strenuous effort, and she devoted every spare moment to the work. She’d pin pages torn out of law books to her wall, reading while she did the wash. After putting the children to bed, it

was more of the same. Lease had not long been an attorney before she again involved herself in politics.

Then, as now, plenty of Americans were dissatisfied with both major parties. This was especially true in Kansas and the West, where falling prices for wheat and corn had caused farm after farm to foreclose. Farmers blamed their problems on monopolistic railroads, which fixed shipping prices so high that farmers couldn’t afford the rates. As novelist Frank Norris described it, a railroad company was really an “octopus”, happily bankrupting farmers to gain control of their land and profit from its resale.



Farmers also accused East Coast bankers of fixing the money supply ever lower in order to increase interest rates and squeeze debtors. Farmers were warned not to expect any relief from state legislatures or the U.S. Congress: they’d been bought and paid for long ago.

By the time western and southern farmers had begun talking about a new party in the early 1890s, Lease had already established a reputation in Kansas for her stirring speeches on behalf of labor unions, Irish independence, women’s rights, and the western farm crisis. Within months of the party’s organization, Lease began organizing and speaking on its behalf. Her speeches were so effective that, by the end of 1891, she had established a national reputation.

What made Lease’s speeches so effective? She did have a superb voice, “contralto, rich, even mellow,” one listener recalled. Maybe more important were her *silences*. “Perhaps you may have noticed,” she told one interviewer, “that before I begin an address I stand silent for nearly a minute. I draw the thousands of souls before me into sympathy.” The spaces between Lease’s words intensified the impact of her voice.

But audiences were not drawn to Lease merely for her voice. The farmers who gathered for open-air rallies and tent-shaded lectures heard in her speeches something of their own anger, their own frustration. More than most speakers then or



The speeches of Mary E. Lease, the "Joan of Arc of Kansas," moved not just an audience, but an entire nation.

now, she could articulate what her audience felt. Her one-liners became famous: "You farmers," she declared, "should raise less corn and more hell!" And: "The politicians said we suffered from overproduction [of wheat]. Overproduction when 10,000 little children...starve to death every year and...over 100,000 shopgirls in New York are forced to sell their virtue for the bread their wages deny them!" All this was a breath of fresh air for men and women used to candidates who delivered dry dissertations about tariff policy or irrelevant resumé's of their Civil War records. One sentence can speak for her skill:

We see the national highway on which we have been traveling for a century marked by blighted hopes, blasted fortunes, broken hearts, ruined homes, and fallen virtue – marked by an army of skeletons of those who have perished miserably because of unrequited toil or toil denied.

In that sentence are alliteration ("blighted...blasted...broken"), assonance (*tunes, ruined, virtue*), and inversion ("unrequited toil or toil denied") – an English teacher's delight. While Lease's style may be too florid for modern day ears, she knew that her audience had been raised on the colorful language of Shakespeare and Tennyson.

This, in fact, was Lease's great strength: she never condescended to her audience or simplified her speech for their ears. She knew their language thoroughly. And while she was apt to quote freely from Emerson, Hugo and Lowell, Lease could just as easily cite government data to support her assertions. Either way, she never allowed technique to get in the way of her message, or used statistics or quotes just to impress listeners. Instead, Lease used every tool at her disposal in order to tell a story – her *audience's* story: "We went to work and plowed and planted...and we raised the big crop they told us to; and what came of it? Eight-cent corn! Ten-cent oats! Two-cent beef!"

Mary Lease differed from other speakers of the time in one crucial respect: she was a woman. Lease's critics wondered whether she'd forgotten that – or just didn't care. One editorialist declared that Lease was "a miserable caricature of a woman." Another suggested that she "raise more children and less hell." A third described her as possessing "a heavy bass voice with whiskers on it." The scorn became much worse when she divorced her husband.

"My children never ran around with holes in their knees," Lease told one interviewer, "yet I managed to find time to take my place in [the] world." As far as she was concerned, "There is no difference between the mind of an intelligent woman and the mind of an intelligent man." Most of the men in her Kansas audiences agreed. In western states like Kansas, where women

had shared with their husbands the rough work of building sod huts and plowing an unforgiving soil, most men had little patience for the notion that women were a softer sex whose femininity would be threatened by exposure to the harshness of politics. Kansas women were among the first in the United States to vote: first for school boards, and later for all offices.

But even Kansas men weren't yet comfortable with the notion of a woman representing them in the U.S. Senate. After the Populist Party made gains in the 1892 election, Lease's friends talked up her candidacy in the Kansas legislature. Legislators split on the issue; to keep the party together, Governor Lorenzo Lewelling appointed Lease to the State Board of Charities and Corrections. She was the first woman in the country to hold appointive office in state government.

Neither Lease's political success nor that of the Populist Party lasted very long. The Democratic Party joined with Populists in 1896 to nominate Nebraskan William Jennings Bryan for the presidency. Bryan, whom Lease considered shallow and slow, was thoroughly defeated by Republican William McKinley. As times began improving for farmers in the late 1890s, most of the Populist Party's supporters drifted

back to the Democratic and Republican parties, which adopted much of the old Populist platform.

Never happy as an administrator, Lease left government service and took up a career as a columnist and lecturer. Called a communist at the height of her career, she became a Progressive Republican and a staunch admirer of Theodore Roosevelt. But she never allowed herself to be defined by one movement or political party.

In lectures delivered around the country through the 1920s, she spoke on every subject from birth control to the League of Nations. By the time of her death, in 1933, much of what she had fought so hard for had become reality. The list is impressive: the referendum, the initiative, the recall, the income tax, agricultural price supports, public utilities regulation, and the extension of suffrage to women.

