# The TOASTMASTER

DISTRICT 47

ROCKS

A
THE WORLD

S

DISTRICT 10

OCTOBER 2001

#### ALSO INSIDE:

C.P.R. for a Struggling Toastmasters Club

Don't Waste the Pain



## What An Adventure!

Highlights from the 70th
Annual International Convention in
Anaheim, California, August 22–25, 2001.







### **Take Control of Your Destiny**

The events of Sept. 11 affected us all. Toastmasters is a worldwide family, and as such, we all feel the pain of that horrible attack on innocent civilians from more than 60 nations. Toastmasters International had three clubs in the World Trade Center and four clubs in the Pentagon. While we've been told that most members of those clubs are safe, we also know that some were lost, and many are injured - exactly how many is still unclear.

In a time like this, our resolve and strength are tested. Tragedy has a way of making us refocus our priorities and putting our daily "problems" in perspective. You may be asking yourself, "What can I do?" I suggest that you carry on your daily life and continue to support the Toastmasters mission of "making effective communication a worldwide reality." Now more than ever, our common goal of becoming better speakers and leaders is urgent and relevant. We can take control of our destinies, in life and in Toastmasters, and work together to ensure that events like this never happen again.

I'm told the Toastmasters clubs that used to meet in the World Trade Center and Pentagon have decided to go on and are looking for new meeting locations. They are not letting terrorists keep them from achieving what they set out to achieve. These members are taking control of their destinies!

Why did you join Toastmasters? Destiny has provided you with an opportunity. What are you doing with that opportunity? I encourage you to channel the painful events of last month into something positive - into determination to take control of your future and set written goals for your achievements in Toastmasters this year. You have plenty of time – our year ends June 30, 2002.

Do you have your CTM? If not, please set that as a personal goal. Put it in writing, because that will give your goal power. Let your Vice President Education know about your goal so she or he can schedule you and help you achieve it. If you already have your CTM, then work toward your ATM Bronze, Silver or Gold. And while you are honing your communication skills, as a CTM you can improve your leadership skills as well, by earning your Competent or Advanced Leader award. Likewise, if you are a club officer, determine - in writing! - to make your club a President's or Select Distinguished Club.

After deciding on your goals and writing them down, be sure to create a plan that allows you to reach your goals. Then you must take the most important step: Act! Move toward your goals. Develop ideas for speeches. Start writing that speech. An ancient Chinese proverb says that even the longest journey starts with a single step.

By actively setting written goals, putting a plan together and acting on that plan, I know you will achieve incredible things this year. Take Control of Your Destiny!

International Presider

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other articles.

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## Contents

October 2001

Volume 67, no. 10

#### features

**b DON'T WASTE THE PAIN**Turn adversity into constructive ways of thinking and acting.

By Victor Parachin



#### **8** WHAT AN ADVENTURE!

Highlights from the 70th Annual International Convention in Anaheim, California.

16 C.P.R. FOR A STRUGGLING TOASTMASTERS CLUB

These techniques can revive your club. By Linda Love, DTM



RX FOR LOW MEETING ATTENDANCE
10 tips for better Toastmaster turnout.

By Susan Dabulskis-Hunter

#### 29 INTERNATIONAL HALL OF FAME

A list of Toastmasters, clubs and districts honored for their accomplishments during the 2000-2001 year.

#### ON THE COVER:

Members of Distinguished Districts 47, 61 and 37 celebrate their accomplishments at the International Convention's Hall of Fame awards ceremony.

#### departments

- VIEWPOINT: Take Control of Your Destiny
  By International President Alfred Herzing, DTM
- 4 LETTERS
- MY TURN: On Terrorism and Toastmasters
  By Suzanne Frey
- CAN WE TALK? Toastmasters Teaches Friendship
  By Dena Harris, CTM
- HOW TO: The 10 Biggest Public Speaking Mistakes
  By Rob Sherman
- MANNER OF SPEAKING: Make Your Speech Come to Life
  By Stephen Mayer, ATM-S



#### The Toastmasters Vision:

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.



#### **IFTTFRS**

Toastmasters from around the world have expressed their sympathy and condolences to all those affected by the Sept. 11 terrorist attack – the following are but a sample of the many messages sent to World Headquarters in recent weeks. Toastmasters truly is a worldwide family whose members support each other in good times and bad.

Taiwan's Toastmasters send our best regards to all the dear fellow members of USA, especially to those who suffered in the tragedy.

We condemn the terrorists who committed the crimes and support all the members affected by it. God Bless Americans and all the people of the world.

Lily Ho. CL - Taipei, Taiwan

Please accept my sympathies over the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington DC. I join the world in condemning these dastardly acts. These are not only acts of aggression against America, but also on all of mankind and humanity. I pray for the victims and their families as well as for an end to this madness. I also wish you all strength during these trying times. There will be a "morning after," and it will come soon.

Johnny Uy, DTM — Past International Director — Cebu City, Philippines

As District 71 Governor, I'd like to convey my thoughts and concerns on behalf of all Toastmasters in Great Britain and Ireland over the tragedy that has struck America. We send all of you our sympathy in this sad situation.

Margaret Worthy, DTM — Guildford, England

After these terrible terrorist attacks and on behalf of District 59P, let me express our profound sadness and sympathy to our fellow American Toastmasters.

Alain Petillot, ATM-S - D59P Governor - Paris, France

We are saddened by the loss of lives in the recent tragedy. All of you will be in our prayers.

Augustine Lee, DTM - International Director - Singapore

I have never known anything like it. It seems like the whole of South Africa is stunned, glued to the various news services to try to understand and explain why. Judging by those news broadcasts and all the e-mails, everybody everywhere is stunned. You are not alone; we are all caring and wishing we could do more. God bless.

Tim Knights, DTM - Past District 74 Governor - South Africa

Please accept profound condolences and sympathy from the Toastmasters in Jordan for all those in pain in America at this tragic loss. Our hearts, prayers and thoughts are with the Toastmasters and people in America affected by this tragedy. May they be strong and their belief unwavering that freedom shall always be protected. May Toastmasters continue to build those bridges of understanding among cultures.

Betsie Krueger, CL - Amman, Jordan

The best words are not easy to find, but as Toastmasters we would wish you to know how deeply shocked, appalled and upset we all are by the events of last Tuesday.

We simply wish to express our sympathy, condolences and concern to all Americans and to Toastmasters in particular as a result of this tragedy. At our meeting tonight we will observe a moment of silence.

I have spent most of my life in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and can appreciate more than most what you are all going through at this time.

Maurice McCullough, CTM - Surrey, England

We write to you from a small town in Australia on the other side of the world – so very far from you in distance, yet so very close to you in spirit, following the tragic events of September 11. It is hard to comprehend why bad things happen to good people, and our sorrow is increased by the knowledge that several Toastmasters numbered among the thousands lost.

You are not alone. Hands and hearts are reaching out to you from the four corners of the globe, as people who still believe in human decency share in your great loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all until the sun rises again.

Southern Cross Toastmasters Club, Toowoomba, Australia

The tragedies of New York and Washington have left us searching for answers. Worse yet, we are not sure what will happen next.

Despite this, these horrific tragedies have also drawn humanity closer together. We saw the unselfish acts of many New York police and fire department personnel. We saw the kindness of citizens worldwide, from strangers in New York to our local citizens here.

We also learned that Canadians and Americans can put aside their differences to help each other. Last spring, I was ashamed to be a fan of the Edmonton Oilers hockey team when Canadian fans booed the American National Anthem. Last Friday, Canadians showed up by the thousands to pay respect to their American neighbors. In spite of what has happened, it is my hope that we can learn from these kind gestures so we can build a better world for humanity.

Rhys Davies, CTM — Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada

By Suzanne Frey



## On Terrorism and Toastmasters

"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: It is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows only the price upon its goods, and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated."

- THOMAS PAINE, FROM HIS ESSAY, THE AMERICAN CRISIS, 1776.

Thomas Paine was America's most persuasive spokesman in the cause for independence in the 18th Century. The essay from which the above paragraph is quoted was read to General George Washington's troops in the Revolutionary War and reportedly did much to lift their spirits. Paine's great gift as a writer and speaker more than 250 years ago was his "plainness." He said he needed no "ceremonious expressions" – in fact he made an effort to put his arguments in a language "as plain as the alphabet," to make "those who can scarcely read understand." As a result, he helped to unite all 13 colonies, made up of mostly farmers and craftsmen, in the fight against British rule.

As Toastmasters, let us learn from Paine. Unfortunately, tragedy and tyranny are not new. Let us use our quest for self improvement to succinctly and resolutely try to make the world a better place, to use our skills as speakers and leaders to unify our families, clubs, communities and nations.

In the nightmare that has shaken the world in the past month, we've been reminded that the more or less idyllic Toastmasters world we used to take for granted is not immune to pain. Toastmasters International had three clubs in the World Trade Center and four clubs in the Pentagon. Those clubs were comprised of members from all walks of life, from various ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. In Toastmasters, they were united in their quest to become better communicators and leaders. We know that several of those members died; how many is as yet unclear.

