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## A GARDENER'S APPROACH

How to use tools to harvest  
ideas for speeches.

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## OUR THOUGHTS TODAY BECOME REALITY TOMORROW



**The month of August is special** because it is when the Toastmasters International Convention is held. It is the time of year when as Toastmasters we have a “family reunion” and get to meet members from around the world and learn first-hand about their journey in Toastmasters. By meeting people from diverse cultures we also have the opportunity to learn *about* their cultures.

I encourage you to travel to Cincinnati, Ohio, August 21–24, to attend the convention. On behalf of the Toastmasters Board of Directors, I welcome you to experience this life-changing event!

The first convention I attended was in the year 2000. It was an eye-opening experience, as I got to meet world leaders, past international presidents and directors, top district leaders and other fellow members. I also met two of my Toastmasters mentors. Since then, I have attended every convention.


**If we are confident in our ability to be successful, we will achieve our goals and success will follow.**

On a separate note, August is the second month into the 2013–2014 program year. Each year, I set a personal Toastmasters goal. Have you set your goals for the program year? If you are a club leader, have you worked with the members of your club to decide on their educational goals? Set achievable goals, and make them measurable, specific and realistic. Evaluate your progress every month, and always have a contingency plan.

We share an important responsibility in upholding our Toastmasters values, and in sharing the benefits with our friends, co-workers and family members as they learn and grow. As these new members undergo their transformation process, we as more experienced members serve as role models. Our actions should echo the organization’s vision, mission and core values.

Our thoughts today will become our reality tomorrow. If we are confident in our ability to be successful, we will achieve our goals and success will follow. Let us work together in the pursuit of excellence, for the benefit of our communities. By becoming effective as communicators in society, we will create a better world.

Those who have strong and positive beliefs will live lives of greatness and strength.

Thank you for your commitment, dedication and courage in serving one another in Toastmasters, where leaders are made. 

  
**JOHN LAU, DTM**  
International President

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**WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE**  
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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.**





**"The hug is a common type of greeting here in the Arab world, and especially in Saudi Arabia."**

— Mohammed Haneef KM, ACS, ALB

## Relishing the **Recap**

Howard Scott's article "Feedback with a Recap" (June) was a great reminder of the value of club meeting recaps for both members and guests. Recaps are easy to do, yet you rarely see them. Of some 20 clubs I visited in Paris, Latvia and Tokyo, only *one* sent out a meeting recap.

My club, Paris Speech Masters, sends a regular newsletter a week after each meeting. In addition, reminders about meeting roles are sent a day before each meeting. Such efforts make people feel like they belong. More than once I have heard members say that it was the quality of post-meeting communication that encouraged them to revisit the club and eventually join.

Natalie Cernecka  
Paris Speech Masters  
Paris, France

## Glued to **Greenland Story**

Carl Duivenvoorden's article "From Greenland to Everywhere" (May) was both engaging and educational. I worried about the technical challenges Carl faced, and then I celebrated his success when he overcame them. I hung onto every passage and lived the moment vicariously. I cannot remember the last time I was glued to an article like that.

What an incredible opportunity—to speak about climate change from Greenland. I hope Carl will write more articles about his professional speaking engagements. Too many Toastmasters think that professional speaking is a staged, contrived act. I know there are many Toastmasters who have bolstered their careers

through these sorts of speaking opportunities. Let's hear more about those times!

Lou Ann Frederick, DTM, PDG  
BBraun Toastmasters  
Irvine, California

## Doornail **Debate**

I always enjoy John Cadley's "Funny You Should Say That" columns. His April column, "Crazy as a Loon," was no exception, except that he was off base by lambasting the phrase "dead as a doornail." Nails were not cheap in the day of Charles Dickens and thus were reused. Doornails were bent over to prevent them from pulling out, so these nails were dead to reuse.

I agree we need to come up with an updated expression, such as "dead as a bent screw" or "dead as an old joke."

Brian Kinsley, DTM  
Creativity+ Toastmasters  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

## Benefits of **Diversity**

The article "Embracing Multiculturalism" by Pierre-Andre Rheault (April) made me think of my club in Cleveland, Ohio. Our city is not often thought of as cosmopolitan, but if you dig deeper, you'll find that Cleveland was built by a wide-ranging group of Europeans. The city now embraces a more diverse group of non-natives.

Our club has members from Mexico, Romania, India, China, Colombia and beyond. Such cultural variety adds so much value to the club; the speeches are diverse and interesting, and each meeting is a learning experience.

Diana C. Golob  
Mid-Day Toastmasters  
Cleveland, Ohio

## Hugging **It Out**

I enjoyed reading "Hugs Make the World Go 'Round" (March) in the magazine's Around the Globe section. The hug is a universal form of physical intimacy. It is a form of nonverbal communication, especially when close friends offer each other a hug and a kiss.

The hug is a common type of greeting here in the Arab world, and especially in Saudi Arabia. The hug will not be initiated by someone unless he is sure the other person is a close friend. Otherwise, greetings are limited to a handshake.

Hugging applies as a greeting whether people meet in the street, in an office, at a conference, in a restaurant or at home. Hugs do make the world go 'round.

Mohammed Haneef KM, ACS, ALB  
Abdul Latif Jameel TM Club  
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

## Editor's **Note:**

*In January 2013, the Toastmaster magazine modified its submissions policy to only accept article queries (brief summaries or outlines) rather than completed articles. This change is to better guide the direction of your story. We continue to accept submissions for My Turn, Letters and photos. To view the revised guidelines, please visit [www.toastmasters.org/writerguidelines](http://www.toastmasters.org/writerguidelines).*

## Do you have something to say?

Write it in 200 words or less. State your name, member number and home club, and send it to [letters@toastmasters.org](mailto:letters@toastmasters.org). Please note: Letters are subject to editing for length or clarity, and may be published in both the print and electronic versions of the magazine.



# WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS

Toastmasters' founder shares his vision.

By Ralph C. Smedley

**Editor's Note:** *This essay by Ralph C. Smedley originally appeared in the Toastmaster magazine in July 1948. At that time, women were not part of the organization.*

**A** Toastmasters club is not a propaganda organization. It does not adopt resolutions, sponsor candidates, nor go out for "causes." It cannot commit its membership in support of any controversial matter, for its mem-

A Toastmasters club is definitely a training organization. It welcomes men of all sorts of opinions into its membership and undertakes to train them to think logically and to speak honestly...

bers come from all elements of society, and unanimity of opinion is hardly to be expected or desired. Different groups—social, political, religious, racial and occupational—are represented in the typical club. It is a cross-section of its community.

A Toastmasters club is definitely a training organization. It welcomes men of all sorts of opinions into its membership and undertakes to train them to think logically and to speak honestly in behalf of whatever cause or procedure they may believe in. The work of a Toastmasters club is to help each member to be his best self, as a member of society and as a protagonist of the things that seem to him most worthwhile.

But in the Toastmasters club, certain principles are held inviolable. Like our [country's] forefathers of 1776, "We hold these truths to be self-evident," although our list of "truths" may differ slightly from theirs.

We hold that every man is entitled to freedom of thought, as well as freedom of speech. He must be permitted—even encouraged—to study, learn, think and reach his own conclusions.

Every man, having thought, is entitled to *freedom of speech*. But his

hearers have the right to demand that he speak intelligently, reasonably and honestly if he expects them to listen.

Every man, speaking his well-considered thoughts, has a *right to be heard*. His right to be heard is in proportion to the worthiness of his thoughts, and the effectiveness of his speaking.

Every man, having spoken, has a *right to listen to others*. His listening must be with open mind, with analytical attitude, with a purpose to accept what is true and to reject what is untrue.

Every man has a *right to disagree* with what other people say, but he must learn to disagree without being disagreeable—to listen to the

opposition calmly and without losing his temper or his balance.

Finally, every man has a *right to share* his thoughts, his ideas and his convictions with everyone who will listen, but he has no right to force his opinions on anyone who will not accept them, nor to compel anyone to act unwillingly under his dictation.

I like the definition of individual freedom given by Dr. George Pinckard, an English scholar of the 18th century.

"True liberty," said Dr. Pinckard, "consists in the privilege of enjoying our own rights, not in the destruction of the rights of others."

And Frederic Farrar, another great Englishman, said it well with these words: "Man's liberty ends, and it ought to end, when that liberty becomes the curse of others."

The Toastmasters club stands for the integrity of the individual, for the sanctity of human character, and for the right of every man to express himself—always with this eternal and unchangeable rule, that "your rights are inviolable, and so are mine; your individual rights are limited as soon as they cross my rights; every person must recognize that personal rights are restricted by the rights of others."

That is the essence of the American ideal of individual freedom. That is what the Toastmasters club, in the final analysis, is proud to represent and advocate. **T**



Ralph C. Smedley

## AROUND THE GLOBE

### INTERNATIONAL INTERPRETATIONS

#### A TALE OF TWO CITIES



The cities of Cincinnati, Ohio, and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, have more in common than merely being sites for the 2013 and 2014 Toastmasters International Conventions, respectively. Both are known for their tasty cuisine and unique architecture.

Cincinnati has its chili. Locals embellish theirs with flavors such as cinnamon or chocolate before serving it over spaghetti or hot dogs. In Kuala Lumpur, try the *nasi lemak* (coconut-infused white rice) topped with roasted peanuts, *ikan bilis* (small fried anchovies), fried eggs and sliced cucumber.

After sampling the food in either city, take time to see the sights. Stroll the 25,000-square-foot Queen City Square pedestrian promenade near the Great American Tower—the tallest building in Cincinnati. In Kuala Lumpur, walk the 190-foot-long skybridge that links the Petronas Towers—the tallest twin buildings in the world.

### WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

#### WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE FOR COMPLETING THE COMPETENT COMMUNICATION (CC) MANUAL?

The following responses come from a LinkedIn Official Toastmasters International Members Group discussion:

“The projects in the CC manual are like building blocks—each skill you develop while working on a particular project will help you with your next speech. Project 2 is probably one of the most important projects in the manual. It teaches you how to have a well-structured speech. It is the basis for all of your future speeches. Once you have worked through the whole manual, you’ll know exactly how to prepare and deliver a speech that gets your message across clearly.

