

# TOASTMASTER®

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APRIL 2013

**10** PAGEANT CHAMP  
PRESERVES PAIUTE HERITAGE

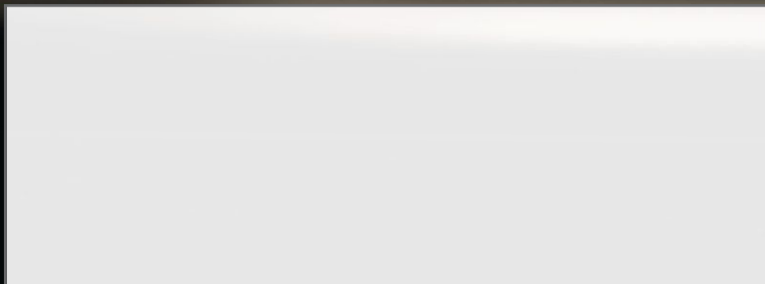
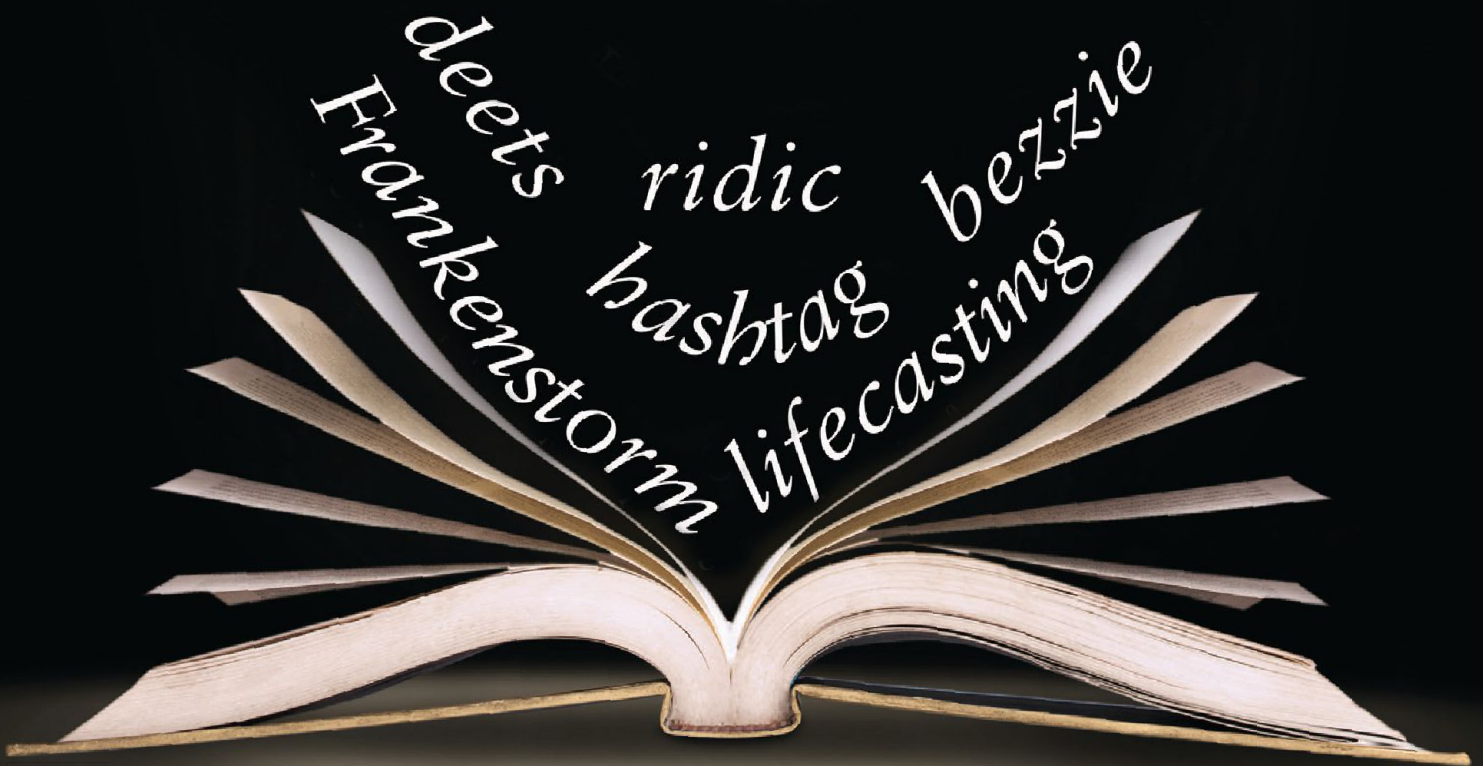
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YOUR SPEECH

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THRIVES IN THAI CLUB

## NEW WORDS

How popular terms fall into place.

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## CONNECTING WITH DIVERSE CULTURES



**Toastmasters International has clubs** all around the world. As a result, our members have very diverse cultural backgrounds. Culture is influenced by lifestyle, language, value systems, beliefs and behavior. Consequently, the way members interact with each other is to a large extent affected by their culture.

For example, in face-to-face meetings, the language and behavior of individuals vary, and their understanding of one another's cultures influences the effectiveness of communication between them.

Communication styles differ not only among individuals, but also among cultures.

Communication in Western cultures is direct, and the listener generally does not have to know much about the "contest of spear"—in other words, about cultural differences—to interpret the message being conveyed. This is sometimes

**We need to understand and appreciate the different beliefs, languages and perceptions of fellow members.**

referred to as "low context," where spoken words are emphasized. In contrast, in other cultures, such as those in Japan and India, the meaning of a message is embedded in the *way* it is presented. Communication is less explicit and relies on interpreting subtle and certain meanings, often only possible with face-to-face contact.

I worked in a multinational corporation before setting up my own business. During my service at the corporation, I conducted business in several countries and learned to speak my customers' languages. Likewise, in Toastmasters, we need to understand and appreciate the different beliefs, languages and perceptions of fellow members. Some cultures practice individualism or collectivism, while others encourage ambiguity and risk-taking. Some are more aggressive, assertive and focused on achievements, while others emphasize interpersonal relationships and sensitivity toward the well-being of others.

We need to respect one another's time. For example, is it appropriate to keep someone waiting for a meeting? Are meetings and appointments scheduled to end at certain times or are they open-ended?

At club meetings, we need to keep to our agenda and respect the feelings of other members. Let us share the values, beliefs, vision and mission of Toastmasters with our friends. Let's bring them to club meetings, and engage them in the Toastmasters movement. Toastmasters, where leaders are made. **T**

**JOHN LAU, DTM**  
International President

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**WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE**  
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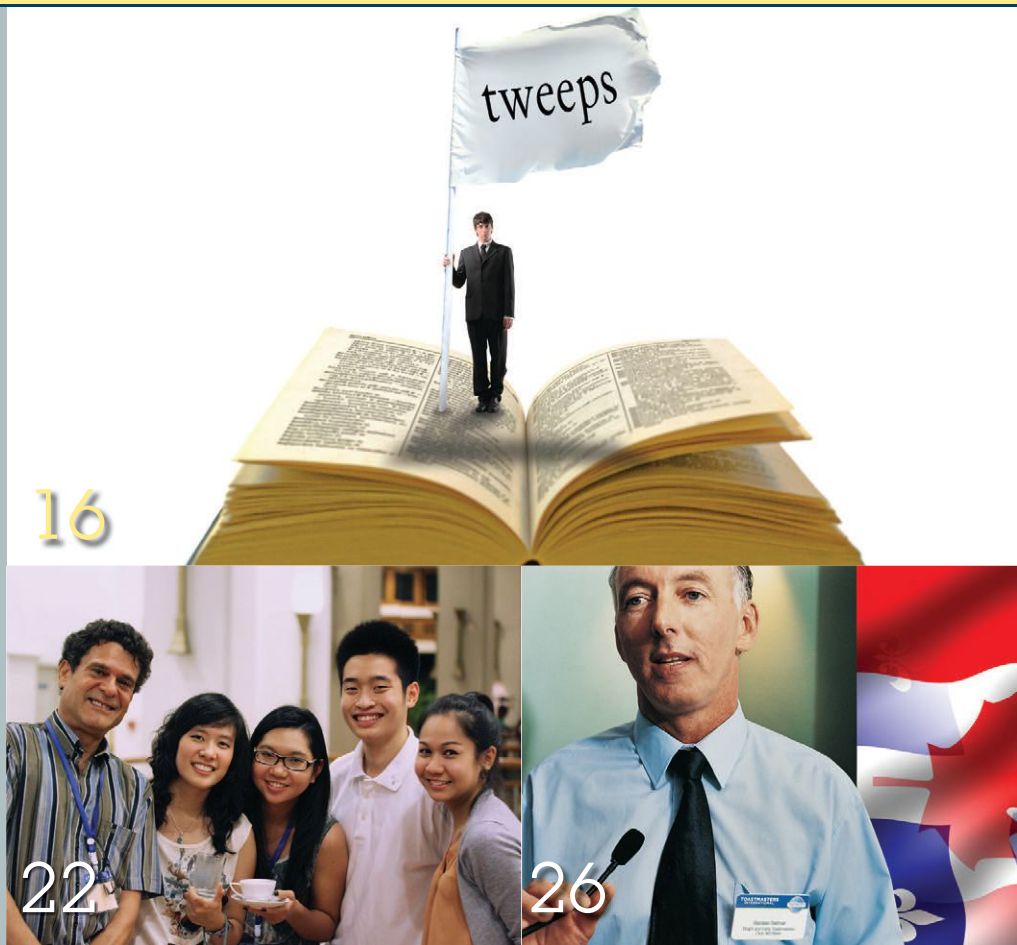
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Since 1924, Toastmasters International has been recognized as the leading organization dedicated to communication and leadership skill development. Through its worldwide network of clubs, each week Toastmasters helps more than a quarter million men and women of every ethnicity, education level and profession build their competence in communication so they can gain the confidence to lead others.

By regularly giving speeches, gaining feedback, leading teams and guiding others to achieve their goals, leaders emerge. They learn to tell their stories. They listen and answer. They plan and lead. They give feedback—and accept it. They find their path to leadership.

**Toastmasters International. Where Leaders Are Made.**





**"It is miraculous that when a person no longer needs 'spare parts,' medical science enables us to use them to give new life to others." — Ellen Gillette, CC**

## Sharing **Adam's Story**

As a donor mom, I was interested in two articles in the February issue: "Proposing a New Life" by Darren Cawley and "Johnny Thomas: He's Got Heart" by Julie Bawden-Davis. I had the privilege of speaking to health care workers after our son Adam died at age 16. The organ procurement organization we worked with asked me to speak about organ donation. Two of Adam's seven organ recipients were there to hear my speech.

I joined Toastmasters in part to share Adam's story with enhanced effectiveness. Knowing that because of him, five other people are alive today and two others have regained their sight, in no way softens the blow of losing my son. Still, it is miraculous that when a person no longer needs those "spare parts," medical science enables us to use them to give new life to others.

Ellen Gillette, CC  
Fort Pierce Toastmasters  
Fort Pierce, Florida

## By the **Numbers**

I enjoyed the article "Same Language, Different Country" by Julian Worker (November). However, the concluding line was gratuitous: "It is important for people whose first language isn't English to realize that even native English speakers have problems when moving to another country." This is true of any language that crosses borders, as anyone who speaks other languages knows.