For those of us who work at Toastmasters World Headquarters, the tragedy hit close to home: The 22-year-old daughter of a staff member was aboard one of the hijacked planes that hit the World Trade Center. Another staff member lost a cousin, a firefighter on duty in the World Trade Center. The entire Toastmasters family mourn for the victims and their loved ones. Many of us have lost friends and coworkers. With each passing day, we learn how this tragedy has affected the lives of members – if not physically, then emotionally, spiritually, psychologically. But we are heartened by the worldwide outpouring of support from the Toastmasters family to District 27 Governor Kathy Fox (Wash-

ington D.C.), District 46 Governor Fran Okeson( New York) and World Headquarters staff in California. The Toastmasters Web site – www.toastmasters.org – offers a link to continuously updated information about the losses in these districts and to a site accepting donations for all major relief organizations.

As citizens of the world, Toastmasters are vulnerable but not weak. We are empowered by our common goal of making better communication a worldwide reality. And, like the American people, we are united and resolved to pick up the pieces, rebuild our traumatized clubs and speak up for all that is good.

The following poem was sent by a Toastmaster in England, Jo Haskins, who says it is frequently read in her country to honor those killed by terrorists. (Author unknown)

#### DO NOT STAND AT MY GRAVE AND WEEP

Do not stand by my grave and weep;
I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry;
I am not there. I did not die.

By Victor Parachin



Let adversity drive you into constructive ways of acting and thinking — not into despair and bitterness.

## Don't Waste the Pain

woman tells about an emotionally difficult time in her life. Her son was experiencing marital problems and became a single parent of four children. During that time of turmoil in her family, she recalls one "very dark day" when she

was extremely anxious about her son, his children and his ex-wife. At the time she was packing her bags in preparation for a trip to the airport where she was to fly out on a business trip. As she was about to leave her home, the phone rang. A friend she had not spoken to for several years was calling. "She said I sounded really hassled, and I explained that I was leaving for the airport, but there were some things weighing on me." The friend said she would not keep her but wanted to leave her with this thought: "Don't waste the pain."

In a curious and mysterious way that phrase resulted in calming and healing that mother's mind and spirit. Those four words – Don't waste the pain – became a source of incredible encouragement in her time of discouragement. Likewise, pain can become our powerful ally if we view it and use it correctly. Profound insights and great strengths are discovered in the depths of pain – not in the midst of

joy. "Pain was not given you merely to be miserable under; learn from it, turn it to account," wrote Thomas Carlyle. Here are some ways of using pain to enrich the quality of our living:

#### LET PAIN INSPIRE YOU TO HELP OTHERS.

For seven years Chris Zorich was a professional football player and remains one of the most inspiring professional athletes of his generation. Yet, as a child he seemed destined to go nowhere. Chris and his mother, Zora, grew up in poverty on Chicago's tough south side. The father abandoned the family before his birth. His mother suffered from severe diabetes. Unable to work, she was forced to turn to public assistance. The income was barely enough to cover their modest rent payment. During one harsh period, food was so short that little Chris sometimes went to bed at 6 p.m. to sleep through his hunger pangs, knowing he'd wake up to a hot breakfast at school. Other times, he and his mother would rummage through a supermarket garbage bin for discarded food. "It's fine," Zora would say pointing out a package of hamburger meat that was well past it's "sell by" date. "I'll cut off the bad parts."

Along with the oppressive poverty, Chris Zorich also had four other strikes against him. He explains: "I was poor, fat, biracial and speech-impaired." All of those made him the brunt of many school beatings and cruel comments. Yet, the one thing he always had going for

him was his mother, Zora. She lifted his hopes and inspired him with her sheer endurance and devotion. He turned to her for guidance and reassurance in life. She responded by putting her son's welfare above everything else. Zora took baby-sitting jobs not just for the money but to provide him with companions she could supervise. She read to him, helped with homework and made sure his used clothes were always clean.

Chris ended up playing football in high school, then for the University of Notre Dame and finally with professional teams. When his mother died while he was still a university student, Chris Zorich realized that his most important work in life would be to honor Zora's memory. So today he has established the Zora Zorich Scholarship, which helps promising students of limited means to attend Notre Dame University. He has established Zorich's Care to Share Family Food Program that distributes groceries to impoverished families. He has established the Chris Zorich & Friends program through which he takes needy boys and girls to ice shows and other events. And, he has established the School Is Cool presentation whereby he speaks and motivates students by sharing his life story.

#### LET PAIN MOTIVATE YOU INTO ACTION.

In his book, *The Virtues of Aging*, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter writes about the remarkable life of his mother, "Miss Lillian." When her husband died in 1953, Miss Lillian was 55 years old. After a period of bereavement she decided there had to be more to life than staying at home. So she investigated opportunities for a 55-year-old widow. First she worked as a housemother to 95 energetic Kappa Alpha fraternity students at Auburn University. "For six years she was their protector, confidante, loan and bail officer, and personal counselor," President Carter writes.

Next, she helped friends open and manage a new nursing home in Blakely, Georgia. After a few years she became tired of "being with old folks" and returned to Plains, Georgia. She soon saw a television advertisement for Peace Corps volunteers that declared there was no age limit. So, at age 68 she finished her training and was sent to a small town near Bombay, India, where she served for two years.

Returning home, Miss Lillian made more than 500 speeches describing her experiences and encouraging her audiences not to let age limit their lives. President Carter says that after her husband's death, his mother "continued to age for 30 more years but never grew old. At the age of 85 she was still full of life, never failing to wake up in the morning with determination to make the new day an adventure."

#### LET PAIN TRANSFORM THE WAY YOU THINK.

Sorrow, sadness and suffering clarify our thinking. They force the mind to place things into perspective, sorting out what is important from what is not important. A time of pain can produce harmony and put balance back into our lives. Whenever you are facing a time of difficulty, be guided by this wisdom from Henry Ward Beecher, a 19th century minister and writer: "Affliction comes to us all not to make us sad, but sober; not to make us sorry, but wise; not to make us despondent, but by its darkness to refresh us, as the night refreshes the day; not to impoverish, but to enrich us, as the plow enriches the field, to multiply our joy, as the seed by planting is multiplied a thousand-fold."

#### LET PAIN DRIVE YOU TO ASPIRE HIGHER.

The greatest power we have is the power of choice. We can choose happiness over unhappiness, health over disease, the positive over the negative. When life sends you an unexpected blow, choose to triumph and overcome rather than be victimized and defeated by the blow. Choose to let pain drive you to aspire higher.

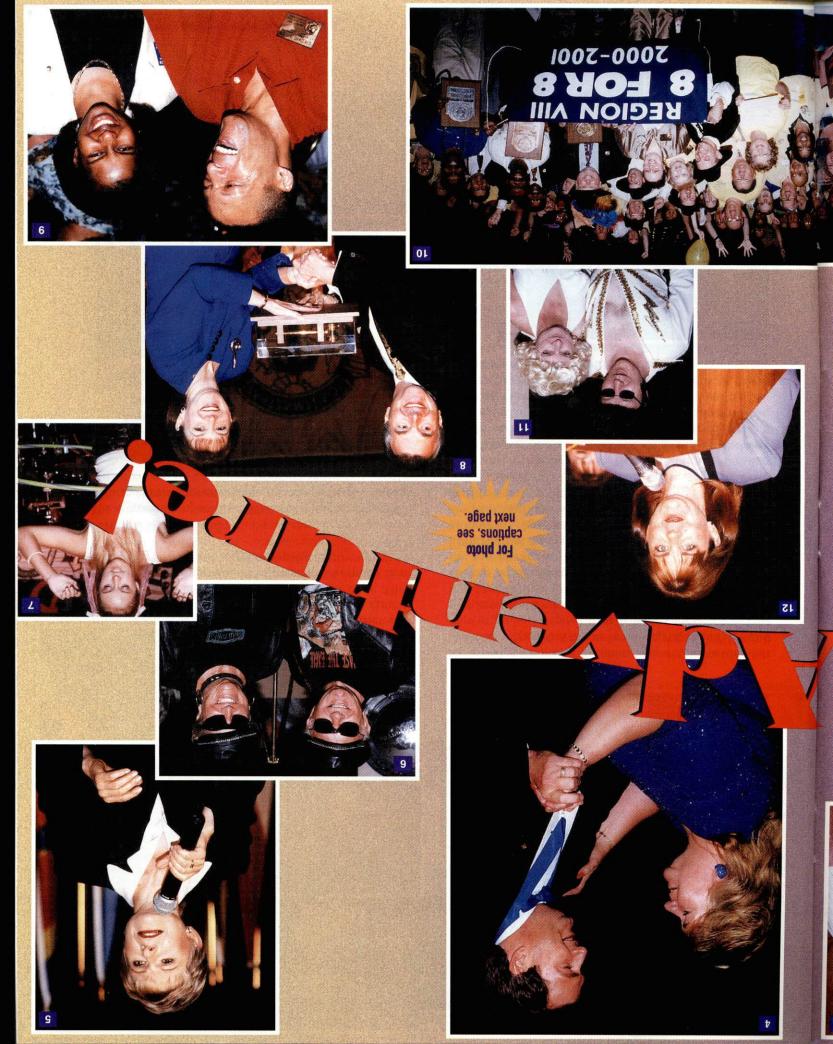
An inspiring example of one who chose to aspire higher is that of 8-year-old Danny Stein of Bethpage, New York. Danny has been playing roller hockey for the past three years in his league's 10-and-under division. Most spectators don't know that Danny was born without the fibula (the outer, larger bone in the ankle area) in either of his legs, or that – following amputation – he now plays while wearing a prosthetic attachment below each knee. "It's unbelievable to watch this kid play," says Michael Revien, the hockey rink administrator. "Unless someone told you, you'd never know about his physical impairment." Pat, Danny's mother, says that her son's condition occurs in about one out of every 3,000 births. It is not known exactly why this happens. Danny was fitted with prosthetic legs when he was only eight months old.

