

THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | DECEMBER 2013

TOASTMASTER®

The Eyes Have It

Use eye contact wisely to connect with your audience.

PAGE 22



A Journey of Self-Discovery



I had already hit upon the great truth that ability in speaking is one of the marks of a leader and that training in self-expression through speech is one of the best ways of discovering and developing hidden talents.

— Dr. Ralph C. Smedley,
The Story of Toastmasters, Volume 1

That visionary insight, expressed in the early 1900s when adult education was just beginning to win recognition, is the genesis and genius of the Toastmasters program. Yet throughout the years, Toastmasters has been perceived solely as a public speaking organization—a limiting image. That is like confusing the sky with the universe.

Speech is the means by which we reach the infinite universe of lifelong learning and self-discovery. On one level, there is the external realm of knowledge and skill, such as the techniques of self-expression through speech. Then there is the inner realm of hidden talents that is buried within us, waiting to be discovered and developed.

The first key to unlocking this inner universe is gaining self-confidence through public speaking. Why is it that “many people fear public speaking more than death”? My hypothesis is that when we speak in front of a group of people, we are afraid that our weaknesses and deficiencies will be exposed for all to see, or for what we think the audience will see.

In confronting who we really are, we are compelled to let go of our mask. The Chinese philosophy of Taoism promotes the power of letting go. The following statements are all attributed to Lao Tzu, the sixth-century B.C. philosopher.

“When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be.”

“When I let go of what I have, I receive what I need.”

“When I feel most destroyed, I am about to grow.”

Does this kind of “letting go” apply to the letting go of the nervousness we feel when we give our Ice Breaker in front of an audience? Once we learn to let go of our masks, we are rewarded with a breakthrough in the form of confidence gained.

The second key to this inner universe is awareness through self-reflection. Making speeches requires a high degree of self-awareness. Socrates’ famous saying “The unexamined life is not worth living” comes to mind. Toastmasters is a practice field from which we develop our self-awareness on our journey to self-discovery and personal leadership. **T**

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International President

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We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



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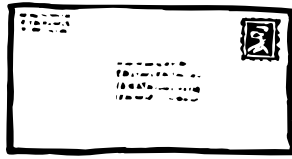
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“As VPE, only when you have regular communication with members will you understand their needs.”

— Cathryn Xiang, CC

Pointers on Prezi

Kudos to the staff of the *Toastmaster* magazine for the Tech Topics article in the July issue, “Craving a Change from PowerPoint?” by Christine Clapp. It would be good to see more articles like this one.

In her article, Clapp lists both advantages and disadvantages of using the presentation software Prezi. However, I must take exception to her claim that it is not easy to make handouts with this tool, because anyone (even those using a free web-based subscription) can easily save their work as a PDF document, which can then serve as a handout for your audience.

Toastmasters learn by doing. I enthusiastically recommend that others “learn to swim” by simply jumping into the deep end of the Prezi pool.

JOHN LESKO, DTM, PDG
Traveling TasteMasters
Stafford, Virginia

Reaching Out

In the July issue’s Viewpoint column, Immediate Past President John Lau shared how he reached out to fellow members when he was vice president education [VPE]. He wrote about how he called each member three days before every club meeting, and regularly called all 29 members of his club to learn about their [educational] needs.

As the VPE for my club, my objective is to reach out to each member, as Lau did.

Today, I booked time to sit with Toastmaster Tony, our immediate past president and area governor. I value the time we shared, because now I know what steps to take to help Tony achieve his goal.

As VPE, only when you have regular communication with members will you understand their needs. You will know how to make every member feel like family.

CATHRYN XIANG, CC
Amazing Afternoon club
Beijing, China

Foreign Hospitality

My trip to Central Africa would have been incomplete had I not visited the Blantyre and Eloquent Toastmasters clubs in southern Malawi. Prior to leaving Canada to travel to Central Africa, I wrote to the vice president membership of each club that I planned to visit. When I arrived, I attended the clubs’ meetings. Although both clubs are small, the meeting quality was excellent. All members were very hospitable, and I felt right at home. The next time you plan to travel, contact local clubs so that you, too, can learn from and share with other Toastmasters.

LYN HILL, DTM
Podium Pros Toastmasters
London, Ontario, Canada

Keeping It Green

While reading “Keep Your Club Green” (April) by Carl Duivenvoorden, I was caught up in the avalanche of ways Toastmasters can help save the environment.

Even in our own little way of doing things in Toastmasters—like having paperless club meetings, turning off projectors when not in use and not using bottled water for drinking—we can have an impact. We all share the same environment, and caring for it is our shared responsibility.

ROEL C. BASERA
TMX club
Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu, Philippines

Alone No More

In the July issue, I was pleased to see the “Poise in Politics” article by Wei-ling Chen, as well as the Member Moment for Keli Yen. Since I joined Toastmasters in 1999, I have never read so much about Taiwan Toastmasters in a single issue. To me, District 67 seems isolated—existing and surviving alone—without being noticed outside of Taiwan. But this issue shattered that idea. Taiwan, a beautiful island, with many exceptional and dedicated members with inspiring, touching stories, deserves more recognition. I believe this was a good beginning.

BRUCE YANG, DTM
Taichung Toastmasters
Taichung City, Taiwan

Awesome App

Congratulations Toastmasters International on a great app. I use magazine apps all the time and this is by far one of the best I’ve seen. The September digital magazine featured a great animated cover, a good layout of the table of contents and a good preview pane. The app also allows you to easily share a story. What an awesome job!

EKUAGRL, commenting on the Toastmasters International app in the Apple App Store

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. 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.

Have you checked out the digital *Toastmaster* magazine yet?

If so, please send your thoughts or feedback to letters@toastmasters.org. Your opinion matters, and your letter may even appear in the magazine.

To find the *Toastmaster* magazine app, visit the Apple App Store.

My Path to a DTM Earned Respect in Dubai

High Performance Leadership project brought success to many.

BY SUJIT SUKUMARAN, DTM

My Toastmasters experience began when I was a member of a Gavel club in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. My positive experiences led me to join a Toastmasters club when I was 21. I met many of my best friends in Toastmasters, and they are like family to me.

For the first six years of my Toastmasters journey, I focused on myself and my quest for excellence in speaking competitions as well as leadership positions. However, after many years and several trophies, I still did not feel fulfilled.

On my path to achieving a DTM award, I did a High Performance Leadership project in 2011 to meet the ALS requirements. My project, called “Champions Incubator,” involved coaching Toastmasters in reaching the World Championship of Public Speaking. At the time, I thought if we didn’t make it to the semifinals, at least the experience would do wonders for our confidence and help us improve.

So we started as a motley crew of 24 Toastmasters who over a span of four months met every weekend to practice and learn through observation, teaching and practical assignments. We trained in the nuances of excelling in the speech contest categories of evaluation, Table Topics, humorous and international speaking.

The initiative was essentially a training program, but what it did for me and the other participants was amazing. On the first day, there was a fellow Toastmaster in our group literally hiding behind the table and saying, “This is not for me. I am not half a speaker as anyone in the room.” After 14 weeks of advice and practice, he went on to win the Humorous Speech Contest in his club. Later on, he told me over the phone—the words I will always remember: “For the first time, you made me believe I was capable of winning something. I sensed admiration in my son’s eyes and appreciation from my wife. I am very grateful to you for that.”

In October 2012, my mentor called me and asked if I wanted to submit the Champions Incubator initiative for an award under the Innovation category of the Dubai Quality Group awards, which is part of the World Quality Day celebrations.



Sujit Sukumaran, DTM, center, receives a Silver Award in innovation for his High Performance Leadership Project from representatives of the Dubai Quality Group.

We entered the competition as the only team representing a nonprofit organization, and were up against teams from many of the country’s elite public sector organizations.

We were shortlisted into the finals with five others. Their presentations were exemplary. Then came our turn. Armed with our communication skills and confidence that comes from wanting to portray our organization in the best light to the outside world, we made our presentation.

As true dark horses, we won the Silver Award for the Innovation category. It was the first time a

Toastmasters initiative was

acknowledged and awarded in a symposium patronized by the local government. This was a major achievement not only for our team, but also for Toastmasters International.

The program transformed me into a better person as I learned that the more you give, the more you get. And however small a gesture might be, your actions might just transform the lives of many people around you. **T**

High Performance Leadership fulfills one of the requirements for earning the Advanced Leader Silver award in the Toastmasters leadership track. To learn more, visit www.toastmasters.org/leadtrack.

SUJIT SUKUMARAN, DTM, is a division governor and a member of Star of Arabia Toastmasters in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

HOW HAS THE TOASTMASTERS PROGRAM HELPED YOU? Do you have a story about overcoming obstacles and lessons learned? Please share it in this column using 700 words or less. State your name, member number and home club, and send it to submissions@toastmasters.org with “My Turn” in the subject line. For more information, visit www.toastmasters.org/WriterGuidelines.

AROUND THE GLOBE

In Brief

WEBSITE UPDATE

As of November 5, the section of the Toastmasters International website previously referred to as “My Profile” is now called “My Account.” My Account is where you go to view your membership or education award history, update your contact information and view your downloads.

ACCREDITED SPEAKER PROGRAM DEADLINE

Applications for the 2014 Accredited Speaker Program will be accepted **between January 1 and February 1, 2014**. To learn more about the program, or to download the application or the new rules, please visit www.toastmasters.org/accreditedspeakerprogram.

MARVELOUS MENTORS

Do you know an exceptional mentor who has positively influenced you or other Toastmasters? Send a 200-word description and photo (1 MB or larger) to mentormoment@toastmasters.org.

