

TOASTMASTER®

Peter Kossowan, DTM

Super club-starter
shares his tips.



**Learn How
to Make
People Laugh**



Toastmasters' Core Values

Which is more important: integrity, respect, service or excellence?

Sometimes members ask which of our organization's four core values is most important. Of course, none takes precedence over the others. Each one is equally important for members and all leaders.

A discussion around core values can make for a very good round of Table Topics in your club.

Our core values align closely with those of other organizations, and questions related to these and similar values sometimes come up during job interviews. Here I'll offer some thoughts on these four values.

What does **integrity** mean in our clubs? For every member, integrity means living up to the Toastmasters promise. That promise includes attending club meetings regularly, preparing for meeting assignments, helping maintain a positive environment, bringing guests to club meetings so they

For club members respect means understanding that each member is a person with his or her own skills and abilities, goals and ambitions, and strengths and weaknesses.

can see the benefits of Toastmasters membership, and maintaining honest and ethical standards during the conduct of all Toastmasters activities.

For club leaders, integrity also means focusing on members' needs and achievements in our program.

Respect? For club members respect means understanding that each member is unique, possessing certain skills and abilities, goals and ambitions, and strengths and weaknesses. For club leaders it also means understanding that each member is developing at his or her own pace, and while some may need a gentle push from time to time, others need space to develop.

Service? For club members service means stepping up when required to help the club function as a stellar learning environment for the benefit of all members. For club leaders service also means focusing on the planning and delivery of an environment and a varied program conducive to member achievement.

Excellence? For club members excellence means performing assigned duties to the best of our ability every time. Sometimes we have bad days, and sometimes we have less time to prepare than we might like. Regardless, excellence means performing to the best of our ability every time for the benefit of the club and all the members. For club leaders excellence relates directly to our organization's strategic plan and to providing an atmosphere of club excellence that enables member achievement.

Values drive culture. Values drive action. Our Toastmasters core values enable club excellence and member achievement. I hope all of our clubs take the opportunity to discuss our core values during a round of Table Topics.

JIM KOKOCKI, DTM
International President

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P.O. Box 9052, Mission Viejo, CA 92690 U.S.A.
+1 949-858-8255 • Fax: +1 949-858-1207 • Voicemail: +1 949-835-1300
www.toastmasters.org

CONTACTING WORLD HEADQUARTERS

For information on joining or building a club, visit: www.toastmasters.org
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Club milestones give many Toastmasters around the world a reason to cheer. Congratulations to these clubs!



◀ Members of the Park Center Toastmasters club in Alexandria, Virginia, celebrate the club's 25th anniversary with an open house.



▲ Members of the BMO IFL Toastmasters club in Scarborough, Ontario, Canada, show excitement as they celebrate the club's 50th meeting.



▲ Den-en Toshi Toastmasters club in Yokohama Kanagawa, Japan, marks its 25th anniversary with a party for members.



◀ Singapore Mandarin Toastmasters club and the Johor Bahru Mandarin Advanced club hold a joint club meeting for the second year in a row.

Send your fun club photos to photos@toastmasters.org. Include a description, your club name, number and location. Photos must be in jpeg format with a resolution of at least 300 dpi (dots per inch) or 1 MB (megabyte). Out-of-focus images cannot be accepted. It is not necessary to include the Toastmaster magazine or other branded materials in your photos, but if Toastmasters materials are displayed, they must reflect the current brand.

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Your club meetings just got easier

The first Toastmasters International mobile app, which features a built-in Ah-Counter, grammarian and timer, is now available to download.



Download on the App Store

Get it on Google play

www.toastmasters.org/Mobile-App



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▶ MEMBER MOMENT

Creating Connections Through Voice

BY SHANNON DEWEY



A professional singer turned voice coach, Katherine Scott, DTM, knows how to get you in tune with an audience, whether you're giving a presentation or belting out a hit.

Originally from Toronto, Ontario, Canada, Scott was inspired by a dream to move to Vancouver, British Columbia, and live by the mountains and ocean. In addition to singing and songwriting, she expresses her creativity through writing and giving speeches.

Currently vice president education for Morningstars club in Gibsons, British Columbia, Scott recently met the goal she set five years ago as a new Toastmaster—earning a DTM.

Why did you join?

In my experience, Toastmasters is the best self-discovery program in the world because results are measured and sustained. Its structure provides a container for my endless creative possibilities. I'd heard about Toastmasters from some of my voice-coaching clients, but my move to the Sunshine Coast was the perfect timing for me to join a club—definitely one of my better life decisions.

Right from my Ice Breaker speech I knew the potential for transformation on a personal level. However, equally important to me is how Toastmasters bridges the divide between different cultures and identities. We can find common ground. What a wonderful model for the world.

Tell us about your career as a voice coach.

I've been a singer forever, but coaching singers and speakers evolved naturally when I began working with a new teacher. Others started asking me to coach them. The day I turned in my resignation at work and opened a full-time voice studio was a high point of my life.

As a singer I'd sung some wonderful repertoire, but when I started to write and sing my own songs I began to understand what it means to have a deep connection with an audience. Toastmasters opened up another opportunity for me to use my voice through professional speaking. My goal in working with clients is to help them intentionally create an experience of connection, every time, with their audience. To learn more about what I do, visit www.youruniqueexpression.com.

You are also a certified emotion code practitioner.

What does that entail?

The Emotion Code is an energy modality developed by Dr. Bradley Nelson that helps people release old trapped emotions. One of my clients temporarily stopped talking at the age of 5 because she was bullied. As a result, she was terrified to speak in front of groups. It was holding her back in her career, but it helped when we identified the incident and worked through it. Being a certified emotion code practitioner means I can use it in coaching sessions when clients hit a wall and don't know why. I work with it myself and I've even done a speech about it in my club.

How has Toastmasters helped you in both of these fields?

Most of my voice coaching is done one-on-one, but I also give workshops on how to speak with presence and power. They're a lot of fun, and I'm confident standing in front of a group knowing that I have something of high value to offer.

My skill in speaking off the cuff has also been transformed. Thank you Table Topics! This year I plan to bring singing and speaking together with music in keynotes. Everything I learn in Toastmasters is essential for achieving another one of my goals—to be skilled at doing online videos and podcasting. Learning better communication skills for the internet will allow me to support more change agents to connect with their own particular audience.

You have held club officer roles and even served as area governor—what have you learned from those experiences?

I wanted to become a better leader, so I joined my club's executive team almost immediately. There's a fine line for me between leading and managing, and I've had a few uncomfortable moments when I've crossed over that line and had to step back. But perhaps the most important change in me is saying yes to invitations to speak and lead outside the club. Before I joined, I probably would have said no.

SHANNON DEWEY is the editorial coordinator for the Toastmaster magazine.

▶ SNAPSHOT

Nitya Kannan, ACB, CL, a member of NTI Advanced Toastmasters in Muscat, Oman, poses at Khardung La, one of the highest motorable passes in the world. It is located in the Ladakh region of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. Every year she and her family travel to a new place. On this trip, they acclimatized for a day before driving up the mountain. “Coming to Khardung La Pass is a very thrilling feeling. We could see the snowy Himalayan peaks and Karakoram mountain ranges,” she says. “It is an experience of a lifetime to visit this amazing point.”



▶ FOR THE PROFESSIONAL

Is Your LinkedIn Photo Up to Par?

Ms. Tiffany's Epiphanies™

BY TIFFANY ADAMS

According to market research, the average number of LinkedIn connections is 930, but uploading your photo can increase your profile views by 11 times, putting you on the path to building more business relationships.

To get the right kind of photo, you must first get the right app. I don't mean purchase the correct software application. Instead, remember this acronym, **APP**, which describes the three criteria every LinkedIn photo should have: **A**pproachability, **P**roperness and **P**rofessionalism.

Second, raise your self-awareness, which is critical in business etiquette, and avoid these photo fails:

- **The Phantom Ghost:** This is the haunting default photo that LinkedIn automatically inserts when no photo is offered. It looks like a ghosted silhouette. I conducted a survey asking what types of people don't upload a LinkedIn photo. Three responses prevailed: older people who are not tech-savvy; indifferent or lazy users; and users who don't grasp the importance of having a completed LinkedIn profile.
- **The Angry Arm Crosser:** People pose with their arms crossed hoping to personify leadership. On the contrary, this body language screams *I'm angry, defensive or closed off*.
- **The Facebook Lovebirds:** Your profile page is about you. Save the photos with your devoted partner or beloved pet for Facebook. When you secure the job interview or meet for a networking lunch after making a LinkedIn connection, will you bring your partner along, too? I think not.



TIFFANY ADAMS

- **The Creepy Crop:** Attempting to crop out other people when your face is the subject matter always looks unprofessional. Cropping often brings in a random body part of another person, such as someone else's hair, hand or arm. Awkward.
- **The Head Tilter:** Ladies, when we don't hold our heads upright during business conversations or for a photo, we aren't taken as seriously. Avoid the head-tilting crutch.
- **The Cool Dude:** Remove distracting barriers like sunglasses, which are perfect for the beach but not for business.
- **The Fierce and Full-bodied:** The real estate that LinkedIn allows for a photo is limited to a tiny square box. Full-bodied shots make you seem less approachable, as opposed to closer head-and-shoulder shots.
- **The Drama Dresser:** Depending on your industry and position, dress appropriately. Avoid attire that is overly formal or casual.

There is no time like the present to invest in your online presence and upload a professional headshot. Let's exercise smart "netiquette" and leave the ghosts for Halloween.

TIFFANY ADAMS is president of the Cincinnati Etiquette & Leadership Institute LLC, which provides business etiquette, international protocol, dining etiquette and women's leadership training. Adams is certified by the Protocol School of Washington. Visit etiquetteplease.com to learn more.