“Also, if you don’t have a mentor yet, talk to your vice president education.”

— STEPHEN GRANT, ACS, ALB, TORONTO BUSINESS TOASTMASTERS, TORONTO, CANADA

“In our club, we encourage new members to build skills from the ground up and follow the projects in the order listed in the CC manual.”

— ROBERT BACHMAN, CC, ALB, ALLIS CHALMERS TOASTMASTERS, WEST ALLIS, WISCONSIN

### SNAPSHOT



Tammy Lim Guat Cheng, CC, from Crystal Toastmasters in Selangor, Malaysia, poses at the Mount Everest base camp in Nepal. She eventually reached the base of Kala Patthar, an adjacent mountain from where she viewed Mount Everest’s peak.

### BOTTOM LINE

**Get a Convention Sneak Peek** Don’t miss the Toastmasters Podcast series. Get a preview of the International Convention’s speakers and education sessions at [www.toastmasters.org/podcast](http://www.toastmasters.org/podcast).

**New District** Another Toastmasters district has grown so large that it re-formed on July 1. Welcome District 44 in the southeastern part of the U.S. state of Georgia. It split from District 14.

**Free Resources** Be sure to take advantage of the free manuals and marketing fliers that Toastmasters International provides. Download them at [www.toastmasters.org/digitalcontent](http://www.toastmasters.org/digitalcontent).



## LANGUAGE TIP

### HELLO, GOODBYE

It takes years to master one language. But a busy traveling professional must quickly learn how to communicate with people who speak different languages. Learn how to say key words in various languages (listed alphabetically), while keeping in mind that some words or phrases are formal (F) or informal (I).

- **Hello:** *As-salām ‘alaykum* (Modern Standard Arabic, F); *salut* (French, I); *guten tag* (German, F); *namaste* (Hindi); *konnichiwa* (Japanese); *nǐ hǎo* (Mandarin); *hola* (Spanish).
- **Please:** *Mīn fāḍlikā* (Modern Standard Arabic); *s’il vous plaît* (French, F); *bitte* (German); *kriyaya* (Hindi); *kudasai* (Japanese); *mǎfán nǐ* (Mandarin); *por favor* (Spanish).
- **Goodbye:** *Ma’a as-salāmah* (Modern Standard Arabic); *au revoir* (French); *auf wiedersehen* (German, F); *namaste* (Hindi); *sayonara* (Japanese); *zai jian* (Mandarin); *adiós* (Spanish).
- **Thank you:** *Shukran* (Modern Standard Arabic, I); *merci* (French); *danke* (German); *dhanyavād* (Hindi, F); *arigatō* (Japanese); *xiexie* (Mandarin); *gracias* (Spanish).



## MEMBER MOMENT

### TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Ta-Da! Clive Greenaway, CC, pulls out a pigeon from an empty paper bag. It’s one of the tricks in his magic act. Greenaway is a magician, after-dinner speaker and auctioneer. He has entertained audiences with a blend of humor and hocus-pocus for more than 30 years.

Greenaway, whose stage name is “Clive St. James,” is president of the Cottonwood Speakers Club in Bournemouth, Dorset, United Kingdom. Many of his shows pay tribute to the late Tommy Cooper, a popular British comedian and magician.



Clive Greenaway, CC

### Why did you join Toastmasters?

As a professional working magician, I wanted to continue enhancing my profile in the after-dinner speaking circuit. So I took the opportunity in Toastmasters to practice bite-size pieces of my speeches—which are generally 45 to 60 minutes long—to get feedback from club members.

### How do you connect with your audience at the beginning of a show?

I think of walking onto the stage—the entrance—as my first opportunity to *entrance* the audience. It is important to hold the moment, establish my presence and give audience members the chance to take a look at me and the way I’m dressed, and to see my obvious pleasure in being there with them.

### What inspired you to perform a Tommy Cooper tribute act?

I grew up watching Tommy. He inspired me to be a magician. I love comedy, and he brought comedy and magic together.

Clive Greenaway is a member of the famous Magic Circle in London. Learn more about him at [afterdinnerstalking.net](http://afterdinnerstalking.net). Watch a clip of his Tommy Cooper show at [youtube/NdDmOK4yZlw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdDmOK4yZlw).

## Unable to Attend the 2013 Toastmasters International Convention?

You can still watch the action! Live streaming coverage of the following popular convention events will be available online: the Board Briefing, Opening Ceremonies, International Speech Contest Semifinals, and the World Championship of Public Speaking. Visit [www.toastmastersondemand.com](http://www.toastmastersondemand.com) for more information.



# AROUND THE GLOBE

## ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

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



Randy Harvey, Ph.D., DTM, is the 2004 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking. He lives in Sherwood, Oregon.

### What's your take on writing a strong speech opening?

The first 35 seconds, or approximately 75–80 words, make the strongest impression (hence, the first impression). Do not include banal language such as, “I’m glad to be here” or “Fellow Toastmasters.” Save those comments for the second paragraph. Stand silent until your audience is attentive. Deliver a line that draws in your audience. Use sentence structure that makes people think, such as simile, contrast, rhyme, echo (repeating parts of a sentence), alliteration and metaphor.

Set the hook in the opening lines. Then use the rest of your speech to reel in the audience.

## FACTS WORTH KNOWING CONVENTION SITES COMPARED

While Cincinnati, Ohio, and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, are continents apart, both cities are worthy of hosting an International Convention.

**Cincinnati:** Lonely Planet, the travel-guide publisher, cites this city as third on its list of top 10 U.S. travel destinations for 2012. Forbes.com ranked it ninth on its list of safest U.S. cities in 2009.

**Kuala Lumpur:** CNN ranked this city as the world’s fourth best place to shop in 2012. In the same year, the annual Cities of Opportunity report named Kuala Lumpur the 18th most significant city in the world, based on social and economic performance.

This chart shows a comparison of the 2013 and 2014 convention-hosting cities.

	Cincinnati (2013)	Kuala Lumpur (2014)
Year the city was founded	1788	1857
2012 city population	296,550 people	1.6 million people
Land size	78 square miles	94 square miles
August average high temperature	86 F	89 F
August average precipitation	3.6 inches	5.6 inches

Additional sources: Wikipedia, emporis.com, U.S. Census Bureau, worldcapitalinstitute.org and weather.com.



### FROM THE ARCHIVES

The lobby and curved staircase in the first Toastmasters World Headquarters building, in Santa Ana, California.



## MENTOR MOMENT

**N**o one has the potential to influence a member's experience like a mentor. Swati Gupta, CC, CL, a member of Docklands Toastmasters in Docklands, Victoria, Australia, shares how she has benefited from her mentor, Judy Murphy, DTM.

### Why did you join Toastmasters?

Judy is a senior analyst at the [travel management] company where we both work. She told me about her experiences in Toastmasters. I wanted to improve my communication skills so in 2011, I joined a club.

**Tell us more about your mentor.** Judy has been a Toastmaster for 20 years. She is a member of a different club but she comes to support me when I give speeches and participate in contests. She tirelessly helps all aspiring speakers who approach her.

**How does Judy give you feedback?** I get feedback from her in person, since I see her almost daily at the office.

### Does she help you with speechwriting or listen as you practice?

I discuss my ideas with her, and if I get stuck constructing a speech, she offers me tips.

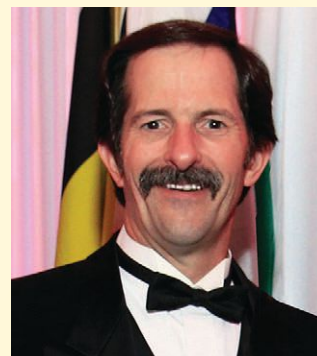
**What goals have you reached with Judy's help?** After serving as sergeant at arms and secretary of my club, I now serve as vice president education. Through my High Performance Leadership project, I earned the Toastmaster of the Year award, and developed the confidence to successfully pursue my career interest in project management.

**What do you like best about her mentoring style?** It's Judy's generosity with her time that I value most.



Swati Gupta, CC, CL (right), with her mentor, Judy Murphy, DTM.

## LEARNING ABOUT OUR PAST INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENTS



Robert "Bob" Barnhill, DTM, AS  
Past International President  
1996-97  
Lubbock, Texas

### Q: What inspires you?

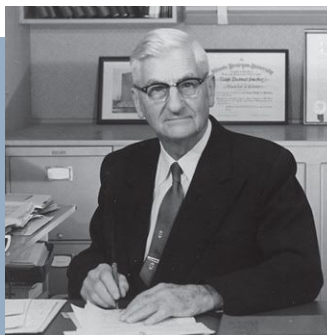
**A:** I have always been a fan of music, but not necessarily the songs you hear on the radio. Inside each of us is a special, unique song waiting to be sung. These are the songs that inspire me. When we sing our song, we touch a heart. By touching a heart, we make the world a better place. In the process, we become a star.

Nothing inspires me more than seeing the glow that comes when someone sings his song, and then witnessing the joy experienced by the recipient. Through Toastmasters, we can help people sing their song and provide a path of hope for the world to see.

## DR. SMEDLEY SAYS

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

**"Purpose determines the good, marks the path, and furnishes the motion power."**



Dr. Ralph C. Smedley  
1878-1965

# Donnie Cochran, ACB, CL: **UP IN THE AIR**

Former Blue Angels commander soars as a speaker.

By Julie Bawden-Davis

**D**onnie Cochran, ACB, CL, a retired naval commanding officer, grew up on his family's farm near Pelham, Georgia. As the fifth of 12 children, Cochran motivated his younger siblings to get their work done before the heat of the day,

"I knew I had to develop my problem-solving skills and create a pathway to achieving my aspirations," Cochran says. Despite having some difficulty in middle school with keeping up his grades, Cochran overcame his academic struggles. He earned a

**"Superb communication is absolutely critical for safely executing close-formation flying and split-second timing maneuvers." — Donnie Cochran**

and developed his mechanical and technical skills operating machinery and tractors. While farm work was demanding and fulfilling, it didn't make his heart race like it did when he watched planes fly over the farm.