WATCH TOASTMASTERS CONVENTION VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

If you were unable to attend the convention in August, visit www.toastmastersondemand.com to purchase on-demand videos and DVDs of the Golden Gavel Dinner, the World Championship of Public Speaking, and the International Speech Contest Semifinals (on demand only).

INTERESTING IMAGES

Show off your photography talents in the “Snapshot” section (opposite page). Send your photo relating to communication or leadership (1 MB or larger) to photos@toastmasters.org. There is no need to display the *Toastmaster* magazine.

MEMBER MOMENT



Bridging Gaps Through Social Media



Rimjhim Ray, CC, is the head of social media marketing at Tata Consultancy Services, an IT services and business solutions company based in Mumbai, India. She has held leadership roles in marketing, sales and management, and has worked with clients internationally. Ray also writes on topics related to management, social media and women in leadership. She holds an MBA in marketing and degrees in mathematics and computer science. Ray is a member of Mumbai Toastmasters.

Why is social media an important form of communication?

Social media helps you communicate without many of the censorship or barriers that more traditional channels pose. It encourages free-flowing debate, galvanizes public opinion and helps individuals across the globe connect on common interests and causes.

How do you prepare for meetings with clients from other countries?

I make myself aware of the nuances of communication and culture of that country. I also learn greetings and some everyday words in the local language. A cheery good morning in one's own language appeals to anyone. In some cases, I read travel guides and watch local videos and movies to learn how people conduct themselves in that region.

What's the most useful thing you gained in Toastmasters?

I've gained friends for life, and a sense of belonging to an amazing worldwide community. I receive a warm greeting from fellow Toastmasters in all the places I visit.

Visit Ray's blog at www.globeslother.wordpress.com.



INTERNATIONAL INTERPRETATIONS

Fork It Over

A fork is the most practical of things—a small utensil designed to get food into your mouth with minimal effort. However, the cultural etiquette surrounding fork use is not always such a simple matter. In some cases, it's best not to use one at all.

For example, if you eat a rice-based meal in Thailand, don't use a fork to put the food into your mouth—use it only to push food onto your spoon, writes Amanda Ruggeri in *Budget Travel* magazine. Only the spoon, not the fork, should go into your mouth.

Then there are tacos. If you eat tacos in Mexico, don't eat them with a fork and knife, notes Ruggeri. That looks silly—and even snobby—to the locals, she says. Just dig in with your hands!



SNAPSHOT

Members of the Meinders School of Business club at Oklahoma City University struggled with low membership for almost a year before David Walkup, ALB, came up with the idea of creating club labels and pasting them on extra copies of the Toastmaster magazine, and other marketing materials, to promote their club. Autumn Harting (in red), vice president membership, made it happen.

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

Craig Valentine, CTM 1999 TOASTMASTERS WORLD CHAMPION OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

This month, Craig Valentine, CTM, shares lessons learned. A member of the Randallstown Network Toastmasters in Pikesville, Maryland, he is the 1999 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking.

Have you ever "bombed" on stage—and if so, what did you learn from the experience?

Yes, the first time was when I did not yet have much speaking material, so I tried to force-fit the content I did have. I told the stories and gave the points I wanted to give, but that content was not what my audience needed. What I learned was: Don't just speak on what you want to say; speak on what the audience needs to hear.

Bombing is certainly part of the process for every speaker. If a speaker hasn't bombed more than once, he or she just hasn't spoken enough.



WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Do you use your smartphone or tablet to help you to prepare speeches?

"As my life gets busier, I find it useful to record a speech draft on my phone or iPod so that I can listen to it for rehearsal purposes."

Colin William, DTM

Greater Lafayette Area Communicators club
West Lafayette, Indiana

"I downloaded iToast on my iPhone, which gives me the use of two apps: one for the timer and one for the grammarian, to help me prepare for a speech."

Pamela Auble, CL

Tech Toastmasters club
Sterling, Virginia

"I use a timer app that turns the screen of my Android smartphone green, yellow or red at the designated times. It helps me time my speech during rehearsals."

Eric Matto, DTM

Creekside TD club
Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

Members contributed to the discussion on the LinkedIn Official Toastmasters International Members Group.



"The deepest joy of belonging comes as one learns to cooperate and contribute and help."

DR. RALPH C. SMEDLEY
1878-1965

TOASTMASTERS FOUNDER

AROUND THE GLOBE

LEARNING ABOUT OUR PAST INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENTS



GAVIN BLAKEY, DTM

*Past International President
2002–2003*

Ashgrove, Queensland, Australia

What inspires you?

Passionate people ... and there are plenty of them in Toastmasters! When people have conviction, and believe in what they're doing, they can move mountains.

Ralph Smedley was one of those people. He didn't let previous failed attempts at starting a speaking club stop him. He believed in the power of effective communication, and in the difference it would make.

Mike and Tom, mentors in my first club, inspired me to volunteer for leadership roles, and then to expand my horizons by becoming an area governor. They had confidence in me before I had confidence in myself. They inspired me to step outside my comfort zone to seek leadership roles.

Who can you inspire by simply offering your encouragement?



Find the *Toastmaster* magazine app in the Apple App Store

MEET MY MENTOR



Jim Eng, DTM

No one has the potential to influence a member's experience like a mentor. Don Edwards, DTM, a member of the Executive Toastmasters club in Tucson, Arizona, shares how he has benefited from his mentor, James (Jim) Eng, DTM, president of the Oro Valley Toastmasters and Cosmopolitan Toastmasters clubs.

Why did you join Toastmasters?

At age 79 I was invited to join the Executive Toastmasters club.

What were some challenges you wanted to overcome in Toastmasters?

I wanted to become a better speaker. We are all judged by our abilities to express ourselves and to comprehend messages as effective listeners. By acquiring these skills, we become better people and learn to enjoy life to the fullest.

Tell us about your mentor.

Jim is a software engineer. I first met him in 2010, when he was an area governor visiting my club. In 2011, Jim was a division governor and I was one of his area governors. Jim has been very patient and dedicated in explaining the education requirements. He helped me establish a timetable to achieve DTM recognition in three years.

How does Jim give feedback?

Jim calls me every weekend to monitor my progress and encourage me to accomplish the next educational goal. As Jim assesses my capabilities and areas requiring improvement, he makes suggestions for speech topics and advises me on how to present them.

How else have you benefited from Jim's mentoring?

Under Jim's guidance, I have gained a better understanding of myself. He has also helped me become a more effective role model for other Toastmasters.

What is your favorite thing about Jim?

It is his vast knowledge about the workings of Toastmasters. It is important to have a mentor who knows the Toastmaster system and route to educational accomplishments.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Mentor Jim Eng, and his mentee, Don Edwards.

For more information about mentoring, download the *Mentoring* module (Item 296DCD) of The Successful Club Series from the Toastmasters Online Store at www.toastmasters.org.

COMMUNICATION TIP

Small Talk



A holiday office party is a nice chance to socialize, but remember: Be smart about your small talk.

Here are three things to avoid.

1. Controversial topics

"While the conversation need not focus on work topics, talking politics, religion and sex is a quick way to alienate someone," writes Caroline Dowd-Higgins in an article for AOL Jobs.

2. Off-color humor

This is not the time or place to tell dirty jokes; what might seem funny to you could be offensive to a colleague. If you want to tell a joke, keep it clean.

3. Office gossip

Tempting as it might be at times, criticizing those you work with behind their backs is a definite no-no. If you are surrounded by others who are doing this kind of bad-mouthing, try to switch the conversation to a positive topic.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



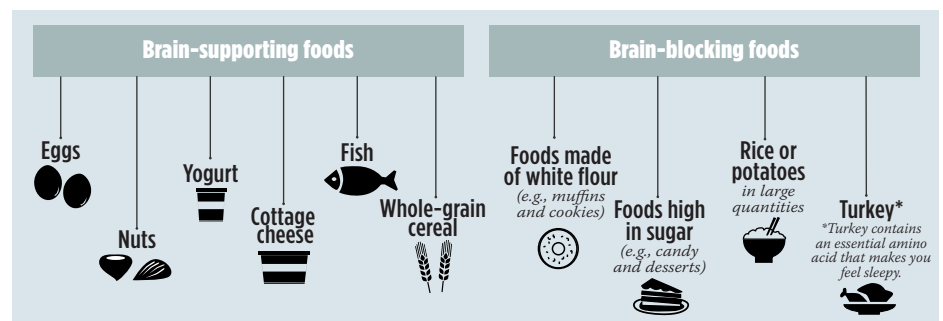
The World Headquarters staff at Toastmasters International poses for a group Christmas portrait, circa 1960s.

FACTS WORTH KNOWING

Did You Eat Breakfast Today?

Be sure to take time to eat what is often referred to as the most important meal of the day, especially if you attend an early Toastmasters meeting. Eating a healthy breakfast will help you think on your feet when you're called on for Table Topics.

Eat a brain-boosting breakfast to energize yourself and improve your alertness, says www.goodluckexams.com, an exam-preparation website. Breakfast foods can either boost or squander your brain power.



"People who miss breakfast tend to feel fatigued early on in the day and have low concentration levels, affecting their efficiency," says dietician Dr. Sunita Dube in an article on *The Times of India* website.

Information compiled from www.goodluckexams.com.



Aimee Le, CC:

Beautiful Inside and Out

Pageant winner speaks up for people with disabilities.

BY JULIE BAWDEN-DAVIS

When Aimee Le, CC, was a sixth-grader, she competed in a school speech contest. The 12-year-old girl practiced for hours, and she was devastated when she didn't win.

"After that, I became reluctant about speaking in public, and I even started stuttering," Le recalls.