When Danny is asked about roller hockey, he doesn't even mention his impairment, only his love for the sport. "It's exciting. It has action and it's really a fun game," he says. "I like skating, shooting and scoring. I'm best at right wing. I have a good slap shot and wrist shot. My backhand is good – I practice that too!" At no time does Danny think of himself as "disabled." Those who know Danny experience him not only as heroic but as a powerful source of inspiration.

Little Danny Stein is a good reminder that when pain drives us into positive, constructive ways of acting and thinking, the pain is useful and helpful. But when the pain drives us into despair and bitterness, it is both unproductive and destructive. The difference between the two is a matter of our choice. We all need to choose wisely our response to the troubles and trials that come our way.

**Victor Parachin** is a minister and freelance writer living in Tulsa, Oklahoma.







Delegates proudly participate in the Parade of Flags.



Past District 34 (Mexico) Governor Thalia Dominguez Corona, DTM, with current D-34 LGET Georgina Ortiz Galicia.



Founder's District Governor Wilma Springer, DTM, welcomes everyone to Anaheim.

Golden Gavel recipient Jim Cathcart with family.

There are Board of Directors meetings, several luncheons and events featuring high-profile speakers, a black-tie dinner dance and, as the highlight, the International Speech Contest. It is truly Toastmasters International's most spectacular event!

This year's convention was no exception. Approximately 1,500 Toastmasters from around the world gathered at the Hilton Anaheim, a stone's throw from the famous Disneyland, to create some magic of their own: They were educated, entertained and inspired – as much from each other as from the impressive program.

#### POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE

The convention opened on Wednesday night, August 22, with members applauding the traditional parade of flags

#### CAPTIONS FROM PAGES 8 & 9. CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

- 1. 2000–2001 International President Jo Anna McWilliams and her husband Bruce.
- 2. Convention site: The Hilton Anaheim.
- The 2001 World Champion of Public Speaking, Darren Lacroix, celebrates victory with his parents.
- The First Couple: Newly elected International President Alfred Herzing dances with his wife, Margie.
- 5. Keynote speaker Patricia Fripp teaches speaking skills.
- 6. Delegates dress the part at the rock 'n roll costume party.
- 7. Aubry Stills wins the Hula Hoop contest.
- Jim Cathcart receives the Golden Gavel Award from President Jo Anna McWilliams.
- 9. International Director Marsha James and her husband, Glen, share a joke.
- 10. The eight districts in Region 8 celebrate their Distinguished District status.
- Newly elected Third Vice President Jon Greiner and his wife, Belinda, aka Elvis and Marilyn.
- 12. Executive Director Donna H. Groh greets the audience.
- District 55 Governor Anna Lopez, DTM, invites everyone to next year's convention in San Antonio. Texas.
- Ti's former Executive Director Terrence McCann shows off a retirement present.
- Session speaker Richard Lederer, Ph.D., thrills the audience with his take on "Anguished English."

representing the nearly 70 countries in which Toastmasters clubs exist. They paid tribute to the organization's past and present leaders, cheered their favorite candidates seeking positions on the organization's Board of Directors, and listened to President Jo Anna McWilliams report on her travels, the organization's growth during the year, and how she saw her motto, "Friends Helping Friends Succeed," being fulfilled during her term in office. Delegates also got to meet the organization's new Executive Director, Donna H. Groh, and were welcomed to Anaheim by Founder's District Governor Wilma Springer, DTM.

Delegates pay attention to the program.

Patricia Fripp, a motivational speaker from San Francisco and a former president of the National Speakers Association (NSA), then took the stage and set the tone for the rest of the convention with her energetic and enthusiastic presentation, "Million Dollar Words: Speaking For Results." She offered insights from her 25-year speaking career and taught the audience "a simple but fool-proof" speech-writing formula. She also empha-

Select
Distinguished
District 59P
Governor Dirk
Husfeld with
wife Luciana
at the
Golden Gavel
Luncheon's
head table.





Luncheon speaker Marilyn Sherman teaches assertiveness.

Members of the Hilton Anaheim (Club 8849-F) all work at the hotel and offered great service.



Host District volunteers Ginny Sullivan, ATM-B, and Chris Christman, ATM-S.



Session speaker Robbie Romeiser, ATM-B, tells delegates how to motivate people toward achivement.

sized the importance of using stories and personal anecdotes: "People don't remember what you say, but what they see [in their minds] when you say it."

On Thursday, after a morning of educational sessions, delegates eagerly took their seats at the sold-out Golden Gavel Luncheon to watch Jim Cathcart receive Toastmasters' highest honor for communication excellence: The Golden Gavel Award. Back by popular demand from speaking at the International Convention in San Diego in 1997, this master speaker and expert on human development wowed the audience with his insights into an otherwise common topic: How to live a rich and rewarding life. His ideas and examples were unique and thought-provoking, and afterward Toastmasters lined up to buy the former NSA President's books and tapes.

The topics of self-improvement and goal-setting continued as a familiar theme by session speakers throughout the week, as various communication experts shared



Members of newly elected International Director Jennifer Johnson's campaign team.

First-time convention attendees Chris Emond, ATM-G, and Kristin Nicholson, DTM, of Rockville, Maryland.



Past International
Director Kitty
Mason, DTM, and
District 18
Governor Eugene
Hill, ATM-B, cast
their votes during
the Annual
Business Meeting.



Second Vice President Ted Corcoran, of Dublin, Ireland, is cheered by the assembly.

their secrets for personal and professional success. As usual, convention attendees had to bow to the inevitable: With so many presentations – many of which were held concurrently – it was simply impossible to attend every scheduled event. An aid to this difficult decision was the five-track system, whereby attendees could focus on five different seminar themes: Public Speaking, Personal Growth, Motivation and Leadership, Club and District Success, and Professional Speaking. Most seminar leaders were Toastmasters who, by their own examples, demonstrated the potential of the Toastmasters program.







Toastmasters from Asia enjoy friendship and a meal.



The Board of Directors introduces new Executive Director Donna H. Groh.

Members shop at the Toastmasters book store.



**Host District volunteer** Alex Robinson and friend



Richard Projetti relishes the attention of Carolyn Kaldy and Barb Scholz.

#### **NEW LEADERS ELECTED**

The business meeting on Friday featured the exciting elections of new organizational leaders on the international level. Delegates voted in the following new officers to serve on the organization's Board of Directors: Alfred Herzing, DTM, as the 2001-2002 International President; Gavin Blakey, DTM, as Senior Vice President; Ted Corcoran, DTM, as Second Vice President; and Jon Greiner, DTM. as Third Vice President.

Delegates also elected the following nine Toastmasters to serve two-year terms on the organization's Board of Directors:

Director From Outside the U.S. and Canada:

Christine Temblique, DTM, of Meycauayan, Bulacan, the Philippines.

Region 1: Betty Eisenzimmer, DTM, of Edmonds, Washington

Region 2: Mary Jones Williams, DTM, of Ventura, California

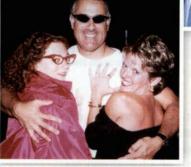
Region 3: Jennifer Johnson, DTM, of Irving, Texas

Region 4: Randy Prier, DTM, of Papillion, Nebraska Region 5: Chuck Carpenter, DTM, of St. Louis, Missouri

Region 6: Dan Blaney, DTM, of Florence, Kentucky

Region 7: George Scott Jr., DTM, of Fairfax, Virginia

Region 8: Frank Connelly, DTM, of Powhatan, Virginia



After the elections, it was time for lunch, and delegates choose their respective sessions: The Club Leadership Luncheon led by Past International President Bennie Bough, DTM, who spoke

to club officers and DTMs about

The audience enjoys the show by entertainer Bowzer.

"How to Create a Dynamic Club that Delivers Member Satisfaction," or the Toastmasters and Guests Luncheon, with popular speaker Marilyn Sherman teaching how to be assertive and avoid interpersonal conflict.