I live in Belgium and speak French, but the moment I cross into France, I know I am in another country. The same is true for French-speaking Switzerland. The most egregious difference is in the numbering systems. In France, there are no distinct words for 70, 80 and 90.

For 70, the French say *soixante-dix* (60 plus 10); for 80, they say *quatre-vingts* (4 multiplied by 20); and for 90, *quatre-vingts dix* (4 multiplied by 20, then add 10). Belgian-French does have distinct words for 70 (*septante*) and 90 (*nonante*), but 80 is still *quatre-vingts*. And Swiss-French has distinct words for all three of the numerals.

There are even dictionaries of "belgicisms" (i.e., uniquely Belgian ways of saying things that a Frenchman might not understand). These differences afford fertile ground for cross-border jokes.

Philip Yaffe, ACB, CL  
Claddagh Toastmasters  
Brussels, Belgium

## Generation **Bridge**

I was excited by reading Ruth Nasrullah's beautifully written article "It's All Relative" (December). My excitement was not only because it included my club, Periyar Toastmasters club in Jubail, Saudi Arabia, and its founding president, PJJ Antony, but also because it carried a message for Toastmasters who struggle to distribute their time between club commitments and family responsibilities. It is a great idea to introduce families to Toastmasters, since membership has dual benefits: better communication and better family relationships.

I am another founding member of Periyar Toastmasters club. Ms. Nasrullah's article makes us proud.

Paul Alappat, ACB, ALB  
Periyar Toastmasters club  
Jubail, Saudi Arabia

## Breaking Down **Barriers**

We know that Toastmasters membership offers many benefits: improved

confidence, competence in presentation and leadership skills, to name a few. But as members, we are doing an even more important job: We are uniting people in friendship all around the world. We are breaking down barriers. This unites us.

Toastmasters International is helping the world become a friendlier and happier place.

Tom Ware, ATMG, ALB  
Dundas Toastmasters  
Dundas, New South Wales, Australia

## **Heartfelt** Gratitude

For me, adjusting to a new country has been made easy by the support of many Toastmasters members. As a member of the Heart2Heart and LaughLovers clubs in Oakland, California, I continue to build confidence and cultivate friendships. Toastmasters truly provides a safe and supportive learning environment.

Séphora Pierre-Louis, DTM  
Heart2Heart Toastmasters  
Oakland, California

## **Scary** Thoughts

I found Nicole Sweeney Etter's article, "Diving In" (December), inspiring. I liked that she included the Eleanor Roosevelt quote, "Do one thing every day that scares you."

When I joined Toastmasters earlier this year, I found it quite scary, but I am becoming more secure in the Toastmasters environment.

John Westh  
Copenhagen Toastmasters club  
Hellerup, Denmark

## **Do you have something to say?**

Write it in 200 words or less. Include your name, address and club affiliation, and send it to **letters@toastmasters.org**.



# MY MOTHER, MYSELF

She paved a pathway for me to follow.

By Christine A. Robinson, DTM



Lois and Christine Robinson

**H**ere's to my mother, who told me to eat everything on my plate when I was a child and, when I became an adult, told me to go on a diet.

Here's to my mother, Lois Robinson, who showed me the way to Toastmasters International. We discovered Toastmasters shortly after my father died in 1974, when we felt lost without our guiding star. A teenager

president and founder of Speakeasy Toastmasters in Reno, Nevada, and as area governor for District 4. She expanded into our community, running for political office. Although she did not win, Mom never lost the self-esteem she had acquired after the death of her husband. She gained friendships and job opportunities; a new chapter began and has continued for the last 35 years.

was a semifinalist in 2010 and 2012. Like my mother, I did not place first. Nonetheless, each competition brought unexpected demonstrations of generosity and support from fellow members.

Toastmasters forged a link between my mother and me, a link we had not shared since my childhood. Although we didn't always agree, she and I found common ground through our club meetings. We shared our speeches and our Table Topics. We sent each other evaluations. Who could do a more thorough evaluation than dear old Mom?

The date I earned my Distinguished Toastmaster award is my mother's birthday, August 28. I became distinguished on the date of her birth. A gentle reminder, like most of Mom's reminders: Without her, I would not be here.

As of this writing, my mother lies in the hospital with heart complications. Soon, she will leave this Earth. Like so many of my contemporaries, I am beginning to comprehend life without my mother. So long as I live, she shall never die. The waters of life flow from her through me to you today. **T**

Although we didn't always agree, she and I found common ground through our club meetings.

at the time, I thought Toastmasters was some sort of drinking club, a community where one learned the art of wassailing or toasting one another. Surely, I thought, Mom's gone off the deep end, drinking her sorrow away. In a way, she did go off the deep end: She plunged right into Toastmasters.

Like so many newcomers, Mom began as a guest in the back of the room (her club met in a pizza parlor). She was smitten by the warmth and brightness of the members, the laughter, camaraderie and fellowship. Of course she would join! Delving into the communication track, she wended her way from the back of the room to the front, giving speeches, earning what was then called an ATM (Able Toastmaster) award, and entering speech competitions. Mom also learned the art of leadership, as

Like my mother, I was a wallflower, only I was more like the plasterboard holding the flower up. I was the quintessential loner, outsider, introvert. In many ways, Mom's story is my story.

Starting a new chapter in my life in 1989, I dropped into California not knowing a soul. With nowhere to go but my office, how could I build a community? Where was I to make friends? Like Mom, I began with an evening meeting in a pizza parlor, which is where the Southern Marin Toastmasters met in Mill Valley, California. The club's encouragement and dedication to this program buoyed me from the back of the room all the way to the Toastmasters International Speech Contest. I advanced to the regional level in 2005 in Eugene, Oregon (before Toastmasters went to its current semifinals format), and

**Christine A. Robinson, DTM**, was a semifinalist in the 2010 and 2012 International Speech Contests. Living and working in Mill Valley, California, she is a communication coach, a local television host and author of *Hair of the Dog Tales—A Four-Legged Perspective to Recovery*.

# AROUND THE GLOBE

## INTERNATIONAL INTERPRETATIONS

### MIND YOUR CHOPSTICK MANNERS



Dining etiquette can sometimes be a sticky matter, especially when it comes to chopsticks. Using these utensils properly involves more than digital dexterity. Protocol varies in different cultures, especially in Asian ones, where chopstick use is most prevalent.

For example, in Chinese and Japanese cultures, it's reportedly rude to stand your chopsticks upright in the rice bowl. In fact, such a gesture symbolizes death. It's said that Taiwanese people frown on biting down on chopsticks or letting them linger in the mouth for an extended period of time. According to Vietnamese tradition, you shouldn't place the utensils in a "V" shape when you're done eating—it's considered a bad omen. And Korean etiquette emphasizes a respect for one's elders: Good table manners means letting the older people at the table pick up their chopsticks first.

## WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

### DO YOU WRITE YOUR SPEECH BEFORE YOU PRACTICE IT?

**Members contributed to the discussion on the LinkedIn Official Toastmasters International Members Group:**

"My first 'draft' is never written. I construct it as I speak while recording it. Nearly all smartphones allow you to digitally record yourself. Hearing what others will hear allows me to focus on the message. I then transcribe this 'conceptual draft,' which I then convert to an outline for the speech."

— KEITH OSTERGARD, DTM, PID  
BEIJING #1 TOASTMASTERS CLUB, BEIJING, CHINA

"I write everything down and then condense it. Finally, I make main bullet points on cards. I want to use exactly the wording that I think fits; but if I do, my speech loses conviction and spontaneity. By constantly trying to remember the script, I risk losing the ability to connect with the audience as I go along."

— GILL ORNSTEIN, CC  
HOD SPEAKERS CLUB, STANMORE, MIDDLESEX, LONDON, ENGLAND

## SNAPSHOT

The Toastmasters family that travels together stays together. Posing near Machu Picchu in Peru are: Raj Nair, DTM, of PMI Chicagoland Toastmasters in Chicago, Illinois; his wife, Ninju, CC, ALB (center); and their children Megha (right) and Vivek (foreground), who both attend the youth leadership program associated with XL Toastmasters Club.



## BOTTOM LINE

**Hall of Fame** See monthly DTM awards and club anniversaries of 20 years or more at [www.toastmasters.org/HallofFame](http://www.toastmasters.org/HallofFame).

**Track Your Orders** Haven't received your magazine or order yet? Email the Toastmasters Tracking team at [tracking@toastmasters.org](mailto:tracking@toastmasters.org) and receive a response within two business days.

**Tune In** For tips, news and laughs, listen to the Toastmasters Podcast Series with hosts Bo Bennett and Ryan Levesque at [www.toastmasters.org/Podcast](http://www.toastmasters.org/Podcast).

## TECHNOLOGY TIP

### TWITTER BASICS

Twitter is a social media force that, with at least 500 million registered users worldwide, is impossible to ignore. In fact, 28 percent of Toastmasters International's online activity revolves around this social networking platform. Remember these points to get the most out of your Twitter account:

- **Make your posts count.**

Twitter is a public forum, with fewer customizable privacy features than Facebook. When you send a tweet, it is tracked by various search engines and available to millions of Internet users. Be wary of writing inappropriate messages.

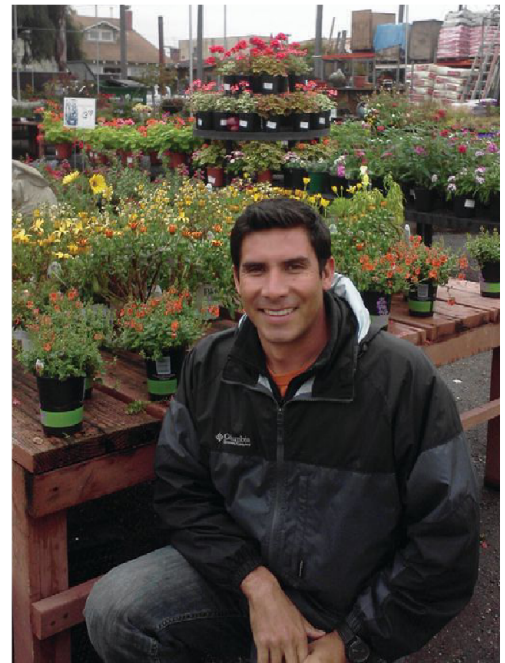
- **Remember to leave extra space** if you want your comment to be retweeted. You only get 140 characters to express yourself in a tweet—but even fewer if your comment is retweeted, since this requires additional characters.

- **Use [bitly.com](http://bitly.com)** to shorten links. To see statistics for a bitly link, add a "+" mark to the end of it and enter that into your web browser.

## MEMBER MOMENT

### RETAILER IS SERIOUS ABOUT GROWTH

Tiger Palafox, ACB, is the store manager of his family's garden center, Mission Hills Nursery, in San Diego, California. Last year, he received the Red Fox/Young Retailer Award, which is given annually to one person under 35 in the United States who is passionate about a career in the garden center industry. As part of the award, *Green Profit* magazine featured him in its September 2012 edition. A member and immediate past president of the Progressive Speakers club in El Cajon, California, Palafox enjoys surfing, snowboarding and hiking with his daughter and wife.



Tiger Palafox

### What does the Young Retailer Award mean to you?

As a young person, it is nice to win awards, because my industry is full of people of older generations who have dedicated their lives to their work. Awards are important because they fuel those of us who are part of the younger generation to strive to be better, even as we are viewed as inexperienced, naive or reckless.