Eventually she learned about Toastmasters from her father, who was a member of a club at his workplace: Boeing, the aero-

"From a young age, I decided that when I grew up, I would advocate for the disabled." — Aimee Le

space company, in Southern California. He told his daughter that Toastmasters could help her. With the assistance of a local club, Le started a Gavel club at her high school; it grew to 20 members, attracting students from all grades. The group met for 45 minutes during lunchtime once a week. Le says her experience with the Gavel club helped her overcome stuttering before she entered college.

The 22-year-old is now a member of ZotSpeak Toastmasters at the University of California, Irvine (UCI). She joined the club as a college freshman. "Toastmasters definitely helped me become less nervous

when speaking in front of people, and even communicating with people in general," she says. "Being able to officially join Toastmasters at 18 allowed me to flourish throughout my undergraduate career at UCI."

A resident of Fountain Valley, California, Le became involved in beauty pageants as a teenager, and this year she won the 2013 Miss Fountain Valley title. The honor requires her to speak frequently in public.

The Pageant Circuit

While looking for college scholarship opportunities during her senior year in high school, Le discovered the Miss America pageantry system, which is the world's largest provider of scholarships. Gaining confidence from her Toastmasters experience, she placed in several competitions before winning the Miss Fountain Valley title. Since starting pageantry work at 17, Le has won more than \$10,000 to help finance her education. In June, she graduated from UCI with a degree in neurobiology, and she plans to continue her education in medical school.

When it comes to pageantry scoring, communication skills play a huge role. "With the Miss America Organization, 30 percent of your score comes from an interview and onstage questions," says Le, who played a piece by Chopin on the piano for the talent portion.

During the 10-minute interview, contestants can be asked anything, including controversial questions relating to current events and politics. "I was asked about healthcare reform," Le says. "I treated each scenario as a Table Topics session, and as a result was able to think on my feet and answer questions on the spot with poise and confidence."

Since winning the Miss Fountain Valley title, she has spoken at numerous appearances, including on television. "For my TV appearances, it was definitely a little bit nerve-racking at first. But I used the techniques that I learned from Toastmasters to answer the questions," she says. "Most of the interviews were casual, so I treated them as normal conversations, and I tried to keep my answers concise."

"Aimee is doing an excellent job of representing the City of Fountain Valley, and we are very proud of her," says Sue Taylor, assistant executive director and public relations manager for the Miss Fountain Valley Scholarship Pageant. "She is poised and gets her message across, and I attribute a lot of that to her involvement in Toastmasters."

In June, Le competed in the Miss California pageant, along with 60 other young women. Although she did not place in the contest, she walked away with \$1,000 in scholarship money for participating, and says the event was "an unforgettable, once-in-a-lifetime experience."

Helping Her Community

The Miss America Organization requires contestants to adopt a platform and volunteer their time to a particular cause. Le decided to make people aware of discrimination against those with disabilities. She created her cause—Aiming High for Disabled Children—because of the special needs of her younger brother and only sibling, Eric, who was bullied in school.

“When we were growing up, other children often said hurtful things to my brother, and I defended him, so they treated us both differently,” she says. “Learning to stand up for myself and for other people with confidence is another reason I joined Toastmasters. From a young age, I contemplated why people say such hurtful things and decided that when I grew up, I would advocate for the disabled.”

Being Miss Fountain Valley has given her that opportunity. “Aimee really cares about others and the community,” says Taylor.

Le plans to help others by becoming a doctor. She studied neurobiology in college so she could better understand her brother’s condition. “I ventured into the sciences to learn more, especially about the brain, the most mysterious and fascinating organ in the human body,” she says.

Gia Nguyen, ACS, is a fellow member of Le’s in ZotSpeak Toastmasters; he delivered the commencement address to an audience of 5,000 at his graduation from UCI in



Aimee Le, the 2013 Miss Fountain Valley, speaks against discrimination of people with disabilities to groups in her community and on television.

2010. Nguyen describes Le as an elegant and graceful young woman who inspires people when she speaks about science-related topics. He points to two of her recent speeches as examples: “Choose Health Over Beauty” and a “Healthy Brain is a Happy Brain.”

“Aimee’s education from UCI gives her great confidence when speaking about brain function, and her time with Toastmasters has made her messages more persuasive,” says Nguyen.

Le says positioning herself to make a significant impact in the lives of others feels like the right decision. “A doctor cares for people and teaches them to take care of themselves. When you are in such a position, people are more likely to listen when you advocate for a cause, such as promoting compassion for the disabled community.

“My wish is to be a positive role model, and I’ll use my Toastmasters skills to accomplish that.” **T**

To learn more about Le, visit her website: <http://aimeele.wix.com/home>.

JULIE BAWDEN-DAVIS is a freelance writer based in Southern California and a longtime contributor to the Toastmaster.

Scoring Breakdown

The Miss America pageant and its 1,500 local and state pageants constitute the largest source of scholarship funds for young women in the world. Contestants in a local Miss California Pageant are judged on the following areas of competition:

- 35 percent—Talent
- 25 percent—Private interview
- 20 percent—Evening gown
- 15 percent—Swimsuit and fitness
- 5 percent—On-stage question

Stay, Speak! What Dog Trainers Know About Pack Leadership

Schooling and evaluation go paw in hand.

BY CAREN S. NEILE, PH.D., CL, ATMS

The worst-trained dogs I have ever owned are my adorable Labrador retriever, Sophie, and my previous pooch, a beautiful golden retriever named Maggie. Don't get me wrong—they weren't aggressive or violent. It's that they were lousy on the leash and just couldn't "stay." It wasn't until recently that I realized where my husband and I had gone wrong: We had not applied the tried-and-true methods I'd learned in Toastmasters. That's right. There are several similarities between training dogs and training speakers. It's all about calm-assertive energy, positive reinforcement, opportunities for growth, and being consistent.

Calm-Assertive Energy

One of the best-known dog experts in the world today is Cesar Millan, a.k.a. the Dog Whisperer. A TV star and author, Millan's training philosophy can be summed up in one concept: calm-assertive energy.

Millan believes that because the pack instinct is central to a dog's motivation, an owner must become the dog's calm, assertive pack leader. Dogs in a pack don't punish each other; they simply correct. Actually, Millan says he doesn't train dogs at all; he helps re-train *humans* to see their behavior and environment through a dog's eyes, and to provide rules and boundaries for dogs.

In Toastmasters, the evaluator's job is also to correct, calmly but with authority. For instance, the evaluator must correct a speaker who has used filler words, strayed too far from the lectern or neglected to fulfill the manual assignment. One of the kindest, yet most potent evaluations I ever received was from a veteran club member who said, "It's okay to make mistakes at a meeting. This is the place to make mistakes so that we don't make them elsewhere." My error was pointed out, without



Effective leaders give calm and assertive feedback, at the park or in Toastmasters clubs.

sugar-coating. But I wasn't reprimanded for it. That's a great evaluation.

In his book *Cesar's Way*, Millan notes that working with other dogs in a pack helps an individual dog learn much faster, and more effectively, than teaching it one-on-one.

What I discovered was when a new and unstable dog was introduced to a group that had already formed a healthy bond; the pack actually influenced the newcomer to achieve that balanced state of mind ... As long as I monitored and stopped any aggressive, exclusive or defensive behavior

on either side of the encounter, the new dog would eventually adjust its behavior to 'fit in' with the others. With humans as with dogs—in fact, with all pack-oriented species—it's in our genetic best interest to try to fit in, to get along with others of our kind.

Translation for Toastmasters: Where would we be as speakers without club meetings? "Pack leadership" is vital in meetings. Strong club leaders and longtime members can influence newer members to adhere to Toastmasters standards and work harder to achieve personal goals, whether by formal mentoring and evaluations or



TV personalities and dog trainers Barbara Woodhouse (far left), Cesar Millan and Victoria Stilwell have taught countless dog owners leadership skills.

simply by modeling appropriate behavior. Having attended a number of club meetings in several U.S. states, I can attest to the range of differences among club cultures. Individuals choose clubs, and stay in them, based on how well they fit in with a particular pack.

Positive Reinforcement

The British actress-turned-dog-trainer-turned-media personality Victoria Stilwell served as a judge on the *Greatest American Dog* and stars on TV's *It's Me or the Dog*. She believes that most of the dog behavioral problems we encounter "stem from insecurity and/or a desire to seek and maintain safety and comfort." Stilwell focuses on positive reinforcement, meaning that if you reward a behavior you like, there's a better chance that the dog will repeat it.

On her site Victoria Stilwell Positively (www.positively.com), Stilwell says that positive reinforcement includes "negative punishment (the removal or withholding of something the dog wants like food, attention, toys or human contact for a short period of time), or using a vocal interrupter to redirect negative behavior onto a wanted behavior and then guide a dog into making the right choices, "combined with an awareness that most dogs are not trying to be dominant. As for Toastmasters, positive reinforcement is sometimes confused with "white-washing," or the tendency to compliment everything a speaker does to avoid hurting her feelings.

As Stilwell points out, "positive" does not mean "permissive." As Toastmasters,

we certainly provide interrupters in the form of the Ah-Counter's bell or timer's red light. (I would never advocate withholding food from a Toastmaster; you may get bitten!) But true positive training emphasizes the speaker's strengths—an emphasis as important in speaking as it is in dog training. If we smile or use our voice particularly well, but are never told that we do, we have two disadvantages: First, we may not do it again. What is more, we won't get that special motivation that comes with being praised for great work.

Opportunities for Growth

Before Millan and Stilwell, there was Barbara Woodhouse. The British dog guru was known for her TV show *Training Dogs the Woodhouse Way* and her bestseller *No Bad Dogs*. The book title echoes her famous saying: "There's no such thing as a difficult dog—only an inexperienced owner."