Well-fed and inspired, delegates then took time to celebrate the accomplishments of individual Toastmasters, clubs and districts at the festive Hall of Fame ceremony. Awards were presented to individual Toastmasters and district officers for achievements ranging from Distinguished Districts to Top 10 Newsletters and Top Five Membership Campaigns. (A list of Toastmasters honored for their efforts in 2000-2001 appears on pages 29-31 in this issue, under the heading "International Hall of Fame.")

By the end of the day, conventioneers were ready to cut loose on the dance floor with Bowzer, former star of nostalgia rock group Sha Na Na, and his group of entertainers. With a rock-n-roll theme to this traditional costume party, the evening featured an unprecedented number of Elvis Presley sightings and otherwise buttoned-up board members participating with abandon in the Hula-Hoop and dance contests.



Marilyn Butterlwerth from California enjoys meeting Wendy Powell from Australia.



#### THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

Unlike the educational sessions, which are held in individual conference rooms, the International Speech Contest was held in the hotel's cavernous main ballroom with two large video screens projecting the stage action to every one of the more than 1,500 Toastmasters, guests and reporters in attendance. The nine contestants were all outstanding,

Distinguished District 61 Governor Sylvie Limoges. with her husband, J.A. Gamache, who placed third in the International Speech Contest.

President Alfred Herzing awards second place trophy to speech contestant Jim Key.



Host District Chairman and past Founder's District Governor Ron Maroko thanks all volunteers.

International President Alfred Herzing gives his inaugural speech at the President's Dinner Dance.

but after the ballots were tallied, Darren LaCroix from Auburn, Massachusetts, emerged as the 2001 World Champion of Public Speaking. In his speech, "Ouch!" the salesman for Bose Corp. dramatically conveyed his message of "don't be afraid to fall" by promptly falling flat on his face on the stage – and remaining in that position to deliver a few key lines of his speech

LaCroix, an amateur comedian and actor who is no stranger to the stage, told of how he, 10 years ago, was heavily in debt after a failed business venture and nursed a dream of becoming a comedian. Inspired by a tape by motivational speaker Brian Tracy, LaCroix acted on his goal, joined four local Toastmasters clubs to learn public speaking and practice his comedic timing, and moved back home with his parents to save money. He said he repeatedly "bombed" in his attempts at stand-up comedy, – "Ouch!" – but said the point is that he never gave up. "I didn't want to look back on my life and say, 'I never did try that comedy thing, but I paid all my bills,'" he told the audience in an emotional acceptance speech.

Jim Key, a computer systems analyst from Rowlett, Texas, placed second with his speech "No Doubt." Third place went to J.A. Gamache from Laval, Quebec, Canada, for his speech titled "Overcome Your Fears or They Will Overcome You."

A panel of 18 Toastmasters judged the nine contestants, who had advanced to the finals following a yearlong process of elimination beginning at the club level. The contestant representing districts outside North America, Mark Hunter from Albany Creek, Queensland, Australia, advanced to the Saturday morning finals only a few days earlier, by winning the Interdistrict Speech Contest on Tuesday, August 21.

The five other Toastmasters competing in the contest were Del Hargis from Region 1; Larry Lands from Region 2; Rich Breiner from Region 4; Kelly Standing from Region 5; and Evelyn Peyton from Region 8.

After the contestants were interviewed – much to the audience's amusement thanks to the quick wit of the contestants as well as Senior Vice President Gavin Blakey – it was time to focus the spotlight on the many local Toastmasters who so generously had volunteered their time and efforts to make the convention run smoothly. Host District Chairman and past Founder's District Governor Ron Maroko, DTM, thanked his "ambassadors" and was then himself recognized for his hard work in coordinating the host district's activities.

Also honored at the World Championship of Public Speaking were the newly conferred Accredited Speakers, George Gilbert, ATM-B, of Club 3254-33 in Las Vegas, Nevada, and Glen Knight, ATM-S, of Club 2970-15, in Boise, Idaho. A third 2001 Accredited Speaker, Denise Marek, ATM-S, of Club 3541-60 in Bowmanville, Ont., Canada, was honored at the Region III Conferencee in June. The Accredited Speaker Award recognizes Toastmasters who have professional-level speaking skills. To earn the award, applicants must meet a rigorous set of requirements, including giving at least 25 presentations varying in topic and purpose before different audiences within three years.

District 55 Governor Anna Lopez, DTM, then invited everyone to next year's convention in San Antonio, Texas.

#### PASSING THE TORCH

After an afternoon of educational sessions, Toastmasters dressed in black-tie elegance and gathered in the ball-room to honor the newly elected officers and international directors at the President's Dinner Dance. 2000-2001 International President Jo Anna McWilliams, who presided over and served as emcee at most convention events, handed over her presidential pin to incoming President Alfred Herzing, DTM, a Southern California resident who began his term with a speech about his chosen theme, "Take Control of Your Destiny."

The convention drew to a close with an evening of dancing and final farewells to new and old friends – and delegates making plans to meet again at next year's convention in San Antonio, Texas.

Editor's Note: Most speeches from the convention – including those from the International Speech Contest – are available for purchase on audio and video cassette. See the ad on page 28 for details.

Also, the photos taken at the convention, including those featured on these pages, are available for purchase through a link on the TI Web site at www.toastmasters.org



### Being a first-rate friend means constantly being willing to evaluate your efforts.

## Toastmasters Teaches Friendship

"After my first several

Toastmasters meetings,

I began to wonder if I'd

mistakenly stumbled

into some sort of bizarre

applause cult."

oastmasters is a "learn-by-doing" club. You don't magically receive communication and leadership skills with the signing of the dues check. Instead, skills are sharpened and honed over time by means of practice, feedback and a desire for self-improvement.

I've enjoyed a plethora of benefits since joining Toastmasters almost a year ago, but the greatest gift I've received from my membership involves learning to be a better friend. As with developing solid communication and leadership skills, being a first-rate friend stems from a willingness to constantly reevaluate one's efforts.

Toastmasters come in a wide variety. In our club we

have college students, nurses, executives, massage therapists, homemakers, computer specialists and engineers represented, among others. Such a wide variety of people inevitably leads to a wide variety of topics, and an even wider variety of opinions. Before my first evaluation of another member's speech, the club's Vice President Education pulled me aside with some advice.

"Remember," he said, "don't evaluate speech content. Focus on technical (nonverbal communication, vocal variety, etc.) issues."

How might this advice apply to friendship, or the workplace? Not surprisingly, people are attracted to others whose "content" (ideas, opinions) is similar to their own. Yet Toastmasters teaches us to take a step back and review information in an objective manner. Members are taught the skill of critiquing, in a positive and uplifting approach, someone whose opinions completely differ from their own. Effective leaders and friends are able to communicate their opinions without quashing those of others.

Toastmasters taught me that it is extremely satisfying to be applauded for taking small steps toward a larger goal. After my first several Toastmasters meetings, I began to wonder if I'd mistakenly stumbled into some sort of bizarre applause cult. There was applause when people stood up, applause when people sat down, applause when people were introduced, and applause as they walked back to their seats. Then it came time for me to give my Ice Breaker. I received a warm round of applause as I strode to the podium. I received an even warmer round when, 5 minutes and 46 seconds later, I

sat back down. I was grateful for every bit of it.

Sometimes in friendship, I tend to overlook the baby steps my friends are taking to improve themselves. Instead of applauding their efforts, I press them to reach their "big goals." The big goals might involve finding a new job, leaving a bad relationship or mending a parental rift. While it is important to encourage friends

toward their goals, it's equally important to be there to applaud their day-to-day efforts.

One surprising discovery for me as a new Toastmaster was the amount of attention required to be a good listener. I had pretty much considered listening an innate skill, as natural to me as my ability to pick the slowest-moving line at any given checkout counter.

Once in Toastmasters, however, I learned to listen with full attention. This means giving the person who is speaking the benefit of finishing a sentence without interruption. It means paying attention to nonverbals, both the speaker's and mine. Am I constantly checking my watch, or am I smiling, nodding my head at a point well made, and considering the weight of the speaker's words? If only we all were so attentive and pleasant to our friends. Many people don't even bother to turn off their televisions when friends come to visit. You might ask yourself what sort of nonverbal message that sends.

People join Toastmasters to build self-confidence. It's critical to a member's success in the club, and in real life, to receive appropriate feedback through evaluations. Our club teaches the "formula" approach of offering two compliments, followed by one to two suggestions for improvement, followed by two more examples of what the speaker did well.

What's the reasoning behind this "formula?" As Toast-masters, we are here to help new members improve their speeches. To encourage them, it's important to tell them what strengths they already have in place to build on. Next, we rarely give a speaker more than one or two suggestions for improvement for the simple reason that they probably won't be able to work with any more than that. This formula approach is very effective and calming in getting a point across. The last time my husband dropped his clothes on the floor, I complimented him on his aim, noted that the hamper or washing machine was a viable alternative, and said I looked forward to his next attempt at household hygiene. He got the point.