▶ MEET MY MENTOR

Patsy Bellah, DTM

BY MARY NESFIELD



FROM LEFT: Evelyn Ballesteros, ACB, ALB, Patsy Bellah, DTM

Patsy Bellah, DTM, is a member of the Lompoc Valley of Flowers Toastmasters club, in Lompoc, California. She has been a mentor to Evelyn Ballesteros, ACB, ALB, since 2006 when they both belonged to the same club, the Professional Women's club near Los Angeles. Evelyn now works for A Window Between Worlds, a nonprofit organization based in Venice, California, where she applies her administrative and program management skills.

Evelyn, please tell us about Patsy.

Toastmasters gave Patsy the skills, confidence and motivation to become an entrepreneur. She operated real estate companies and also started a virtual assistant business. She now helps authors self-publish their work and is an author of several books on the subject.

In 2013, she received the Roy D. Graham Lifetime Achievement Award. Created by District 1, this award acknowledges those who recognize the benefits of Toastmasters and who give back to the organization through their dedicated hard work.

How has she helped you?

Patsy generously shares her time and advice, and her knowledge of Toastmasters. When I was a new member, she thoroughly explained the Toastmasters process and manuals, as well as how to perform functionary roles. She adjusts her mentoring style to meet my needs, for example, by advising me on how to proceed with a project or by collaborating with me on a topic idea. After I deliver a speech, she gives me clear, specific and candid feedback.

Patsy also provides the right amount of nudging at the appropriate times to challenge me. She helps me realize how, through leadership, I can become a more confident speaker. She supported me when I took on district conference roles. Patsy encouraged me to be club president and the decision was life-changing for me. She is always available whenever I have questions or need advice.

What is the best advice Patsy has given to you?

It's that the Toastmasters program works if you follow it conscientiously. It opens doors that you'd never expect. One of her mottos is: "If you want to learn how to do something, volunteer to do it in Toastmasters. There will be others who will help and teach you."

What else have you accomplished since becoming a member?

I stepped way out of my comfort zone when I participated in a panel for an education session at a district conference.

Most recently, I met with other past presidents of my club outside of regular club meetings to further build our leadership skills and promote Toastmasters in the community. One of our successes was presenting a Speechcraft program to the Freedom Writers Foundation. The group then chartered a club and I served as its co-mentor. This experience with serving the community influenced my decision to change my career path to work with nonprofits.

What is your favorite thing about Patsy?

Her enthusiasm for Toastmasters—it's contagious!

MARY NESFIELD is associate editor of the *Toastmaster magazine*.

NOMINATE YOUR MARVELOUS MENTOR!

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

▶ SPEECH CONTEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Members of HP Houston Toastmasters, an open corporate club at Hewlett Packard in Houston, Texas, are all smiles at District 56's Area R speech contest where two of the members placed. Pictured left to right: Nana Poku, Jason Noorani (1st Place, Evaluation Contest), Osaid Shamsi (2nd Place, International Speech Contest), Kent Biggs and Mirza Baig.

▶ LOOKING AT LANGUAGE

What Do You Mean by That?

BY MARY NESFIELD

Our first speech in Toastmasters is called the **Ice Breaker**. But how many of us realize that the name is shared by small ships called icebreakers? This conjures up images of rescue ships freeing up larger ships that are stranded in frozen seas. The next time you need to coach a new member on that challenging first speech, tell them it's a warm and cozy experience compared to the alternative icebreaker experience.

But the Ice Breaker is just the beginning of our journey in Toastmasters. Now that speech contests are underway, lots of us find ourselves **"in the limelight"** when onstage. But just what is limelight? In the early 19th century, before the invention of the electric lightbulb, scientists found that quite a bit of light can be generated by heating a cylinder of lime with a flame, especially when the cylinder is placed in front of a reflector or behind a lens.

Although limelight had been used for other purposes, possibly its earliest known use to illuminate a public performance was in 1836, when magician Ching Lau Lauro juggled outside at Herne Bay Pier in Kent, England. The following year, limelight was used indoors to illuminate the Covent Garden Theatre in London, and the trend took off around the world. Limelight then became used to highlight different performers and speakers, just as modern-day spotlights are now used. But today, unless the power goes out, the lime can be left at home.

For those of us who speak with no preparation, we do Table Topics. Some say we speak **"off the cuff."** What do *cuffs* have to do with it?



There is an old practice in which men sometimes wrote informal, impromptu notes on the detachable and disposable cuffs of their dress shirts. This was a practical solution, as it allowed men to travel without a notebook. They could record their ideas and still wear their shirt long after the note and cuff had been discarded.

That must have been convenient, for example, when in days gone by, livery stable owners recorded the credit they issued to their customers on their shirt cuffs. As it turned out, however, these informal contracts were not very cost-effective, because debtors sometimes went from town to town to borrow without paying off the debt they owed for boarding their horses at the stables. These people were known to live "off the cuff."

You can still buy detachable shirt cuffs today, although they're certainly not required attire in Toastmasters. But if you're looking for your next speech idea, you need not look further than the phrases that you use.

MARY NESFIELD is associate editor of *Toastmaster magazine*.

▶ WHAT'S NEW?

Support Your Speakers



Ready to cheer? The speech contests at the 85th Annual International Convention take place in August, giving you plenty of opportunities to support the participants.

At this year's convention, to be held in Washington, D.C., 98 members—one qualifier from each district around the world—will compete in the the Toastmasters International Speech

Contest semifinals. That's the largest number of members to ever compete in the semifinals. Come and support the representative from your district!

The top 10 contestants in the semifinals then vie for the title of World Champion of Public Speaking. That contest will be held Saturday, August 20. The speaking talent in the championship round is always impressive, making it an annual must-see event.

The encouragement of fellow members means a great deal to the competitors. Mohammed Qahtani, last year's World Champion of Public Speaking, says he was touched and inspired by the presence of fellow district members at the contests. He is from Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, in District 79.

"It makes a big difference in your performance when your district members are there in the audience cheering for you. For me, I know that if it weren't for them, I probably wouldn't have won. "I was competing to make them proud."

If you are unable to attend the convention, you can still cheer on your district's winner—and others—by watching the contest online. Live streaming coverage of the semifinals and championship round will be available.

The convention is August 17–20 at the Marriott Marquis Washington, DC. Register at www.toastmasters.org/Convention.

TRAVELING TOASTMASTER



1 | HAFEEZ RAHMAN, FROM SINGAPORE, is captured in a photo of the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

2 | SHERRY XU, FROM SHANGHAI, CHINA, visits the Kodaiji Temple in Kyoto, Japan.

3 | LYN PARKER AND DALLAS COFFMAN, BOTH FROM WAKEFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS, take a break from skiing 8,500 above sea level at Lake Tahoe, Nevada.

4 | NANCY NORTON, ACG, CL, FROM PARIS, FRANCE, stands on top of a historic temple overlooking the southeastern plains of Bagan, Myanmar.



View more photos on Toastmasters International Official Fan Page on Facebook.



PICTURE YOURSELF HERE! Pose with the *Toastmaster* magazine during your travels and submit your photos for a chance to be featured in an upcoming issue. Visit www.toastmasters.org/Submissions. Bon voyage!

What's On Your Bucket List?

Performing stand-up comedy was at the top of mine.

BY STACEY GUSTAFSON

These days almost everyone has a bucket list; a list of things you want to do before you die or “kick the bucket.” My number one goal has always been to do stand-up comedy. I’ve never shared this with anyone because I believed that would jinx it.

After I published my book, *Are You Kidding Me? My Life With an Extremely Loud Family, Bathroom Calamities, and Crazy Relatives*, I received invitations to four speaking engagements, including one paid opportunity. I knew that to promote my book, these types of events came with the territory. Yet the thought of speaking in front of a group made me as nervous as a pig at a barbecue.

Until now, the mighty pen had been my mouthpiece. I expressed myself

I asked the club manager, “What do I need to do to be successful?” She said, “Bring your friends.”

through my blog, Facebook and humorous short stories. Face-to-face communication was not for me.

Then everything changed. After I announced my speaking gigs to my friend in a writing class, she said, “You know, if people are going to start paying you to present at book fairs and such, you’ll need to be more polished. Have you ever considered Toastmasters?”

In July, I attended my first meeting of the Afternoon TeleTalkers in San Ramon, California. I even participated in Table Topics. I was shocked when the Ah-Counter reported my 15 “ahs.” I had work to do.

At the end of the meeting, the Toastmaster approached me. “What did you think about our meeting?” I said that I felt welcomed and appreciated the club members’ professional manner. I would definitely be back.

Since then, I’ve held every role in the club, from speaker to Toastmaster. Within six weeks, I was able to weave humor into each presentation and stop using notes. “Ahs” were a thing of the past. After 12 weeks, I represented my club at the area level of District 57’s 2015 Humorous Speech Contest. I placed second and my confidence soared.



When I told my club members about my goal to perform stand-up, they rallied behind me. I found a local comedy club that holds open mic nights. Then I started preparing. The time it took to write, rewrite, rehearse and polish a 3 ½-minute routine was more than I anticipated, but as I searched for my comedic voice I decided on storytelling, using material from my book. I hyper-analyzed each word and whittled down each joke. I paid careful attention to the set-up and punchline rhythm.

I performed my set for the club at the next meeting. Their critique helped me make necessary adjustments and convinced me I could be laugh-out-loud funny.

Then I signed up to perform at an open mic night at a local comedy club. I asked the club manager, “What do I need to do to be successful?” She said, “Bring your friends.”

Thirty comics debuted and only three were women. I chose to perform in the seventh slot. As my turn approached, my legs quaked at the prospect of getting onstage. But my slot came and went. *Wait a minute. I was supposed to be seventh.* I realized that since my big crowd filled the club, the organizers wanted me to wait longer, fearing that once I finished my set, my friends would leave. Soon, frustration replaced nervousness. *Get me onstage.*

Finally, I performed my set. And then it happened. I won best comic at open mic night with the help of more than 70 friends and family members. After hours of practice, I was prepared and delivered my routine with the appropriate pauses to evoke laughter. Eye contact, facial expressions and arm gestures were spot-on. The friendly Toastmasters in the audience gave me the support and reassurance I needed.

