

TOASTMASTER®

June 2009

Turning Accents Into Assets

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diversity in your club.

Working the Room

Tips on connecting
with others.

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Making the most of your
moment in the limelight.





The Courage to Conquer the Finish... and Realize It's the Beginning

✦ Here it is, June – the end of our calendar year. Think back nearly a year ago to July 1. We were making plans. As individuals, we might have planned to complete the next educational level in our Toastmasters journey. Perhaps we challenged ourselves to serve as a club or district officer, or to mentor a new club or member.

As clubs, I hope you were setting your course to be Distinguished, determining which of your members could reach those Competent and Advanced Communicator and Leader awards, planning your strategy for recruiting new members and completing your administrative work.

As districts, you were completing your District Success Plan, laying out the groundwork for a Distinguished, Select Distinguished or President's Distinguished year.

Funny thing about plans. I'm great at making plans. Just ask my husband! Ask him how many times (this year alone) I've planned to clean up my library. It's easy to plan to do something; I find it even easier to think I have all the time in the world to accomplish it. Then you look up one day and you're at the finish. You're kidding! Where did the time go? I find myself, more often than I would like, lacking the Courage to Conquer the distractions that prevent me from accomplishing my best intentions.

I hope that as this year finishes, you have had the Courage to Conquer any challenge or distraction you may have faced on the road to your Toastmasters goals. I look forward to our end-of-year reports to see just how many educational awards were earned, how many clubs are Distinguished and how many districts will be honored at the International Convention in Connecticut.

Yet as Louis L'Amour wrote, *"There will come a time when you believe everything is finished. That will be the beginning."* That's the wonderful thing about Toastmasters; though we may come to a finish by completing an educational level or serving as a club officer, it is merely the beginning. This is an educational organization; as long as we are willing to learn, there is *something* to learn! Each manual will continue to expand our speaking skills. Each level of service we assume as an officer provides a depth of knowledge and skill not experienced at former levels. As long as we continue to work the program, it will continue to endow us with abilities that will permit each of us to be a more effective spouse, parent, employee, manager, leader and friend.

If you met the goals you established at the beginning of this year, congratulations! But success is not final. It's time for different goals. If you are not yet where you had hoped, don't be discouraged. Keep working! I know that with the help of your fellow members, you can find the Courage to Conquer the finish. But remember, when you do, it will really be a new beginning!

Now if you will excuse me, I need to go conquer my library, as well as my Competent and Advanced Communicator applications!

Jana Barnhill

Jana Barnhill, DTM, Accredited Speaker
International President

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The Toastmasters Vision:

Toastmasters International empowers people to achieve their full potential and realize their dreams. Through our member clubs, people throughout the world can improve their communication and leadership skills, and find the courage to change.

The Toastmasters Mission:

Toastmasters International is the leading movement devoted to making effective oral communication a worldwide reality.

Through its member clubs, Toastmasters International helps men and women learn the arts of speaking, listening and thinking – vital skills that promote self-actualization, enhance leadership potential, foster human understanding, and contribute to the betterment of mankind.

It is basic to this mission that Toastmasters International continually expand its worldwide network of clubs thereby offering ever-greater numbers of people the opportunity to benefit from its programs.



Do you have something to say? Write it in 200 words or less, sign it with your name, address and club affiliation and send it to letters@toastmasters.org.

The Common Thread in Toastmasters

I truly enjoyed Julie Bawden Davis' article, "Giving Hope to the Homeless" (April). It was inspiring to read about the members in the shelter and how the club not only helped them with public speaking skills, but also with confidence, self-esteem and leadership. It is a common thread that Toastmasters provides a supportive environment, whether you are in Georgia, California, or outside the United States. I look forward to more articles from Julie!

Sandra Yoshida, CC • Advanced Expressions Club • New York, NY

I wanted to share some accolades in regards to Julie Bawden Davis' article "Giving Hope to the Homeless." Julie spent over six hours interviewing members from Clifton Toastmasters for the article. I watched the men walk away with their heads held high after speaking with Julie. I was amazed at how Julie was able to take all that material, condense it into two pages, and yet keep the integrity of each person she interviewed in her report.

The interview was a jolt of energy for the men from Clifton in which they became more motivated with their participation in the club. Keep in mind these men have lost hope and are in despair, based on their situation; consequently, the article uplifted their spirit in more ways than one. Julie did an awesome job with the interviewing process.

Jeannine P. Jean-Pierre, ACB, ALB • Peachtree Club • Atlanta, Georgia

Am I The Only One?

Each month I read the *Toastmaster* magazine, and I don't know how many contributors have claimed that Toastmasters has transformed their lives in some positive way. Well this can only be good. But surely this is not why most people join.