Finally, I learned how important it is to let my friends know I want them to succeed. Do we sit at our club meetings, hoping the speaker will forget his speech and slink

#### Being A Friend

- Share your thoughts and opinions, and respect those of others.
- Appreciate small steps taken give all members a warm round of applause.
- Listen with full attention.
- Pay attention to nonverbal communication, and be aware of your own body language.
- Tell friends what they're doing right, instead of what they're doing wrong. Give them a foundation to build upon.
- Let friends know you want them to succeed. Be a part of their success.

red-faced back to his seat? Of course not! Inside, we're all rooting for that member to give the speech of a lifetime. When he does, no one is happier for him than the club members who have watched him progress along the way.

As Toastmasters, we want others, especially our friends, to reach their full potential. We recognize in our friends the hopes and dreams we hold for ourselves. If they can succeed, so can we. And if we're really lucky, we recognize that we in some small way may have contributed to their success.

**Dena Harris, CTM,** is a member of Rocking Hammers Club 4327-37 in Madison, North Carolina.

## San Antonio, Texas!



District 55 Governor Anna Lopez, DTM, and International President Alfred Herzing invite you to join them at the 2002 International Convention.

Plan now to join Toastmasters from around the world at the 71st Annual International Convention, August 21-24, 2002, at the Marriott Rivercenter in San Antonio, Texas.

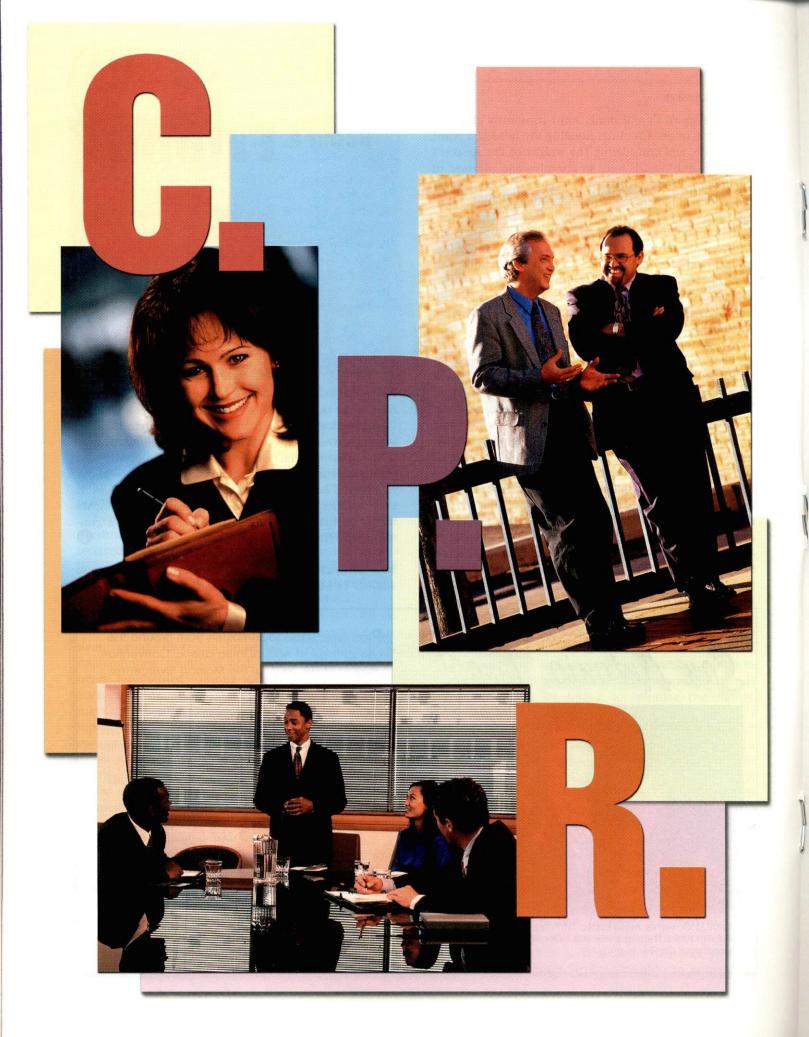
#### Experience dynamic educational sessions

and see contestants compete for the coveted title of World Champion of Public Speaking.

Look for details in the March and April 2002 issues of *The Toastmaster* magazine.

#### In and Around, Up and Downtown – It's San Antonio's River Walk

Experience the River Walk and think kaleidescope...
twisting, turning and changing. Enjoy cruising on a
river taxi on your way to the next port of call. Visit the
many wonderful shops, hideaway restaurants and
sidewalk cafes. See you there!



# for a Struggling Toastmasters Club These techniques can revive your club. BY LINDA LOVE, DTM

o matter how strong your Toastmasters club is at present, it has been said that the difference between a healthy, thriving club and a dying club is only one six-month dues period. In some cases it can take far less time than that. I recently saw a company club

in Atlanta, Georgia, go from 53 enthusiastic members to 10 demoralized members in about a week. I was mentoring the club when suddenly, without warning, the company laid off most of the club members, moving all their jobs to Colorado.

I have found it helps to apply CPR when trying to save a dying club: "C" for commitment, "P" for personality, and "R" for run.

- Are officers and members committed to saving the club? If not, the club will die.
- Is there a personality, or a faction of personalities, causing a problem in the club?
- Is the club run well so that it will attract and retain members? Poorly run meetings will cause the club to lose members.

Sadly, you can't save every failing Toastmasters club with CPR.

#### THE POWER OF COMMITMENT

When I lived in San Diego, California, I joined a company club that had existed for many years. When I signed on in the early '90s, the club was in trouble because the Cold War had ended and the company's orders for missiles declined. The result: The company was laying off employees and the Toastmasters club was losing members.

Yet, the club attracted me even though only 10 members remained because these members were enthusiastic about the club and delighted to see me on my first visit. Moreover, since the club didn't have many members, I would be able to speak frequently. And I wanted to become a better speaker fast! I also thought the club had fun meetings that were run well. They always had at least one prepared speaker and lots of challenging Table Topics.

Shortly after I joined, several officers asked me to serve as club president. When I asked why, they replied, "Because you have the enthusiasm we need to save our club." I agreed to the tough task of leading the club during this difficult time.

One night we held a long meeting on the topic of how to save the club. We decided to open the club to members from outside our company. We made fliers and distributed them to all the companies located near our club, inviting their employees to our Toastmasters meetings.

It worked. We recruited several new members and kept our club alive. We were committed to ensure the club's survival.

In this case, our club didn't have personality problems. We just needed to change the way it had been run – from being an exclusively corporate club to opening its doors to membership from the community.

#### THE PERIL OF PERSONALITY PROBLEMS

Just as one person can make the difference in saving a club, one person can destroy a club. A high-level officer told me this story about how a personality problem killed a club. One member kept insulting people with sexist and racist remarks. He continued to do this even after repeatedly being asked to stop.

Why didn't the club simply vote to get rid of him? They couldn't vote him out because the club had never voted on his membership. Since he hadn't been voted in, he couldn't be voted out. Members became so disgusted by this one member's bad behavior that the club disbanded.

If your club is not currently voting on accepting members, it should start doing so. A lot of clubs still aren't voting on membership despite the fact that Toastmasters International requires it.

I recommend that your club do what my club did. We read a current roster of all 35 members and then officially voted them into the club. Now the club votes on anyone who wants to join. This way, if the club ever has a disruptive member who refuses to cooperate, the club can vote that member out.

Key officers who don't do their jobs pose another type of personality problem. I know of one case where a club went into a slump because a Vice President Education didn't carry out duties in the manner that other members expected him to. The club was revived after that officer was asked to step down and a new VPE was selected.

Club officers need to act quickly to resolve personality problems. One negative personality, faction or key officer not doing his or her job can rapidly take a club down.

#### IS YOUR CLUB WELL-RUN?

The "R in our CPR analysis is another lifesaver. I have visited many small Toastmasters clubs over the years and observed that a club can have a great meeting with just a few members if the meeting is well-organized and a spirit of fun prevails. As few as five people can have an enjoyable meeting and attract new members if they conduct their meeting professionally.

Often visitors want to join a club because they are impressed with Table Topics and the fact that members can speak extemporaneously on any subject. A person can be walking down a hall, come across your club meeting and, provided it's run well, decide to join.

Now that you've been introduced to CPR as a way to resuscitate a struggling club, where do you start? Your

action plan involves two main categories – the CPR analysis and a strategy to build the club back to charter strength of 20 or more members.

Although club officers will lead in developing the analysis and action plan, it's important from the outset to share both with all club members, seeking their input and support. Periodically surveying members to see if they are satisfied and if they have ideas for improving the club is important as well.

Also ask for help from the area or division governor in analyzing the club's problems and making constructive suggestions. A fresh pair of eyes often can help. And ask the district governor to appoint an experienced club specialist if the club has nine or fewer paid members. The club specialist will help the club rebuild by advising the officers (executive committee) and becoming a club member.

A simple action plan might be to conduct well-organized weekly meetings with two well-prepared speakers, creative Table Topics and at least one guest at each meeting. Monitor the plan to determine if it's working and adjust where necessary. Be optimistic and realistic! Remember: "Eighty percent of success is just showing up." That especially applies to Toastmasters clubs!