### How has Toastmasters helped you in your profession?

It has given me the ability to speak with confidence and clarity during presentations. Also, because I interact daily with customers, Table Topics has made my answers clearer and I use fewer crutch words.

### What is the most useful skill you gained from Toastmasters?

One of the biggest things it taught me as a manager is how to tell someone she did something wrong without berating her, and to make her feel like she wants to do it 10 times better the next time.

## The Convention Countdown Is On

The 2013 Toastmasters International Convention will be held August 21-24—only four months from now! The Duke Energy Convention Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, will host the event. Consider staying at a nearby hotel, such as the Hilton Cincinnati Netherlands Plaza or the Hyatt Regency Cincinnati.

Registration opens on the Toastmasters International website in April. You can receive a discounted rate on the full convention package if you register by July 26. Visit [www.toastmasters.org/Convention](http://www.toastmasters.org/Convention) in April for a schedule and additional information.



## AROUND THE GLOBE

### ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

#### IN THIS MONTHLY

**COLUMN**, Accredited Speakers and Toastmasters World Champions of Public Speaking share lessons learned.



Mark Hunter, ATMS, a member of Helensvale Daybreak Toastmasters in Helensvale, Queensland, Australia, won the 2009 Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking.

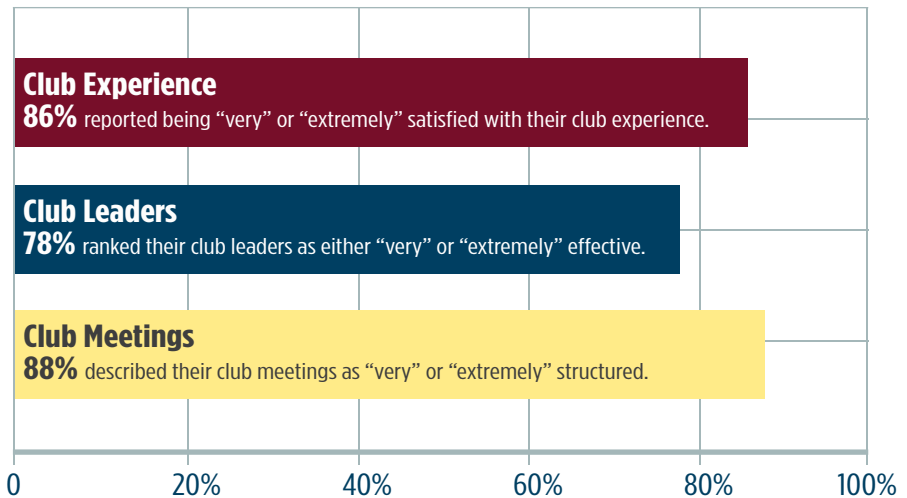
#### What can a member do to prepare for giving a speech in another country?

When preparing to speak to a culturally different audience, a Toastmaster needs to show *respect* by knowing and addressing cultural issues relevant to that audience. These include which protocols to use, what speech topics and body language to avoid, and what type of humor and language is appropriate. Running your speech by someone who has the appropriate cultural awareness will help with this task. Additionally, a Toastmaster can optimize his or her effectiveness when speaking to such an audience by avoiding colloquialisms, and using visuals, repetition and appropriate speaking pace to compensate for the audience's lack of English fluency (where relevant) and the negative impact of your own accent.

## FACTS WORTH KNOWING

### MEMBER SATISFACTION IN LARGE CLUBS

Members from a representative sample of clubs with 30-plus members were asked to rate their Toastmasters experience. This is what they said:



They often used the words *inspiring*, *organized*, and *professional* to describe the positive attributes of their clubs. Members in clubs with 12 or fewer members were more likely to describe their club as *friendly*, *relaxing* and *welcoming*.

Note: Data obtained from a December 2012 Toastmasters International survey.



### FROM THE ARCHIVES

In 1957, this machine was used to fold printed documents at one of the early "home office" locations for Toastmasters International. A series of rented office spaces in Southern California served as the organization's home office until 1962.

## MENTOR MOMENT

**N**o one has the potential to influence a member's experience like a mentor. Christina Hession, ACS, ALB, vice president education of the Phoenix-Tara Toastmasters club in Dunboyne, County Meath, Ireland, shares how she has benefited from a mentor.



**Christina Hession (right) credits mentor Ciaran Moore for giving her confidence to speak up.**

**Why did you join Toastmasters?** I joined Phoenix-Tara Toastmasters in October 2009 because I suffered from panic attacks, which almost resulted in the loss of my job as a court stenographer. I am also studying law, and when I couldn't sit through an exam in my best subject in college, I knew I had to take control of the panic attacks before they controlled me.

**Tell us about your mentor.** Ciaran Moore, ACB, ALB, a District 71 area governor, is an area manager in an Irish manufacturing company and a part-time lecturer in management. It is easy to praise contest winners, but real leaders are Toastmasters like Ciaran, who provide support to members like me when things don't go according to plan.

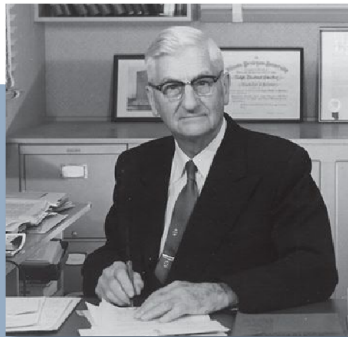
**How does Ciaran give feedback?** He is visionary, supportive and encouraging. He gives honest and comprehensive feedback, verbally and via email. When I dried up during an evaluation, Ciaran emailed me that inspirational poem "The Man Who Thinks He Can." Although I still get nervous before I speak, the encouragement I get from Ciaran keeps me going.

**What specific goals have you accomplished with your mentor's guidance?** I am serving as club vice president education, something I would never have dreamed was possible prior to joining Toastmasters. It was the best decision I have ever made.

### DR. SMEDLEY SAYS

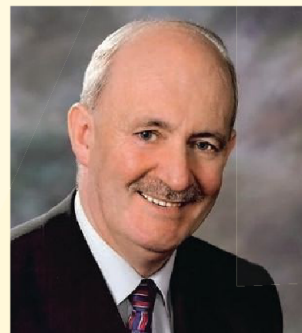
Toastmasters founder Dr. Ralph C. Smedley shared many insights worth remembering, such as:

**"Select the stories you tell; don't dabble in dirt."**



**Dr. Ralph C. Smedley  
1878-1965**

## LEARNING ABOUT OUR PAST ... INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENTS



**Ted Corcoran, DTM  
Past International President  
2003-2004**

**Q:** What inspires you?

**A:** Peter Legge, the 1993 Golden Gavel recipient, says, "You will be the same person in five years except for the books that you read, the places you visit and the people you meet."

That's what inspires me—books, places and people. While there are too many inspiring books to mention here, any book in which the central figure rises above the vicissitudes of life never fails to inspire me.

Places like Yellowstone in the U.S., Niagara Falls in Canada, Kruger National Park in South Africa, and the beautiful West Coast of Ireland, where I grew up, have inspired me with their magnificence.

Finally, the members of Toastmasters who work so unselfishly to help fellow members grow are a constant source of inspiration to me.

# Christina Thomas: **A NATIVE VOICE AMPLIFIED**

Paiute instructor brings new life to endangered language.

By Nataly Kelly

**Y**ou might never have heard the word *Paiute* until now, but if Christina Thomas has it her way, you'll never forget it. This determined young woman is committed to helping the Paiute language and culture of her heritage thrive, using the knowledge and experience she has gained in her Toastmasters club.

Paiute (pronounced "pie-yoot") is both a Native American ethnicity

discovered she had a knack for the language. By the following semester, she began studying the language for credit toward her degree. She also began to sing traditional songs in the language.

Thomas eventually became proficient enough to teach the Paiute language. She is now the youngest teacher of Paiute in Nevada's Washoe County School District. She currently teaches at a public high school where many

"Most of the people who speak Paiute today are elders," Thomas says. "There is a huge generation gap. The children are not learning it, and we don't have enough teachers."

However, the language's endangered status only seems to push Thomas to work harder to raise awareness of the Paiute culture and language. "Ever since I became interested in the language and learning more about who I am and where I come from, I've had many opportunities open up. I've been able to travel and represent not just my tribe, but Native Americans from other places as well."

Indeed, Thomas' list of accomplishments is very long for her being 28 years old. She was selected as an ambassador for Americans for Indian Opportunity, a nonprofit organization that serves as a catalyst for Native American initiatives. Moreover, she has sung for U.S. first lady Michelle Obama, Vice President Joe Biden and U.S. Senator Harry Reid.

"When I was asked to open for the first lady at the Nevada Women's Summit in 2010, I was very honored," says Thomas. "I wasn't nervous, as I have sung for a lot of people."

Thomas has also found success on the pageant scene, which is how she became involved in Toastmasters. She originally joined her local club, Washoe Zephyrs in Reno, when preparing for the 2009 Miss Indian

"Ever since I became interested in the language and learning more about who I am and where I come from, I've had many opportunities open up." — Christina Thomas

and the name of the language spoken by its people. Thomas is of Northern Paiute, Western Shoshone and Hopi descent. She grew up on the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation in Wadsworth, Nevada. However, she did not know much about her people's history or language until she took a class at the University of Nevada, Reno. It changed her life.

One day, Ralph Burns, a respected elder of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, came to speak to her class, and he mentioned where he was from. After class, she introduced herself and let him know she grew up on the same reservation. He invited her to take a Paiute language class. She joined the class and

of her students are not Native Americans. "I've had non-Native students, Hispanic students—students of all backgrounds. It's open to anyone who wants to learn Paiute," she says.

## **Closing the Generation Gap**

Training younger generations to speak their ancestral language is critical to the language's survival. Only 1,638 people currently speak Paiute, according to 2010 United States Census data. As a result, the language is now classified as "definitely endangered" by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which means that children no longer learn the language as a mother tongue.





World contest. The pageant is held during a large-scale event known as the Gathering of Nations, which occurs annually in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Thousands of people attend, making it one of the biggest powwows in North America. Because public speaking was one of the areas in the competition, she knew she would need to improve her skills beyond what she had acquired by doing talks at local schools and businesses.

Thomas found the club to be a tremendous support. When its members discovered she would compete in public speaking, they held mock interviews and helped Thomas with her impromptu speaking skills. “They really wanted me to do well,” she says. “After the pageant, I was sponsored through generous people in my club so that I could keep coming back. I feel very blessed to have been part of such a group.”

Club members who cheered Thomas on were in for a treat—they got to hear Paiute spoken at their meetings. “During my Ice Breaker, I began introducing myself in Paiute,” Thomas says. “It really caught their attention, and I won the Best Speaker award for that day.” She also incorporated traditional Paiute singing and dancing in her presentations.

## Representing Her Culture

While Thomas did not win her first big pageant, she set a record for selling the most tickets to the event since the competition’s inception. And the following year, when she competed in the 2010 Miss Indian Nations pageant, she was first runner-up. In 2012, she became the first-ever Native American to represent the United States at the Miss Humanity International pageant, which took place in Barbados. This pageant focuses on people who give back to their

communities, allowing Thomas to represent not only Native Americans, but to be the face of humanitarian work for her entire country.

Patricia McCoy, chief judge of Miss Humanity International, says, “Christina lights up the room when she enters and knows how to keep you on your feet. I have seen her face challenging moments, but with her strong will, she holds her head up high and continues on.”