What’s on *your* bucket list? After joining Toastmasters, you may be closer than you realize to making a dream a reality. ■

STACEY GUSTAFSON is a member of the Afternoon TeleTalkers Toastmasters club in San Ramon, California. Her book, *Are You Kidding Me? My Life With an Extremely Loud Family, Bathroom Calamities, and Crazy Relatives*, was a No. 1 Amazon best-seller in parenting, family humor and motherhood. Learn more at www.StaceyGustafson.com.

Never Too Late, Never Too Old

Stand-up comedian
and storyteller proves
that adventures can
start at any age.

BY SHANNON DEWEY



In 1944, an unassuming girl from Transylvania began the simple task of recording her thoughts in a diary while hiding in Budapest after fleeing the Nazis during World War II.

Julie Kertesz's diary entries as a 10-year-old have served as a roadmap for her storytelling 70 years later.

Kertesz, DTM, is an effervescent Toastmaster who uses her intriguing past and honest humor to engage audiences all over Europe, especially in London. Kertesz initially found Toastmasters in 1977 while living in the United States, and with typical candor she admits her reason for joining.

"Should I confess? I was just divorced and working in America, and I wanted to find a place with more men than women!" Kertesz says. "Did I find 'my man' at a Toastmasters club? No, I'm still looking. But I found my voice!"

She performs stand-up comedy, teaches a storytelling workshop, attends meetings at the Lewisham Speakers Club in London and writes blogs. Every few decades she's encountered major changes in her life, but she's learned to make the best out of any situation and finds humor in everything.

Crossing Cultures

For 35 years, Kertesz called Paris, France, her home. During that time she worked as a chemist and later as a researcher while studying for a doctorate in chemistry. Life had thrown her a curveball, however, and after her marriage ended, she took her two children and her Ph.D. to the U.S.

"For a long time I asked myself *who am I?* I felt like a fish out of water," Kertesz admits. But then, after living near Washington, D.C., for three years, she felt welcomed, especially after discovering her first club, Monument Toastmasters in Silver Springs, Maryland.

Kertesz worked as a visiting fellow at The National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. But without U.S. citizenship, she could only stay for a limited time under her work contract, so she packed up her life again and returned to France. But finding a research chemist position at that point in her life proved impossible. After being told that she was too old, she was forced to change professions.

In 1981, at the humble beginnings of personal computers, Kertesz developed an interest and started a company that distributed

"I had never even heard of stand-up comedy until age 77 and it was only then that I learned we all have funny bones—we just have to cultivate them."

American computer products in France. She even had the privilege of meeting computer industry pioneers Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak and Bill Atkinson.

"I liked being a chemist, but I loved working with personal computers," Kertesz says. "I never even dreamed I'd be a computer company founder and buyer/seller, but I discovered with delight when approaching age 46 that I had it in me."

60 is the New 30

When Kertesz turned 60, she retired from her computer career and began to read through her 50 years' worth of diary entries. She started saving them as digital files to share with her children, but in doing so she realized that others may be interested in her stories, so she published them. Soon, her blog julie2004.blogspot.co.uk was up and running.



Julie Kertesz (center) stands with Toastmasters Oscar Santolalla, left, and Asta Pipiraite, after presenting her *Funny Bones* workshop in Tallinn, Estonia, for two Nordic European Toastmasters divisions last November.



Kertesz poses for a newspaper photographer while in Budapest where she participated in the Continental Europe Toastmasters Laugh and Learn conference in 2013.

Written in French, the diaries reveal her authenticity starting with entries from 1944. During that time, Kertesz and her family, who were Christian but of Jewish origin, were living in hiding under the steps of a coal cellar in Budapest. This is an entry from December 25, 1944:

“Yesterday we celebrated Christmas. I am filled with happiness! Yet there is a war. We have fir branches hanging from the ceiling, we decorated them and added candy. I received so many gifts! ... For two days we hear the roar of guns so strong that even mom heard them, at least the most violent ... A small bomb fell outside the church of St. Apostles (but no one died).”

While she enjoyed writing and sharing her stories, Kertesz also discovered photography at age 70 and joined the popular website Flickr, where she posts images for public viewing (www.flickr.com/people/joyoflife). Her photography consists of nature shots, portraits of strangers, places where she travels and more. Sixty thousand photos later, Kertesz is still posting every day. Her photos have surpassed 10 million views from people all over the world.

In another change of events, in 2008 Kertesz moved to London, England. Although linked to millions of people through her blog and photography, she again felt disconnected in her new city. But after a short time she found her way back to Toastmasters and joined two clubs, as well as participated in Spark London events

(Britain’s first true storytelling initiative), where she performed before a paying audience. After earning her Competent Communicator, she started a blog in English called competentcommunicator.blogspot.co.uk/ where she offers advice and videos.

“Coming to London, I wanted to find like-minded people and tell my stories,” Kertesz says. “I had finally found my tribe at Toastmasters.”

Branching Out

In her late 70s, Kertesz stepped out of her comfort zone and dipped her toe into the pool of stand-up comedy.

Sporting short white hair and well-earned wrinkles, Kertesz admits she may give off a “grandma” vibe when strolling onto a stage at the comedy clubs. But audiences learn quickly not to judge her by appearance alone. Her stand-up act includes allusive jokes about her love life and some self-deprecating humor about her age, with four-letter words sprinkled in, despite her daughter’s advice. In this case, the grandmother of five uses her geriatric status as an advantage to conjure laughter.

“I had never even heard of stand-up comedy until age 77, and it was only then that I learned we all have funny bones—we just have to cultivate them,” Kertesz says. “I believed for so long that I was not funny. But we develop, with time, a ‘comedian’s eye,’ looking at all our problems and learning how to present them so others will laugh with us.”

Kertesz now incorporates elements of what she’s learned onstage back at her Toastmasters clubs, or while giving speeches as an Ambassador for Toastmasters’ revitalized education program (REP). She also saw the fruits of her labor recently when she was invited to Tallinn, Estonia, to give a workshop on “*Funny Bones*” to two Nordic Toastmasters divisions.

“Speaking from the inside connects us to any audience,” Kertesz says. “I learned to connect with a young audience as a stand-up comedian and with a middle-aged crowd as a personal storyteller.”

She especially bonds with her audience when she performs her personal story titled “When I was 10, the War Caught Up With Me.” Watch a video of it here: bit.ly/1RCNBKM.

What’s Next?

These days Kertesz, who turns 82 in July, spends time on her Kindle reading romance novels, scrolling through Facebook and adding to her Flickr photo account. Since she is tech savvy, she was an early adopter to meeting online with a group of advanced Toastmasters from around the world. That group chartered in March as the Firebirds Collective club.

“I learned through my online meetings that we can get to know each other even better through the web, and in a fun environment like that we learn a lot from one another.”

So what’s Kertesz’s next adventure?

“I hope to give more workshops, visit my clubs often as an REP Ambassador and create a storytelling club for Toastmasters of different continents,” she says.

Kertesz has come a long way since fleeing her home in the midst of the Second World War. A young girl, quietly writing in her diary, would have been surprised to know how those entries would impact people in other countries 70 years later. ■

SHANNON DEWEY is the editorial coordinator for the *Toastmaster* magazine.



The Library of Congress Toastmasters Club

Capitalizing on a Capital Setting

Clubs abound at government agencies in D.C.

BY MITCH MIRKIN, CTM

Welcome to Washington, D.C.—home to the White House, Capitol Hill, the Lincoln Memorial, cherry blossoms ... and Toastmasters?

That’s right. United States’ capital—the site of the Toastmasters International Convention in August—is bustling with Toastmasters clubs, many hosted by federal agencies or other U.S. government bodies. More than 60 such clubs exist in and around D.C. The host organizations range from iconic institutions such as the FBI, Senate, Smithsonian and Treasury to lesser-known ones such as the Defense Intelligence Agency and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

For many of the government employees who attend these clubs, Toastmasters and public service go hand in hand. Iris Taylor, DTM, a senior cataloging specialist at the Library of Congress—the world’s largest library, and a popular D.C. tourist stop—is president of the club that meets there every two weeks. She says she uses Toastmasters values as a guide for her work as a public servant. This means providing service to others with “respect, integrity and excellence,” she says.

Some government-based clubs, like Taylor’s, meet in stately settings with grand marble architecture and large murals on the walls. Kevin Breckenridge, CC, serves as vice president public relations for the Capitol Hill Toastmasters.

“The fact that we are located in the nation’s capital is appealing enough, but more than that, we are actually located in the U.S. House of Representatives,” he says.

The Cannon House Office Building, where the club meets, is the oldest congressional office building. It was completed in 1908 and reflects the heavily ornamental Beaux-Arts style of architecture, seen in many federal structures in D.C. Some of the surrounding buildings on Capitol Hill date back to colonial times.

“The location itself is inspiring, and drenched in history,” says Breckenridge. “Just the thought of being in one of the most powerful buildings in the world really gives you a sense of pride, and a call to duty to perform your best each time you enter the building.”

Breckenridge himself is not a public employee but a real estate entrepreneur. His club, like most others at government institutions, welcomes outsiders, either from neighboring agencies or the community at large. Typically, though, visitors who are not on-site employees will have to go through strict security checkpoints, similar to those at airports. In some cases, an escort is required.

Other government-based clubs meet in less majestic surroundings—run-of-the-mill conference rooms, in some cases at satellite offices a few blocks from agency headquarters.