Now for checklists to analyze your club's situation and chances of success:

Commitment: Determine whether the club has at least two highly committed members who are willing to do what it takes to build the club – and if they can persuade the other members to make the changes necessary to revive the club.

**Personalities:** Determine whether your club presents a friendly attitude to both members and guests and whether any member is disruptive or causes potential problems. If so, decide how to deal with these problems.

**3**Run: Consult Toastmasters resources to determine if your meetings are well-run. Ideas from all members also should be sought. A well-run club fosters a warm and supportive environment, begins and ends meetings

### **New FREE Resource!**

Valuable club and membership-building information is now available to download at no charge from TI's Web site at www.toastmasters.org. Follow the link from "Info For Members" to "Membership Building Ideas and Resources." There you'll find a large collection of materials that can help your club grow, including manuals such as How to Rebuild a Toastmasters Club and the public relations resource, Let the World Know (pictured) and promotional brochures and fliers. The First Aid for Your Club flier lists all the materials available to help you revive your club.



#### **Sometimes You Must Just**

## Kufu Your Way Out

By John Gallo, CL

If you had told me two years ago that our struggling Toastmasters club would be the thriving, energetic club it has become today, I wouldn't have believed you! After all, I remember meetings where it was just the lectern and me. OK, perhaps I exaggerate. Maybe one or two other poor souls had gathered there.

So what mysterious phenomenon was responsible for the monumental shift in our group's dynamics to produce the growing, vibrant club we have today? The answer is really not very mysterious, nor is it very complicated. The underlying principle responsible for our club's turnaround can be summed up in a single Japanese concept – we simply "kufued" our way out!

According to David J. Rogers book, Fighting To Win, kufu is a term that means "giving yourself completely to discovering the solution or to finding the way out of your difficulties and to your objectives. It means to struggle, to grapple, to wrestle until you find the way out." The concept of kufu is infused within Japanese culture. It refers to the mental state that allows someone to endure while learning a difficult discipline such as calligraphy, flower arranging, or a martial art. Kufu is simply "stick-to-it-ness."

Our club was in dire straits just a couple of years ago. Our district noticed we were struggling and quickly assigned a club specialist to help us rethink, regroup and rebuild. We needed to take immediate action to help our small, club gain new members. You name it and we tried it! We distributed fliers. We displayed our club banner at meetings where

onlookers could easily see it. We invited co-workers to our meetings. We advertised our club in a local weekend-events circular. We rented a voice mailbox so that inquisitive potential members could call and leave messages. And we educated ourselves about finding new members by presenting the "Finding New Members for Your Club" module from Toastmasters' Successful Club Series.

For the longest time nothing seemed to be working to increase our membership. Things looked bad. Thank goodness our early club members were instilled with the kufu spirit! Sometimes there were meetings when that spirit was all we had.

We stuck with our club and eventually – and I do mean eventually – things turned around for us. One day, all of a sudden, out of nowhere, it began to happen. I guess you can say our club had its "breakthrough" experience. People began visiting our meetings, and they began to revisit, and they began to join! Today our Toastmasters club is 17 members strong and growing!

So fellow Toastmasters, if you are thinking of quitting your small Toastmasters club...DON'T! Hang in there, stick-to-it, wrestle and grapple your way to the club of your dreams! Like we were, be too pig-headed to throw in the towel. Things WILL work out. Perhaps your club's next word of the day should be "kufu"!

**John Gallo, CL.** is a member of No Fear Singles Club 1846-50 in Dallas, Texas.

on time, meets at times and places that are convenient for members and in rooms that are comfortable and set up for meetings well ahead of time.

If a sponsoring company or organization is downsizing, merging or relocating, can the club quickly open participation to potential members outside the organization and become a community club?

Public relations and publicity, recruiting new members and educational achievements, based on Toastmasters manuals, are also important. Is your club working toward becoming a Distinguished club?

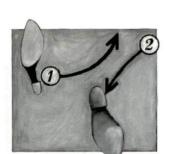
A well-run club constantly seeks guests to turn into new members, encourages current members to progress through Toastmasters educational manuals and contacts members who have dropped out and invites them to rejoin.

Really committed current members will wear their Toastmasters pins to spark questions about the club from

people they encounter in day-to-day activities. Regular social events (parties, lunches or dinners) that help members bond beyond meetings are important, as are ceremonies to mark club milestones and to recognize club officers' contributions in front of the membership. And recognizing guests and asking them to participate in meetings is essential.

In applying CPR to your club, be sure to check out the many materials available free from Toastmasters' Web site to help you. These include manuals prepared by the Education Department as well as promotional fliers and sample membership building programs and ideas.

**Linda Love, DTM,** is a member of Speakers Roundtable Advanced Club 2739-14 in Atlanta, Georgia.



# Biggest Public Speaking Mistakes



ome top executives step to the platform and fall flat on their faces as speakers. How could these itelligent, business-savvy executives, who are so adept at running a company, end up boring an audience?

After watching and working with executives from all walks of life, I've compiled this list. Avoid these mistakes and you will speak like the leader!

**1** Starting with a whimper. Many speakers begin with a polite "Thank you very much for that kind introduction." Rather trite, don't you think? Instead, start with a bang – not a whimper. Give the audience a startling statistic, an "in-your-face" statement, an interesting quote, a news headline – something powerful that will get their listeners' attention immediately.

2 Attempting to imitate other speakers. Famous speakers can lend guidance to your speaking style, but it's a mistake to attempt to emulate these individuals. Effective speakers adapt their own style to the platform, speak conversationally and don't attempt a wholesale conversion of their personas. You cannot connect with an audience without authenticity. Authenticity is lost when you aren't yourself.

Failing to "work" the room. If you fail to take advantage of the time before your presentation, you have lost an opportunity to enhance your credibility with your listeners. You should always arrive early to greet your audience prior to your talk. Of course you would do this at your own functions, but when you speak to external groups, make it a point to "work the room" – don't arrive two minutes before your speech and leave immediately after it. Your audience wants to meet you. Give them this opportunity.

4 Failing to use relaxation techniques before saying a word. Most speakers have some anxiety before taking the spotlight. Use your time before the presentation to relax. Breathe deeply from your diaphragm for two minutes. Simple exercises such as shoulder shrugs or tensing, then relaxing various muscles are helpful. Listening to music in the car helps relieve pressure. Do whatever it takes to relieve some of the anxiety that accompanies every speech.

5 Reading a speech word for word. It has been said that the last time someone read to you, it was your mother and she was trying to get you to sleep. Instead of reading, use a "keyword" outline. These keywords will



prompt complete thoughts as you speak. Look at the keyword, look into the eyes of the audience, then speak.

6 Using someone else's stories. Rule 1 – Your audience wants to connect with you. Rule 2 – Your audience will connect with you when you tell your own stories, not stories that they may have heard. You may weave in brief quotes or short stories from other sources, but you must illustrate your most profound thoughts from your own life experiences. And if you don't think you have any interesting personal stories to tell, you aren't looking deeply enough.

**7** Speaking without passion. You want your audience to do something as a result of your presentation. Whatever you want them to do, there is a better chance that they will do it if you show that you are passionate about your subject. An added benefit is that your public speaking fears will dissipate when you are truly excited about your subject matter. Speak with passion and you will inspire others.

8 Ending with questions and answers. Most executives end their sessions with a question-and-answer

session. Instead, tell the audience that you will take questions and then say, "We will move to our closing point." After the Q&A, tell them a story that ties in to your main theme. Or summarize the points made during the presentation. Conclude with a quote or call to action. Whatever you end with, make it memorable.

"Most executives end their sessions with a question-and-answer session. Instead, tell the audience that you will take questions and then say, 'We will move to our closing point.'"

Pfailing to adequately prepare. It's amazing how many executives take the stage without adequately preparing. They may have someone else write their speeches without their input, or they may write their own presentations that have no organization or discernible purpose. These amazingly bright individuals lose priceless opportunities to demonstrate leadership skills that can immediately increase their credibility. Speaking for 20 minutes before the right group of people can better enhance their perception of you as a leader than spending a year behind your desk!

10 Failing to recognize that speaking is an acquired skill. Many executives believe that speaking before groups is easy and that no special training or skill development is needed. Nothing could be further from the truth. Effective speakers learn how to present in the same way they learn to use other tools to operate their businesses. Speaking, like any learned skill, requires time and practice.

The good news is that common speaking mistakes are easy to avoid if you recognize them. But most executives will not take the time to make adjustments to improve their speaking styles. That means that those who do will find themselves virtually alone at the top of the leadership ladder – a great place to be when making a presentation!

**Rob Sherman** is an attorney, speaker and author living in Columbus, Ohio. Contact Rob at RobSherman@ ShermanLeadership.com.