Thomas leads a multifaceted life. She is a college student majoring in biology and hopes to become a dentist. She continues to teach Paiute at the local high school. She also holds another job and runs a weekly youth group she founded in 2010 called Native Butterflies, helping young Native American girls to develop pride in their heritage.

Pageants are not the only places in which Thomas uses the skills and knowledge she gained through Toastmasters. She finds the club experience has helped her in many parts of her life, including in her work as a teacher. “The need to speak clearly—and to speak well—affects that aspect of my life too,” she says. “Toastmasters has changed my life.”

Thomas says Toastmasters has helped her through her journey. That journey is made even more memorable by the preservation of the Paiute language and culture, to which Thomas brings something extremely important: hope for the future. **T**

**Nataly Kelly** is chief research officer at Common Sense Advisory, a market research firm specializing in language services and global business. Her latest book is *Found in Translation: How Language Shapes Our Lives and Transforms the World*.



Christina Thomas, shown here in Native American dress, has participated in pageants such as Miss Indian World and Miss Humanity International.



# RECYCLE YOUR CONTENT

With a little creativity, you can reuse any speech.

By Nicole Sweeney Etter, CL

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**Y**ou've given a stellar speech at your Toastmasters club. You spent days thinking through your topic, crafting a killer opening, developing your key messages, finding supporting research, and polishing your conclusion.

And then, in five to seven minutes, it's all over.

Or is it? Your hard work doesn't have to be destined for the trash bin. Instead, consider recycling the content of your manual speech to give it new life. You've already invested your time and energy, so it only makes sense to leverage your content for a different or larger audience. Read on for just a few ways you can reuse a Toastmasters speech.

## Put It on File

If you haven't already, type your speech and save it. Depending on your speaking rate, your average five- to seven-minute speech might convert to a personal essay ranging from 600 to 1,100 words—right on target for the personal essay section of many publications. Flip through your favorite magazines to see whether they publish personal essays, and search for “writer’s guidelines” to get details on how and where to send a submission. Check Writer’s Market ([writersmarket.com](http://writersmarket.com)) for other possible outlets. If your essay is accepted for publication, you might get paid, or at least you’ll have the satisfaction of seeing your words in print.

Andrew Chiu, CC, a division governor in District 1, helped start the

ToastWriters club in Santa Monica, California. He says, “We encourage people to use the same source work for various speech projects so they develop a refined pitch for their work. In other cases, people have used speech projects as a way to develop and test nonfiction work, particularly in self-help.”

## Tell It Live

If your speech focuses on a compelling, memorable or humorous personal experience, think about sharing it at a storytelling event. The Moth, a nonprofit organization in New York City, is dedicated to “true stories told live.” Maybe your pitch and your story could land on The Moth Radio Hour, its website or even one of the live



performances around the U.S. Go to **themoth.org/tell-a-story** to learn more. The National Storytelling Network (**storynet.org**) also lists storytelling events and groups all across the U.S. and in some other countries, including Canada, Australia and Germany.

### Become an Expert

David Simono, CC, a founding member of the GE Speaks club in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, advises new members to develop a “back-pocket speech” they can practice whenever they have a chance.

When writing speeches, Simono tries to choose a topic such as recycling that has multiple subtopics, allowing him to “expand on the topic in different ways (like paper versus plastic, or composting and reuse) in many speeches.”

Mike Woodall, CC, ALB, of Owensboro Toastmasters in Owensboro, Kentucky, has a “stock” speech on forgiveness that he has given six times in the past year. “I reconstruct the opening

and closing to fit my audience; however, the body stays the same,” says Woodall, an area governor for District 11.

### Post It Online

Thanks to the Internet, it’s easy for your speech to go global. Matt McCormick, CC, and Chris Haynes, CC, launched Soapbox Guru (**soapboxguru.com**) in 2009, when they were active members in Victoria, British Columbia. “We noticed that more people were getting comfortable with the idea of recording their speeches and uploading them on YouTube,” says McCormick, who now lives in Japan. “We thought it would be great to have one site where Toastmasters members could watch other members’ speeches to get inspiration and enhance their Toastmasters experience.”

More than 15,000 speeches have been uploaded so far. Evaluators rank videos on a scale of one to 10 and share feedback on the speaker’s

strengths and opportunities for improvement.

McCormick says, “By posting their speeches on the site, members are able to get feedback from Toastmasters all over the world.”

If your goal is simply to share your content, an online service like SlideShare (**slideshare.net**) can help you spread your message far beyond your club. The site allows you to upload a presentation and promote the link on your club’s website or on a social media site.

So the next time you plan on giving a speech at your club, think about how you might repurpose your topic. Not only will it help you be more efficient and strategic with your Toastmasters time, it will also give you a chance to test your Toastmasters skills in a new way. **T**

**Nicole Sweeney Etter, CL**, a writer and editor, is the founding president of Marq Our Words Toastmasters club in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



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# KEEP YOUR CLUB GREEN

Turn waste into savings in 10 easy steps.

By Carl Duivenvoorden, DTM

**T**hese days, everyone's talking about going green and taking better care of the planet—so why not at Toastmasters, too? Here are 10 ways you can make your club more eco-friendly.

## 1 Organize a member carpool.

What is likely a club's biggest environmental impact actually happens before and after the gavel sounds. It comes from the vehicles we use to get to and from our meetings. Many clubs use email or websites to assign meeting roles, so why not use those same tools to organize member ridesharing? The greater the distance traveled, the greater the environmental benefits—and gas savings.

**2 Minimize paper use.** Examine where paper is used in your club to determine ways to reduce and save. Is it necessary to print a copy of the Word of the Day for every member? Could it be printed on half a page, incorporated into the agenda, or written on a chalkboard, whiteboard or flip chart? Limit handouts to essentials, and consider electronic or online options for sharing resources. When printing is unavoidable, strive to print double-sided, use 100 percent post-consumer recycled paper, and recycle whatever you can. Save partially used feedback slips for the next meeting.

## 3 Ration your lighting needs.

Turn on only the lights you need, and maximize the use of natural light whenever possible.

**4 Rethink disposables.** Many clubs incorporate a break for socializing and snacks—but breaks often feature disposable dishes and

cutlery. Brainstorm ways to avoid disposables, such as using onsite supplies or asking members to take turns bringing in necessary tableware.

**5 Serve in bulk.** Use large containers whenever possible for beverages, condiments and food; skip individual-sized packets, bottles and cans.

**6 Avoid bottled water.** Instead, use tap water—which is often tested more rigorously than bottled water anyway—filtered water or spring water from large containers.

## 7 Reduce or skip ice in beverages.

It takes energy for a freezer to produce ice, and we often use more ice than we need, as evidenced by ice cubes remaining in our empty glasses. So using less is always a good habit. That's doubly important during the cold time of year. Here's why: Ice absorbs heat as it melts, and during the winter that heat comes from our heating systems. You could say ice cubes in winter have a double carbon footprint.

## 8 Turn off projectors when not in use.

Many presentations today involve the use of computers and projectors, both of which consume energy. Projectors, in particular, produce a great deal of heat—which, during hot weather, makes air conditioners work that much harder. See if your club can get into the habit of turning off computers and, especially, projectors whenever they are not in use.

## 9 Hold a green-themed meeting.

Toastmasters is all about education and leadership, so why not extend that to environmental education and leadership? Plan a meeting featuring green-themed

speeches, snacks, Table Topics, Word of the Day and even fines. It will mean fun and learning for all!

## 10 Ask members to commit.

Distinguished clubs happen when leaders and members commit to collective goals, and the same applies to sustainability initiatives. Why not hold a club discussion to engage everyone, gather ideas, set goals and ensure success? It might even make for a great High Performance Leadership project.

Many of these suggestions apply to area, division and district events, too. District 45, to which I belong, comprises three Canadian provinces and three states in the United States. When our fall conference was held in a distant corner of our district several years ago, more than 35 conference attendees rode a chartered bus to the event. The benefits? Safer and more comfortable travel, plenty of time to catch up with Toastmasters friends and, of course, a smaller carbon footprint. In other years, the conference registration committee has encouraged carpooling by coordinating it through the registration process.

So what are you waiting for? Turn talk into action by using the above tips to help Toastmasters go green at the club level and beyond! **T**

**Carl Duivenvoorden, DTM**, served as District 45 Governor in 2004–05 and is club president of Civil Speakers Club in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. He works as a speaker, writer and green consultant. Learn more at [changeyourcorner.com](http://changeyourcorner.com).

# GRAMMAR FAUX PAS RECONSIDERED

Language rules, like clothes, go in and out of style.

By Jenny Baranick

**W**hen I tell people I teach at a fashion college, they assume I teach something fashion-related. I can see why people think so. I dress rather fashionably, if I do say so myself. But I don't teach fashion; I teach English. When surrounded by "fashionistas" 40 hours a week, you start to understand color and proportion, and you find yourself saying things like "The silhouette of your dress reminds me of a 2010 Dior." One surprising discovery I made about fashion is that many of the things traditionally deemed "grammar faux pas" are acceptable today. It's perfectly okay to wear white after Labor Day, and navy and black can be worn together. I know! In that way, fashion is similar to English grammar. Many of the things that are largely thought to be "grammar faux pas" aren't. For example, did you know that infinitives can be split, prepositions can end sentences, and—my favorite—*and* and *but* can indeed begin sentences?

Splitting an infinitive is largely heralded as *the* grammatical error. An infinitive is the word *to* plus the simple form of a verb, e.g., *to run*, *to ask*, *to go*. A split infinitive is when an adverb splits the *to* and the simple form of the verb, e.g., *to quickly run*, *to politely ask*, and the most famous split infinitive of all time, thanks to *Star Trek*: *to boldly go* (where no man has gone before). Were the creators of *Star Trek* predicting that, because grammar rules change, infinitives

will be split by the 23rd century?

According to the Oxford Dictionaries' website, split infinitives aren't a future phenomenon: "People have been splitting infinitives for centuries."

So why have split infinitives received such a bad reputation? Editors of *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage* don't know. According to the website, "there has never been a rational basis for objecting to the split infinitive." Pam Peters, author of *The Cambridge Guide to English Usage*, goes so far as to promote split infinitives "to avoid awkward wording, to preserve a natural rhythm, and especially to achieve the intended emphasis and meaning." I believe that gives us permission to *boldly* split them!

If splitting an infinitive is incorrectly deemed the king of all grammatical errors, then ending a sentence with a preposition is its queen. A preposition is a word that expresses temporal or spatial relationships. Common prepositions include words such as *to*, *at*, *for*, *on*, *off*, *with*, *above* and *below*. It's not always correct to end a sentence with a preposition, but it's certainly not always wrong either. This Winston Churchill quote illustrates how awkward it sounds when we try to avoid ending a sentence with a preposition at all costs: "Ending a sentence with a preposition is something up with which I will not put." However, Churchill would be correct not to put up with the sentence "Where are you going to?"

because the *to* is unnecessary. "Where are you going?" adequately conveys the meaning. Basically, if the preposition is gratuitous, leave it off.

And lastly, was it wrong for me to begin this sentence with *and*? Some argue that the words *and* and *but* should not start sentences, because they are connecting words (conjunctions), which are meant to link rather than begin thoughts. However, the consensus among grammarians these days is to follow the same approach as when eating cheesecake: It's okay to do, but for best results, exhibit self-control. (Fine! I'm putting it back in the fridge.) Starting a sentence with *and* or *but* can create a dramatic effect or convey a less rigid tone, but overdoing it can make writing sound choppy and too informal.