Support for Toastmasters

In either case, U.S. government institutions do not officially sponsor or oversee the Toastmasters clubs that meet on their premises. But the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), which sets human resources policy for federal agencies, does support Toastmasters as a valuable source of low-cost employee training. In a 2014 letter to Toastmasters Chief Executive Officer Daniel Rex, the then-director of the OPM described the agency's "continuing recognition of Toastmasters International's contributions and history of service to Federal employees." The letter goes on to say that "OPM itself has its own Toastmasters Club which holds periodic on-site meetings. Our Club has helped to promote an organizational culture of continuous learning and an environment for professional growth for all employees."

The OPM endorsement holds sway at individual federal agencies. By and large, managers are happy to send their employees to Toastmasters to build communication and leadership skills. Bruce Jones,

Whether they work in public service or other arenas, Toastmasters in the U.S. capital seem to draw extra drive and inspiration from their unique setting.

ACB, CL, president of the VA [Department of Veterans Affairs] Cavaliers club, says Toastmasters has boosted his ability to present at national meetings. He's chaired two recent national conferences for his agency—a role that involved his speaking from the podium.

Other federal Toastmasters strike a similar theme. Taylor, of the Library of Congress, says Toastmasters has been a boon to her career. "I am able to train new staff, give presentations, chair several positions in different organizations and express myself regardless of the opinions of others," she says.

Exodie Roe, CC, president of the Capitol Hill Toastmasters, says that "serving in several different leadership positions in the club has enhanced my overall leadership ability, professionally and personally. I've learned to delegate assignments more effectively and better manage a team." In his job on the Hill, Roe drafts bills and provides policy analysis to a congressman. He also writes speeches that are delivered on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Labor of Love

Fred Drayton, with the U.S. Department of Labor, says Toastmasters has helped him give speeches all over the nation on behalf of the agency. His club is called the BeLaborers Toastmasters—somewhat ironically, since members, of course, are *not* encouraged to belabor their topics when speaking.

A handful of other federal-agency clubs have clever names as well. The club at the Department of Homeland Security chose one that is a play on the department's trademarked slogan, "If you see something, say something," familiar to Americans from countless public service announcements. The club's name is "See Something, Say Something ... Better."

Drayton, a founding member of the BeLaborers, proudly points to its niche in the annals of Toastmasters history. Back when the

club was attempting to charter, women were not yet allowed formal admission to Toastmasters. Drayton sent a petition to Toastmasters World Headquarters in 1972 and received a letter back from then-Executive Director Robert "Buck" Engle notifying him that the organization would be allowing female members. "We believe our club was the first in the world to be chartered with females as members," he says. The letter from Engle, adds Drayton, "is posted on the wall back in the stacks in the Department of Labor library." The issue of equal rights is close to Drayton's heart: He was director of civil rights for his agency from 1975 to 1983.

Famous Alum

Other government-based clubs have their own claims to fame. The Capitol Hill Toastmasters, for example, count among their alumni the host of the American TV talk show *Hardball with Chris Matthews*. Matthews started his D.C. career as a member of the U.S. Capitol Police and went on to become chief of staff for Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill during the administration of President Ronald Reagan.

In a 2008 *Toastmaster* magazine article, Matthews said he joined the Capitol Hill club because "I desperately needed to overcome my stage fright. I couldn't sleep at night. Whenever I had to speak publicly, it got to me." Participating in Toastmasters changed his mindset, he said. "As a speaker, you have to know that there are people out there rooting for you—more than you might believe."

Most current members in the Capitol Hill club work as aides for members of the U.S. Congress, says club president Roe. And while no Congress members belong to the club, they are supportive of the group, he says.

Capitol Hill is also home to the U.S. Senate Toastmasters club. Founded in 1972, the club's membership includes employees of the U.S. Senate. Club meetings often take place in the elegant Russell Senate Office Building, across the street from the U.S. Capitol Building.

The club's alumni include Pete Weissman, CTM, CL, an award-winning speechwriter for prominent political and business leaders. (Weissman spoke at the 2012 Toastmasters International Convention in Orlando, Florida.)

Whether they work in public service per se or other arenas, Toastmasters in the U.S. capital seem to draw extra drive and inspiration from their unique setting. Breckenridge says his participation in the Capitol Hill club—including taking part in speech contests—has boosted his confidence and leadership skills, as well as increased his motivation and ability to succeed in real estate.

And while he is a private entrepreneur, Breckenridge also considers himself a public servant—as should any Toastmaster.

"I've developed a sense of value about what I have to say. That in turn has led to several outside speaking opportunities where I've had the opportunity to serve the public good through my thoughts and ideas." ■

MITCH MIRKIN, CTM, is a member of Randallstown Network Toastmasters, based in Baltimore, Maryland. He works as a writer and editor for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.



Owen Lean

Co Com

Humor has the unique ability to lift a presentation to another level. Used smartly, comedy can get people to see things from a different perspective and foster a more emotional connection with an audience. If you can get your listeners to smile, you've engaged them, and when they laugh with you, odds are they'll also be for you.

Yet as any speaker knows, the line between making them laugh and making them groan can be razor-thin.

In this article we highlight four Toastmasters with comedic talents: a London street performer, a TV show host, a professional emcee and a business executive who made the leap into stand-up comedy. While their approaches are similar, each has unique lessons to teach from both successes and failures in seeking the power of mirth.

Comedy Connection

Four funny members offer their humor tips and tricks.

BY DAVE ZIELINSKI

Owen Lean, London

Owen Lean found his calling when, on a whim, he began performing magic tricks in the streets of Melbourne, Australia. Inspired by the magician David Blaine, Lean soon found onlookers in that city doing double takes and walking into lamp posts after watching him perform tricks like floating a bank note over his hand.

Since then Lean has traveled the world making his living as a street performer. He currently lives and works in London. A member of the Canary Wharf Communicators club in London, Lean holds one of the world's first university degrees in street magic. When he was given approval to perform a street show as part of his dissertation project, Lean performed the show successfully in front of all his tutors. He's currently making the transition into professional public speaking.

As a street performer, what have you learned about reading audiences?

One thing I've learned, which many speakers know, is that people sitting with their arms folded aren't always fully present. I get audiences clapping for no reason at the start of a performance; they have to unfold their arms to clap, and others hear it and become curious about the show.

That begins the audience rapport that is the essence of a street show. I also watch how people are walking. If someone is walking very fast or with purpose, there is no way they are going to watch my show, and I don't attempt to lure them in.

Performers are essentially energy manipulators. If you're doing your job right, the audience ceases to be individuals and morphs into a giant whole. I work to control audience energy so it reaches peaks at different times in my shows. For example, the best way to gather an audience for a street show is to create a happy, relaxed energy at the start. So I might tell jokes and use silly humor as people approach me. "Don't worry sir, if you keep practicing you will learn how to ride that bicycle" as one example.

I've also learned who will make the best volunteers. You might think it's the person who is most clearly and loudly enjoying your show. But if someone is giving you that much energy, you don't want to remove them from the audience; that would be a big loss. You want someone who is not as high-energy but may be leaning in and focusing intently on you.

How do you deal with hecklers?

I've developed tactics for dealing with archetypes like "the Joker," who may have been the class clown in school and just wants to be part of the action. They typically aren't trying to be disruptive, so I will sometimes include them.

One audience member was making jokes about me during a performance. After a while I addressed him. "Ladies and gentlemen, let me introduce you to my uncle. I was quite sure I tied him up in the car." The man joined in the fun, laughing and retorting, "Nephew! Great to see you again." And that was the last we heard from him. He was satisfied with the attention.

You're making the transition to public speaking. How does your approach to using humor change in that scenario?

I'm big on using humorous anecdotes from my own life and finding something I think the audience will relate to. In the street a lot of comedy comes from prepared responses to things you know are likely to happen. A dog may run through my show barking, distracting people. So I might say, "Later on, ladies and gents, I will take that dog and twist it into a balloon."

It can work the same way in public speaking. You might see someone in the audience wearing the same kind of thing

"In the street a lot of comedy comes from prepared responses to things you know are likely to happen."

—Owen Lean

as someone else; it might be two women with red dresses and red shoes sitting close to one another. I'll say, "Before I start, I am going to read these women's minds—your favorite color is red." Having bits prepared for things you are likely to encounter is a good way to inject some humor.

Sarah Carothers, DTM, Houston, Texas

Making others laugh and feel better about themselves has been a life's mission for Sarah Carothers, vice president public relations of the Texas Trotters Toastmasters in Houston, as well as an Ambassador for the Toastmasters revitalized education program. The CEO of Craven Comedy, Inc., and host of her own TV show, Carothers also is a practicing chaplain, author, facilitator and philanthropist.

How do you react when your jokes aren't working?

I have experienced that on occasion while performing stand-up comedy. You just have to keep going and eat it up, as I say. But you also can make light of yourself. I might say, "I have to stop buying those jokes from Jokes.com," or some other line, to acknowledge what's going on and lighten the mood.



Sarah Carothers (left) and Palmo Carpino.

You mentioned that you try to find humor in your mistakes. What's an example of that?

Toastmasters clubs often include members from around the world and on occasion names can be mispronounced. We had a gentleman in one of our clubs whose first name was hard for me to pronounce and early on I would make mistakes.

I apologized and he suggested I use his last name instead. We were able to laugh together about it. You have to find a way of finding the comedy in things but also let your colleagues know you respect them... in this case by trying hard to learn his name.

What can audience body language tell you about how your humor is being received?

Just because people aren't bent over laughing doesn't mean you're bombing. Some do their laughing on the inside or with a slight smile. Other times it might be difficult to get a firm read on an audience but you have to proceed undaunted. You just have to be sincere with your audience and they'll usually embrace you in the end.

Palmo Carpino, DTM, Calgary, Alberta

Palmo Carpino is a professional speaker and emcee who uses humor and improv techniques to connect with his audiences. He emcees events like awards ceremonies, company banquets and

volunteer-appreciation celebrations. A Toastmaster in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, for nearly 20 years, Carpino competed in Humorous Speech contests and coached and facilitated humor workshops. For the past five years he's been actively involved in the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers.