These days, Mary Elizabeth Lease isn't remembered, much less honored. But her life demonstrates the potential power of public speaking: power to move not just an audience, but a nation. **T**

Tom Laichas teaches history at the Crossroads School in Santa Monica, California. He was a consultant for the Rhino Records CD collection of "Great Speeches of the 20th Century."



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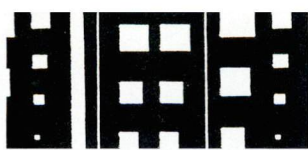
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 Richard Rose, 2146-25
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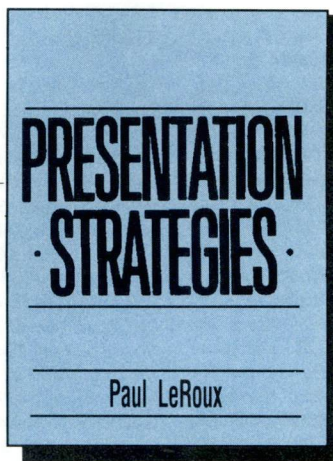
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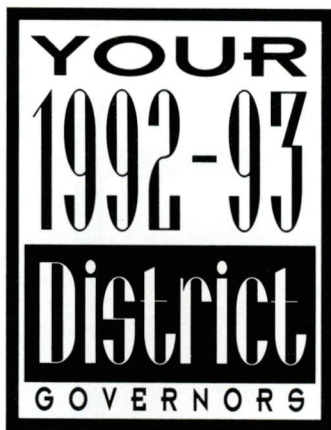
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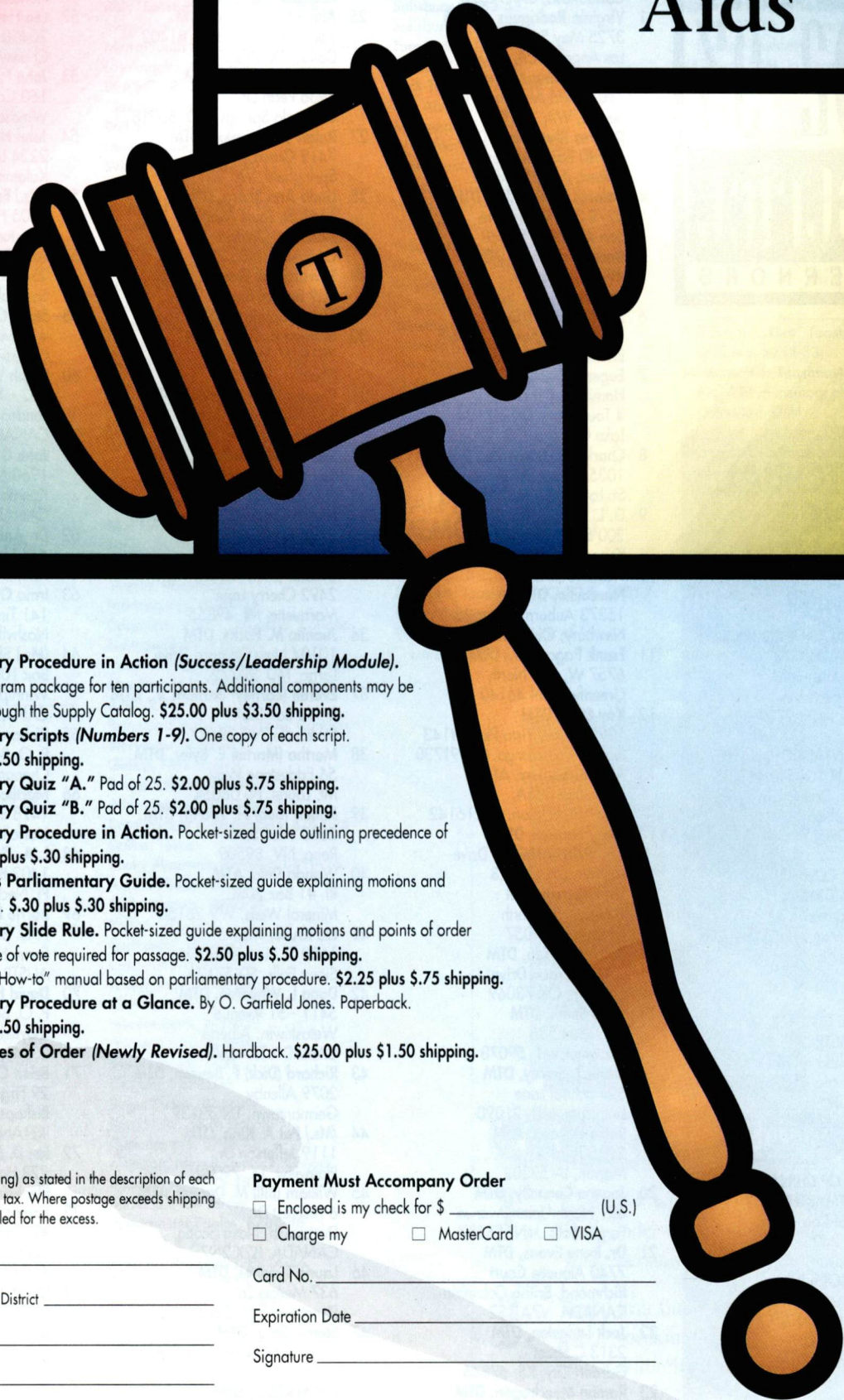


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