When I found out it was grammatically acceptable to split infinitives, end sentences with prepositions and begin sentences with *and* and *but*, I was almost as excited as I would be if I learned that cheesecake has no effect on the waistline. But there's a catch: Many people still haven't learned that these grammar practices are okay. Consequently, it's probably a good idea to curb these practices—unless they are necessary for clarity and flow. But in the meantime, I urge you to boldly spread the word. **T**

Jenny Baranick is an English instructor based in Southern California.

# THE DEFINING TEST FOR **NEW WORDS**

Why terms like *fiscal cliff*  
and *ridic* keep  
lexicographers busy.

By Patrick Mott

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**L**ast December most Americans could be forgiven for never again wanting to hear the words *fiscal cliff*. The term, which had been used in the media for only a few months, had provoked something approaching frenzy in Washington, D.C., as politicians grappled with the combination of economic, social and political circumstances many believed would shove the United States over the edge into economic chaos.

Meanwhile, many of the nation's top lexicographers predicted the term would be widely embraced by their peers. And indeed, it took third place when the American Dialect Society voted for its 2012 word of the year. (*Hashtag* came in first.)

But does *fiscal cliff* have the staying power to find a permanent home in the great dictionaries of the English-speaking world?

It hasn't yet made it into the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), the massive repository of record of the English language, whose entries include words that were coined more than 1,000 years

ago. Neither has it made it in the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary*, the second-best-selling book in the United States (outsold by only the Bible).

And that, say lexicographers, is as it should be. It isn't enough for a word to merely be popular, or even widely used. It has to survive a rigorous selection process and get a lot more than just one head nodding in assent.

"We want to see words that have an enduring appeal and an enduring usefulness," says Peter Sokolowski, the editor-at-large for Merriam-Webster. "We tend to be conservative and wait a year or two. We keep watching those new words to see that they re-

words," he says. "OED, because of its size and scope, is more likely to include technical terms, or historical terms that wouldn't get into a more general dictionary, so in this sense you could say that it's easier to get these words into OED."

### Hard-Working Lexicographers

Modern lexicography—the study of words, their origins and their meanings and usage—is a decidedly active rather than passive pursuit, which explains why most new words have to endure a long period of scrutiny. At Merriam-Webster, the process involves reading from a wide range of materials.

Last year's list of new English words and phrases included such contemporary gems as *bezzie*, *boyf*, *deets* and *tweeps*.

tain their meaning and they're used in the same way, [and] also that they're used in increasing frequency over a period of years."

The process for entering a word into the dictionary used to take even longer, says Sokolowski. "It used to take many years, if not decades. But now, with the speed of communication and the speed of publication, we have words like *blog* that pop up and become almost universal and almost ubiquitous within a year or two of their coinage," he says.

*Blog* was coined in 1999 and entered into the dictionary in 2004, which was "a kind of record speed," Sokolowski points out. "And *blog* is a special case because it's naming something for which we had no name before."

Different dictionaries throughout the English-speaking world have different standards of inclusion, says Jesse Sheidlower, the New York-based editor-at-large of the OED. "I think you'll find that OED actually includes a lot of new

Sokolowski says the entire editorial staff spends about an hour a day reading, looking for new words as well as old words used in new ways. The reading list includes magazines, websites, novels, academic journals—and even things like soup can labels and restaurant menus.

"Evidence of words in use becomes the kind of raw form of our research," Sokolowski says. "We now have a nice collection of 17 million examples of words used with their full context and full bibliography, and that becomes a kind of hand-picked corpus of language in use."

To be included in most dictionaries, words must evolve to the point that they spring easily from many pairs of lips. The OED website ([oed.com](http://oed.com)), for example, asserts that the dictionary's editors look for commonly used and understood words—ones "that are not immediately followed by an explanation of [the word's] meaning for the benefit of the reader."

However, plenty of unusual words do appear in Oxford Dictionaries

## ARE YOU USING THE RIGHT WORD?

If it looks like a valid word and sounds like a valid word, is it a valid word? Not necessarily. In a recent post on the website PR Daily ([prdaily.com](http://prdaily.com)), Mark Nichol points out a number of linguistic creations that closely resemble the preferred or correct version of a word. Here are six examples:

1. **Irregardless**—*Regardless* is the word that should be used, not *irregardless*. *Irregardless* is a word that literally means “without without regard.”
2. **Firstly**—When listing points or examples, some people write *firstly* (and *secondly* and *thirdly*, for that matter). But most language experts agree it's preferable to write *first* (and *second* and *third*).
3. **Supposably**—This is incorrect when used in place of the word *supposedly*.
4. **Dimunition**—Close, but the word is spelled *diminution*. It primarily means the act of diminishing or lessening, so a good tip is to remember the similarly spelled word *diminutive*, which means small.
5. **Undoubtably**—*Undoubtedly* is the proper term, not *undoubtably*.
6. **Administrate**—This term is listed in the dictionary, but the preferred word is *administer*, meaning to manage (which an administrator does) or to carry out (as in “to administer last rites” or “to administer justice”).

Online (ODO), at [oxforddictionaries.com](http://oxforddictionaries.com). Both the OED and the ODO are under the Oxford umbrella, but while the former is a historical dictionary, focusing on words and meanings over the past 1,000 years, the latter is dedicated to current language and practical usage. Consequently, the

of video material on the Internet that documents one's day-to-day activities).

Noting the difference between the OED and its online cousin, Sheidlower says, “There's no obvious reason why a dictionary intended to reflect current English should not include colloquial or technology-related

“Sometimes, people even want to sell you the word. But that's not how language works.”

— Jesse Sheidlower, New York-based editor-at-large of the *Oxford English Dictionary*

online dictionary is updated quarterly with new words. Last year's list of new English words and phrases included such contemporary gems as *bezzie* (best friend), *boyf* (boyfriend), *deets* (details), *ridic* (an abbreviation for the word *ridiculous*) and *tweeps* (a person's followers on Twitter). A number of ODO's additions are related to computer jargon—recent entries include *UI* (abbreviation for *user interface*), *inbox* (used as a verb, it means to send a private message or email to someone) and *lifecasting* (broadcasting a continuous live flow

words, so we might put such words into ODO quickly even if we don't think they're ready for OED yet.”

### Answering Word Questions

The phones in lexicographers' offices often ring with people who believe they've coined a new word or who are curious about a strange word they've just heard.

“Everyone gets letters or emails from people claiming they've coined a word because they think it's a useful word, or because they want to claim some kind of control over it,” says

Sheidlower. “Sometimes, people even want to sell you the word. But that's not how language works. Words get used because people want to use them or because people need to use them.”

Still, words are coined constantly. “They start appearing, you don't know how they got there, and you don't know who coined them,” notes Sheidlower. “Some of them might be obvious as figurative extensions of existing terms. *Fiscal cliff*, for instance, is not that unexpected of a metaphor.”

(One of the reasons it's not so unexpected, he says, is that it's not new. One of his colleagues found an example of *fiscal cliff* being used in 1975 in a similar political context about budgetary discussions.)

Slang continues to be a source of new words, and there's a long tradition of the world of technology being almost ubiquitous in lexicographic discussions. “If you look at the 15th century there were tons of words coming in, medical terms from Latin or French. Twenty years ago, it was the personal computer, 10 years ago it was the Internet, now it's texting and apps and smartphones and all that,” says Sheidlower. “Electronic communication certainly is an important source.”

### Barnhart Was a Trailblazer

It goes all the way back to Sputnik. That's when Clarence Barnhart, then-editor of the Thorndike-Barnhart series of dictionaries, hurriedly retooled a page in one of his smaller desk dictionaries to accommodate the name of the Soviet communication satellite in 1957. A quarter-century later, he and his son David began what would become The Barnhart Dictionary Companion, a quarterly publication that features new English words exclusively. David Barnhart is the current editor.

Barnhart estimates that more than 12,000 new words a year fall under his eye, but few of them are worthy of inclusion in his publication.

"There are too many people who may come up with a word and use it once or twice and it falls by the wayside," he says. "And there may be no compelling reason to use it again. It needs some currency. Most of the terms are either lacking in currency or they are in such a highly rarified subject area, like astronomy, for instance, that people aren't going to go to the dictionary to seek them out."

And, says Barnhart, some words simply fall out of fashion and use and consequently may disappear from some dictionaries (with the exception of the OED, which never excises a word once it's made the grade). "The word *diva*, for instance. It made a run at applying to any strong woman and it really hasn't stuck," Barnhart says. "It's begun to dwindle in recent years. People will use it, but it usually applies in the areas of sports and music." The word, he adds, originally meant goddess.


Others that have been excluded from Merriam-Webster's stable: *Ostmark* (the unit of currency of the former East Germany), *bodad* (an old slang term for a wannabe surfer), *vitamin G* (now known as riboflavin), and—a sad note for people who were teenagers in the '50s and '60s—*record changer*.

A few words from the last year or so that have caught the attention of lexicographers and, in particular, the American Dialect Society: *door buster* (extra-attractive deals offered at stores), *Frankenstorm* (a reference to Hurricane Sandy), *Eastwooding* (making a point by arguing with an empty chair), *text neck* (a literal pain in the neck that results from too much texting), *reverse retouching* (doctoring an already doctored photo to make it appear more real) and *hyperlocal* (intensely local media coverage).

Whether or not there's any gold in them will be determined by watching,

listening and a lot of waiting. Tracking new words is a bottomless task, notes Barnhart, yet one in which he finds endless fascination. He reads and listens to a wide range of media sources, and is ever-vigilant when he goes out and about.

"I keep my ears and eyes alert to the noises and print that I encounter. I sometimes resort to [writing things down] in a 'little black book' when I hear something interesting, a la Henry Higgins," says Barnhart, alluding to the fictional phonetics professor in the musical *My Fair Lady*.

"New words are all over the place. Even if you had the staff and budget of the Pentagon, you couldn't find them all." 

**Patrick Mott** is a Southern California-based writer and regular contributor to this magazine.

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# IT'S A GOOD IDEA— WHY DON'T YOU GET IT?

How to convince others that you're right.

By Michael LeFan

**H**ave you ever had a good idea, only to discover that you could not convince anyone else of its worth? You feel like saying, “It’s a good idea—why don’t you get it?”

When leaders present their ideas, others listen and agree ... or at least that’s how it works in theory. However, if it were that simple, nobody would ever have to think or say, “It’s a good idea—why don’t you get it?” Anyone trying to “sell” goods, services or ideas to others needs effective skills to get an edge in dealing with fierce competition in the marketplace. Salespeople not only have to contend with aggressive competitors and a collapsing framework of customers, they also have to deal with cost-cutting practices. They are often challenged within their own organization by competing plans and ideas.

In many cases, the key to success is the ability to persuade others of your point. This skill can be used by anyone needing to influence others at work or at home. The process begins at the point you encounter opposition. One common problem is the failure to take the other person’s wishes into account. We may be so in love with our own ideas that we don’t bother to consider the thoughts and ideas of others.

In his book, *Why Don't You Want What I Want?: How to Win Support for Your Ideas Without Hard Sell, Manipulation, or Power Plays*, Rick Maurer says we can avoid persuasion traps by paying attention to three things: the idea itself, the emotional reaction to it, and the other person’s confidence in us. All three of these need to be in place if our idea is to take root.