How does humor help you as an emcee?

With any event, humor is absolutely the best way to get people on my side. If they are with me, they will stay with me—stay on time, stay in the room. Whether I'm presenting or hosting an event, I make it a point to meet with audience members prior to the event. I look for those friendly faces from the stage. Creating a sense of familiarity—all of us laughing at the same thing—really helps with staying in control [of the event].

And humor really comes in handy in those times when there are little hiccups in the agenda. When people are laughing (or just having a pleasant time in general), they are less likely to panic, or stampede or throw food.

What's your philosophy about using humor in speeches?

Instead of using someone else's joke, or something you've found online, I suggest using truthful or self-deprecating anecdotes instead. For example, maybe I can't button my suit jacket because of the

great meal that was just served. I might say to the audience, “That’s OK because I’m starting to sweat anyway, and I always sweat before I’m asked to talk about things I know nothing about.”

What are the biggest pitfalls of using humor from the stage?

Any content that is inappropriate for the audience or the occasion is sure to disappoint. Also, any time you single out an individual instead of the circumstance, you can be sure that the “division” you create is also between you and your audience.

“Just because people aren’t bent over laughing doesn’t mean you’re bombing. Some do their laughing on the inside or with a slight smile.”

—Sarah Carothers

Permission plays a major role in what you may be able to get away with. If you are not a woman, do not make fun of women. If you are not an athlete, don’t make fun of athletes. If you are not Italian, don’t make fun of the Mafia. Okay, even if you are Italian, don’t make fun of the Mafia.

How do you recover when you bomb?

If my own humor isn’t going over as intended, then, quite simply, I haven’t done my homework and have no one to blame but myself. It means I haven’t researched the group enough and/or haven’t read the audience correctly in that moment. Ideally, if the intended humor is appropriate to the topic at hand (which it must be), you may be able to come back with an actual recovery line, such as, “OK, perhaps not the best illustration—let me try again.”

The best comedians learn from failure and create changes as needed. I’m a huge fan of motivational humorist [and longtime Toastmaster] John Kinde and his phrase “A bad joke deserves a good autopsy.”

How can speakers develop their “humor gene”?

Humor is built on timing and on the unexpected. You can strategically and tactically plan it with an arsenal of planned spontaneity or, you can just say out loud what you are thinking in your head and learn to decipher what’s appropriate. Delivery, and specifically your own style of delivery, can be a completely different matter than use of humor formulas. This is usually what separates the “ok attempts” scribed into a written speech from the “memorable point illustrated in a memorable manner.”

My last point is one I also share with newbie improvisers and I think it is true here as well. Techniques are all fine and good but I would suggest that if you want to go from good to great, “It’s not so much about building a library as it is about building your reflexes.”

Raajeev Aggarwal, DTM, Burbank, California

You can likely count on one hand the number of computer industry executives who also are stand-up comedians. But that wasn’t about to stop Raajeev Aggarwal from making the leap. Aggarwal, who has been a member of Toastmasters clubs in Washington, D.C., Boston and Los Angeles, didn’t tell the employees of his computer-systems design company, Compubahn, Inc., about his double life for years. “I hesitated mainly for fear they might think their boss was a clown,” he says. But Aggarwal had little to be concerned about as most have championed his courage and he’s gone on to perform on the American cable network Nickelodeon TV, where he portrays a dull high school teacher in a show called *100 Things to Do Before High School*, which began airing in 2015. Aggarwal has also inspired his wife and two of his children to try stand-up comedy.

What’s your approach to using humor in public speaking, including Toastmasters?

Self-deprecating humor generally works best. Because humor is challenging and can easily upset people, I prefer that safer variety. I like to use myself as the victim so I am the one who looks stupid and not the

audience. As an extension of that, I also make fun of my family I try to use comedy that relieves people of their misery. You are putting yourself down so that everyone in the room feels better about themselves.

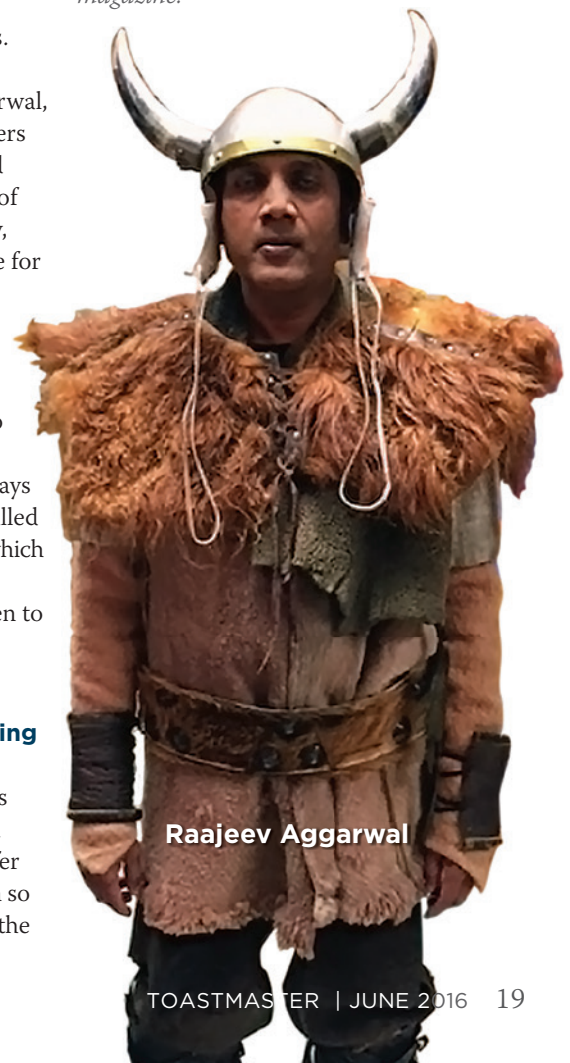
How often do you perform stand-up comedy?

About twice a week. I generally go to booked shows or Open Mics. I also use my Toastmasters participation to try new jokes. I tell my fellow Toastmasters that I am using them as guinea pigs to try new material.

What if you’re performing stand-up and the audience isn’t responding?

If the humor isn’t working, then I try side comments like, “Some of you are going to get this joke and laugh tomorrow morning.” Or, “It seemed funny when I wrote it.” ■

DAVE ZIELINSKI is a freelance business journalist based in Minneapolis and a frequent contributor to Toastmaster magazine.



Raajeev Aggarwal

Nine Ways to Spot a Leader

Learn what qualities make a great club officer.

BY DANA LAMON, DTM, AS



Now is the time for you to choose members to lead your club during the next six months or a year (according to your club bylaws). Should you elect the member who has been around for several years but not yet served as a club leader? Perhaps. Should the member who has been around only a few months be chosen as your club president? Maybe. The issue is not the duration of membership; it is the ability to lead.

The leader you need talks about “we” for blame as well as for credit.

As I read the book *The Ten Golden Rules of Leadership* by Michael A. Soupios and Panos Mourdoukoutas, I identified some telltale signs of a leader. If you want to spot the next leader in your club, here are nine things you can look for.

1 Look for motion. A Chinese proverb says, “[It’s] not the cry, but the flight of a wild duck, that leads the flock to fly and follow.” A leader must be in motion. A person who is standing still may be in front, but there is no evidence that she is going anywhere. It is when she takes that first step that she shows her potential to lead.

Motion in the club is evidenced by personal growth. The member who sets and achieves goals, tries new projects and/or takes on new roles is showing signs of leadership.

2 Look for a smile. I took an informal, non-scientific survey of members of the three clubs I belong to. The unequivocal conclusion was that they

would not follow a person who doesn’t smile. In her article “There’s Magic In Your Smile,” posted on psychologytoday.com, Sarah Stevenson writes that smiling is contagious. When you smile, you make others smile.

At your next Toastmasters meeting, look around the room. Your potential leaders are among those who are smiling.

3 Look for confidence. Your club leader must be able to make decisions without wavering, determine direction without hesitation and guide through difficulties with courage. Only a confident person has the capacity to carry out these responsibilities. He fulfills the aphorism of ancient Greece, “Know thyself.”

A member’s confidence, or lack thereof, can be seen in how he gives and receives evaluations. A leader knows the value of feedback, negative as well as positive, to stimulate growth. As I think about the club and district leaders who have come from the clubs I belong to, the successful ones have been those who welcome constructive criticism.

4 Look for humility. An “I-centered” individual usually crowds out everyone else; she has to have room for her ego. She is without followers, and you can’t be a leader without having at least one follower.

Who claims the credit for the accomplishments of your club? If it is “I,” she is not the person you are looking for. The leader you need talks about “we” for blame as well as for credit.

5 Look for camaraderie. One member asked me to count her out of a planned club potluck lunch. She wasn’t interested in socializing with the club. And you know, when I asked members about having that same person as president, the response was unanimous: “No.”

The authors of *The Ten Golden Rules of Leadership* hold that community development and positive group sentiment are virtues that leaders must nurture. These virtues can be found in the person who treats his fellow Toastmasters as comrades rather than stepping stones toward a goal.

Camaraderie among club members is more likely displayed in activities outside the regular club meeting. These activities can be area and division speech contests and district conferences as well as celebratory social events.

6 Look for candor. The person you should choose as your leader is one who is just as willing to hear the truth as she is willing to speak it. To be sustainable a club’s growth must be based on truth. However, knowing that sometimes the truth hurts, she will insist that it be given with kindness.

Just as you can look at speech evaluations to spot confidence, you can look at them to find candor. A leader will invite honesty and truth.

7 Look for excellence. “Excellence demands that you do your best, not that you be the best,” is Principle 2 from my book, *The Excellence Book*. Your club leader will not be paid to do her job. Nonetheless, you want her to perform to the best of her ability. The member who is giving her best

to her personal growth will most likely be the one to offer the same standard of performance to her leadership role.