"Our farm was located along a route used by military pilots who trained by flying at low altitudes and high speeds," says Cochran, a member of 310 North Toastmasters in Atlanta. "The aircraft were visible for only a few seconds as they flew overhead, but it was thrilling to watch them."

That experience inspired him to pursue a career as a naval aviator. However, his prospect of becoming a pilot was challenged by a lack of financial resources for flight lessons.

scholarship in the U.S. Navy's Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program so he could attend Savannah State College (now Savannah State University). Cochran received a degree in civil engineering and was commissioned in the Navy, which paved his way to his dream career.

After several years as a Navy fighter pilot flying off aircraft carrier decks, Cochran underwent a rigorous and highly competitive screening process and was selected as the first African-American pilot to fly with the Blue Angels, a flight demonstration squadron made up of elite Navy pilots who perform popular aerobatic air shows. [In March, all performances were cancelled for the remainder of

2013 due to military budget cuts.] Cochran flew with the team during two separate tours: initially from 1986 to 1988 as a demonstration pilot, and again from 1994 to 1996 as the first African-American commanding officer and flight leader. Between tours with the Blue Angels, Cochran spent several years developing his leadership skills as a department head and an executive officer. He also led a team that deployed aircraft from a ship at sea as a commanding officer of an operational F-14 squadron, another high honor.

When he was an active member of the Blue Angels during the air show season, Cochran and fellow team members regularly shared their experiences with various audiences. The presentations were brief, but they allowed Cochran a chance to share the thrill of close-formation flying and the dedication and teamwork required to execute those maneuvers. As he spoke, Cochran discovered that he preferred to talk about his journey of becoming a Blue Angel, including challenges and triumphs, and specific values and qualities he had developed to be considered for this competitive honor.

In 2004, four years after retiring from his 24-year naval career, Cochran was hired by The Coca-Cola Company





**Donnie Cochran flew with the Blue Angels as the first African-American commanding officer and flight leader.**

as a manager of aviation programs, which fly the company's executives and guests around the globe. Cochran provides leadership oversight for pilot training and safety programs, and manages dispatchers and flight attendants.

He later joined the company's Toastmasters club, 310 North Toastmasters, so he could share his Blue Angels experience more effectively.

Cheryl Zettler, DTM, has known Cochran since he joined the club. She says he has become a sought-after speaker within the company, especially for leadership and high-performance teams.

Cochran says, "Becoming a Toastmaster helped me connect with audiences on an entirely new level. I was blessed to acquire unique and insightful lessons from flying with the Blue Angels. Now I'm in a position to not only share my story, but also to inspire and influence people to take action on their dreams or career aspirations."

Taking advantage of the techniques and principles taught in Toastmasters, Cochran shares with audiences lessons learned from his Blue Angels experiences, including the need for excellent communication skills. "Superb communication is absolutely critical for safely executing close-formation flying

and split-second timing maneuvers," he says. "It is an aerial art form that includes precise phraseology and tempered voice inflexions to transfer clear, concise and direct communication."

During his speeches, Cochran uses vocal variety combined with visual aids, including props such as a model plane and a video clip of the team flying, to demonstrate how the Blue Angels fly upside down.

"I also share how to learn to become more comfortable being uncomfortable in difficult situations—in other words, getting out of one's comfort zone," he says. "After demonstrating the flying maneuver, I ask the audience what happens when their world turns upside down. Do they experience fear, a loss of confidence, or feel trapped by self-limiting beliefs? Then I raise the *attitude* [orientation] of the model and remind them how important it is to maintain a positive and engaging attitude—especially when your life is filled with challenges or despair."

Cochran's speeches also cover the term "Up we go!"—a phrase used by the Blue Angels when executing a high-performance maneuver. "Before a climbing maneuver, such as a roll or loop, the flight leader announces over the radio, 'Up we go!'" Cochran

explains. The pilots use this cue to anticipate and execute a smooth pull-back on their control sticks so they can stay in sync with the leader during the maneuver. "Sharing 'Up we go!' with audiences provides a great lead-in to talk about effective teamwork and individual performance," he says.

Those who have heard Cochran speak report being positively affected by his inspiring messages. "Donnie's message had a profound impact on me and how I thought about my career at Coca-Cola," says Aok Deo, president of 310 North Toastmasters. "His speech was also one of the main reasons that I decided to join. He's also warm and friendly and makes new members feel at home."

Cochran's life experiences have changed his perspective about what it means to be successful. "I used to say with a great deal of passion that you have to pay the cost to achieve your goals," he says. "Now, I know that you don't pay the cost for a fulfilling life—you enjoy the journey." **T**

**Julie Bawden-Davis** is a freelance writer based in Southern California and a longtime contributor to the *Toastmaster*.



# FROM ACTOR TO TOASTMASTER

How I gained the courage to be me.

By James Wantz, ACS, ALB

**F**or years I studied as a stage actor. On stage I became someone else, a character in a play—someone big, bold and brash, or mousy, meek and mild. In contrast, as a Toastmaster I am given the opportunity to be myself. Yes, seriously, I get to be myself, and not a fictitious character that I get to portray for a few hours as I “chew the scenery” and “tread the boards.” Not someone I *wished* I were, but who I *am*.

In theater you step into the skin of another person. You borrow eloquence from a playwright, you emote as the director tells you to, you follow a script, and then, when it is over, you go back to being whoever you were before the show.

In 1991, while I worked as a performing arts reporter for my college newspaper, I interviewed Ted Neeley, the actor who played Jesus in the 1973 movie *Jesus Christ Superstar*, the 1992 Broadway show, and thousands of other times on stage. He played Jesus for so long that when I interviewed him, even though he was out of character, his language sounded biblical. He told me how playing Jesus was the greatest role in the world for him. He’d been so infused with the character, as written by Tim Rice and scored by Andrew Lloyd Webber, that he was no longer Ted Neeley. I got the impression he was happy with the trade-off.

I deeply understood his decision to play a role for life. That’s what I tried to do with every role I took on. I wanted to lose myself, and to become someone else—villain or hero, it didn’t matter. The point was to escape my life of addiction, depression, neuroses and fear. By taking on a role, I was able to escape myself for a few weeks or months, but the confidence I borrowed while onstage never lasted. I went back to being myself after the close of each show.

## Finding a Character

The theater is full of stories about actors who are unable to step away from a role they play and become that character offstage: the Othellos who murder their Desdemonas because they can’t



disconnect from the suspicious paranoia that is so much a part of that Shakespearean role, the on-screen psychopaths who become suicidal off-screen, and those who voluntarily become typecast for the rest of their lives. Even knowing these stories, I remained determined to find a character to become for the rest of my life. But when Randy J. Harvey, the 2004 World Champion of Public Speaking, held a master class for

who I was, but I took his advice and started to talk about me—the real me, the one with problems, addictions, fears and, as it turned out, a sense of humor. I am an introvert, and social engagements such as club meetings cause me anxiety and dread in a way that makes it necessary to take on a role simply to interact with other people. I would borrow a recent theater role and become that person.

**It wasn't really me giving the speeches—it was a character in a one-man show performing in front of my fellow club members.**

my club, I walked away with his words ringing in my ears: “If you speak from your heart, people will listen.”

How can I speak from my heart if I don't want to be me? I was busy trying to be someone else, and had no idea what was in my heart. Resolved to find out, I gave many speeches in my club. I worked through the *Competent Communication* manual in four months using every bit of stagecraft I knew. I gave excellent speeches and won several club awards. But it wasn't really me giving the speeches—it was a character in a one-man show performing in front of my fellow club members. This fantastic speaker, with perfect diction, projection and stage presence, was not a speaker. He was an actor. He was not me.

“You act too much,” my club mentor told me several times. “Stop performing and just speak.”

“But about what?”

“Well, you are an expert in one thing. No one can contradict or disagree with you if you talk about yourself.”

Why would I want to do that? I thought to myself.

### **The Real Me**

It was next to impossible to stop performing and become myself. I was certain no one wanted to know who I was. I didn't even want to know

I'll never forget the day I got up to speak without having my entire speech memorized and intricately rehearsed. That was the day I was the most frightened and vulnerable, and was myself the most. I received so many positive and encouraging comments as a result of that speech that I went home feeling the best I'd felt in years. That was my turning point.

Toastmasters continues to give me confidence to be myself in front of others. Thanks to club members, mentors and several advanced speaking manuals and leadership projects, I am more myself than ever.

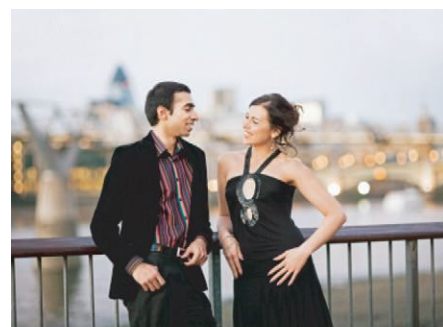
I don't like the saying “Fake it 'til you make it.” It is too much like what I tried to do all those years as an actor. Now I use the saying “Step into confidence.” It is what I tell myself when I feel nervous about speaking, when I do things I used to avoid or face first-time experiences, such as move to a new city, start a new job or seek out a new Toastmasters club—all of which happened recently. Toastmasters has been essential in helping me continually step into confidence, no matter what the situation. Toastmasters improves my self-confidence, even while I'm away from the podium and involved in one-on-one interactions, small group discussions and conversations with co-workers—things I used to dread.

This is the nugget I want to give away: Step into your own self-confidence. Put it on, not as a role you play, but as a choice you make. Be confident in presentation and communication, and, if you speak from your heart, two things will happen. One, you will become even more confident, and two, people will listen to you. The more you practice, the easier it will become.

Now that I am a Toastmaster, I make the choice daily to step into my own self-confidence. It is not a role I have set aside when the speech is done. It is a choice, and an action, I make constantly.

Now that I am a Toastmaster, I have the self-confidence to finally be me. **T**

**James Wantz, ACS, ALB**, is club secretary of New Horizons Toastmasters in Tualatin, Oregon. He is an AutoCAD draftsman by day and a writer by night.