We all tend to resist the onrush of a runaway idea. Maurer, a change-management consultant, suggests this happens when we fail to address another person’s viewpoint. Overcoming resistance demands that others understand your idea, get excited about it and then agree it’s the problem-solver for the situation. To transform resistance into agreement, you must identify any limiting issues and neutralize them.

People might say about your idea, “I can’t see it.” Their emotional reaction might be, “I don’t like it.” Or they may lack confidence in you and say, “I don’t think I like you.” If you hope to persuade, you must keep the original idea in mind, be aware of the reaction to it, and clearly understand your relationship with the other person or persons.

If you are stuck in an impasse with someone, view that as an opportunity. Success starts with tough times. As an old Arabian proverb says, “Calm seas do not make able sailors.” People may become angry and abandon rational thinking, but by keeping your cool you can rise above the fray.

You deal with all kinds of people every day. Having strategies for dealing with them will give you confidence—and help you whenever conflict resolution arises. Among the people you are likely to encounter:

**The Know-It-Alls:** They’re arrogant, and have an opinion on every issue. When wrong, they get defensive.

**The Gripers:** They prefer complaining over seeking a solution.

**Now-You-Tell-Me Characters:** These people never volunteer ideas and they never let you know where

they stand (unless they’re also After-the-Fact Grippers).

**The Intimidators:** These folks bully. They are demanding and unrelentingly critical.

**The “Yes” People:** They agree to anything, but you can’t depend on them to produce real results.

**The “No” People:** They quickly point out why something won’t work. They can’t be swayed.

You’ve probably tried to persuade some of the aforementioned character types about the attributes of a “good idea,” only to wonder why they didn’t recognize its genius. It helps to remember these persuasion tips:

Begin by learning to understand the difficult people in your life. Try to find out how they think and what they fear. It can help you understand why they do what they do, and understanding makes dealing with them less frustrating.

- ▶ Be proactive, not reactive. Determine beforehand what to do and say.
- ▶ Become less of a target. Chances are good that at least somebody gets along with the difficult people in your life. Figure out how, and learn to get along, too.
- ▶ Bring out the best in others. Nobody is difficult all of the time, and we’re all difficult some of the time. Seek to reinforce the positive behavior in others.

To become a successful leader, you must understand how to persuasively communicate without badgering, manipulating or pulling rank. Piece of cake, right? **T**

Michael LeFan is a freelance writer and author. Learn more at [www.lefan.com](http://www.lefan.com).

# THE SOFTER SIDE OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership is all about how you make other people feel.

By Gary Burnison

**T**he world's most impactful leaders in all arenas, from business to government, understand the paradox that although leadership starts with the leader, it's never about the leader. A leader's primary objective is to empower others to make decisions and to take actions that align with the organization's vision, purpose and strategy.

As a leader, you must be hands-on. You're "all in" in terms of commitment, but the spotlight is on the results of the team, not on you. It takes real effort to empower people and to continually reward a team with praise and acknowledgement. It's a commitment on the part of a leader to do more listening than speaking so that others feel heard while valuable feedback is collected. These nuances are the softer side of leadership.

By the time I became a CEO, I had developed the ability to strategize, implement and execute. Once I was in the job, however, I had new lessons to learn. For one, as CEO, when I spoke, it wasn't just for me.

People perceived me differently because of the position and the institution I represented. I noticed this first when people began to read my mood like tea leaves. If I was worried, distracted or having a "gray day," they suddenly began to wonder if they should be concerned. I quickly understood that I needed to convey my messages not only with *what* I said, but also with *how* I said it. I focused more attention on my tone. When you're the leader, people look to you for assurance.

As you define and distinguish your leadership skills, here are some tips and insights for mastering the all-important softer side.

**Leaders are the mirrors for the entire organization.** If the leader is down, the organization will follow. If leaders reflect optimism and confidence, the organization will rise. Good leaders have the ability after every conversation to make people feel better, more capable and more willing to stretch than they did before the conversation occurred.

**Leadership is taking charge to help others execute.** A leader does not tell people what to think or do, but rather guides them in what to think about. Taking charge means setting the strategy and agenda—and also making sure that the length of the runway is right for the organization to actualize that agenda. Remember, it's others who will need to execute against that plan. If you try to charge up the mountain without the buy-in of your followers, you'll find yourself trekking alone.


**Leadership is awareness of what you're not hearing.** It's a fact of life as a leader: People won't tell you what you really need to know, only what they think you want to hear. To keep from being isolated, you need to be engaged. Stay close to your customers and employees. Ask questions with an inquiring mind (don't conduct an "inquisition"). Look to reopen people's eyes to situations and possibilities, starting with yours.

**Leadership should be humbling.** Humility is the grace that constantly whispers, "It's not about you." Humility means that you know who you are, where you've been, and what you have accomplished. With that knowledge, you can get out of your own way and

focus on others with the confidence that you can lead, inspire and guide them.

**Leadership has an endpoint—organizations should not.** Just as a leader took over from someone else, so others will follow the leader as a successor. Your job as a leader is to be the source of energy and change that will grow the organization during your time and to act as a steward. Then you will turn it over to another. The team should be in better shape now, as compared to when you inherited it.

**Leadership is all about how you make other people feel.** Your achievement as a leader is measured in the successes of others. To motivate and inspire, you must shift from "what must be done" to "why we're doing this." You can't just put up targets and tell people to take aim to reap a short-term reward. Leadership conveys and embodies the enduring purpose and deeper reasons for an organization's existence.

As a leader, you plan, strategize and set priorities. Your primary responsibilities, however, are always to inspire, motivate and empower others. As a leader, you rise above "me" to embrace "we." 

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**Gary Burnison** is the CEO of Korn/Ferry International, a worldwide leader in executive recruitment and talent development based in Los Angeles. He is the author of *The Twelve Absolutes of Leadership* and *The New York Times* best-seller *No Fear of Failure*.



Pictured from left are Capitol Toastmasters members Jeffrey Ira Krasner, Sitanan Sriworakan, Kittima Lohavanijaya, Jatuphat Limprapruetkul and a guest.

# EMBRACING MULTICULTURALISM

How our club draws strength from 18 nations.

By Pierre-Andre Rheault, CC, CL

**A**t our club's recent executive committee meeting, we were amazed when we looked at the number of nationalities represented in our membership roster. Out of 54 active members of Capitol Toastmasters club in Bangkok, Thailand, we counted 18 different nationalities. We have members from Thailand, the United States, China, Canada, France, Germany, Iran, India, Vietnam, the United Kingdom, Australia, Nepal, Japan, Sweden, Norway, Portugal, South Korea and the Philippines. We are proud of this diversity, and we think of it as one of our club's greatest strengths.

On a personal level, Toastmasters has helped me improve my communication and leadership skills and advance my career. Before joining, I was a timid speaker. Once, during a conference I was attending, the host asked a question. He offered me the microphone, expecting me to reply with an answer. I was unable to utter a single word. The host moved on to another person.

It was then that I decided to become a member of Toastmasters—I joined Capitol Toastmasters club.

Being a member has also improved my cross-cultural communication skills. One year after joining Capitol

Toastmasters, shortly after completing my Competent Communicator projects, I was hired to promote overseas studies to students in Vietnamese universities and colleges. This involved speaking in front of several hundred people, including students, teachers and university deans—a feat I could not have pulled off a year earlier.

## A Club Questionnaire

To find out what our members see as specific advantages we gain from having a culturally diverse club, we asked them to reply to a questionnaire. The results showed the benefits could be grouped





Members of the author's club, Capitol Toastmasters in Bangkok, Thailand, enjoy the benefits of belonging to a multicultural club.

into three areas: 1) learning about different cultures; 2) improving cross-cultural communication; and (3) enhancing leadership skills in a multicultural setting.

Members of Capitol Toastmasters learn about many different cultures, and as our survey shows, they view that as the number one benefit from being in a culturally diverse club. One founding member, Tim Cornwall, DTM, from Ottawa, Canada, says, "Where else would I get to learn about so many different cultures and customs while also being able to share mine?"

In any given club meeting, you might hear about the world's diamond trade, the importance of studying law

at a Thai university or what it was like to grow up in a small town in northeast India.

"I have learned that people from different cultures have different ways of thinking and different attitudes towards the same thing, which helps me understand that no one is absolutely right or wrong," says club member Xueying "Wanda" Wang, ACS, who is originally from China. "This helps me be more open-minded to different perspectives."

This increased awareness, says Wang, influences her choice of speech topics. She gives speeches about love, friendship and relationships between men and women—topics that usually transcend cultural boundaries.

## Improving Cross-Cultural Communication

Capitol Toastmasters provides the opportunities to practice reaching out to members of different cultures. As a French-speaking Canadian who now leads a team of Thai and Vietnamese co-workers in promoting American and European organizations in Asia, I have learned from cross-cultural communication experiences, including misunderstandings. In the early days of my employment in Vietnam, I explained my points of view to people based on experiences I had in Canada. The response I got from co-workers was, "We are in Vietnam, and in Vietnam this is how we do it."

To communicate more effectively, I had to learn more about the culture of the country in which I worked. I accomplished my goal in Toastmasters—in the city where my employer was based. Capitol Toastmasters had several Vietnamese members, and after learning more about their culture, I adapted my work presentations by telling my audiences “Hello, my friends” in Vietnamese (*Xin chào các bạn*). I won them over.

### Improving Leadership in a Multicultural Setting

Fulfilling a leadership role at Capitol Toastmasters means helping people from different cultures. And in a world where globalization is increasing, leadership in a multicultural setting is more important than ever.

“Where else would I get to learn about so many different cultures and customs while also being able to share mine?”

— Tim Cornwall, DTM

Club member Kakuko Yoshida, from Japan, has worked in more than 70 countries. She says, “At this club, I get to challenge myself by trying to win over a diverse audience—both culturally and generationally, as well as professionally.”

With such leadership also comes challenges. Peter Keusgen, DTM, originally from Australia, is a past president of Capitol Toastmasters. Keusgen has worked for several multinational companies in Asia and says certain values are the same in every language and culture—they just get dressed up differently and are presented in different ways.

“Once our club started recognizing the different ways truth and desire are presented or are held back from a variety of cultures, the club expanded—both in numbers and in cultural wealth,” he says. The approach Keusgen took was to identify members

whose cultures usually hold them back from volunteering for top club leadership positions, and then connect them with informal mentors from the same culture or a similar one. This helps the club bridge the cultural divide.

Now a division governor in Thailand, Keusgen says, “The most obvious challenge is determining which dynamics come from personality traits and which come from cultural backgrounds. Once you get past this, the rewards start coming in.”

### How Our Club Became Multicultural

Capitol Toastmasters has not always had the multicultural membership it has now. Three years ago, the almost all white-male membership embarked on a project to make the club more

international. Looking back, we recognize the factors that helped us accomplish this goal. First and foremost, having a “gathering figure” as the head of our club helped us reach out to people of different cultures. That person was Wanda Wang. One of the few women in our club, Wanda was one of our most active members. When she became president of Capitol Toastmasters, we saw a difference in new membership. Her background, speech topics and friendly mannerisms made guests and new members feel welcome. Asian female guests, in particular, felt comfortable joining the club because of Wanda’s confidence as a Chinese woman.