Excellence can be detected in a member's performance from speech to speech. It can also be seen in the attitude toward speech competition. If the attitude is about improving, you have a potential leader.

8 Look for inquisitiveness. Gladys (a pseudonym) took over as president of her club when the president abruptly quit. Most of the members were like Gladys, with less than a year experience in Toastmasters. The club is on the right track and growing thanks to Gladys's leadership and her willingness to ask questions. She sent question after question to the area director to understand her role and Toastmasters' processes. I know about the questions because many of them were forwarded to me for answers. The key question that a leader must ask is, "Why?" When she understands the why, she can lead to the how.

If you want to spot a leader, don't run away from the person who is asking questions. Consider the member who challenges the process by asking, "Why?"

9 Look for integrity. Sophocles wrote, "I would prefer even to fail with honor than to win by cheating." Need I add more? **T**

DANA LAMON, DTM, AS, is the 1992 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking. He is a member of three clubs in Lancaster, California, and an Accredited Speaker. Reach him at dana@danalamon.com.

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5 TIPS FOR FINDING A PROSPECTIVE LEADER

One of the biggest challenges for club officers is finding future leaders. Identifying these members involves planning, teamwork and collaboration with the leadership team. Here are a few tips to help with the search:



Tip #1: Pay attention to members who are responsive, take action and are consistent with keeping their word. There's a good chance that these members already have leadership experience in their personal and professional lives.

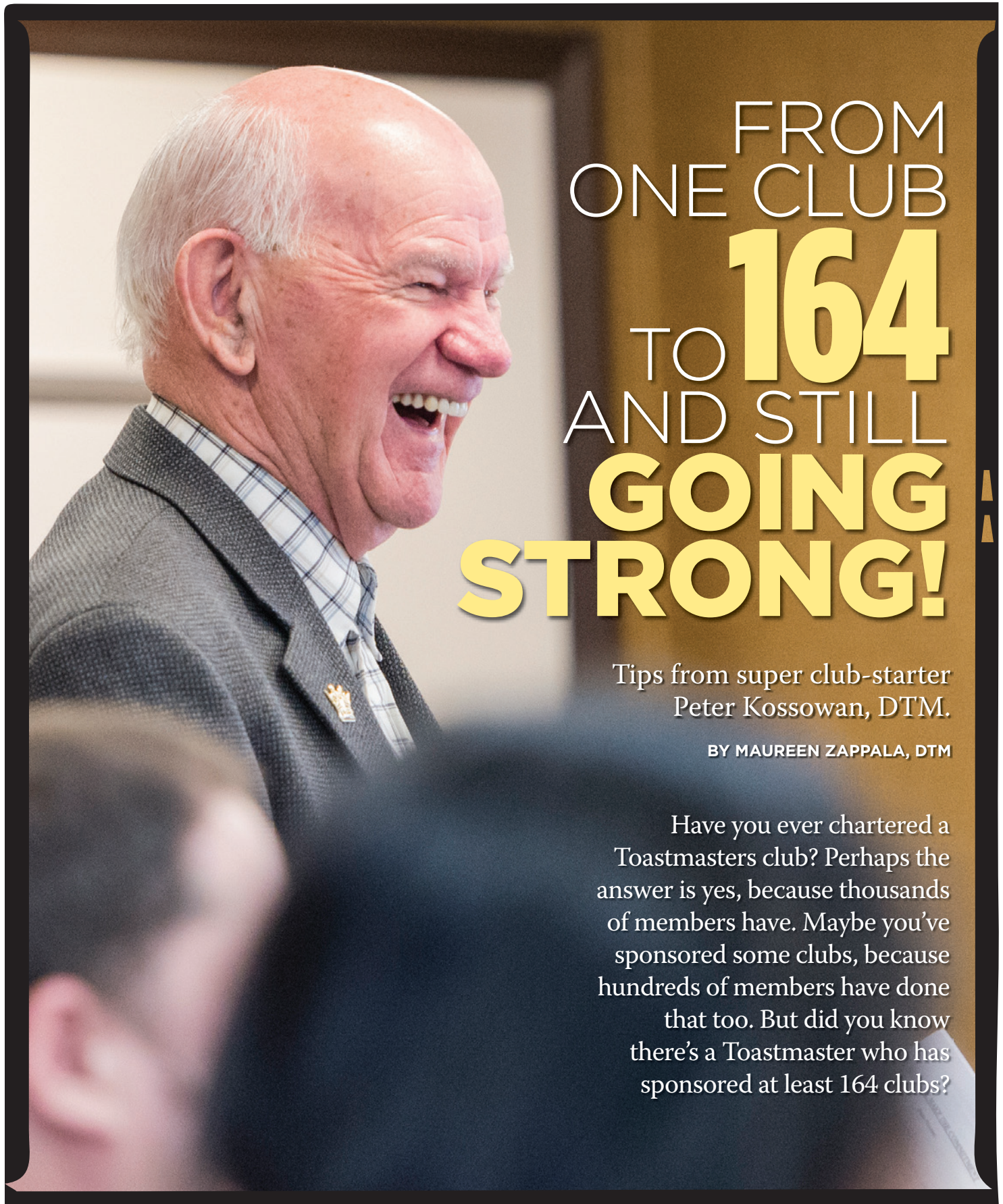
Tip #2: Look for members who are showing improvement in their leadership skills. Plant the seed and tell them specifically where you see improvement. In follow-up conversations, tell them why they would make good leaders and eventually ask them to take on a leadership role. This allows a member to consider the idea well before being asked to commit to lead.

Tip #3: Explain to members the benefits you personally have experienced in your role. For example, you could describe how it continues to build your confidence and leadership skills. You might also share your story about how and why you became a club officer.

Tip #4: Make members aware of opportunities. It's important to talk about upcoming open positions frequently at your meetings so that members know prior to election time what roles are available and which ones they might find interesting.

Tip #5: Ask members what area of their lives they would like to improve. Tie their answers into the skills they would learn as a club leader. For example, if their goal is to build confidence in decision making, suggest that they assume the role of club president.

Although it may not be easy, building your club officer team can be rewarding for both you and your members.



FROM
ONE CLUB
TO **164**
AND STILL
**GOING
STRONG!**

Tips from super club-starter
Peter Kossowan, DTM.

BY MAUREEN ZAPPALA, DTM

Have you ever chartered a Toastmasters club? Perhaps the answer is yes, because thousands of members have. Maybe you've sponsored some clubs, because hundreds of members have done that too. But did you know there's a Toastmaster who has sponsored at least 164 clubs?

Wow! *Who did that?*

The credit goes to Peter Kossowan, DTM, in Edmonton, Canada. He joined Toastmasters in February 1970, and he's practically built an entire Canadian district by himself. At age 82, after inspiring and mentoring hundreds of people, Kossowan is still committed to Toastmasters.

What's his secret? To put it simply: He is passionate about serving the community. Kossowan has a long history of involvement with dozens of community groups besides Toastmasters. In one podcast interview, Kossowan said he is inspired by these words from the playwright George Bernard Shaw, who said, *"My life belongs to the community, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live."*

His commitment to the community helps explain why Kossowan is drawn to Toastmasters, an organization that identifies service to the member as a core value. He credits having been born to a generous and kind mother who developed in him an attitude of service, an attitude that is evident to everyone who meets him. Kossowan's close friend Past International President Neil Wilkinson, DTM, says of him, "Kossowan always wants to put somebody else first, to connect you with someone who can help. That's what he's all about—helping others."

Kossowan's 46-year Toastmasters journey started when a friend invited him to attend a club meeting. He immediately saw how Toastmasters could help him grow in his financial planning business by improving his presentations and sharpening his listening skills. He increased his sales-closing techniques—the same skills he uses to launch new clubs.

"I've been to many Toastmasters demo meetings where the people conducting the meeting don't ask for the sale," he says. "They don't invite visitors to join. You have to ask for the sale!"

Chartering a new club may seem daunting, especially if you're a new member. But if one member can do it *164 times*, surely anyone can do it once. And you can too, if you fit the following criteria:

1 You love Toastmasters. The best club-starters are the ones who enjoy Toastmasters with infectious enthusiasm. The camaraderie and applause members enjoy are magnetic. The club is a safe haven for personal development. Helen Blanchard, the first female Toastmasters International President, said, "If you get out of Toastmasters all you can get out of Toastmasters, you'll never get out of Toastmasters."

2 You like people. Kossowan believes nobody has too many friends. "Some of my best friends are Toastmasters," he says. He loves watching people develop. "They walk tall and feel valued and it shows in their body language," he says. "Each individual is unique, bringing wisdom and knowledge to the group."

3 You see the big-picture impact. Toastmasters doesn't just change people; it also affects organizations. One club Kossowan helped build was for an association for people with learning challenges. "We helped give a voice to those

who've never had a voice before," he says, "and it changed the organization's culture.

"One woman, a member with learning challenges, gave a speech at their fundraiser and it generated \$145,000 in contributions!" That's a big-picture impact that goes far beyond counting *ahs* and *ums*.

4 You're comfortable asking for help. Kossowan has developed relationships with many phenomenal, helpful members. "Their values coincide with mine," he says. "I trust them to do whatever task they choose to do." To conduct a demo meeting, for instance, Kossowan uses five volunteers. He has a one-page flier that describes the tasks for each one. "Should a new volunteer join us, I send them the flier so they know what is expected of them," he says. "It works like a charm. I have sponsored clubs hundreds of kilometers from home using this technique."

"Kossowan always wants to put somebody else first, to connect you with someone who can help. That's what he's all about—helping others."

— Neil Wilkinson, PIP, DTM

If those four qualities resonate with you, why not jump in and sponsor a club? Here are some tips to help:

Prospects are everywhere! Look where large groups gather. Kossowan believes any group of more than 250 people can sustain a club. He has built clubs within the blind community, amid ethnic groups and nonprofits, and in prisons, universities and government settings. Maybe you work for a big company or are part of a large congregation. Be watchful and learn from Kossowan, who is constantly prospecting for potential clubs.