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# READ IT FOR RICHES

How my business benefits from the *Toastmaster* magazine.

By Lesley Stephenson, ACG, CL

**I** sat in the Copenhagen Airport on my way home from a company training assignment. Heavy snowfall delayed my flight by 90 minutes, but I wasn't worried. In fact, I was delighted. In those 90 undisturbed

or engaged in some other field where public speaking and leadership skills are required, this resource will help you succeed. It's your personal invitation to participate in a first-class strategic alliance created by the many international

*I can list many income-generating ideas and engagements for my business that have been inspired by articles I read in the *Toastmaster*.*

minutes, I improved my skills and my company's profits. How? I read the latest issue of the *Toastmaster* magazine.

Toastmasters' monthly magazine is an invaluable resource for all members. Whether you're a professional in the speaking or training sector (like I am),

communication experts who contribute to it. Not reading the magazine is the equivalent of throwing money away—lots of money. Let me show you why.

Last year, I won a contract with a European financial institution to create and deliver a customized training

course on writing business reports. I already had a blueprint program, so I quickly began designing in-class writing assignments based on the company's needs. I created strong text-reduction and image-based writing exercises, but I knew I needed something more. Then I remembered an article I had read by Dave Zielinski several months earlier (July 2011), which I filed: "Speechwriting Tips from the Pros."

In that article, Zielinski shared a tip from Jim Endicott, head of the coaching firm Distinction Communication in Newberg, Oregon. When Endicott trains his clients in PowerPoint practices, he asks them to create the last slide of their presentations first to streamline its core message.



I transferred this idea to report writing and asked my participants to write the last paragraph of their assigned report first. This exercise boosted the overall content of the training and was a big success. The client company called me back for more engagements!

Now, this is not an isolated example. I can list many other income-generating ideas and engagements for my business that have been inspired by articles I read in the *Toastmaster*.

**The next time you find the *Toastmaster* in your mailbox, remember that you've just received a pot of real gold.**

For instance, while traveling by train to a company venue where I was to deliver a program on meeting chairmanship, I opened up the February 2012 issue of the *Toastmaster*, and a title jumped out at me: "You Are a Brilliant Woman." This article by Tara Sophia Mohr provided a number of tips for women to enhance their leadership skills and public speaking performance. It was a warm and compelling article, and I read it twice before I reached my destination.

That morning, all 13 participants in my training group were female. They worked fast, and we had some time left for general discussion at the end. Some of the women asked me about my perspectives on issues related to gender in chairmanship and leadership, and raised some points that related to Mohr's article. So I took out the article and shared it with the group. As I told the author later, they loved it.

The feedback from that group was some of the best I received during the delivery cycle of the

chairmanship program. And with the help of Mohr's article, it also led to a speaking engagement for another company where one of the participants recommended me.

My own business is certainly not the only one to profit from the valuable resources and alliances provided by the *Toastmaster* magazine. Other communication professionals are quick to point out its advantages. Past District 59 Governor Ellen Hermens, DTM, is the director of the speaking


and leadership training company The Kingmaker Institute in Munich, Germany. She, too, acknowledges the benefits of reading the magazine for her professional work: "I check each issue for interesting articles, and I love the variety. One article helped me develop my own use of humor, and I've been able to use several others in my own business."

Reading the magazine each month requires time, but that time is a sizeable investment in your business or professional work. If you're too busy to read it carefully when it arrives, save it for days when you're traveling, or for weekends or holidays. This is a practice followed by David Fisher, DTM, a member of Professional Speakers Toastmasters club in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, who makes sure he has the latest edition of the *Toastmaster* with him when he's traveling. "I love the magazine," Fisher confirms. "When I have to commute a lot, I am very happy to sit on the bus and read every article. When I'm short on time, I comb through to find

the articles I need right then, and prioritize others. The problem is, they are generally all of use to me."

Fisher goes on to point out another important aspect of the *Toastmaster* magazine: "I see comments and opinions from Toastmasters around the globe, and I see that we're not alone. As a result, I feel part of a truly international organization."

To use the resources provided in the *Toastmaster*, a filing system is advisable. Rick Haynes, DTM, of Miranda Toastmasters club in Sutherland, New South Wales, Australia, keeps a file of past issues dating back 10 years, housing a year's worth of issues in a large folder. Alternatively, you may follow my practice, which is to remove and file only articles that are of particular relevance. My file dates back to 2004, and I thin it out about once a year. Some articles, like early PowerPoint articles, are outdated and can be replaced by more current findings. Others, like Michele Caldwell's "You Gotta Have Bones" (February 2005), are timeless.

So, the next time you find the *Toastmaster* in your mailbox, remember that you've just received a pot of real gold. I strongly recommend that you read it carefully because it can, and will, enrich you. 

**Lesley Stephenson, ACG, CL**, is a keynote speaker, corporate communications trainer and director of the Swiss-based training company Speaking Solutions GmbH. She is a member of Zuriberg Toastmasters in Zurich, Switzerland, and Gourmet Toastmasters in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Learn more about her at [lesleystephenson.com](http://lesleystephenson.com).

# WHEN CLUBS MEAN BUSINESS

Clubs at business schools give students an entrepreneurial edge.

By Jennifer L. Blanck, DTM

**T**he Cass Toastmasters club means business. The members—students enrolled at Cass Business School, City University London—plan to become successful entrepreneurs and working professionals. They joined the club to improve their confidence and business-communication skills.

School of Management in West Lafayette, Indiana, was founded “with immense excitement from the faculty, staff and the student body,” says club member Debdeep Roy. “Our mission was to integrate business communication with public speaking, as well as with leadership-skill development, in a safer environment.”

augment the curricular and extra-curricular options designed to strengthen students’ speaking and leadership skills. And there’s a very good reason: Research shows that communication and leadership skills are at the top of employers’ lists across the globe.

“You may have ever-so wonderful ideas, but if you cannot sell them to others, you will not succeed.”

Mark Zupan, dean of the University of Rochester’s Simon Graduate School of Business in New York

Cass Toastmasters was formed for this very reason—for the business students to hone their public speaking and leadership skills. “Toastmasters’ supportive environment allows members to test and experiment with their speaking and leadership styles at no or minimal cost, which helps us to avoid paying for our mistakes in the competitive business world,” says club member Louise Luo, CC, CL.

Cass Toastmasters is not alone. The Krannert Graduate Toastmasters club, at Purdue University’s Krannert

Examples of other business school-affiliated clubs include the Toastmasters @ MIT club at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Sloan School of Management; Odette School of Business Toastmasters at the University of Windsor in Ontario, Canada; and RSB Toastmasters at the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

These and other business schools are benefiting by having Toastmasters clubs on campus to

## What Businesses Seek

Communication and leadership skills ranked at the top of employers’ list of attributes desired in new hires, in both the 2011 and 2012 Corporate Recruiters Survey. The survey examines the worldwide job and recruiting trends for recent graduate business school students, as well as employers’ focus areas.

The survey report is produced by the Graduate Management Admission Council, a global organization of graduate business schools, in partnership with the European Foundation for Management Development and the MBA Career Services Council.

In 2011, more than 1,500 recruiters participated in the survey, representing 905 firms in 51 countries. The employers were provided with 19 skill sets from which to



# University of Michigan Ross School of Business



Students at Cass Business School, City University London, joined the Cass Toastmasters club to experiment with their speaking and leadership styles.

# Purdue University Krannert School of Management







Clockwise, from left: Cass Business School, City University London; members of the Toastmasters @ MIT club at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Sloan School of Management; members of the Odette School of Business Toastmasters club at the University of Windsor; and MIT's Sloan School of Management.

choose their top five. Communication skills ranked number one not only overall, but also across all three delineated regions—the United States, Europe and Asia Pacific.

In 2012, almost 1,100 recruiters from more than 800 companies in 40 countries participated. Leadership skills topped the list, with recruiters focused on “employees who are able to lead and inspire.”

Mark Zupan, dean of the University of Rochester's Simon Graduate School of Business in Rochester, New York, says communication skills are key to students' long-term professional success. “Our advisory boards and recruiters tell us that the most important skills our students could further develop are their writing and speaking skills,” he says. “This feedback is consistent across every other leading business school of which I have been aware.”

The Simon Toastmasters club helps students at the Simon Graduate School improve those skills. As Zupan explains, “You may have ever-so wonderful ideas, but if you cannot sell them to others, you will not succeed.”

### Preparation for the Business World

In addition to the regular attention on honing public speaking and leadership skills, business-focused clubs emphasize other aspects important in the corporate world. Some clubs have their speech topics focus solely on business issues.

They also place a greater importance on the possible networking opportunities through and beyond the club. As Odette School of Business Toastmasters member Kevin Kapustiak, ACB, CL, notes, “Toastmasters are fantastic! I've met so many interesting people I otherwise would never have had the chance to talk to if it weren't for this organization.”

Some clubs emphasize Table Topics as a means to help with a range of business situations, including job interviews and sales meetings. Clubs using Table Topics sessions as interview preparation drill students with questions and prime them for even the toughest corporate interrogations. Table Topics and evaluations also help

prepare students for business meetings where they have to speak and assess products or ideas on the spot. “The business world is extremely fast-paced,” says Kapustiak. “Knowing how to quickly and efficiently evaluate an initiative saves hours of rework.”

The University of Michigan's RSB club uses Table Topics to hone analytical skills. “We try to incorporate up-to-date Table Topics questions on real business problems to analyze a situation, defend a point of view and convince the audience,” explains club member Christian Jarjouhi, CC, ALB. “This helps our members develop critical thinking while pushing them to stay current with the latest business topics.”

Benefits also result from the leadership aspect of the Toastmasters program, as business clubs are mindful of how these leadership opportunities relate to members' careers. Cass Toastmasters member Luo says, “What I enjoy most about Toastmasters is that it provides me with the stage to lead and empower our members.”



Managing diverse teams, demonstrating vision and guiding groups toward a common goal are just a few of the opportunities members have to foster their leadership skills. As Roy, a member of the Krannert Graduate club, notes, “The feedback loop and abundant opportunities to take on leadership roles in club activities have shaped the future of the Krannert graduate MBAs, vis-à-vis business leaders.”