Woodhouse, who died in 1988, believed that dogs thrive when they learn new things. "I recommend that people, when they come home from work or on weekends, give the dog something new to learn," she wrote. "A dog must have interests. Otherwise, it will often become nervous and neurotic. Dogs like training if the owners make it exciting enough."

Toastmasters, too, like to learn new things, especially when they're excited about what they are learning. That's why it's so important that a club's vice president education encourages club members to create new goals, move through the ranks to DTM, and then start all over again with

a basic manual using different speeches and strategies. Events such as conferences and special meetings, and meeting roles from Topicsmaster to Ah-Counter, are all opportunities for growth that keep members motivated and moving forward.

Consistency

All dog trainers emphasize one important piece of advice above all others: consistency. It doesn't work to reprimand a dog for doing something one day that goes unnoticed the next. For Toastmasters, however, consistency means a number of things. For beginning speakers, it means attending club meetings on a regular basis, and setting and achieving new goals on an ongoing basis. For club officers and district and division governors, it may mean continually touching base with fellow members. And for every Toastmaster, consistency refers to maintaining high standards that benefit the individual as well as the group.

Speakers aren't dogs, of course. Human beings have a host of needs, desires and challenges that extend far beyond those of our canine friends. Nevertheless, these tried-and-true concepts may just make the difference between a great speaker and one's whose skills have, shall we say, gone to the dogs.

A treat wouldn't hurt, either. **T**

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The History of Toasting

Ancient tradition is full of colorful tidbits.

BY CRAIG HARRISON, DTM

Every day around the world, cultures celebrate, honor and signify meaningful events with toasts, usually involving a libation, heartfelt words and the clinking of glasses. Whether toasting the Almighty, the head of state, the wedding party or an award recipient, we toast for health, wealth, happiness, safe passage, healing or any of a number of noble and sometimes frivolous aspirations.

Yet few people know the history behind this ritual. It's a tradition that began centuries ago. "The ancient Hebrews, Persians and Egyptians were toasters, as were the Saxons, Huns and other tribes," Paul Dickson writes in his book *Toasts: Over 1,500 of the Best Toasts, Sentiments, Blessings and Graces*.

"In those days the duties of the toastmaster tended to be referee-like in that his main function was to give all toasters a fair chance to make their contribution."

— Paul Dickson

In his 18th-century history book *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbons wrote about toasting, Dickson notes. Gibbons described a feast among the Huns at which their leader, Attila, led no less than three rounds of toasts for each course of an elaborate dinner.

Ancient Greeks drank to each other's health and welfare. In *The Odyssey*, Ulysses drank to the health of Achilles. The idea of poison—which was a potent weapon in the sixth century B.C.—also came into play. According to David



When toasting in another country, stick to safe topics like friendship, life and health.

Fulmer's book *A Gentleman's Guide to Toasting*, toasting was "a good faith gesture to assure the drink wasn't spiked with poison." The best way to prove a drink was safe for sipping was to take the first sip. Just as a handshake assured others that nothing was hidden up one's sleeve, drinking a shared libation in front of others signified to all its worthiness for consumption.

The Romans built upon this Greek custom of drinking to others' health and well-being: They added toasted bread crumbs to their goblets, reducing

the acidity of the often bitter wine. Thus came the appellation "to toast"—referring to the drink itself—from the Latin term "tostus," meaning "to dry up" or "scorch." In Rome, "drinking to another's health became so important, the Senate decreed that all diners must drink to Augustus [the first Roman emperor] at every meal," Dickson writes. "Fabius Maximus [the Roman politician and general] declared that no man should eat or drink before he had prayed for [Maximus] and drank to his health."

The Clinking of Glasses

The toasting custom spread throughout Europe and England, where for the first time the clinking of glasses accompanied the ritual. Whether its intent was to mix the content of each other's glasses so everyone drank the same grog (lessening the likelihood of being poisoned), or to add sound to the experience of taste, touch, smell and sight, no one is sure.

In the 17th century, toasting became very popular, says Dickson. Eventually, the position of "toastmaster" emerged. In England, the toastmaster presided over events, delivering and soliciting appropriate toasts. "In those days the duties of the

To this day, one can find the National Association of Toastmasters in the United Kingdom—whose trained members wear ceremonial red dinner jackets and are skilled at oratory, poetry and toasting. They emcee events of all varieties, from weddings and funerals to christenings and fundraisers.

Dickson describes a Golden Age of toasting in America during the 40-year period from approximately 1880 to 1920. Many prominent authors wrote toasts, toast books and pamphlets were published, and newspapers ran columns on the subject. One periodical, *The National Magazine*, had its own Toasts

is emptied and the last few drops are shaken out, then it is passed to the guest and the host refills the glass," says the website Etiquette International (www.etiquetteinternational.com). "A glass is never refilled until it is completely empty in Korea, whereas in Japan the glass is constantly refilled so it is never empty."

If you're going to make a toast in another country, notes the site, be sure to find out the toasting customs there "before putting your foot in your mouth."

"Toasts don't necessarily translate well, especially if they are idiomatic or poetic," adds Etiquette International. "It's a good idea to stick to safe topics like friendship, the enjoyment of life and health."

"A glass is never refilled until it is completely empty in Korea, whereas in Japan the glass is constantly refilled so it is never empty."

— www.etiquetteinternational.com

toastmaster tended to be referee-like in that his main function was to give all toasters a fair chance to make their contribution," writes Dickson in his book.

He adds that one of the earliest books on toasting—if not *the* earliest—was *The Royal Toastmaster* by J. Roach, published in London in 1791. Roach's view was that the toast is a very powerful ritual. Consider this passage from his book:

A Toast or Sentiment very frequently excites good humor, and revives languid conversation; often does it, when properly applied, cool the heat of resentment, and blunt the edge of animosity. A well-applied Toast is acknowledged, universally, to soothe the flame of acrimony, when season and reason oft used their efforts to no purpose.

editor, whose duties included judging the best toasts in a monthly contest, Dickson says.

Traveling Toasts

Worldwide, numerous nations and cultures have their own toasting customs. Many are similar to each other yet others are unique. For example, in Japan, China and Korea, the customary toasts sound very similar but are pronounced differently. According to the Matador Network (www.matadornetwork.com), a site devoted to travel journalism, toasters in Japan say the word *kanpai* and pronounce it "kan-pie"; in China they say *gān bēi* and pronounce it "gan bay"; in Korea they say *gonbae* and pronounce it "gun bae."

And Korean toasting customs differ from the Japanese. "In Korea, the glass

The ancient and international tradition of toasting is no doubt one that will endure for many more years. Let's hope the future of the toast is as engrossing as its past. **T**

Many countries around the world have their own unique words or phrases to use with a toast. Here are a few:

Spain—"Salud" (health)

Israel—"L'Chaim" (to life)

Romania—"Noroc" (good luck)

Russia—"Za vas" (here's to you)

Turkey—"Şerefe" (to honor)

Iran—"Nūsh" (immortality)

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For more tips on toasting, see the digital version of this article on your tablet.

Table Talk

How to serve food for thought at meals.

BY CAREN S. NEILE, PH.D., CL, ATMS

“Don’t talk with your mouth full.” For many of us, that’s the full extent of our training with respect to speaking at the table. Yet for much of human history, the practice of breaking bread (or pita, or tortillas) has been a profound ritual—and one that carries emotional significance. In the current age, in which our time is so divided and multitasking is the norm, it is more important than ever to sit down and focus on food and fellow diners.

When so many of our personal conversations and professional negotiations take place over meals, it helps to know not only when to speak, but also how to speak—and to whom.

Here are some strategies that will help:

Include Everyone

When you eat at the table with three or four other people sitting near you, make your conversations inclusive. If one of your neighbors has no one to talk to, be sure to include him in your conversation as soon as possible.

“In any group, there are people who are naturally talkers and those who are content to listen. I try to draw out the latter,” writes leadership expert Michael Hyatt, author of *Platform: Get Noticed in a Noisy World*. Just as in any

speaking situation, we want to interact with listeners through eye contact as well as through conversation. We want people to feel that we care about their thoughts and reactions, and so we must focus our full attention on them without distraction.

Start with a Light First Course

All of this begs the question: What do we say? When sitting at a table with strangers, the first step is to introduce yourself. You might also want to say what your connection is to the host or to the other guests. Chances are your neighbor will do the same, but if not, you can ask. When talking to a table neighbor, tread cautiously at first: Consider holding off on jokes, for example, until you know a little bit about the person’s sense of

humor, especially if he or she is from another culture.

A spoonful of small talk is invaluable at the table, particularly when it comes to asking questions. Ask open-ended questions starting with *who*, *what*, *where*, *when* and *how* instead of asking questions that can be answered by a simple “yes” or “no.” This will help you keep the conversation moving.

For example, say you are dining with somebody who just returned from a two-week trip to New Zealand. A good question might be: “What was your favorite part of the trip?”

Even if you have nothing in common with other diners, there are general topics of discussion that can get everyone talking. Examples include: food and wine, room decor, music and the people around





us—as long as we’re not saying anything we wouldn’t want those people to hear. Experts also suggest floating trial balloons of conversational topics, such as sports, television shows, movies or theater, depending on what you or your fellow diners enjoy. Mainly, you don’t want to tackle any subject that is too controversial or potentially offensive, says Gloria Starr, an etiquette, communications and leadership coach.

“I recommend that you do not talk about politics, religion, death, bereavement or anything that is too spicy,” she says.

That doesn’t mean you can’t engage in deep conversations at the table, particularly with people you know well. The key is to be polite and to find a subject that interests everyone.