"Recently, at a funeral, I met the executive director of an organization that would benefit from Toastmasters ... we have a demo meeting scheduled next month." Work with district leaders, especially the club growth director, whose job it is to prospect for new leads. Kossowan handles several prospects simultaneously. Immediate Past District 42 Governor Doris Henn, DTM, says Kossowan is very organized and keeps a spreadsheet of all leads. "I have passed leads on to him," she says, "but he also generates many of his own. Sometimes he's working on 20 leads at once."

Be patient. Most visitors are not accustomed to the applause, structure, speaking and evaluating that are part of the club experience. Some won't buy into Toastmasters until they see the benefits for themselves, which could take time. Sometimes new marketing techniques are needed.

Kossowan is currently working on establishing a corporate club. He says they have 12 members, and in six months, that



number has not changed. “I am advising them on how to invite guests,” he says, “but I must wait until they are prepared to accept the knowledge. Patience!”

Try a softer invitation. It’s tempting to exclaim *You should join Toastmasters!* and call that an invitation. However, the word *should* can be counterproductive. Denver psychologist Susan Heitler, Ph.D., writes in *Psychology Today* that although the word *should* sometimes gives good guidance, “More often it sets unrealistic expectations, induces guilt and decreases the desire to do what you otherwise might want to do.”

With his 55 years of sales experience, Kossowan prefers to take a softer approach: “Why don’t you join me at a Toastmasters meeting and see for yourself the benefits?” This works!

Marketing is key! You may have an advantage if you want to start a club in your company. “Today, many more human resource managers are aware of the value of Toastmasters,” Kossowan says. “Invite them to a meeting to show how it benefits employees.” To start a community club, use social media, public bulletin boards and word of mouth. Invite people with leadership ability and ask *them* to invite people in *their* network. Talk about it everywhere.

“I moderated a political forum,” Kossowan says, “and I mentioned Toastmasters. At the end, I invited those interested in Toastmasters to see me afterwards. Ten people approached me! We arranged for a demo meeting and chartered in one meeting!”

Plan a demo meeting: Give a demonstration of an actual meeting. Kossowan uses a team approach with his volunteer demo members, giving each one a clearly defined role. Assign a Toastmaster, speaker, evaluator, Table Topicsmaster, timer and grammarian.

Another approach is to bring short scripts describing each role, which visitors read out loud. One visitor reads the role of evaluator, another reads the role of timer, etc. This can be done with only two Toastmasters—one serving as Toastmaster, evaluator and general evaluator and the other doing a speech and leading Table Topics. Be creative and make certain to cover the integral components. Visitors are more likely to join if they are involved.

Sell the benefits and the features. We teach communication and leadership skills. So what? *Why* is that important to a prospect? Tailor the benefits to the specific group. To charter a corporate club, management needs to know what their employees will gain from it, says Kossowan. He tells them, “It’s ongoing and cost-effective leadership training. Employee morale goes up and they make better sales presentations.”

Greg Gazin, DTM, one of the hosts of the Toastmasters podcast series and Kossowan’s good friend, has participated in many demo meetings with the super club-starter and says he directs his pitch to the specific needs of the audience. “While I have heard many variations of his pitch or call to action,” Gazin says, “it never gets tiring; it always feels fresh.”

Collect success stories, including your own. Craig Valentine, the 1999 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking, teaches the “then-now-how” technique of persuasion. “Back *then* I was terrible. *Now* I’m not. Here’s *how* I improved.”



Kossowan prospects for potential clubs wherever he goes. He invites the people he meets to club meetings to demonstrate how members benefit from the experience. He invites visitors who are interested in joining a club to speak with him and tailors his pitch to the specific needs of the prospective member.

What's your Toastmasters "then-now-how" story? Tell it! Brag about the people in your club who were terrified to speak and stumbled over their words but were transformed after a few months. Success stories sell.

Ask for the sale! Before the close of your demo, share some short success stories and let the Toastmaster of the meeting take questions from the audience. Finally, use Kossowan's brilliant yet gentle technique to ask guests to join: "Knowing what you know about Toastmasters, how many of you will support the formation of a club? Raise your hand." Kossowan raises his hand, as do the volunteers. "Should 10 or more hands go up," he says, "we arrange for another meeting and ask each visitor to bring a guest." That is how Kossowan recruits the 20 members needed to create a club.

District 42 Director Marg Faryna, DTM, has watched Kossowan at demo meetings. She says he ends it this way:

"I've been to many Toastmasters demo meetings where the people conducting the meeting don't ask for the sale. You have to ask for the sale!"

— Peter Kossowan

"If there are no other questions, I have a question for you. Will you complete the membership application and leave it with us today?"

His simple questions work!

Chartering a club is incredibly rewarding—it brings the greatness of Toastmasters to a world that desperately needs strong leaders and communicators. You *are* qualified to start a club, and you *are* up to the task.

As Gazin says, "When Kossowan calls for help with another potential club, I say yes—just as I did the first time over a decade ago when I was both vice president education and area governor and the thought of chartering a club gave me a serious case of the butterflies. Today, I'm no longer afraid to step up to the challenge."

Your journey to 164 clubs starts with one. Decide today to do it. **T**

Editor's Note: For a detailed guide on the club chartering process, download the free *How to Start a New Club* manual from the Toastmasters website. (www.toastmasters.org/Membership/How-to-Start-a-New-Club)

MAUREEN ZAPPALA, DTM, is a former NASA propulsion engineer. Today she's a professional speaker, author and presentation skills coach, as well as founder of High Altitude Strategies, a coaching and speaking service. She belongs to the Aerospace Toastmasters club in Cleveland, Ohio. Visit her website at www.MaureenZ.com.





Official Notice of Vote Your 2016–2017 Officer and Director Candidates

On Saturday, August 20, 2016, you will have the opportunity to vote for the international officer and director candidates of your choice while attending the 85th Annual Toastmasters International Convention in Washington, D.C., USA.

The International Leadership Committee nominated officer candidates

for the positions of International President-Elect, First Vice President and Second Vice President. International director candidates were nominated for Regions 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14. The Committee's selection is presented in accordance with the Bylaws of Toastmasters International, Article VIII.

2016 Annual Business Meeting
12:30 p.m.
Saturday, August 20, 2016
Marriott Marquis Washington, DC
Washington, D.C.

Officer Candidates



International President-Elect
Balraj Arunasalam, DTM



First Vice President
Lark Doley, DTM



Second Vice President
Karen Blake, DTM



Second Vice President
Andrew Little, DTM



Second Vice President
Deepak Menon, DTM



Second Vice President
Richard Peck, DTM

To review details of each officer nominee's qualifications, visit the Toastmasters International website at:
www.toastmasters.org/officercandidates

Director Candidates

From Region 2

Tod Henry, DTM
Jim Kohli, DTM

From Region 4

Monique Levesque-Pharoah, DTM
Stephen Shaner, DTM

From Region 6

Avis Brodie, DTM
Vera Johnson, DTM

From Region 8

Matt Kinsey, DTM
Charles Lawler, ACS, CL

From Region 10

Michael Osur, DTM
Charley Patton, DTM

From Region 12

David Fisher, DTM
Mark Richards, DTM

From Region 14

Elisa W. Tay, DTM

To view details of each director nominee's qualifications, visit the Toastmasters International website at:
www.toastmasters.org/directorcandidates

It is the right and duty of all clubs to participate in the vote, either through their representatives at the convention or by proxy. If you are attending the convention, you will have the opportunity to meet and talk with all the international officer and director candidates before the election. Additional nominations for officers and directors may be made from the floor at the Annual Business Meeting.



FOR

Cast Your Vote For Proposal A and Proposal B

Amendments to the Bylaws
of Toastmasters International

**The Board of Directors
recommends voting in
favor of Proposals A and B.**

To view the full text of amendments
to the Bylaws of Toastmasters
International, visit
www.toastmasters.org/TIBylaws.

Make Your Voice Heard

This August, your club will have the opportunity to cast its vote on two important proposals at the Annual Business Meeting, which will be held on August 20, 2016, in Washington, D.C.

PROPOSAL A

This proposal relates to the legal and physical locations of Toastmasters International. The first part confirms that Toastmasters International is legally domiciled in California. The second part removes the requirement that World Headquarters be located in California.

The Board of Directors encourages you to vote 'Yes' on Proposal A to enable the organization to strategically place World Headquarters in a location that includes access to a growing, diverse and talented workforce while not being restricted to an extremely high-cost environment.

PROPOSAL B

This proposal formally recognizes the Audit Committee as a standing committee of the Board of Directors and defines its processes are governed in accordance with the California Nonprofit Integrity Act of 2004.

The Board of Directors encourages you to vote 'Yes' on Proposal B to record the organization's commitment to following the most stringent requirements governing financial oversight and audit.

To learn more, visit the Toastmasters International website www.toastmasters.org/2016-Proposals.
You can also send your questions to boardcontact@toastmasters.org.

The Board of Directors of Toastmasters International unanimously recommended approval of these amendments to the Bylaws of Toastmasters International.

Don't miss this opportunity to engage, participate and make your voice heard.

Member Achievements

How four members found victory through adversity.

Lois Strachan, DTM

Cape Communicators Club, Cape Town, South Africa

Don't Tell Me I Can't

Lois Strachan is no ordinary lady—she's fierce in her determination to do the things others tell her she cannot do. Lois is a past District 74 Governor and an ambassador for raising awareness of the capabilities of people living with disabilities. Author of the children's book series *The Adventures of Missy Mouse*, Lois is a professional speaker and storyteller and more notably, the recipient of the Tributes Excellence Awards in the literature and education category.

And to think ... Lois has achieved all this and more without her sight.