Another development that increased our club’s diversity occurred by accident. Club meetings were previously held at an executive club lounge in a building in the center of the Thai capital city. The executive club had a

dress code; therefore, people in jeans or university uniforms could not attend our meetings. When the building closed for renovation, we moved our meetings to a site where there was no dress code. Attendance then improved considerably.

### A Focus on Communication, Not Just Language

Capitol Toastmasters is flexible in upholding a language standard. Although members help non-native English speakers like myself become more proficient with their English language skills, it is not the primary focus of the club. We function without grammarians, and that helps non-native English speakers feel less self-conscious about their language use.

Club member Govindan Talian Veedu, CC, is director of Cambridge University Press for the Association for Southeast Asian Countries region. “Capitol Toastmasters has a true cosmopolitan environment and culture. While it has several members from native English-speaking countries, these members never intimidate non-native members, which I believe is the true spirit of Toastmasters.”

### Conflicts and Misunderstandings

Carelessness with words creates conflicts. This is especially true when people make comments that draw on cultural stereotypes. Our club members avoid saying things such as “The rich kids of Bangkok come here in chauffeured BMWs” or “Canadians don’t say many *ums* and *ahs* because they say *eh* at the end of each sentence.” Sensitivity is emphasized, especially when referring to someone else’s culture.

However, misunderstandings do occasionally arise due to different points of view. For example, if a member suggests someone should be a club officer because of his or her racial background or gender, it could be interpreted as meaning he or she would be selected purely on that background alone, rather than on communication



and leadership skills. We all must be sensitive to the feelings of others.

Challenges can also arise from the observation of religious holidays. Although our members follow different customs, all of them respect the culture of our host country. We observe only the religious holidays of Thailand; however, we do celebrate the calendar new year.

Despite some difficulties, we receive guests each week and welcome new members each month. Visitors learn about our club through word of mouth. Jihyun Kim, a recent guest from South Korea, says she heard about Toastmasters through her Nepalese friend and colleague at the United Nations complex in Bangkok. She says of Capitol Toastmasters, "The fact that it is such a multicultural group somehow made me feel very comfortable."

We also attract visitors through our active online presence, which includes our website and Facebook page. And

whenever guests visit, we welcome them, no matter where they are from.

### The "Soi 8 Bar" Effect

Our club is popular with those interested in cultural exchange, but it's also popular with Thai citizens who have spent time abroad. Prae Piromya's parents were government diplomats, and because of their various assignments, she grew up in different countries. "I came to Toastmasters to learn how to speak eloquently and convincingly in public. Instead, I got much more," she says. "I got leadership skills, great friends and even a boyfriend!"

"And now, even my parents want to join."

After club meetings, members sometimes meet for drinks and dinner at a restaurant called Soi 8 Bar (which translates into "Eighth Street Bar" in English), bonding with each other and developing friendships.

Just recently, the club celebrated its 600th meeting. More than 50 people attended, and they saw seven new members present their Ice Breakers. Learning about other cultures, improving cross-cultural communication and enhancing leadership skills in a multicultural setting are just a few of the benefits our members enjoy. Any club with determination, a focus on common values and a little flexibility can achieve greater diversity and enjoy the same types of benefits. **T**

**Pierre-Andre Rheault, CC, CL**, is a member of Capitol Toastmasters club in Bangkok, Thailand. Originally from Quebec City, Canada, he is an international relations officer at a work-and-study-abroad agency that promotes American and Canadian universities and organizations to students of Thailand and Vietnam.



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# OF BILINGUALISM AND BRAVERY

Entering a French speech contest was an eye-opener for this English speaker.

By Dick Bourgeois-Doyle, CC

**A**t your next club meeting, just for fun, ask for a show of hands from those who speak a language other than English. As you count the total, reflect on how this multilingual dimension could add a new quality to meetings, amplify your club's impact and stretch your ability to engage new members. You might also ask yourself what it could mean for you personally.

For me, speaking another language led to an unusual and rewarding experience in a speech contest. But more on that later.

Here in Canada, the most common non-English language is French.

Canada is officially a bilingual country. More than half the clubs in my district (District 61) identify themselves as bilingual, and the district consistently promotes bilingual club formats and services for its members.

District leaders are careful to avoid the misperception that Toastmasters is a place to learn another language, yet they recognize that the confidence and skills members develop can make us more effective in any tongue. French-speaking Toastmasters readily accept the challenges of speaking English. "English has always been tricky for me, but I try to not let it stop me from participating fully in meetings," says

Sylvie Couture, who is vice president membership of the CMHC-SCHL club in Ottawa, Ontario. "But I used to cause a lot of confusion when I suggested to people that 'we should elope'—believing that it meant we should get going."

The Canadian government is also a strong supporter of bilingual communication. It promotes bilingual business meetings with tips that resonate with Toastmasters everywhere: Acknowledge guests, respect everyone's comments during discussions, and evaluate meetings after they are over.

"It is true that bilingual meetings can take a little longer and require

more preparation, but the benefits are great,” says Cécile Villard, a Corporate Official Languages Coordinator with a Canadian federal agency. “We know from experience that people are more willing to participate, speak with greater ease and feel respected if their first language is being used even a bit—and, of course, there are no shortcuts to making everyone feel truly welcome.”

### My Linguistic Adventures

Despite my bilingual-bicultural surname—Bourgeois-Doyle—no one who talks with me in French would mistake me for anything other than a product of the English-speaking side of Canadian society. As a government

employee whose career has often been defined by my linguistic abilities, I have long regarded French as a daunting challenge and strain.

employee whose career has often been defined by my linguistic abilities, I have long regarded French as a daunting challenge and strain.

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“Unless you go over time or screw up your registration form,” a co-worker observed, “you’re going to win a French speech contest. That’s crazy!”

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**Dick Bourgeois-Doyle, CC**, is vice president education of CMHC-SCHL Toastmasters in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. The club’s initials stand for “Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation-La Société Canadienne d’Hypothèques et de Logement.” Dick is director of corporate governance at the National Research Council of Canada. His blog is **stubbornbooks.blogspot.ca**. (To read the Humorous Contest speech he delivered in French, click on the link on the right-hand side of the blog page that says “Bilingualism and Award for Bravery.”)

## SUPPORTING A BILINGUAL CLUB

If you want to help your bilingual club flourish, keep the following tips in mind.

### ► Greetings and Agendas

If a significant number of your members are more comfortable in another language, make it a standard practice for the Toastmaster of the meeting to greet everyone in two languages and to develop agenda templates in both languages. Even though the speeches, Table Topics and evaluations may be in English, simple gestures constitute a polite acknowledgement and a token of respect.

### ► Explaining Roles in Other Languages

While most of us understand the benefits of explaining our club meeting roles, a tedious feel can creep into the proceedings after the 30th or 40th time that the timer and grammarian have described their duties. To mix things up, permit members who speak in different native tongues to explain their roles in another language.

### ► Try It Yourself

If you can get the help of a bilingual mentor, consider trying to deliver a speech in a language with which you are not entirely comfortable. It’s a unique experience—you will expand your speech-giving skills, your fellow club members will appreciate it and you might even be recognized for a peculiar kind of bravery.





# THE POWER OF CULTURAL REFERENCES

Make a quick connection with your audience through stories, poetry, music or pop culture.

By John Lente, ACS, ALB

**A**s a speaker, you must reach your listeners in a way that allows them to feel the impact of your message. How would you like to connect with your audience on a personal, emotional and culturally significant level by saying just one sentence?

If you make a connection in just a few words, you will have more time for quotes, catch phrases, supporting material and other meaningful ways of delivering and reinforcing your message.

Consider the following example:

*My anniversary is coming up, and my wife has been leaving*

*breadcrumbs all over the house about what she wants me to get her. I found a travel brochure on the coffee table. She leaves her magazines open to ads for tourist resorts. And she even changed our Internet home page to the cruise line company's website!*

What of the reference to breadcrumbs in the first sentence? If you were raised in Western society, you are probably familiar with the Brothers Grimm fairy tale of Hansel and Gretel, two German children abandoned in the woods. The children dropped breadcrumbs along the trail as they went into the forest so they could follow the crumbs back home.

The speaker makes that cultural connection by having the wife leave metaphorical breadcrumbs to provide travel clues to her husband.

Here's another example:

*When I returned home after studying abroad for two years, I felt as if I were walking like a raven. My accent had changed, my taste in clothes was different from what my old friends wore, and my family said I didn't quite fit in anymore.*

In this example, the listener can infer that the speaker felt like a stranger in his homeland after studying abroad. What does walking like a raven have to do with the speaker



feeling like a changed person who no longer fits in? Those raised in the Middle East or southwest Asia have probably heard the fable told in *Kalila wa Dimna* (an Arabic literary classic) about the raven (or crow, in some versions) that tried to walk with the grace of a partridge. The raven failed, and then struggled to return to its original style of walking. Unable to fit in, it was ostracized by the other birds. Thus, walking like a raven can symbolize the feeling of alienation in one's own homeland.

By tapping into stories, songs, poetry and pop culture, you can make an immediate connection with the

kids enthusiastically follow one teen and applaud his every action, but when another emulates the actions of the popular kid—or even outperforms him—no one cheers or appreciates him.

In your speeches, articles and other presentations, you won't have time to explain an entire television show or the connection between two rock bands and their lead singers. So you need to research and select your references carefully to reach a broad audience with minimal explanation needed. Folk stories, fairy tales and classical poetry have been around for hundreds of years and are told and

leaders are widely influential in their day but soon forgotten when their power wanes, while others have an enduring impact. By referencing leaders such as Abraham Lincoln, Mother Teresa, John F. Kennedy, Confucius, Winston Churchill, Gandhi or Nelson Mandela, you can reach broad audiences around the world.

There is a significant difference between citing a source and making a reference. When a speaker cites a poem, book or other source, he is really saying, "I've read this person's works, but you haven't." While it is valuable as a form of instruction, it creates a sense of difference between the speaker and the audience. When you make a reference, do it unobtrusively. If you integrate it properly, it will feel like an integral part of the material and will support it. If your reference can't be worked in smoothly, consider drawing upon more widely recognized material or save the reference for another presentation.

When speaking to an audience from a different culture, first familiarize yourself with that culture. What is the audience's average age and educational level? What is their primary religious background? Learn which political leaders, societal thinkers, authors, singers and other cultural figures have influenced your audience, and study those people.

Through the use of appropriate references in your speeches, you will create a greater connection with your audience, and they won't need breadcrumbs to find your message. **T**

By tapping into stories, songs, poetry and pop culture, you can make an immediate connection with the audience.

audience. Such literary cultural references tell the audience, "I am like you. We share a common background."

### Layered References

Recently I was driving in the car with my 15-year-old son, listening to the American pop-rock band Smash Mouth. The group's song "The Fonz" expresses frustration at the fickleness of celebrity popularity. More poignantly, the song references the late Kurt Cobain, front man of the famous grunge-rock band Nirvana. My son, knowing neither Kurt Cobain nor the character of The Fonz (from the American 1970s hit TV series *Happy Days*), missed the meaning of the song title. So he and I discussed Arthur "The Fonz" Fonzone. The motorcycle-riding character was the embodiment of everything cool and popular, regardless of the quality or morality of his actions.

Once I explained the context, my son understood the depth of the song and the references it made. In his own life he had seen how high school

retold by one generation to the next. Pop culture, on the other hand, has a limited shelf life.