Don’t Spoil the Party

Speaking of being polite, nothing causes indigestion during a meal quicker than a ringing cell phone. Turning on the phone is the ultimate turn-off at the table

When talking to a table neighbor, tread cautiously at first: Consider holding off on jokes, for example, until you know a little bit about the person’s sense of humor.

because it delivers a message that is loud and clear: *You no longer have my attention*. If you must pick up an urgent call at the table, excuse yourself and leave the room, say etiquette experts. And definitely don’t *make a*

call, unless there is a compelling reason to do so.

Above all, do more listening than talking. “You must be aware of the rhythm inherent in any conversation,”

says Hyatt, the leadership expert, in his blog post. “How much are they talking? How much are you talking? The key is to focus on asking questions. If you do this well, you will find yourself talking less and listening more.”

Conversation Starters

Try these conversation starters at a family meal and get everyone involved. You could even use them at your club's next Table Topics session.

- What are the most important qualities you look for in friends?
- What skill would you like to have someday?
- What would you like to be doing in 10 years?
- Who is one of your heroes and why does he or she inspire you?
- What's the nicest thing you've ever done for someone?
- Have you ever stood up for something you thought was right?
- What do children know more about than adults?
- What's the scariest thing that ever happened to you?
- What is one piece of advice that you wish you could pass along to everyone else?
- What one special talent would you like to have?
- Most people have a favorite story or experience that they love to share with other people. Here's your chance: What's your story?
- If you had to write your own personal definition of the word success, what would it be?
- Whenever you are having a bad day, what is the best thing you can do to help cheer yourself up?
- What event or activity in the next few months are you looking forward to more than anything else?
- If you had the time and money and could go on any month-long summer adventure, what would you choose to do?

This is a modified version of the Mealtime Conversation Starters list from www.familytreemd.org.



Bunzo Suzuki, a past District 76 governor, and Mike Storkey, Toastmasters International's Second Vice President, enjoy some mealtime conversation at the 2011 International Convention's District Governors Luncheon.

There's another bonus to being a good listener: The more the other person is talking, the more time you have to eat!

Conversational Styles Differ

From my own experience dining with many people over the years, I have observed that "table talkers" tend to break down into five general categories. Which one do you fit into?

The Lecturer. The lecturer has an agenda—and makes sure that everyone at the table knows about it. Sometimes angry or strident, she may interrupt her fellow diners, but more likely, she doesn't give them a chance to be interrupted. She wants to dish out her knowledge, thoughts and feelings, but she doesn't understand that a conversation requires back-and-forth—it's not a monologue.

"Conversation is like a game of volleyball—you hit the ball over the net to the other person, and they hit it back to you," Starr says.

The Storyteller. Like the lecturer, this diner holds the floor far longer than anyone

else at the table, only he may be more entertaining. Other diners may not wish to be rude and interrupt his story, but that doesn't mean they don't also want to speak. There is a caveat to the Storyteller's style, however: Few things are more delicious at the table than sharing stories as a group, particularly if they're entertaining. (Think of the classic movie *My Dinner with Andre*, about two old friends having an expansive conversation over an elaborate meal.) As long as all, or most, of the diners are involved in the activity, storytelling can be a great way for people to relax and connect with one another during a meal.

The Silent One. Everyone likes to be the center of attention, but by being quiet, the Silent One may give fellow diners too much of the floor. Most people find it difficult to talk with someone who only nods and smiles and contributes little to the conversation. However, if the Silent One were to sit next to the Lecturer or even next to the Storyteller, it could create the perfect situation.

The Interviewer. Somewhere along the way, this person learned that asking ques-



When you eat at the table with other people, make sure no one is left out of the conversations.

tions draws people out. True enough, but again, this may be a matter of too much of a good thing. People don't want to feel as though they are put on the spot conversation-wise. Fellow diners may even wonder what the Interviewer has to hide, or even what magazine she's writing for.

The Conversationalist. This is the person who authentically listens to others, asks a moderate number of questions that draw others into the discussion, and offers comments of no more than a couple of sentences at a time to avoid holding the floor for more than about a minute. Conversationalists are popular guests.

Toastmasters at the Table

If you have not done so already, you and members of your club might wish to share a meal from time to time. Consider it a great opportunity for Table Topics beyond the scope of a Toastmasters meeting. No one should speak for more than a couple of minutes at a time, and the conversation should include comments and responses, as in any natural conversation. You could even have a round robin for Table

Topicsmaster, and let each person who gives a Table Topics response suggest the next topic for someone else at the table. The beauty of this opportunity is that not only do club members get a chance to speak, but they also experience the pleasures of a good dinner party—the nurturance of food and fellowship.

With so many things to think about, don't forget the early training you received about talking at the table with your mouth full. "People may ask you a question [while you have] food in your mouth ... under no circumstances do you want to answer the question when you are chewing," says Starr. Drink some water before you answer and make good use of your napkin. No one wants to see food on someone's face, or in their teeth.

And before you ask others a question at the table, notes Starr, make sure their mouths are empty too. **T**

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Tips for Talks

The following links are useful for learning more about the fine art of table conversation:

Dinner Conversation: http://www.etiquettescholar.com/dining_etiquette/table_manners/dinner_conversation.html

Etiquette for Dinner Conversation: <http://given2hospitality.com/etiquette-for-dinner-conversation/>

How to Have Better Dinner Conversations: michaelhyatt.com/how-to-have-better-dinner-conversations.html

Conversation Starters: Good Dinner-table Topics: www.divinecaroline.com/life-etc/home-food/conversation-starters-good-dinner-table-topics

— Caren S. Neile

Can We Talk?

How to deal with difficult relationships in the workplace.

BY RENÉE EVENSON

If you are uncomfortable facing conflict, you are not alone. Most people feel uncomfortable when dealing with any conflict, especially when it occurs in the workplace. We often ignore these situations, hoping the problem will go away. The bad news is that ignoring conflict will only allow it to grow.

If left unresolved, conflict causes employees to become disgruntled and bitter, relationships will break down completely, and, worse-case scenario, it can cause your customers to quit doing business with you.

When you arm yourself with the skills needed to meet conflict head-on and

work quickly and effectively to resolve problems, you will gain respect as an involved leader who is committed to being part of the solution rather than part of the problem. Learn the steps below to resolve conflict in order to maintain strong, cohesive and productive relationships with others.

View every conflict as an opportunity. Conflict is a natural component in all relationships and should be welcomed. No matter how hard you strive to keep your work environment positive, problems are going to occur. Richard Selznick, a

psychologist and author of *The Shut-Down Learner*, says, “Without resolution, resentments stay below the surface and magnify. When conflict resolution allows for good discussion, those involved can begin to move ahead.” Good discussion clears up confusion, channels positive energy, boosts confidence, improves the cohesiveness of the employees, and opens the door to resolution.

In high-producing teams, conflict often comes about when people are creative, productive and passionate about their work. Tom Sebok, director of the Ombuds Office at the University of Colorado at Boulder, says, “Almost any team is likely to view a situation from different perspectives, which can lead to conflict. Recognizing this and encouraging discussion of different points of view can help groups make more thoughtful and informed decisions.”

Anticipate problems and deal with them immediately. In any conflict, someone must take ownership of the issue and work to resolve it positively. If you are the one taking ownership, there is another element of conflict resolution: the time factor. Once you become aware of a conflict, you do not have the luxury of time to wait and see what will happen.

Learn to be on the lookout for problems, and resolve issues when they are still manageable. Become an active observer and communicator; stay involved and watch for things that are not right. Ask your team members, co-workers and friends to tell you when a problem is brewing. Be aware of co-workers who suddenly become negative, quiet, agitated or upset, as this is often a sign of conflict.

Communication is key. Miscommunication is often at the root of arguments,



Productive disagreements can lead to good discussion and thoughtful decisions.

so it makes sense that good communication is the key to resolving them. Resolving conflict effectively is as simple as 1-2-3: 1—Listen and Question; 2—Decide and Plan; 3—Respond and Resolve.

1 Listen and Question. Before attempting to draw conclusions or make decisions, listen carefully to all sides. Sebok believes that although both parties may disagree, listening provides the best opportunity to understand each other's perspective, setting the stage for more constructive dialogue.

Good discussion clears up confusion, channels positive energy, boosts confidence, improves the cohesiveness of the employees, and opens the door to resolution.

Allow each person to tell their version of the story. An effective way to approach this, adds Selznick, "is to stay away from *you* statements. It's more honest to focus on *I* statements." Seek information by using nonjudgmental words and phrases, such as *I noticed...*, *I feel that...*, or *I need to talk to you about something that concerns me*. Follow up by asking questions to enhance your understanding.

Pay attention to the nonverbal messages you are receiving—and those you are sending. People are going to be emotional when talking about the conflict; observe the message behind the words. Is the person angry, hurt or embarrassed? What is the person really telling you? Be aware, also, of the signals you send out. Show concern in your facial expressions by maintaining eye contact and don't frown, laugh or send other improper messages.

2 Decide and Plan. When you are confident you have enough details to work toward resolution, take time to think

through the situation before deciding how to respond. It may help to rest the problem for a short time so you can make the best decision. When you have drawn your conclusion, plan what you will say when meeting with the person or the group. Think about how those involved are going to respond to you. Who will be confrontational? Who will refuse to take responsibility? Who will be passive and give in? Plan how you are going to answer these responses.

Include in your planning who needs to be at the resolution meeting and where

the meeting will be held. If the conflict is between two people, you most likely do not need to involve your entire team to resolve the issue. Find a private location for your meeting.

3 Respond and Resolve. The most effective way to resolve conflict is to allow those involved to jointly reach consensus. There will be times, though, when you must make the final decision for your team. In either situation, resolution occurs when you can find a win-win solution where all involved feel valued and can accept the solution.