Lois' story is a remarkable one. She went blind in 1992 at age 21, after being diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. She says of that day, "The initial feeling in that hospital room was anger. I wanted to throw something and hear it shatter into a million pieces because that's what I felt had been done to my life."

Both of her parents were Toastmasters, but it wasn't until 2000, at age 29, that Lois decided to join a club. Her husband, Craig, DTM, joined at the same time because he felt it would benefit his career.

Lois says, "Initially I did not make the connection between Toastmasters as a social activity and as a catalyst for transforming one's entire life—professionally and otherwise." It was only through active participation in the program that she realized how the benefits carried over into all aspects of her life.



Lois Strachan and her guide dog, Eccles

One wonders what's next for this amazing lady. Besides being an inspiration to many people within Toastmasters and throughout the greater South African disabled community, she says, "I love every moment of doing the things that people try to tell me I cannot do."

Find out more about Lois' journey at www.loisstrachan.com.

Contributed by Zoya Mabuto, CC, 2015 District 74 International Speech Contest Champion



Mark Ma and club member Nikita Nanwani

Mark Ma, CC, CL

HKIE Toastmasters Club, Hong Kong, China

Learning the Language

I was a "poor language" man who was good at mathematics. I hardly passed the languages part of the entrance exam at the University of Hong Kong. In fact, I failed the oral part of the exam, both in English and in Chinese (my first language). However, my life started to change after I joined Toastmasters seven years ago.

I can feel my gradual improvement in various aspects of English. I went from being too shy to speak to daring to speak and being willing to listen. I participated in speech contests and even won first place in my home club. Last year, I was fortunate to serve as club president and learned a lot, especially about listening. I went from not reading to liking to read and write. I regularly read the *Toastmaster* magazine from which I learn vocabulary while being inspired by excellent ideas. I even enjoyed writing and submitting this article to share my story.

I love how Toastmasters helps me develop habits in speaking, listening, reading and writing. I also love the supportive learning environment which builds genuine friendships.

Aurora Quezada Ortega, DTM

Ixtaccihuatl Club, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico

I Am A Winner!

In June 2008, my oldest daughter passed away at age 53 due to an aggressive cancer, leaving me without the slightest idea of how to continue with my life. I was in a deep depression and I could not accept reality.

A dear friend told me, “Why don’t you come to a Toastmasters meeting? It might help you move on.”

In April 2009 I attended a meeting. I already knew something about it, since my friend had talked about it several times before. I joined the Ixtaccihuatl club. In May of that year I was elected vice president education, but my problems continued. I studied and studied, but I did not understand anything.

But thanks to my mentors, I moved forward, giving 10 speeches and earning a Competent Communicator award. After I was elected club president, I discovered abilities I had kept stored in the memory of days past—memories of my childhood and what I had inherited from my parents. From my father I learned to be a leader and to have a clear, objective goal. From my mother I learned responsibility, dignity, integrity and reciting.

I went on to win Humorous Speech contests in 2009 and 2010, and in March 2013, I won first place in a women’s speech contest at an International Women’s Day event.

I found the most success in leadership and in educational advances in 2014 and 2015. I served as area governor and I was the club mentor for the Redjal club and a coach for the Aztlan club, both in Guadalajara. I also conducted a High Performance Leadership project, founding the Amor por Mexico Gavel club.

I am a different woman today. My self-confidence has improved and I feel valued by my Toastmasters partners, friends and family. I just turned 81, and during my six years of service I stand firm with my goals and in my motto: Serve to live and live to serve. I am a winner!



Aurora Quezada Ortega, DTM

Sojan Paul, ACB, ALB

Alturki Toastmasters Club, Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia

Why Did I Join Toastmasters?

Why join Toastmasters?

I’ve been asked this question repeatedly since I joined my club. The answer is simple; I wanted to be a *better* communicator. All living beings are communicators, either directly or indirectly. A blossoming flower has something to communicate to its pollinators. An ant has even more to communicate with its coworkers and competitors. If we listen, the message is clear. But we often do not listen.

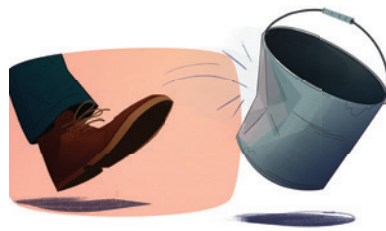
When I attended my first club meeting, the Table Topicsmaster called me onstage. That was, in fact, the first time I faced an audience. I went to the stage, looked at the audience and felt them staring at me as if I were a rare animal. To make a long story short, I couldn’t utter a single word that day.

After that, I asked myself, *why should I go again?* The answer came immediately. The worst had already happened, and there was no need to be afraid any longer. If I could utter a single word this time, it would be a great achievement. I did attend the second meeting, and I haven’t stopped attending since. The more meetings I attend, the less afraid I am on stage.



Sojan Paul, ACB, ALB and his many trophies

So far I have won 14 trophies in club- and area-level speech contests. I also participated in a division-level contest and won in all five categories, including Table Topics! I could do this only because of Toastmasters. My goal is to become the World Champion of Public Speaking. 📌



Euphemistically Speaking

Nice words to talk about all those things that aren't so nice.

BY JOHN CADLEY

In last month's column I described how politicians have perfected the art of saying what they don't mean. This month I would like to talk about how the rest of us are equally adept at *not* saying what we *do* mean. I'm speaking of euphemisms, those handy little words and phrases we use to talk about things we'd rather not talk about. Going to the bathroom, for instance. Nobody says, "I'm going to the bathroom." For some reason that's like publicly announcing exactly what you intend to do there. (My Uncle Ted did announce it, and proudly, but trust me, you don't want to be like my Uncle Ted.) Instead, we "use the restroom." Never mind that there's no resting going on. It spares us the visual, and that's a good thing.

Euphemisms like this abound because life is so full of unpleasantries, more so in certain areas than others—like medicine. Going to the doctor is unpleasant for two reasons: Something unpleasant has brought you there, and there's a good chance that what the physician has to say about it will be equally unpleasant. Medical practitioners used to soften the blow by using technical jargon to give your condition an air of grandiosity, almost as if you should feel proud to have it. Wouldn't you rather hear the doctor proclaim triumphantly, "Ah yes, a classic case of onychocryptosis," than to hear him mutter with a yawn, "You have an ingrown toenail." I know I would. Now, however, in our patient-friendly world, the euphemisms appear in kinder, gentler terms. For instance, if your doctor says that he or she is "concerned" or "doesn't like" something involving your health, chances are you can expect a fair amount of unpleasantness in your immediate future.

Airline travel is another area where language must be chosen carefully so as not to agitate people who are already agitated simply because they have to travel by airline. Recently, I was stuck in an airport while my flight was continually delayed. Knowing that this would result in missed connections, canceled business meetings, shortened vacations, and general weeping, groaning and gnashing of teeth, the gate agent cheerfully announced that the airline was graciously rolling out its "amenities cart" to help us through this troubled time. Amenity is a nice word. It means some kind of gratuitous convenience or service, which in this case took the form of stale fruit bars and warm bottled water. We were invited to partake of these "amenities" at our leisure, while my wife translated what they were really saying: "Welcome to your worst nightmare. Have a cookie."

Pilots, too, are well aware that their precious cargo of 280 passengers contains a goodly number who are not comfortable sitting in a metal tube hurtling 30,000 feet above *terra firma* at 500 miles an hour. So if the flight encounters bad weather, the captain calmly informs you of some "chop" that could make the ride "bumpy"—which is so much better than saying: "There's a thunderstorm ahead which I'm trying to avoid because if I don't, you're going to know what it's like to be in the spin cycle of a washing machine." So yes, "chop" and "bumpy" will do just fine, thank you very much.

Wouldn't you rather hear the doctor proclaim triumphantly, "Ah yes, a classic case of onychocryptosis," than to hear him mutter with a yawn, "You have an ingrown toenail."

Of course, the ultimate unpleasantry for us human beings is when we cease to be—otherwise known as "death." There are so many euphemisms for the dreaded D word that we've had to break them up by category. If you're the active type, you can kick the bucket, buy the farm or bite the dust. Fishing enthusiasts can go to Davey Jones' Locker or, if their business associates were of a certain kind, sleep with the fishes. Sociable types will be happy to meet their maker, gamblers can cash in their chips, gardeners will push up daisies and those of a more technical bent can sustain a negative outcome. English majors, on the other hand, can reference the Bard by shuffling off their mortal coil, and comedians can check into the Horizontal Hilton or Motel Deep 6, depending on their budget. And if all this colorful language is too much, you are free to simply succumb, pass, depart or croak.

And the euphemism for my demise? Well, being a writer I guess the choice is obvious: The End. ■

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

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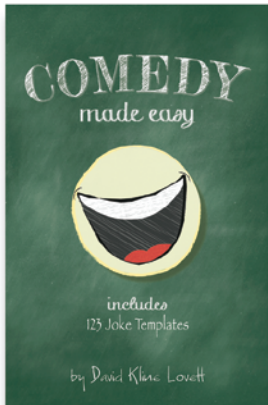
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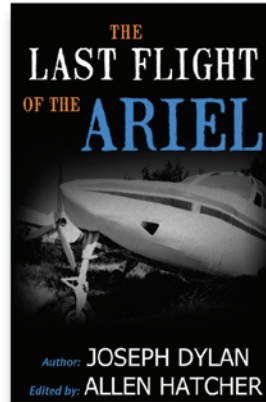
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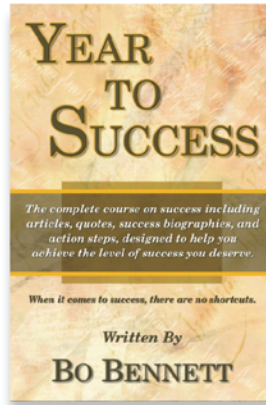
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