### Business Skills Beyond Business Schools

Although the Krannert club was established for MBA students, the Krannert School of Management found that scope too narrow; there was too much of a demand from beyond the business school. “Over the years, significant amount of interest from the Purdue University community has made it imperative that we open the club for the greater good,” Roy says. “Even then, the primary focus of the club’s activities revolves around business topics and networking opportunities.”

It’s not surprising that other clubs have also seen this expansion of membership. The Toastmasters program is an ideal fit with the mission of higher education institutions. And improved skills and increased confidence are results that everyone seeks and supports.

As Luo notes, “Strong public speaking and leadership skills are essential tools of successful individuals in business and life.” And that’s good business sense. **T**

**Jennifer L. Blanck, DTM**, is the founder of Georgetown Toastmasters in Washington, D.C. She is a career consultant and writer with more than 14 years of experience in university career services and seven years in public affairs.

## Tips for Starting a New Job

By Eugene Yiga, CC

Starting a new job can be tough. In addition to navigating relationships and expectations, you have to figure out the little quirks of that office copier. But with these five simple ideas, you can achieve success:

- ▶ **Define your role.** If you didn’t do so during your interview or when finalizing your contract, now is the time to meet with your boss and define your role. Ask what the company’s top priorities are and what is expected of you. Then ask to have regular feedback sessions to evaluate your progress based on these objectives.
- ▶ **Avoid office politics.** Every office has its sensitive topics, and it can be very easy for “the new guy” to quickly get sucked into taking sides. Don’t waste your time with this. If you have to listen to the conversations, do so silently. And if you really must voice an opinion, make sure whatever you say behind someone’s back is something you would gladly say to his or her face. Dissension and disrespect will tear any team apart.
- ▶ **Ask questions.** As you learn how things work, you’ll probably see processes that don’t make sense and could be better if done differently. But before making suggestions to revolutionize the company, ask questions so you understand why the processes are that way in the first place.
- ▶ **Develop your skills.** Different companies want different skills, so find out which ones your employer is looking for. Improve your knowledge by subscribing to industry-specific blogs so you can gain deeper insight into the competitive environment and bring relevant ideas to the table.
- ▶ **Raise your game.** Be a leader by taking on additional challenges. Find useful things to do in your spare time instead of waiting to be assigned work. During your feedback sessions with your boss, ask if there are projects you can volunteer for and other ways you can contribute more. Even if it’s not part of your job, taking the initiative will set you apart.

**Eugene Yiga, CC**, is vice president education of The Grove club in Cape Town, South Africa. He is a writer, consultant and coach, and his website is [eugeneyiga.com](http://eugeneyiga.com).

# GO BACK TO COLLEGE— AS THE TEACHER!

Speak at alumni events to boost your career.

By Jennifer Cunningham

**S**ome people's idea of the perfect high school or college reunion is to show up in a stretch limo, with wads of cash spilling out of their pockets and a handsome partner escorting them to the event. But a more realistic way of connecting with fellow alumni may be to speak at an alumni event. As a Toastmaster, you're uniquely qualified for this opportunity, even if you aren't a celebrity or industry hotshot ... yet!

Thousands of universities around the world produce regional networking events for alumni, community members, students and their parents. Alumni relations teams and volunteer leaders are always looking for exceptional speakers who can attract and appeal to diverse audiences with a variety of topics. They need charismatic presenters and panel members who can give practical advice to recent graduates, share an insider's view of their industry, or offer smart commentary on hot topics.

While the setting may be different, the level of enthusiasm and encouragement at alumni events feels very similar to a Toastmasters meeting. "Alumni audiences are among the warmest that a speaker could hope for," says Jim Mazza, Associate Vice President for Alumni Affairs at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. "People attend these events because they shared a common experience at a formative time in their lives, and they are specifically interested in each other's stories and expertise. Our job as staff in choosing speakers is to identify alumni

and, occasionally, parents of current students, who enjoy connecting with an audience and exchanging ideas."

So how can you learn more about these speaking opportunities?

## Try Before You Commit

Your first step should be to attend an alumni event that features a speaker, to assess whether this type of speaking engagement is right for you. Most schools have a website dedicated to alumni, where they advertise upcoming events and offer invitations to join email mailing lists. Poke around the site to read about past events, to get a feel for the topics and how they're marketed. Many schools follow a similar formula, with events that incorporate a networking reception and a speaker or panel.

Wait until the end of the event to introduce yourself to the responsible staff member or host, when he or she has more time. Let that person know how much you enjoyed the event and the format, and then ask for advice about pitching an idea for a future event. Have a business card ready to hand over, with a note mentioning your interest in speaking.

## Give Back to the School

Scott Pesner, Director of Alumni Affairs for Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, says he gets dozens of requests from alumni who want to speak, even though Columbia, like most schools, doesn't usually pay speakers. How does he choose?

Pesner wants speakers to show him how their topic will attract alumni

and how it relates to the school's mission. He says, "Some people focus on what they want to get out of the experience, not what they can offer to the alumni or the school. Trust me—if you focus on giving the audience useful and interesting information, they will naturally want to buy your book or hire you as a consultant, for example. I'll be happy to work with you when you connect the dots for me."

## Make Some News

Other ways that alumni offices find speakers is through news stories, Google Alerts, web searches and other research methods. Press agents or public relations agencies sometimes send releases to alumni offices.

Beth Hammock, Vice President of Strategic Communications and Marketing at The University of Montana Foundation, says her staff proactively looks for speakers who have been mentioned in news articles. They also comb notes submitted to the alumni magazine. Before approaching someone to speak, the Foundation tries to determine the person's public speaking experience and whether potential presenters can effectively translate their expertise to a wide audience.

## You Get the Gig. Then What?

Congratulations! Next up is to promote the event. The number one advice for this phase is to follow the lead of the staff members or volunteers: They've put on dozens of events, so they know what works. You can make their job easier by offering a professional



photo of yourself and an outline of your topic, so the hosts can spin it into attention-grabbing email invitations and Facebook posts. If you are asked to write the content promoting the event, ask to see past emails from events that sold out and follow that format.

As you're developing your speech, remember that alumni who attend these events are expecting the unique intellectual and engaging experience they experienced in college. Shane Dunn, Assistant Director, Alumni Relations and Annual Giving at the Massachusetts Institute Technology's Sloan School of Management, says "alumni are looking to learn something new that they can't easily learn anywhere else. They're also looking to meet other people interested in the same topic, so presenters whose topics stimulate conversations during the reception hour or who are willing to spend a lot of time engaging in Q&A are usually the most successful."

If you're asked to be part of a moderated panel, it's important to research the backgrounds of the other people on stage, and then focus just on your expertise when you answer questions. Unlike a prepared speech, speaking as part of a panel is more casual and off-the-cuff, but be sure to use your Table Topics training. Most importantly, keep your points short so you don't dominate the conversation, and mention other panelists' comments to create a sense of cohesion and camaraderie.

Plan to stick around after the event to network with other attendees and answer further questions. Also ask the staff at the alumni office if they will offer their own feedback and if they can provide you with attendees' comments from the post-event survey. If not, a good barometer of event success is how long after the speech people stick around to continue their

conversations. If the venue is turning out the lights and you're still there, that's a great sign that people enjoyed the discussion.

But wait—it may not be over. Great speakers are hard to find. If you knock it out of the park, don't be surprised if you are asked to speak again. Speaking for your alma mater can be a wonderful way to reconnect with your school and your fellow alumni. No matter where you went to school, chances are good that the alumni relations staff is looking for great speakers. That great speaker could be you. **T**

**Jennifer Cunningham** is a member of the Big Red Toastmasters at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. She's Cornell University's Senior Director of Metrics+Marketing in the Office of Alumni Affairs, which produces or supports 1,400 events per year around the world.

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# LESSONS FROM A GARDEN SPEAKER

Follow the path of a green thumb to reap presentation rewards.

By Colleen Plimpton, ACB, CL

**I**t was my own fault. I stood in front of the audience at my local library, quaking in my gardening boots at the prospect of delivering my first paid speech. As the lights dimmed, I murmured, “What on earth am I doing here? I’m not ready!”

The crowd rustled. My face grew warmer and redder as my eyes teared up behind my glasses. My hands shook as I furtively read my notes one

out of my league. Even with my notes, my speech was disjointed. I spoke too quickly and blushed furiously. I avoided making eye contact with anyone, and failed to hold my audience’s attention.

The next day, I joined Toastmasters.

Today, several years down the road, I have a thriving garden-communication business. I speak to thousands each year at garden

**As both Toastmasters and gardening have taught me, it’s important to sow the seeds of a talk by securing ideas as they occur.**

more time. I glanced with apprehension at the clock ticking away the minutes until my certain doom. At the appointed time, I approached the lectern, stumbled through the presentation, and fled the room in relief when it was finally over.

Giving a talk on seasonal color in the garden had seemed like a good idea at the time. As a longtime gardener I was certainly knowledgeable, and the library staff was even willing to pay me! I outlined a speech, gathered some photos for a PowerPoint presentation, practiced a bit, and awaited the day. But at delivery time it quickly became apparent that I was

clubs, libraries, nurseries, resorts, museums and historical societies. I’m a frequent guest on television and radio segments, and I speak with confidence and enthusiasm.

How did I overcome my trepidation and become a success? Here, from a gardener’s perspective, are a few of the lessons I learned along the way:

**Record your ideas:** As both Toastmasters and gardening have taught me, it’s important to sow the seeds of a talk by securing ideas as they occur. Keep a notebook and jot down thoughts that may become the nugget for a future speech. As you



The author gives tips for planting flower bulbs on a local Connecticut TV show.

write, think of yourself as a storyteller. We all love a tale, and stories or anecdotes make any presentation more interesting. Sharon Closius, CC, CL, of Bethel Toastmasters in Bethel, Connecticut, tends an exquisite garden of shrubs and perennials. She says

**Your speech conclusion, where you leave the audience with a lasting impression, is similar to the overall impact of a garden.**

to “bloom where you are planted.” In other words, speak about that with which you are familiar, and be aware of your strengths, interests and aspirations. It’s good advice for gardeners as well as for Toastmasters.