If your role is to facilitate the discussion and guide your co-workers to reach consensus, make sure all members are present when you meet to resolve the issue. Describe the problem and ask for ideas to resolve it. Sebok makes two important ground rules in mediation situations:

- No interruptions and no button pushing through insults or personal attacks.

Another ground rule should be:

- Focus on the solution rather than the problem.

When you encourage everyone to offer their suggestions and analyze the consequences of each, you will be able to stay focused on the issue at hand and find the best resolution.

Work toward consensus and a solution that everyone can buy into. When complete agreement is not possible, make sure everyone accepts the outcome before ending the meeting.

In the event that you are the decision maker, Selznick stresses, "It will help to begin by saying something like, 'I've taken all of your opinions into consideration, but ultimately someone has to decide. It's not an easy decision but I'm going with X.' The important point is to let everyone know you listened to their view."

Handling conflict, whether it involves an unhappy customer, a problem performer or a disagreeable co-worker, is not an easy skill to master. As your confidence grows, others will see you are a person of action and they will respect your forthrightness and leadership. Whenever you can, allow others to become part of the solution and when you can't, discuss the reasons behind your decision. That is the key to maintaining strong relationships, and strong relationships can weather any conflict. **T**

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The Eyes Have It



Use eye contact wisely to connect with your audience.

BY RUTH NASRULLAH, ACB, ALB

It was the wink seen around the world. During the 2008 U.S. Vice Presidential debate, Republican candidate Sarah Palin winked at the camera throughout the debate, so frequently that the Internet was abuzz with commentary the next day. Some commentators even counted her winks. The winking debate almost overshadowed the discussion of what she actually said.

Palin caused a stir because she employed a classic communication method: She used her eyes to convey thoughts and emotions.

Communication involves more than the words we use. The Toastmasters educational program emphasizes that communication is enhanced by skillful use of nonverbal means, such as body language. For example, proficient speakers are adept at communicating through their use of the eyes. Eye contact is a powerful means of expression, one that can be used to positive or negative effect.

Good eye contact can help you become a more polished speaker. However, in order to avoid offending, speakers also need to consider the cultural setting before they employ a gaze, a wink, a stare or a blink.

So why was Palin's winking so noteworthy? Body language expert Tonya Reiman says winking sparks powerful associations—those associations are posi-



tive or negative depending on how they're interpreted. A wink exchanged between spouses, co-workers or guests at a party may send the message that "we're in this together," notes Reiman, author of *The Power of Body Language: How to Succeed in Every Business and Social Encounter*. But a wink that's interpreted as insincere can cause discomfort or even disaster in both interpersonal and public communication, she says.

Winking is a tricky technique that should be used judiciously, especially when addressing an international audience.

What Do Your Eyes Say?

The eyes offer clues to a person's feelings, often involuntarily. Maggie Pazian, founder and president of New Jersey-based VisualEmotion LLC and an expert in interpreting facial language, explains that the eyes work in concert with the entire face to express emotions such as excitement,

fear or deception. She notes that negative emotional expressions such as anger or fear are hard-wired into our brain, making them universally understood.

When a person is surprised, his or her eyes enlarge, says Pazian. "That comes along with raised eyebrows," she adds. "Enlarged eyes can also communicate excitement or fear."

She describes how the opposite may indicate feelings such as sadness. "With sadness, the eyes are droopy," says Pazian. "They tend to close a little bit so the aperture looks small. In sadness you will also have the brows turned down."

She also notes that there is no universal expression for nervousness. Overall, her advice for speakers is to be self-aware, focus on what "gives them away," and work to improve that expression.

Intercultural Challenges

Rebecca Huber, group tours coordinator at Joy Tour & Travel in Cincinnati,

Ohio, has been traveling the world since she was a teenage student ambassador with People to People, an organization whose mission is to build goodwill among people of different countries and cultures. Looking back at her time with People to People, she recalls that some of her greatest intercultural communication challenges were related to how eye contact is interpreted in many Asian cultures. For example, casting the eyes down is a sign of humility and a show of respect. She first experienced this while on a job in Japan. When she was speaking with her supervisor, he avoided looking at her directly.

"At first I thought, What did I do wrong? Did I say something or do something? I don't think he likes me," Huber recalls.

After she came to learn that this was not an insult but rather a sign of respect, she became accustomed to it. Huber says this avoidance of direct eye contact



Humorist and speaking coach Judy Carter uses effective eye contact during her education session at the 2013 International Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio.

reflects the strong sense of hierarchy in some Asian cultures, a lesson that served her well while conducting business in the Far East.

Some of [Huber's] greatest intercultural communication challenges were related to how eye contact is interpreted in many Asian cultures.

"When I had superiors who were from Hong Kong and China, I always had to be very conscientious [about] not looking them directly in the eye when they were giving me a performance report."

Huber also notes that in many Muslim countries, direct eye contact between opposite genders is not considered appropriate. Her advice to international communicators is to do research before traveling or interacting with people from other cultures.

Eyeing the Audience

Matthew Arnold Stern, DTM, is the author of *Mastering Table Topics: Tips and 500 Sample Questions to Help You*

Become a Better Impromptu Speaker.

In his experience, eye contact is crucial when speaking, because it builds a connection between the speaker and the listeners. "It makes me feel [the speaker] is being trustworthy and sincere," says Stern.

He notes that the speaker shouldn't necessarily pick out individuals to look at. "In front of an audience, look at different groups," he says. "Look at one for a few seconds, then another group. That makes

various people in the audience feel connected to you as listeners. And you may be looking directly at one person, but everyone feels like you're talking to them." Stern also suggests that developing speeches in an outline format rather than writing it all out in advance can strengthen a speaker's use of eye contact. He has used the outline structure for quite some time and sees it as improving communication for both the speaker and the audience.

"When I learned to give speeches from that structure, it allowed me to have much better eye contact because I'm not focusing on notes or trying to memorize what I wrote," he says. "And I can adjust my speech, too, if I see their attention drift away."

Use Your Evaluator

One of the most powerful tools in Toastmasters for using eye contact more effectively is the speech evaluation. Many, if not most, Toastmasters manuals address the use of eye contact when speaking to an audience. One of the best ways you can work on this when you give a speech is by asking your evaluator beforehand to pay specific attention to your eye contact during your presentation.

Table Topics is another great opportunity to practice communication through use of the eyes. Because impromptu speaking is typically more conversational, it's easier to make eye contact, says Stern.

Although making eye contact with individuals is helpful, it is important not to do it longer than five seconds on average. Avoid what Reiman calls the "stalker stare."

"You feel the stalker stare when you're having a conversation with someone and they're just staring at your eyeballs and blinking only twice or three times a minute," says the body language expert.

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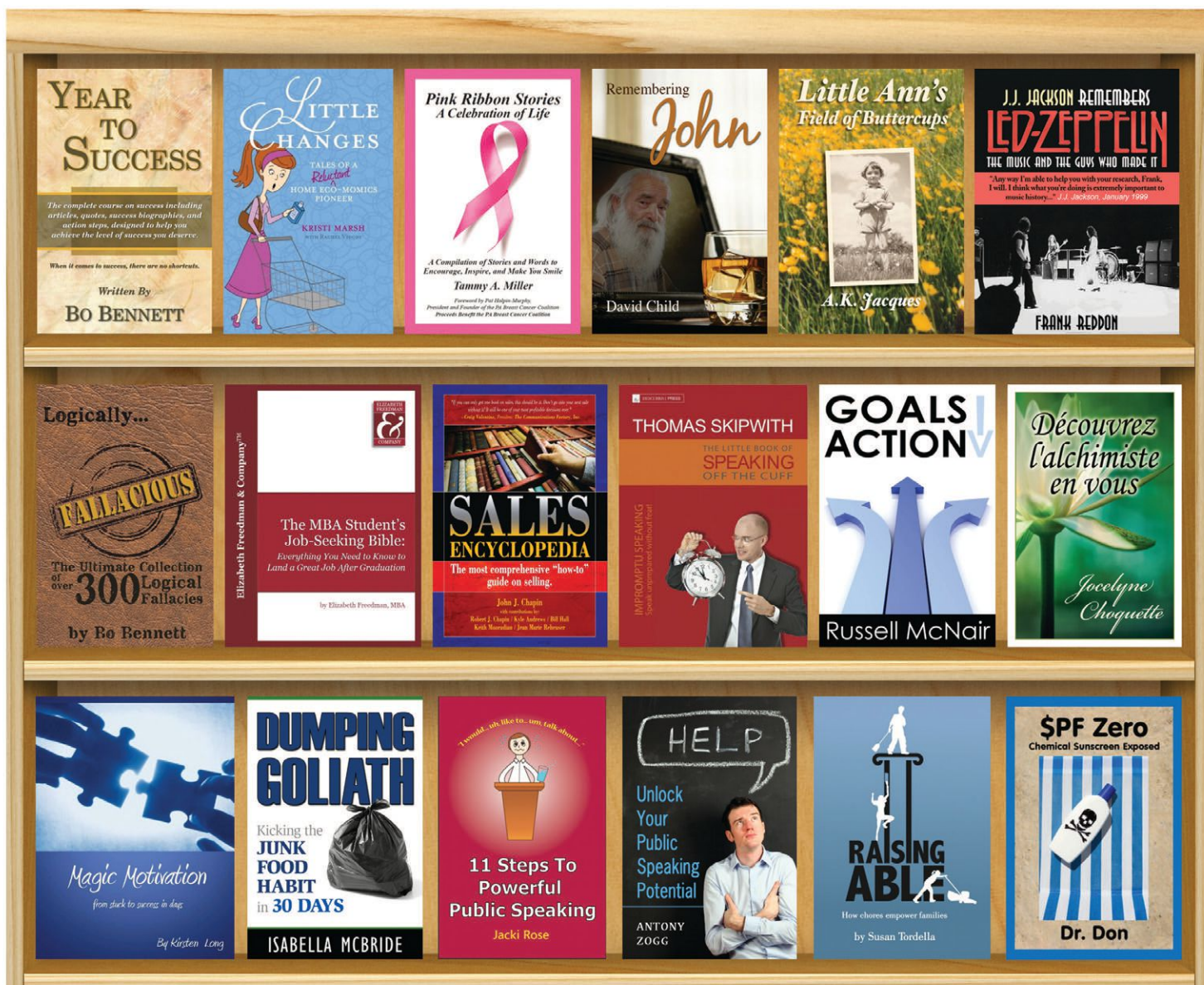
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Breaking Down the Numbers

Finance pros explain complex money matters in simple terms.