In addition, keep the following points in mind:

- ▶ Fairy tales and most folk tales will appeal to the audience's "inner child." They elicit emotions on the subjects of home, youth and parental nurturing.
- ▶ Classical poetry and literature reach audiences that are more mature or better educated than younger listeners.
- ▶ Popular music and television shows get through to younger audiences on a wide scale—even internationally—but only for a limited time. The American television show *Friends* influenced fashion, conversation and humor for nearly a decade. A decade later it is essentially unknown to the 20-something audience that was its biggest target.

### Quote Leaders

You can also quote societal and political leaders to make quick, strong connections with your audience. Some

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# CRAZY AS A LOON

Really? Let's take the bull by the horns.

By John Cadley

**C**lear communication requires clear thinking, and when I hear some of the figures of speech people use every day, I wonder if they're thinking at all. For instance, when you've been postponing a decision, a well-meaning friend will invariably say, "It's time you took the bull by the horns." Really? Have you ever seen a bull? Do you know how much he likes being grabbed

Skunks don't drink, not even an occasional glass of sherry after dinner.

by the horns? If you did, you would know that it is never time to take the bull by the horns—unless you like the idea of spending several months being fed through a tube.

Tell your *friend* to take the bull by the horns, and then go over to where he's been thrown into a tree and ask: How's that workin' for ya?

What your friend means, of course, is that it's time for you to take command of the situation. Fine. Then let's come up with a figure of speech that clearly reflects that meaning, something like, "It's time to grab the kitty by the back of the neck." Now *that's* a situation you can control.

Another oft-repeated phrase is that someone is as "drunk as a skunk." Skunks don't drink, not even an occasional glass of sherry after dinner. And thank God they don't, or they'd be spraying everything in sight just for the fun of it. I know—it rhymes. Big deal. So does "bee's knees." So does "lucky duck." Bees don't have knees

and ducks aren't lucky, not when they have to stick their behinds in the air just to get a little food.

We can do better. The next time you encounter a drunk person, you might say, "You're as drunk as an individual who has consumed a quantity of alcohol sufficient to impair the normal functioning of your mental and physical faculties. Even a skunk wouldn't do that." I know—it's long,

but the shock of hearing it might sober the person up.

"Dead as a doornail" bugs me, too. Something can't be dead unless it was once alive, and to my knowledge, a sharpened piece of metal with a cap on the one end for pounding with a hammer does not fit into the category of sentient beings. I suppose we could get all New Age and say everything is "alive," even the rocks and the dirt, and we could sit naked in sweat lodges and talk to trees and eat flax. But let's face it—those people are nuts. Especially if they think you can kill a doornail.

And why just the nail that goes into the door? What about the floor nail and the wall nail and the ceiling nail? They get pounded just as hard as the doornail. How come they aren't dead, too? Sure, "dead as a doornail" is alliterative. Short and sweet. You don't have to go into the morbid details of how the being in question actually died. The worst thing is that

the phrase implies a comparison, as if there are different kinds of dead:

*How dead is he?*

*Dead as a doornail.*

*Wow, that's pretty dead. Too bad he isn't as dead as a deck screw. He might not be as dead.*

I don't even like the word *homemade*. I know—it's like dissing mom and apple pie. But think about it. Where do you see *homemade*? In a store. So the next question is: Whose home was it made in? I've been in some homes where the kitchen should be closed by the health department.

Finally, there are these wonderful little catch phrases made up by our local television newscasters, like "weather on the tens" and "breaking news as it breaks." A news program here in my hometown even promises "eleven nonstop minutes." What the program means is eleven minutes of news without commercial interruption, but that doesn't sound dramatic enough, so the news station's promotions department comes up with a slogan that defies the laws of the universe. If you're seven minutes into the program and the power goes out, the minutes aren't going to stop, folks. Sorry. If you want to invent a time warp, go to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and work in theoretical physics.

I have to stop now. Writing about meaningless clichés makes me mad as a hornet. Wait, let me rephrase that. **T**

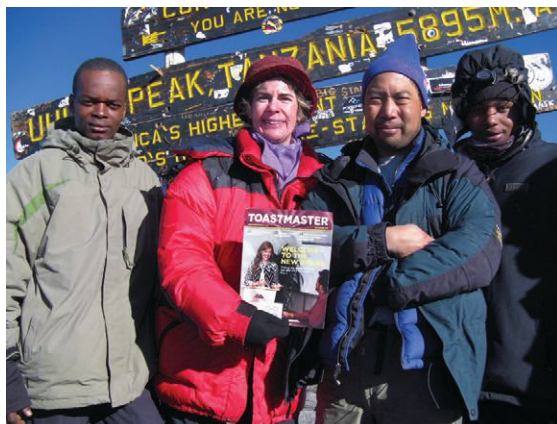
**John Cadley**, a former advertising copywriter, is a freelance writer and musician living in Fayetteville, New York.



## TRAVELING **TOASTMASTER**



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**Elaine Lung** from Sunnyvale, California, poses with her husband (center) and two tour guides at the top of Uhuru Peak on Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania.



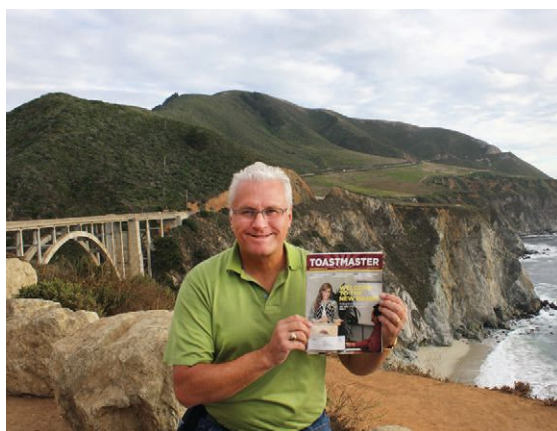
**Sze-Wen Kuo** from Bedford, Massachusetts, stands at the foot of the Jokulsarlon Lagoon in southeast Iceland.



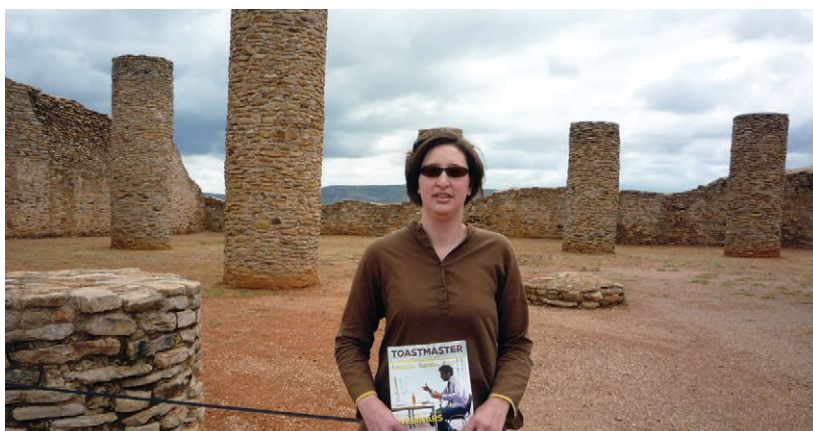
**Juanita Wilson** from St. Louis, Missouri, revels in the beauty of Honolulu, Hawaii.



**Brad Barker** and wife **Judy Pugh**, both from Boylston, Massachusetts, take in the sights near Lake Wanaka in the Otago region of New Zealand.



**Rick Lundy** from Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, smiles by the Bixby Bridge in Big Sur, California.



**Holly Gerdes** from Cincinnati, Ohio, explores the Chicomóztoc ruins of La Quemada in Zacatecas, Mexico.



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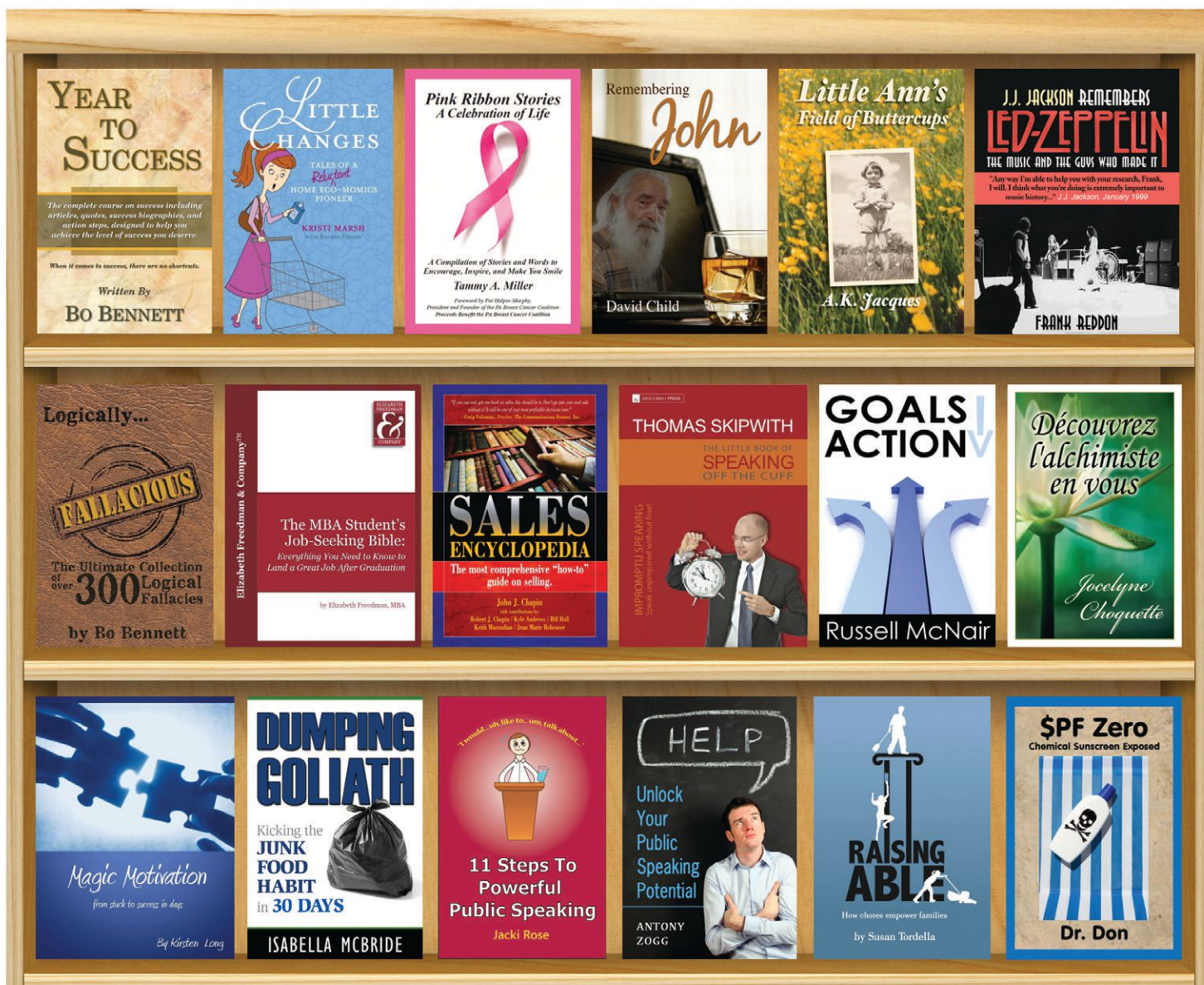
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