**Let your thoughts sink in:** Once you’ve captured the kernel of an idea, let it germinate by granting yourself sufficient time to expand on the concept. If a topic excites you, the outline of your speech will develop easily into a speech as you let your thoughts flow. When an outline emerges, let it lie fallow a few days, and then return to organize it.

**Have a plan:** Design the speech as you would a garden. The introduction, where the talk is prefaced and the audience is intrigued, is analogous to the garden edge, which is marked by small interesting plants close to the observer. The body of the speech, where you fulfill the premise of the introduction with facts, figures and ideas, is similar to the robust plants in the center of the

flower border that enchant the viewer and delight the eye. Your speech conclusion, where you leave the audience with a lasting impression, is similar to the overall impact of a garden. Is it colorful and full of dwarf conifers? Is it a container garden with precious annuals?

Or a thriving vegetable garden, bursting with good things to eat?

**Do your research:** As you prepare your speech, research your topic as you would when planning a garden. Google Images has been a boon to garden planners. It allows us to see the promise inherent in tiny plants and bare earth. In speech groundwork, confirm your facts by devoting time to research. This allows you to use details confidently, just as the gardener is certain, after adequate exploration, that a specific plant will thrive in a particular setting.

**Practice and prune your speech:** Grow your speech by practicing. The adage is true: Practice makes perfect. And in the case of speechwriting, it simultaneously increases poise and lessens anxiety. Rehearse in front of a mirror with your outline in front of you and a red pen at the ready, because you’re going to compost what doesn’t work. Prune words that are extraneous

or easily misunderstood. Pull out weedy, redundant concepts. Professional gardener Donna Balzer, a member of Arbutus Toastmasters in Parksville, British Columbia, Canada, has tilled the soil for 25 years. She co-hosted a garden show on HGTV, and was a radio show host for decades. She believes it is best to weed early and weed often whether it is thistle or extra words clogging your speech. She advises to “just get out there and do it” before the weeds or extra words overtake the effort.

**Enhance your presentation:** Once the basics of your speech are down pat, fertilize it with visual aids, handouts, video or a PowerPoint presentation. Add appeal by using variety in your vocalizations just as the gardener uses diversity in the garden. Avid gardener Carmine Coco DeYoung, DTM, is a member of three clubs in Connecticut, serving as president of Emerging Speech Masters Advanced Toastmasters. DeYoung says that the garden is a great place to practice vocal variety, for plants do indeed perform better when spoken to. This variety helps keep the audience focused on her talks, compelled by what they are hearing, just as the unfurling of Mother Nature beckons to the gardener.

**Use the best tools for the job:** Garden author Julie Bawden-Davis of Southern California, a longtime contributor to the *Toastmaster* magazine, offers this suggestion: Just as gardeners have implements that make the task of gardening easier and more productive—such as hand trowels and rakes—Toastmasters have many valuable tools for improving their speaking. Have patience, she counsels, and nurture your craft, whether it is speaking or gardening.


Just as the gardener employs focal points in the landscape design—such as a weeping tree, special perennial or rare conifer—use your body to



emphasize speech points. Gesture, make eye contact, change your facial expressions, and vary your stance.

**Evaluate your progress:** The gardener frequently stands back to assess color echoes, height and harmony in the garden. It's equally important for a Toastmaster to be evaluated on speech performance. While garden clubs and tours provide unofficial gardening peer review, formal evaluations at Toastmasters meetings offer members the opportunity to advance in a measured manner on the road to becoming a better speaker.

**Reap a successful speech:** Your words—carefully chosen, tended, fertilized and delivered—will inspire, persuade and teach your audience. Collect your accolades, as horticulturalists do, and consider joining another club. When a gardener becomes proficient at perennials or flowering shrubs or vegetable gardening, she will often enroll in another type of horticultural troupe, perhaps one devoted to daylilies or organic gardening. Similarly, the many different Toastmasters clubs offer the prospect of increasing one's skills. Consider joining an advanced or professional club, or one geared to a specific business.

As I began to use time-tested gardening principles in my speaking career, my anxiety diminished and bookings mushroomed. I increasingly realized that gardening and public speaking have much in common—both are soul-satisfying and productive endeavors that improve us as individuals while enhancing our communities. The end result of each is a fine and fruitful harvest. 

**Colleen Plimpton, ACB, CL**, is a professional garden communicator who lectures, writes, teaches and coaches about gardening. Learn more at [colleenplimpton.com](http://colleenplimpton.com).

## The Importance of Enthusiasm!

The ability to communicate delight and confidence in one's chosen topic is a hidden key to successful speaking. Of course, a Toastmaster must always pay attention to organization, vocal range, extraneous filler words and a host of other items, but if a speaker doesn't project pizzazz and show devotion to her topic, the speech may still fall flat on its well-prepared face.

Here are four helpful strategies to help you project enthusiasm:

- ▶ **Let your body reflect your words.** If you say "lean," then sway to one side. Smile, not only at your audience but during the humorous parts of your presentation. What is your audience watching as you speak? Not your hands, not the lectern; they're fixed on your face. So arch an eyebrow, shrug those shoulders, nod your head when appropriate.
- ▶ **Use descriptive words.** Your audience really wants to share an experience with you. Too often we speakers forget that we are performers as well as informers. So carry an audience into your speech by employing action verbs and colorful nouns. Use all five senses, just as actors do in theatrical productions.
- ▶ **Be well-grounded in your topic.** That's where confidence and enthusiasm intersect, and there's nothing worse than coming up blank on something you should know. Audiences are sharp, and they can sense when speakers are knowledgeable about and involved in their topics.
- ▶ **Use props.** When I show pretty garden pictures, my voice conveys how much I love the flowers, and that I know the bulbs are grateful to receive three helpings of fertilizer a year. When a listener asks a particularly relevant question, I ring a bell. "The winner!" I exclaim. "You've won the prize!" I then delve into my supplies, and extract either a compost bag or small potted flower and hand it over to the pleased and surprised individual. What have I done by my actions? I've dramatically engaged the participant and grabbed the attention of the entire room.

*This excerpt is from Colleen Plimpton's article "Enthusiasm! The Cure for the Common Speech," which ran in the November 2010 issue of the Toastmaster magazine.*

# THE RELUCTANT LEADER

Rise to the occasion—because someone has to.

By Lynn Marie Cherry, CC, CL

**Every Tuesday at 9 a.m.**

I silently grumble my way through a weekly staff leadership meeting at work. *This is a complete waste of my time. I am not a leader. I should be sitting at my desk actually doing my job.* Unlike some people who actively participate in these meetings, I never dreamed of being a CEO or any other three-letter executive. I don't long for that position; I am quite content with my small piece of the puzzle.

Sometimes all a reluctant leader needs is someone to believe in her.

When I completed my *Competent Leadership* project record last year, I was forced to quietly acknowledge that I am indeed a leader, albeit a reluctant one. Toastmasters helped me realize this truth about who I am.

Five years ago our club's vice president education joined the military, and I stepped up to take on his role. I didn't do it because I wanted to, but because no one else did. Someone had to do it, right? I have continued to serve as an officer each year, and was even president. Last program year I was vice president education again, and I had to acknowledge that our club flourished under my disinclined leadership: It earned Distinguished Club recognition.

You may have no qualms about leadership, but perhaps you've spotted a prospective leader in your club who is hiding in the shadows. Here are

some tips to help you draw a reluctant leader out of her comfortable nest:

▶ **Have patience.** Once you've identified an unenthusiastic leader, move slowly. Encourage her to complete the *Competent Leadership* manual. This was truly an awakening for me. Guide her through the more challenging projects. Connect her with another quiet leader in your club.

▶ **Speak to their potential.** Sometimes all a reluctant leader needs is someone

to believe in her. Identify the budding leadership qualities you've noticed. Write these out in an email or in the *Competent Leadership* project evaluations. Our area governor at the time, Ivan Gray, ACS, did this for me. Paint a picture of the leader you see and help the member see it too.

▶ **Present the need.** When you learn of an impending vacancy in a leadership position, share the opportunity with her. Explain the particulars of the position and how she is suited for it. Allow her time to process the idea of taking on the role.

▶ **If she waivers, do a risk assessment together.** Remind her that Toastmasters is a safe place to test out leadership wings, even though it may feel awkward at first. We often only discover what we are capable of when pushed beyond our perceived limit. Help her remove the barriers so she can jump out of the nest and discover that she can fly.

You will find that reluctant leaders mature and grow into the positions they accept. They also bring along these valuable characteristics:

▶ **Encouragement.** Reluctant leaders are great cheerleaders. We excel at celebrating the accomplishments of others, because, unlike many other leaders, we don't see ourselves in competition. We genuinely want to see people reach their goals, even if they reach them before we do.

▶ **Servant-hearted.** Reluctant leaders tend to be compassionate and service-minded people. We didn't campaign to be put in this position. We won't demand anyone's respect for our authority. Typically we rise to the occasion to meet a need or fill a vacancy. We may be slow to embrace a leadership role, but we are willing to serve.

▶ **Delegators.** Reluctant leaders are wonderful at delegating. We are not in this for personal glory, and, truth be told, we would rather have someone else lead. We are quick to share opportunities that arise and are good at rousing others who hesitate.

Toastmasters really is a place where leaders are made. I never expected that to be true for me. Be on the lookout for reluctant leaders in your club. You will be pleasantly surprised by how much they bring to the table—and so will they. **T**

Lynn Marie Cherry, CC, CL, is vice president education of Shoreline Toastmasters in Austin, Texas.



# Tribute: In Memory of **HELEN BLANCHARD,** **1926–2013**

First female International President  
was an inspirational leader.

By Paul Sterman



**S**he was affectionately known as the First Lady of Toastmasters, in honor of her role as the organization's first female International President. Helen M. Blanchard, who passed away in May at the age of 86, left behind a legacy as a trailblazer in the organization she served for more than 40 years.