BY CARMINE GALLO

Warren Buffett is one of the richest men in the world, so it's safe to say that few, if any, financial professionals can match his track record. As a young man starting out in the securities business in Omaha, Nebraska, Buffett understood the importance of public speaking. He realized that he needed to be comfortable speaking in front of groups if he hoped to win new clients. Yet he has said that the act of public speaking terrified him.

Buffett conquered his fear by enrolling in public speaking courses and forcing himself to teach night courses at the local community college. He has said he considers public speaking the most important skill for anyone who hopes to enjoy a successful career in finance and business.

Michael Keating, a certified financial planner for InnerHarbor Advisors in New York City, agrees that the ability to deliver financial information in a way that is clear, informative and relevant to clients is the key to a successful financial career. Keating says he has been sharpening his public speaking skills as a member of the SEC Roughriders club in New York City.

Keating says he has learned three valuable lessons from Toastmasters that he incorporates into his client meetings and presentations.

Respect everyone's time. Every Toastmasters meeting has an agenda and the speakers are timed. Keating says he now provides an agenda at the start of every client meeting and is always respectful of a client's time. If the



Business magnate Warren Buffett (top) and television personality Suze Orman speak about financial issues in a clear and authentic manner.

meeting goes long—more than 40 minutes—he encourages taking a break.

Listen more than you speak. “At Toastmasters, we spend a lot of time listening,” says Keating. The same is true when Keating meets with a client. “I ask a lot of questions while avoiding the temptation to explain everything about

a financial product or strategy. I let the client lead the conversation.”

Face-to-face conversations trump emails. Every Toastmasters meeting happens in a room, with participants speaking face-to-face. “Face time is also crucial in the financial business,” says Keating. “I can’t read someone’s face in an email or on the phone. Sometimes

their voice says, ‘Yes, I understand it,’ but their face says, ‘I don’t get it.’ If they don’t understand the idea, I have to adjust the message.”

Face-to-face conversations also help Keating to distill complex financial ideas, making it easier for clients to see the big picture. For example, Keating recalls advising a husband and wife who each had real estate holdings from prior marriages. He broke down all of their voluminous real estate information into a one-page

As evidence of her powerful impact on people, Orman was named one of the top 100 “most powerful women” in 2010, according to *Forbes* magazine. I knew Orman well before she had her own television show. Early in my career, from 1996 to 2001, I was a financial correspondent for CNN business news and I hosted a television show for a San Francisco-based technology network. During those years, I had the opportunity to interview Orman several times. She was one of our favorite


Orman was just as animated in the conversation as she was when the TV camera went on.

She told the makeup person that some of her daily habits were pushing her deeper and deeper into debt. Orman was using the same phrases she uses on the air—money management means freedom and power. In one brief conversation, she inspired that young woman to change her life, just as she has inspired millions of TV viewers and readers of her books.

Authentic communicators connect with their audience on a deeper, more meaningful level.

Simplicity. Orman doesn’t speak in the jargon so common in the financial industry. She speaks in simple terms. More important, she has the *courage* to speak simply and that makes all the difference. “Too many speakers want to impress others with information so others think the speaker is intelligent. All I care about is that the information empowers the viewer or the reader,” Orman said.

“Here’s the key: You must not be afraid of criticism,” she added. “If your intention is to impart a message that will create change for the person listening, then if you ask me, it’s respectful to that person to make the message as simple as possible.”

Orman’s advice over the years has been pretty basic: Save more than you spend, reduce credit card debt, understand your credit score and invest for the future. It’s not the advice that makes her influential—it’s the way she packages it. You may never make a *Forbes* list, but if you package your content in a passionate, authentic and simple way, you’ll exert far more influence over your listeners than your competitors will. Now that’s a list worth making! 

Learn more at www.carminegallo.com.

CARMINE GALLO is the author of *Talk Like TED: The 9 Public-Speaking Secrets of The World’s Top Minds*.

“If you want to strike a universal chord and get somebody’s blood pumping, you’ve got to appeal to the heart before you appeal to the brain.”

— finance expert Suze Orman

visual that helped them decide which properties to sell, and in which order. “Most of the time we need to explain ideas with pen and paper to help clients visualize their financial information. We need to do that face-to-face,” says Keating. “Email is the last resort.”

The Art of Explanation

John Dierolf has worked as an independent financial advisor in Salinas, California, for 40 years. Like Keating, he understands the importance of helping clients visualize complex financial information. He says he likes to sketch out a financial strategy on a whiteboard or a notepad. Dierolf often begins formulating a financial plan for his clients by discussing the three circles of safe money: large banks, treasury bonds, and large insurance companies with excellent ratings. He says it’s much easier for his clients to understand the strategy when he shows the client how their existing assets can be allocated to fit within the three circles.

One of the best at explaining complex ideas in simple language is internationally acclaimed personal finance expert and television personality Suze Orman.

guests, because she was passionate, authentic and communicated in simple terms—all traits that public speakers should exhibit when trying to explain complex financial information.

Let’s take a closer look at those qualities:

Passion. Passion is everything, and great communicators dig deep to identify their true passion. Orman is not passionate about stocks, bonds, trusts and saving accounts—she’s passionate about helping people avoid the crushing financial debt that caused so much pain for her father and family when she was growing up. “If you want to strike a universal chord and get somebody’s blood pumping, you’ve got to appeal to the heart before you appeal to the brain,” she said in one of our conversations. “Otherwise, you will put them to sleep. You will have bored them to death. If you involve their emotions, you now have passion.”

Authenticity. Orman is exactly the same person off camera as she is on. The first time I met her was before my TV show in San Francisco. I walked into the waiting room to introduce myself to her. She wanted me to wait until she finished a conversation with our makeup person.



Controller John Bond (front row, second from right) and his team strive to simplify financial processes so Toastmasters leaders can focus on boosting their skills.

WHQ Finance Team Makes Math Look Easy

The group is the last stop for all monetary transactions.

BY JULIE E. KIM

While Toastmasters officers all over the world are busy running their clubs and districts, employees in the Finance department at World Headquarters are supporting those clubs and districts with a range of financial services.

and accounting tasks for this group of financial experts to perform throughout the year. In addition to maintaining the organization's 501(c)(3) nonprofit status and focusing on lowering operating costs, the department addresses issues related to three subgroups—financial

with finance and accounting experience. Bond says, "Members join Toastmasters to become better communicators and leaders, not to become accountants. Our job is to help make their financial processing and reporting easier." The department handles tasks that support the operations of Toastmasters International, including:

- Accounts payable and receivable
- Vendor relations
- Policy interpretation (in regard to the appropriation of funds)
- Dues renewal payments and supply orders
- Issuing insurance certificates required by venue hosts

"Our job is to help make members' financial processing and reporting easier." — John Bond, Controller

With approximately 600,000 dues renewals to process, as well as 250 district bank accounts and more than 14,000 clubs throughout the world to support, there are plenty of bookkeeping

reporting, district accounting, and tax and regulation.

Led by Controller John Bond (a Vermont licensed CPA), the Finance department is made up of team members

continued from page 24

- Troubleshooting club bank account setups
- Supporting district leaders in the management of district funds
- Providing technical support for treasurers using the district accounting system

The Finance department faces a unique set of challenges, working with differing regulations for worldwide bank accounts and state and international tax laws. To maximize efficiency, employees work with third-party lawyers and accountants to provide the most up-to-date research and support to members.

In the past three years, the team has introduced many additional services intended to help club and district treasurers manage their funds. For example, the department has a Tax and Regulation team that focuses on providing tax, regulatory, banking and insurance support to members at the club and district levels. The team began filing annual tax statements for all U.S. Toastmasters clubs earlier this year. This ensures that all U.S. clubs maintain their nonprofit status and remain in good standing with the Internal Revenue Service.

In July 2011, the department unveiled a web-based global accounting system that allows district officers to manage their finances and report their monthly monetary activities. Previously, districts used an Excel-based system that lacked organization and structure required of a multi-entity, multicurrency organization. Bond sees the new district accounting system as a success in standardizing the global accounting process.

The team's busiest months follow financial deadlines. The Financial Reporting team wraps up the calendar year by consolidating the global financial statements for the organization's annual audit, while the Tax and Regulation group spends the first half of the calendar year completing tax forms for U.S.-based clubs. The month of June, in particular, is hectic for the District Accounting team when they train new

treasurers in district finances and ease them into the role they will play in the new year. "We provide continuity for districts because we have a history of previous-year transactions where the new district leaders may not," says Bond.

As the organization continues to grow, Bond says the Finance department intends to "expand the role of the Tax and Regulation team to provide additional support in the area of overall club finances and communicating best practices." By helping club and district officers maintain better financial records, Toastmasters can focus on the picture bigger: improving leadership and communication skills. For these number crunchers, that's the bottom line. **T**

To contact the Finance department, call **949-858-8255**, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Pacific Time).