By Stephen Mayer, ATM-S

#### Your information should be easy and fun to receive.

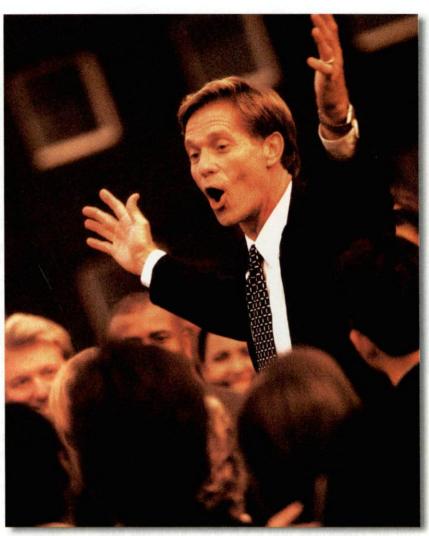
# Make Speech Come to Life

doubt that any speaker sets out to give a boring speech, but I have heard a few that made me wonder. At a recent business conference in Dallas, Texas, the luncheon speaker was a renowned expert on investing in precious metals. The audience was interested in his topic and eager to learn from him. They were soon disappointed.

The expert started his speech by "treating" us to a series of questionable jokes. Then he launched into a belabored and detailed exposition. He made point after tedious point, which he attempted to illustrate on graph after sterile graph. Even the most considerate among us

were soon grappling for an excuse to leave the room. From my point of view (and the view of most others, given the number of "phone calls" that suddenly had to be made), this speaker failed to make even the slightest connection with his audience. This is sad, because he had knowledge to share with an audience that was eager to learn.

Don't let this happen to you. When you speak in public you have the opportunity to share something of value with the audience. To be effective, you must present the material in a way that makes it easy and fun for the audience to receive it. As this Dallas speaker illustrated, that can be a challenge. Here are five steps that you can take to inject vitality into all of your speeches and bring them to life for your audience:



■ TAKE A STANCE – A successful and vibrant speech starts with the right attitude. Decide what yours is. Are you trying to inspire, inform, entertain or motivate? Is your goal to teach, convince or accomplish any of many other purposes? Once you have decided on your purpose, maintain a tone throughout your speech that is consistent with that purpose.

In the Dallas speech, the speaker probably felt his credentials could carry the day. So he offered a few jokes "to establish rapport" and then proceeded to present a dry, technical dissertation on his area of expertise. His approach was: "I am the expert; they will listen to me." In actuality, his tone conveyed: "I am the expert; they are fortunate to have me here." The audience went "yawn."

If he had tried to excite us about the subject, challenge us with some new facts, or tease us with his new theories, he could have captured our interest.

Don't assume that you will be accepted because of who you are. Show the audience why they should listen to you through your attitude and enthusiasm. If you're alive about your subject, the audience will share your excitement.

■ TELL THE TALE – Use stories, stories, and more stories. Draw from your own wealth of experiences. Be energetic. Nothing makes a point "stick" better than a story. My very favorite speakers are great storytellers, and we can learn much from them. Stories not only illustrate specific concepts, they place the audience in your shoes for "Be genuine, a while. Stories add the human elenatural and enthusiastic, ment and give the speech a life of

its own. and you can elevate any In the Dallas speech, the speakspeech you give." er could have forsaken some (or most) of his graphs and related a story about how his knowledge made him a lot of money, or - maybe more vividly - how his disregard for a particular theory cost him a lot of money. Stories bring theories and practices to life and cement their validity with the listener.

Stories make the speaker memorable. I tell a story about some almost unbelievable misadventures I had after Navy boot camp, including a helicopter ride over the frigid North China Sea. At the time the events were anything but humorous, but I have a lot of fun telling the story today. The audience senses that I'm having a good time and becomes involved with me. I still have people come up to me and say, "You're the guy with the helicopter speech." The story stuck with them.

Use stories whenever you can. People remember them, they remember you, and they remember the points you made.

■ PAINT THE PICTURE – Use visualization and characterization to add drama and life. Be enthusiastic. Strive to let the audience see, hear, taste, smell and feel what you do. Create visual images with your words, voice and gestures.

When you think of an elephant do you mentally picture the word "elephant" or a huge gray animal with a long trunk? Virtually everyone creates mental pictures in their minds. This is why memory experts use visual imagery to improve memory. With this same technique you can reinforce and enhance your audience's experience during your speech. And the more vivid the better.

The precious metals investment expert in Dallas could have abandoned many of his graphs and created much

exciting imagery. He could have alluded to the fabled lost city of El Dorado with streets paved in gold, or perhaps King Midas and his golden touch. He could have made a humorous reference to Scrooge McDuck's money bin. By tying these images to a relevant point, the audience would have taken home a picture of what the speaker was conveying.

■ STRUT YOUR STUFF – Be as animated as is natural to you. And then stretch your limits. Test yourself by pushing through your comfort zone. You will be amazed at what you are capable of doing. Avoid pretentiousness.

Have fun and your audience will too.

Most audiences want the speaker to succeed. They are rooting for you. Enthusiasm and energy by themselves can often carry a speech, regardless of its subject matter. Listeners might have concluded that the Dallas speaker was naturally boring, but with just a small amount of effort and an injection of enthusiasm and excitement, he could have lifted his presentation to a much higher

level. At a recent Toastmasters club meeting, one of the scheduled speakers failed to show, so another member volunteered to fill in at the last minute. She gave a speech on how much she loved her bed and shower. Not the deepest of subjects, but her enthusiasm and obvious pure

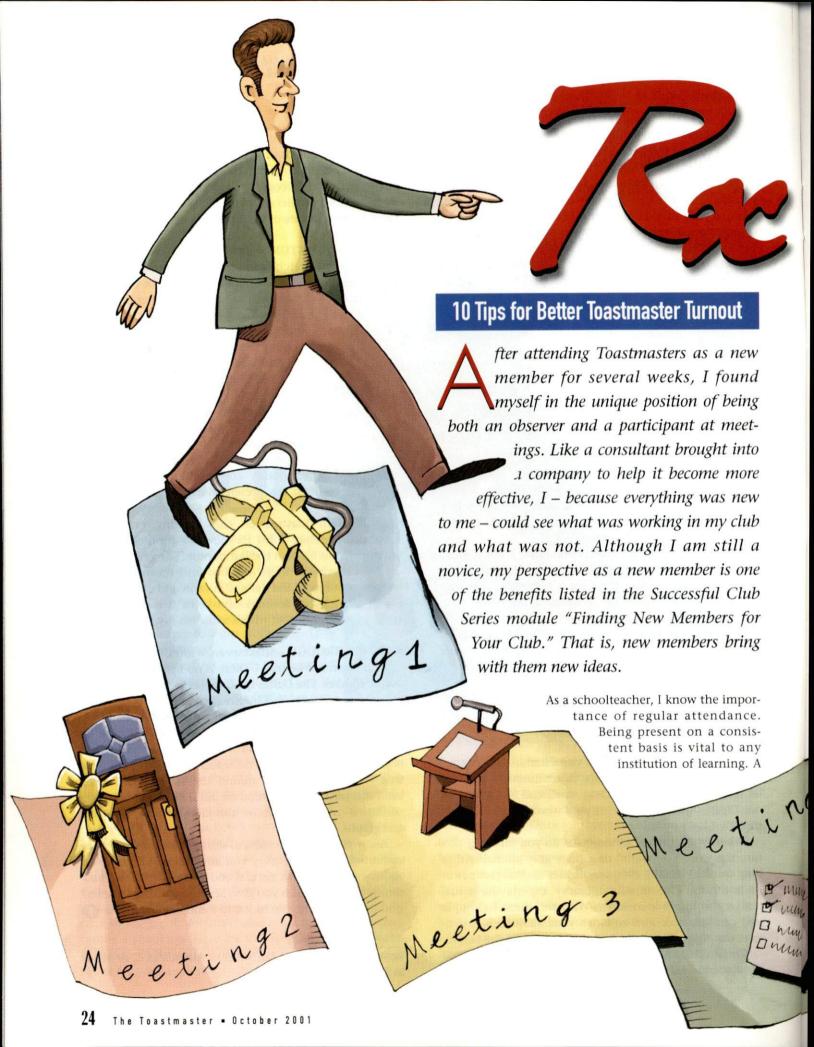
joy at sharing her feelings captivated the club. It is a

speech I will remember with a smile on my face.

■ SHINE THROUGH – Shakespeare wrote, "This above all: to thine own self be true." There is no better advice for a public speaker. The Dallas speaker was so involved in giving us all of his detailed information that he completely failed to allow a personal glimpse of himself. A handout pamphlet or brochure would have been more effective in communicating what he had to say. Granted this speaker is most likely a studious, serious and reserved person, and that for him to prance around the stage would have been incorrect and unnatural for him. But he could have permitted us to get to know him and not just his charts and graphs.

Allow your self-expression to shine. Draw from the treasure trove that is uniquely you and share that with the audience. Be genuine, natural and enthusiastic, and you can elevate any speech you give. Send your audience home glad that they were able to spend some time with you. 👔

Stephen Mayer, ATM-S, is a member of Articulates Club 316-F in Lake Forest, California.