Helen served as Toastmasters' International President in 1985–86. The theme she chose for her term was "Commit to Excellence." Her Toastmasters friends recall her as an influential and gracious leader, someone who inspired others not only with her pioneering accomplishments but with her positive words as well.

served on the Toastmasters Executive Committee in the early 1980s.

"I really learned to appreciate what an amazing person she was, let alone an amazing Toastmaster," says Dunn. "One thing about Helen: She always put the interest of the organization first."

Blanchard's story was a Homeric one. In 1970, when she first became involved in Toastmasters, it was an all-male organization. So to disguise her gender, she applied for membership under the assumed name of "Homer Blanchard." By 1973, women were allowed to join Toastmasters and no disguise was needed.

Blanchard's home club was Naval R&D in San Diego, and she eventually belonged to two other San Diego clubs as well: Undersea Toastmasters and Excelsior Toastmasters.

Dunn, a longtime member of the Top O the Morning club in Fargo, North Dakota, says of Blanchard, "She felt both the need and the opportunity to blaze the trail for other women who were in the organization. You could just tell that she took that responsibility very seriously." **T**

**"One thing about Helen: She always put the interest of the organization first."**

— Past International President Eddie V. Dunn

Blanchard's positive impact touched countless people, and she will be missed by all who knew her.

Her daughter, Cheryl Sonnenwald, says she was amazed that her mom was able to raise two kids [Cheryl and her brother, Bruce], maintain a home, have a distinguished professional career—and do so much in Toastmasters, to boot. "She was just a pillar for everybody," says Sonnenwald. "I'm still in absolute awe of her. I feel honored to have her as a mother."

Blanchard, a Distinguished Toastmaster, grew up in Pender, a small town in Nebraska. As a 16-year-old, she taught 24 children in a remote one-room schoolhouse. In the mid-1950s, she and her husband, John Joseph Blanchard—a chief petty officer in the United States Navy—moved to San Diego, California, where Helen lived for the rest of her life. John Blanchard passed away in 1974.

Joyce Persichilli, DTM, a past region advisor and past governor of District 5—Blanchard's home district—remembers the encouragement she received from her friend each time she took on a new leadership role in Toastmasters. "Helen would either give me a phone call or send me a note or letter to tell me how proud she was of what I had been able to achieve," says Persichilli, the first recipient of District 5's annual Helen Blanchard Trailblazer Award, established in 2010.

Eileen Hope, DTM, another past District 5 governor, adds, "It's hard to think of anybody I've known who epitomized what a leader really is more than Helen did. A leader is someone you don't blindly follow—you follow them because you know it's the right way to go."

Past International President Eddie V. Dunn (1983–84), DTM, became good friends with Blanchard when the two

*To learn more about Helen Blanchard, read a 2008 Toastmaster magazine profile at [www.toastmasters.org/ToastmastersMagazine/ToastmasterArchive/2008/November/Departments/Profile.aspx](http://www.toastmasters.org/ToastmastersMagazine/ToastmasterArchive/2008/November/Departments/Profile.aspx).*

**Paul Sterman** is senior editor of the *Toastmaster* magazine.

# HELLO, HOW MAY I HELP YOU?

Member Support team  
strives to wow you with  
their service.

By Jennie Harris

**S**even thousand phone calls and 10,000 emails a month. That is the average number of member communications handled by employees in the Member Support division at Toastmasters International World Headquarters. In these thousands of monthly interactions, the employees—called member service representatives—identify members' needs, answer their questions and provide solutions to their challenges. Their job is to ensure that your Toastmasters experience is both positive and fulfilling.

"My team believes in Toastmasters and in what they do," says Director of Member Support Darci Maenpa, who is passionate about supporting members and providing first-rate customer service.

With 41 employees, Member Support is the second-largest division at the Southern California-based World Headquarters. Most of the division's employees work in the Member Services department, where they answer more than 200,000 member queries each year.

Team members are trained to respond to a range of Toastmasters-related questions. New hires typically receive a minimum of six weeks of training to learn how to respond accurately.

"When members call and ask a question, we never respond with a

simple 'yes' or 'no,'" says Maenpa. "Our job is to provide solutions to their challenges and a positive experience. It is our hope that when they hang up, they say, 'Wow, that was a great call, because now I understand.'"

On average, the Member Services team processes approximately 100,000 new member applications, 55,000 education awards, and 1,200 new club charters per year. They also process membership renewals, address changes, product orders, club officer changes and club coach awards. They provide online support, such as assisting with logins and passwords; track shipments of items ranging from education awards to New Member Kits; and answer questions about club officer training, club bylaws and speech contest eligibility.

The team is busiest during certain months when club officers submit items required to meet Distinguished Club Program goals, including membership renewals (in October and April) and updated officer lists for clubs that elect officers annually (in June).

Other employees on the Member Support staff coordinate Board of Directors meetings and Mid-year Training. They also plan the annual Toastmasters International Convention, which is attended by nearly 2,000 Toastmasters from around the world. The convention



Director of Member Support Darci Maenpa (front, right) and her team are passionate about providing first-rate service to members.

is where members and the organization's leaders elect international officers and directors at the Annual Business Meeting and conduct business on behalf of the organization. It is also where education sessions take place and where the semifinal rounds of the International Speech Contest culminate with the naming of the World Champion of Public Speaking.

If you receive a customer satisfaction survey from Member Services, take a few moments to complete it. Representatives appreciate members' positive comments, which are printed and pinned on a cork bulletin board in the office. And, of course, in true Toastmasters fashion, constructive feedback is always welcome. **T**

**Editor's note:** This article is one in an occasional series about the various departments at Toastmasters' World Headquarters.

To contact Member Services, call 949-858-8255, Monday through Friday, from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. (Pacific Time). For a list of email contacts, visit [www.toastmasters.org/departments](http://www.toastmasters.org/departments).

Responses to members' frequently asked questions are available at [www.toastmasters.org/FAQ](http://www.toastmasters.org/FAQ).

Jennie Harris is a junior writer for the *Toastmaster* magazine.



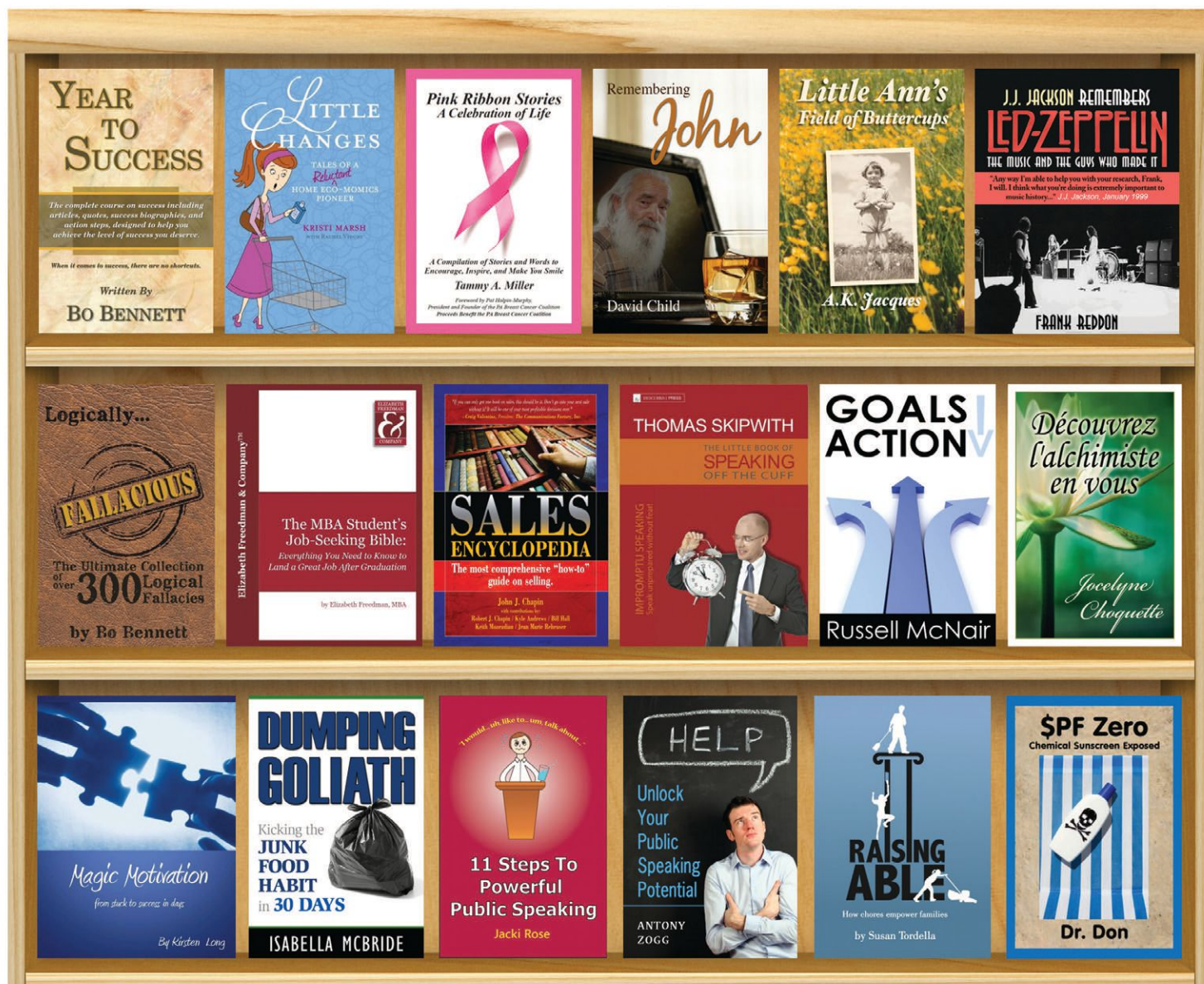
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# POOL RULES

Trying to follow them leaves my head swimming.

By John Cadley

**I swim at the YMCA for exercise.** (I won't say whether or not I swear a Speedo; I'd rather spare you the visual.) After ruining my hips with running, wrecking my knees with biking, and splintering my shins from power walking, it's the only exercise left—and apparently one of the best. Aside from its obvious aerobic benefits, health experts praise the totally nonimpact nature of the sport. There's simply no way to hurt yourself except by drowning, and that's not really an

know how you could shower without water. As for the soap, I guess they want you squeaky-clean before you go in, even though the pool is so heavily chlorinated you smell like Michael Phelps for days afterward.