For a list of email contacts, visit **www.toastmasters.org/departments**.

Information for district officers is available at **www.toastmasters.org/districtfinance**.

- For account balances/credits/statements, **statements@toastmasters.org**
- For certificates of insurance, email **tmininsurance@toastmasters.org**
- For tax information, email **irsquestions@toastmasters.org**
- For the Ralph C. Smedley Memorial Fund, email **supplyorders@toastmasters.org**
- For wire transfers, email **financequestions@toastmasters.org**

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

JULIE E. KIM is an editorial assistant for the Toastmaster magazine.

"You might feel like you're being stared down. But often when people give the stalker stare, they are concentrating intensely."

Pazian, the VisualEmotion founder, stresses the importance of self-evaluation. She says some people have "static expressions," meaning that even when they're not thinking hard about something, their face may look sad, angry or happy. Your facial expression should match up with what you say—so use a mirror, if it helps.

Videotaping your speech may also help you assess your eye contact skills; after

In today's tech-driven culture, we sometimes miss eye contact altogether, staring at our smartphones and away from the reality around us.

all, if you make good eye contact with yourself—or if you don't—you'll know it right away. The *Communicating on Video* advanced manual includes projects that are meant to be taped.

Don't Forget to Look!

In today's tech-driven culture, we sometimes miss eye contact altogether, staring at our smartphones and away from the reality around us. Despite the abundance of texting and tweeting, the eyes still give insight into our thoughts. As Reiman notes, human beings are hard-wired for eye communication; remember that when speaking before a group or among colleagues. Remember, too, to be aware of cultural factors and to use the Toastmasters program to its fullest.

Don't lose sight of the fact that optimizing your use of eye contact is a key aspect of public speaking. **T**

RUTH NASRULLAH, ACB, ALB, is secretary/treasurer of the Speakers R Us club in Houston, Texas. She serves as the 2013-2014 Area P6 Governor in District 56. For more information, visit **www.ruthnasrullah.com**.



I Think That I Shall Never See ...

... A modern poem I can actually understand.

BY JOHN CADLEY

If
I were
to start my column
like this,
would it be
a poem?

I'm not being a wiseguy. It's an honest question. When I was a kid, poems came in verses that rhymed, which made them a lot easier to memorize for English class. Then they didn't rhyme. Just phrases stacked like bricks. What happened? I don't know. I do know that a guy named e.e. cummings started using lowercase letters for everything—including his name—and people thought it was wildly creative, although I'm still not convinced it wasn't just because the Shift key on his typewriter didn't work. One of his most famous poems starts:

*!blac
k
agains
t
(whi)
te sky
?t
rees which
h fr
om droppe*

I'm not sure if that's a poem or the world's first Word Jumble, but people went nuts. So abstract, so inscrutable, so nihilistic, so meaningless! It had to be brilliant.

They call it free verse, which basically means there are no rules. All it has to do is express emotion in an interesting way. What emotion was e.e. cummings expressing? I'm guessing indigestion.

I can hear poets and poetry teachers screaming already. I'm a philistine, a yahoo, a literary Luddite. I'm stuck in the cobwebs with Longfellow and Coleridge. OK, maybe I don't get it. So I'm going to try. Here's one from Japanese poet Kobayashi Issa:

*The man pulling radishes
pointed my way
with a radish.*

I get it. Vegetables aren't just for eating. You can use them to give directions, too (although I would have used carrots; they're easier to point with. Definitely not watermelons). Gee, this isn't so hard. Let's try another—the beginning of a poem by Theodore Roethke: *I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow / I feel my fate in what I cannot fear. / I learn by going where I have to go / We think by feeling. What is there to know? / I hear my being dance from ear to ear.*

I could be wrong but here's my take: "I wake to sleep" is a typo. He meant I wake *from* sleep. (Who wakes to sleep unless they hear the alarm and hit the snooze button to catch a few more Z's?) Then it all makes sense. The guy has trouble getting up in the morning. He feels his fate because he has to go to work—maybe in a car wash?—and he learns by going, because today they're showing him how to work the waxer and he wonders how hard it will be. ("What is there to know?") Then he hears his being dance from ear to ear because the pressure hose is so loud he's developed tinnitus. That works for me, especially because if you've ever seen a picture of a poet, that's how they look—like they just got out of bed.

Now let's try some lines from the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda: *And because love battles / not only in its burning agricultures / but also in the mouth of men and women / I will finish off by taking the path away / to those who between my chest and your fragrance / want to interpose their obscure plant.*

First of all, this is a translation, and we all know how things get lost in translation—like the translator's mind. Could this thing make any less sense? Oh, I know what it's about. The guy's a farmer who just grew a new variety of pepper (obscure plant) but it's too spicy (burning agricultures in the mouth). It's given him heartburn bad (my chest), and his wife something worse (your fragrance). I get that part. What's crazy is everybody knows farmers work from before dawn 'til after dark. When are they going to get the time to write poetry!

Call me an old fogey but I prefer the good old days. When I was a kid, if you inadvertently made a rhyme, someone would say: *You're a poet / But you don't know it / Your feet show it / They're long fellows.*

Now that's poetry. **T**

JOHN CADLEY, a former advertising copywriter, is a freelance writer and musician living in Fayetteville, New York.



TRAVELING TOASTMASTER



1 | JOAQUÍN PINILLA FROM MADRID, SPAIN, enjoys a desert safari in Dubai, close to the border of the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

2 | SONIA PEREZ FROM TEMECULA, CALIFORNIA, smiles in front of the gondolas in Venice, Italy.

3 | SARAH WALLACE FROM LEBANON, TENNESSEE, takes in the panoramic view at Whistler Mountain in Whistler, British Columbia.

4 | BRIAN TREFFERT FROM PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, stands high above Salzburg, Austria, in the meadow where The Sound of Music was filmed.

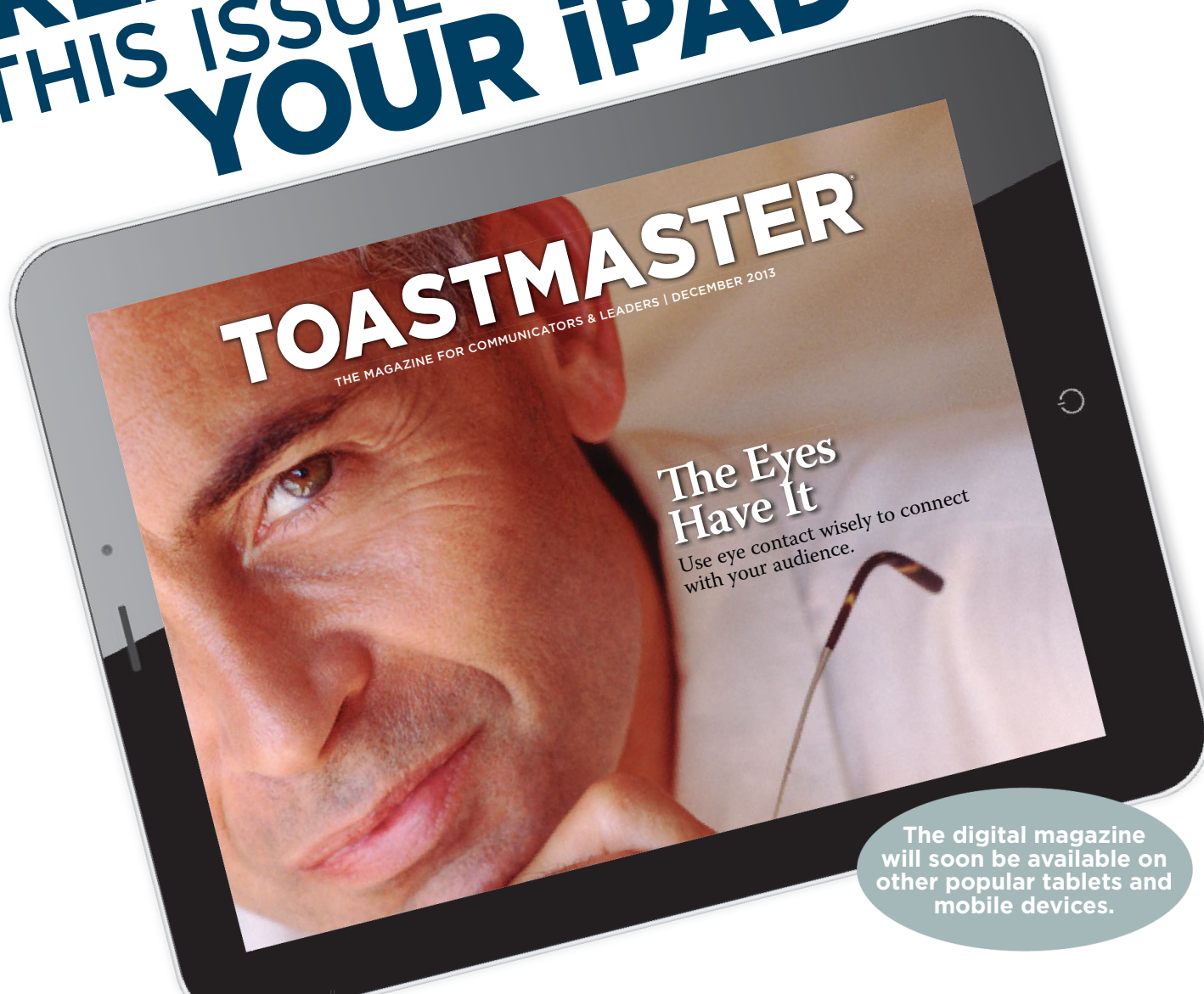


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