## for LOV/Neeting Attendance

BY SUSAN DABULSKIS-HUNTER ILLUSTRATION BY TONY STOM

Toastmasters club is no exception. Toastmasters provides the perfect environment for both polishing our communication skills and broadening our minds. But such an endeavor is successful only if we are learning as a coherent group over time, building and honing the strength of our arguments and discussions together as we advance as

individuals. Thus, regular meeting attendance is key to progressing toward achieving our goals.

Meeting 5

When many members are hit-ormiss attendees,

this is a disadvantage not only to them, but to those members who regularly attend meetings. The learning scale that brought us together – as our manuals often point out – is a cumulative one. So when a subject is discussed at length one week, and is brought up again the following week by someone who didn't attend the previous meeting, the discussion can get stale. Members have an obligation to attend meetings regularly and keep current on issues that we are learning about not only as individuals, but as a group.

Here are some tried-and-true tips to keep your club members coming back regularly week after week so that everyone can benefit from meetings with a good turnout:

#### FEED THE MASSES

than food. A basic and primitive need on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, food is a requirement not only for life, but also

for well-being. Simply put, we cannot learn if we have a growling stomach. This is true of adults as well as children. But in our rushed society, many of us travel from place to place with nary a moment in between for nourishment. Offering food at meetings, therefore, is vital to making the meetings successful. So make food and beverages a priority in planning. Announce at your meeting - a week in advance what food will be served at the next club meeting. Budget for it, vary it, make it enticing, and set it up attractively in the meeting room. Arrange for club members to take turns bringing or arranging snacks so that no one becomes resentful or overwhelmed. Or assign a "FoodMaster" to be in charge. Encourage members to bring their own mugs for beverages. Serve food in environmentally-friendly paper products when possible. Offer caffeine-free and "Anyone can be a low-fat products to health-conscious members. club member, but only

#### KEEP AN ATTENDANCE RECORD

At meetings, distribute an attenactive members who dance list. Have people who are present sign their initials beside their regularly attend and names or print their names on a contribute to meetings. blank sheet of paper and circulate it. Make sure to Draw attention to these names at the next meeting by putting them at the top recognize them" of the agenda under a separate category. The new entry might appear as follows: "Members In Attendance at the June 6th Toastmasters Meeting: Sally Kearns, Mike Wallace, Debbie Reynolds, etc."

We did this at student council meetings and it worked. Recognition was given to members who did make it to meetings. Such an addition to the agenda also serves as a personal reference for those who are regularly present at meetings. They can keep weekly copies of the agenda as an attendance record and, in this way, demonstrate that they are not only Toastmasters, but that they consistently attend meetings. Anyone can be a club member, but only a select few are dedicated, active members who regularly attend and contribute to meetings. Make sure to recognize them.

#### OFFER AWARDS OR INCENTIVES FOR PERFECT ATTENDANCE

If attendance is something you actually value, reward it. When we value a good speech, for example, we reward it. Why shouldn't we also do this for perfect attendance? Rewarding attendance infuses positivity into a club and includes members who may not have a huge collection of Best Speaker ribbons tucked away in their folders. By giving a certificate to every member who attends five meetings in a row, for instance, you are not only stating

that attendance is important to your club, you are taking notice of it and thereby reinforcing it. Demonstrating the value of consistent attendance by setting real, quantifiable and attainable goals for members sets the stage for the strong organization they foster.

#### DON'T COMPLAIN ABOUT LOW ATTENDANCE

a select few are dedicated,

No matter how few people attend, don't focus on those not present at meetings. Instead, celebrate those who have chosen to come. This can be especially difficult if you stand on the podium looking out onto deserted chairs and can almost see the tumbleweed blowing through the room. Try not to take this to heart. Resist

the urge to continually comment on paltry attendance. Instead, with a positive attitude, commend those who are in your audience.

They may be few, but they are eager and are to be commended for showing up. Relax and enjoy the unique gathering before you, no matter its number.

BRAINSTORM AND FOLLOW THROUGH ON GOOD IDEAS

Conduct a brainstorming session with a sheet of paper, a magic marker, and a time limit of ten minutes at the most. By the end of the meeting, plan to put at least one of the suggestions

into action immediately. Strike while the iron is hot. If you wait until the next week, a different set of members may be there and the valuable ideas brought forward will be lost.

After hearing some great ideas, ask members to volunteer to put some ideas into place before the next meeting. For example, if you decide as a group that food and beverages are needed at meetings, ask for volunteers right then and there and follow through by having food at the next meeting. Tell the others via e-mail or phone what you'll be serving the upcoming week. Act upon your ideas promptly, especially when member attendance is hit-or-miss.

#### SET YOUR AGENDA ONE WEEK PRIOR TO MEETINGS

Toward the end of meetings, entice members with the topics that will be discussed the following week. And assign duties beforehand as often as possible so that people will feel more obligated to come. If members who will speak the following week are present, ask them to briefly describe the speech they will present. The function of such an announcement is two-fold. First, it solidifies a speaker's commitment to a certain topic well in advance, thwarting procrastination

attempts. And second, it serves as a sales pitch to those who may otherwise be tempted to miss the following week's meeting because of anything from the gorgeous weather to their favorite show on television. If members know that Sally will give a passionate talk on Green Space, for instance, and that they will soon deal with that issue at work, they may be more likely to come to hear that speech.

#### REACH OUT TO CURRENT MEMBERS

Make phone calls and write personal notes to those who have missed meetings. Perhaps they are not well or have had family problems. Don't assume that a lack of interest or lack of self-discipline has caused a member's absence. Show these members that they are valuable by reaching out to them kindly and sincerely. Furthermore, when someone has done a particularly spectacular job at something or has touched you in some way, be sure to let them know about it. People want and need to know that they are valuable contributors to society. Taking the time to send them a handwritten note or making a phone call lets them know just how they have made a difference in your life, and it encourages them to keep attending.

#### HOLD A DRAWING FOR A DOOR PRIZE

Simple, hand-made tickets with numbers on them can be distributed at the door when people arrive. Or they can be placed on one side of the room so that members and guests are motivated to get up from their seats and enter the drawing. An additional advantage of getting people out of their seats before meetings and at break time is that, while at a table getting a ticket, members may browse through some of the literature placed there, which they may not otherwise see.

To make tickets, write the same number on each half of a slip of paper. Give one half to a member and toss the other half in a jar. Make sure to have a new set of numbers on each paper, or you may find yourself with more winners than prizes!

Toward the end of each meeting, the president or Toastmaster can pull a ticket out of the jar and give the door prize to whoever has the matching number. The prize doesn't have to be elaborate – just a pen or something from the TI Supply Catalog. You might even give the winner a free manual of his or her choice. Whatever the prize, having great minds come together to share thoughts and reflections is a cause to celebrate. Make it appear that way. Offering a door prize acts as yet another reinforcement for those who have made it to the meeting. It enhances enthusiasm and provides incentive to make every meeting an event not to miss. After all, you can't win if you aren't there!

#### **CONDUCT A SURVEY**

If you would like feedback on how to improve club meetings, create a survey and have members fill it out anonymously. By using a questionnaire with open-ended questions, you provide a forum for members to voice their thoughts and opinions freely. Afterward, gather these opinions and share them with members. Again, be prepared to vote or act on suggested improvements, and then implement them promptly.

#### **OFFER RIDES TO MEMBERS**

In our club, we have a valuable member who is 84 years old. She is vibrant and contributes much to meetings, but she depends on rides to get there. I saw this member at only one meeting over a five-week period. At the end of our meeting, I saw this woman look around for the person she thought was giving her a ride home, only to find that he had left without her.

Don't let this happen at your club. Make sure you arrange ride schedules for those members not able to drive. Have a volunteer pick up and take home members needing rides each week. By being inclusive you allow members without a means of attending to maintain their dignity and share their knowledge with the group on a consistent basis.

To have successful Toastmasters meetings, people need to feel that by attending, their minds, bodies and souls are enriched. If the club can meet these three basic needs, turnout will be more consistent week after week, regardless of weather and television programming. Recruiting new members is redundant if those who are already members do not attend meetings regularly. Focusing on current members' attendance is more likely to produce a quicker return than investing solely in new-member recruitment. A circle of success is created when people attend regularly because enthusiasm spreads throughout the club. So get excited about our organization and make every meeting an event!

At the same time, however, keep in mind that self-discipline is currently at an all-time low in our society. Poor attendance at meetings may sometimes reflect this. Do not take it personally if certain members haven't made attending a Toastmasters meeting a priority in their lives. Instead, rejoice in those who have. Then try some of the techniques listed here for motivating others. Soon, you'll have the magic formula perfected and, like a pied piper, you'll be able to entice members to get off of their couches week after week – or even choose to attend Toastmasters instead of some other meetings – just to get a good seat!

**Susan Dabulskis-Hunter** is a member of Northern Hills Toastmasters Club 3456-40 in Fairfield, Ohio.



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All Toastmasters Clubs need new members. Even though your Club may currently enjoy a healthy membership roster, a few months from now that could change as members move, change employment, or reach their speaking and leadership objectives. Toastmasters International has created a variety of materials to help:

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