**Diapers are not allowed in pool.** I'm 67, so that's not an issue for me—yet.


**Flotation devices are only allowed in the shallow end.** Now there's a head-scratcher.

It's like saying: You can use a life-saving device in the area of the pool

pump the person's chest until he or she is gushing water like a hot springs geyser. Lifeguards don't like to do this. Training for it on a dummy is one thing, but seeing it for real is just plain gross. (The rule could also be for children who want to scare their mothers by slowly turning blue.)

**Please refrain from public displays of affection.** Don't worry. My wife and I don't plan to get romantic in wet bathing suits surrounded by screaming children, watchful mothers, teenage lifeguards and large men with hairy backs.

**Please wear appropriate swim attire.** Street clothes are not allowed in the pool. Thanks for the reminder, fellas, but I really wasn't about to jump into the pool in a three-piece suit. And I know what appropriate swimming attire is ... unless maybe I don't. Maybe that's what they mean. They see me wearing a Speedo—OK, so I do wear one—and they come up and say, "Sir? We hate to tell you this, but you look ridiculous in that thing. It was designed for someone half your age and half your size. Could you please wear something a little more age-appropriate? You're scaring the children."

**We reserve the right to create any rules for the protection of our members.** I've always wondered who wrote these rules and when I read this one, I knew: It had to be a member of the U.S. Congress. 

Why don't they just say, "Please don't kill yourself in the pool area"?

injury. It doesn't hurt, you don't have to go to rehab, there's no fighting with the insurance company over reimbursement, and it doesn't affect your quality of life because you don't have one anymore.

I like the YMCA. Everywhere you look there's a banner extolling the benefits of righteous living:

- ▶ "The family that plays together stays together."
- ▶ "Strong minds, strong bodies."
- ▶ "Courage, dignity and respect."

It's good to be reminded of these things, and someday I may actually put a few of them into practice.

The pool has a sign, too—a list of rules outlining proper conduct in and around the aquatic center. After swimming there for a number of years, I finally decided to read them. A few in particular caught my attention.

**Please shower with soap and water before entering pool.** Well, it's hard to

where you really don't need it, because if you get into trouble all you have to do is stand up. You cannot, however, use one in the area of the pool where the water is way over your head, and where, if you don't have one, you could very easily sink like a cinder block. On the other hand, lifeguarding is a really boring job, and maybe this gives them a chance to save somebody once in a while.

**Please avoid excessive breath holding.** Why don't they just say, "Please don't kill yourself in the pool area," since that's what usually happens when you deprive yourself of oxygen for too long? I can only assume this is meant for those daring souls who attempt to swim the length of the pool underwater. If they can't, the sympathetic nervous system automatically starts gasping for air, only instead of air it sucks in a big lung full of water, forcing the lifeguards to

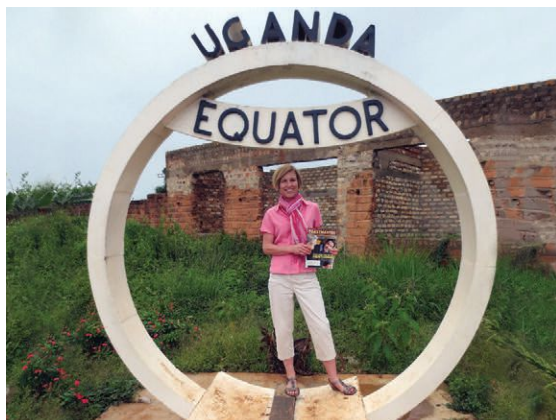
**John Cadley**, a former advertising copywriter, is a freelance writer and musician living in Fayetteville, New York.



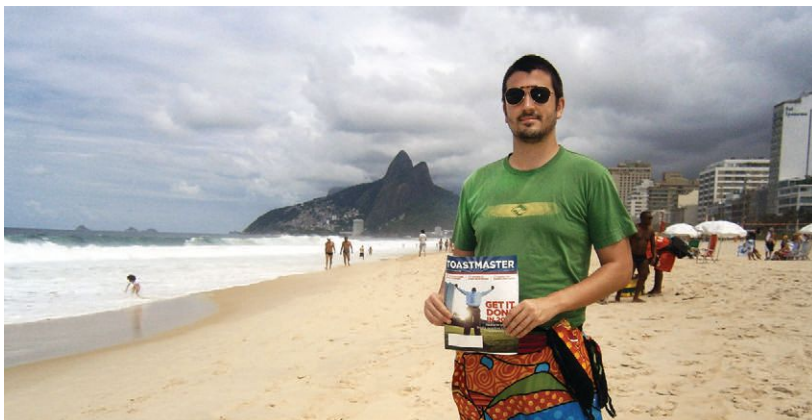
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**Suzanne Frey**, Managing Editor of the *Toastmaster*, steps foot where the Southern and Northern hemispheres meet at the Uganda Equator in Africa.



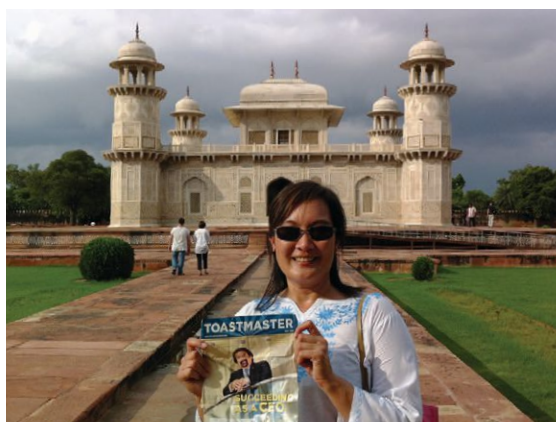
**Miguel Manrique de Lara Cadiñanos** from Madrid, Spain, visits Ipanema Beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



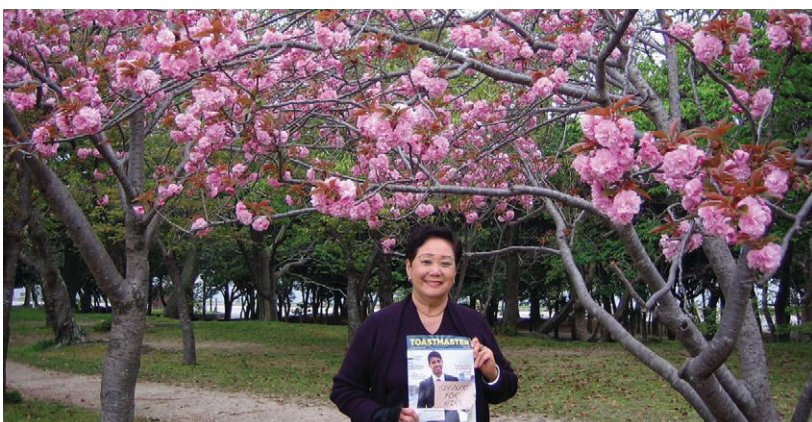
**Shishir Lakhani** from Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada, enjoys the Stonehenge in Wiltshire, England.



**Martin Busik** from Quickborn, Germany, takes in the Picos de Europa mountains in the northern coast of Spain.



**Naomi Takeuchi** from Morrisville, North Carolina, stands outside Etimad-ud-Daula's Tomb in Agra, India.



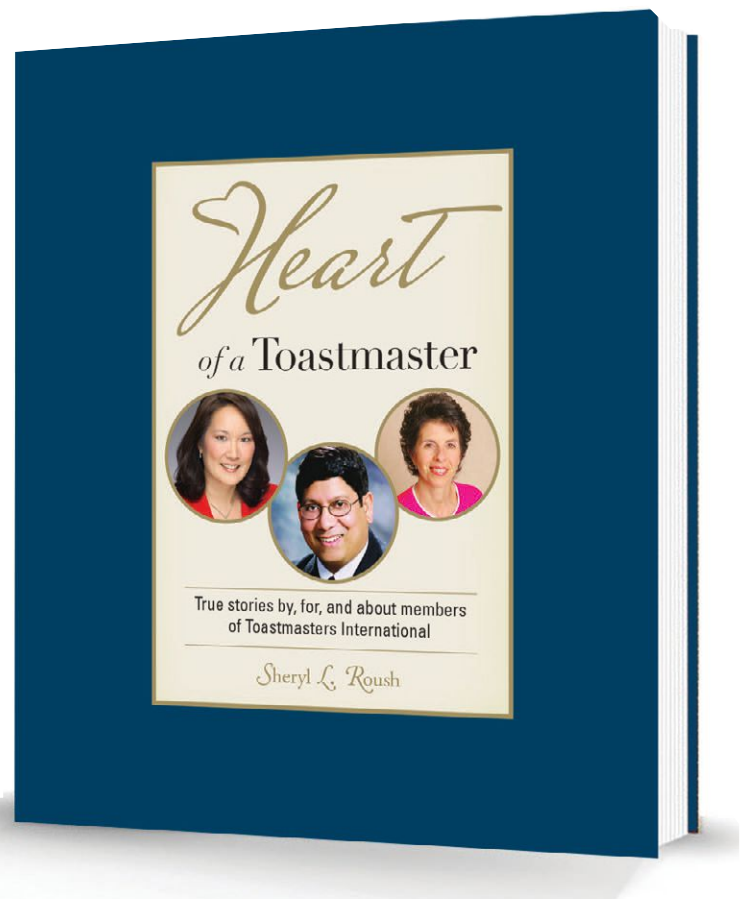
**Gloria Shishido** from Kailua, Hawaii, is surrounded by cherry blossoms in Fukuoka, Japan.



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# Stories and Ideas to Inspire Toastmasters Everywhere

*Heart of a Toastmaster* is an inspirational collection of stories written by and for Toastmasters International members.



Sheryl Roush is an international speaker and author, who offers humor, heart and hope to rekindle the spirit and boost morale. Her other books include *Heart of a Mother*, *Heart of a Woman* and *Heart of the Holidays*.

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