I am a member of the Bossuet Gaveliers, in Luxembourg, the oldest

club in Europe. There are three other clubs in Luxembourg (two English, one French) with whom we interact at district level. The majority of people I meet join Toastmasters for the mixture of social and intellectual pleasure it can bring. One or two have certainly grown in confidence as individuals but I doubt whether those who feel no major life improvement (other than their speaking skills) feel particularly short-changed.

Even if the articles continue to be inspirational in character, can we not hear, via the letters, from others who just do it because it is fun?

Steve Richards, ACB • Bossuet Gaveliers • Luxembourg

Thinking Like a Loser

I have experienced win and loss in the evaluation contests in just three weeks. Between the win and the loss, I read John Kinde's article in the March *Toastmaster*, "Thinking Like a Loser," many times. I really appreciate his thoughts on handling the psychology of losing the contests.

Just three days before our club evaluation contest, the contest chair asked me to participate in the contest. I wasn't sure whether I could do well because English is not my

first language. Finally, I entered the contest and easily won it.

Before the contest at the area level, I read articles about speech evaluation and watched speaking videos on YouTube. When I watched *American Idol*, I even paid attention to how the judges made comments. However, during the contest, I was stuck in a key sentence at the beginning and my facial expression [became] stiff.

Losing a contest is not a bad thing. It allows me to see more aspects that I can improve. I will try the following: 1. Speak without a lectern; 2. Improve my pronunciation; 3. Enter more contests.

Jason Zhang • Deer Park Club • Toronto, Ontario, Canada

I give two thumbs up for the article "Thinking Like a Loser" by John Kinde (March). I was initially attracted by the "Taylor Hicks gray hair" cover, but as I read the article I enjoyed how the author expressed his thoughts in a simple and light manner without using a single jargon word. Like Simon and Kara used to comment in *American Idol*, it is simply brilliant and artistic. Of all the articles I've read, I find this to be the most enjoyable so far. Kudos to John!

Martin Loh • BM Big Foot Club • Penang, Malaysia

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In the wake of a tragic firestorm, Victoria Toastmasters find support from members around the world.

Aiding Australia

February 7th – “Black Saturday” – will long be remembered by Australians as the day the state of Victoria burned. In the aftermath of that day’s horrific firestorm, people in this country, including Toastmasters from my district – District 73 – have been dealing with the devastation. The inferno killed more than 170 people. It destroyed more than 2,000 homes, leaving 7,500 residents homeless. The series of bush fires that day were the worst natural disaster in Australia’s history.

Yet, amid all this tragedy, we have also seen the best in people. The world opened its heart, sending generous amounts of financial aid. And Toastmasters, both near and far, have offered help and comfort in all kinds of ways. I have been so touched by the outpouring of support.

My recollections of February 7th are still vivid. The day dawned eerily: The winds were blustery and hot, and the atmosphere was tinged with a strange yellow color – you could almost see the air. Very few people were out and about, with the majority heeding warnings to stay indoors. The combination of high temperatures, low humidity and strong winds ignited the series of raging bush fires.

In District 73, which includes Victoria, we were fortunate that none of our members perished. I am a member of two clubs in the district – the Healesville Toastmasters, located in the small rural town of Healesville just outside the city of Melbourne, and the Lilydale Toastmasters, which is in Lilydale, a suburb of Melbourne. The Heales-

ville group is the district’s closest club to the Yarra Valley, where the fires were some of the worst. Two Healesville members – a married couple – escaped with only moments to spare. Their home in Steels Creek was destroyed. Another member’s property was badly damaged. Steels Creek is a small community of about 100 residents where, sadly, 11 people died in the firestorm.

One Lilydale club member lost his home in Steels Creek. Other club members just barely managed to save theirs. Many other members of these two clubs lived for weeks with the continual threat of bush fires.

The south of Victoria was also ravaged by the blazes. The East Gippsland and Latrobe Valley clubs – the two closest to the fires in south Victoria – weren’t directly affected by the disaster. However, many of their members have family, friends and colleagues who have suffered.

People compared the horror of these fires to being in a war zone. The devastation was likened to an atomic-bomb blast. I cannot begin to imagine what it must be like to not only lose family, friends and everything you own, but also to have no community to go back to.

Moving Forward

Toastmasters life went on, though of course nothing was as usual. Our club’s meeting room in Healesville was converted into a refuge center for almost a month. Because of that, we needed to cancel our February 16th meeting. We met again on March 2nd, on the eve of a newly issued fire warning, even though a number of members enacted their

fire plan and evacuated the town that night. At the meeting, we allowed mobile phones to be turned on – an exception to our normal policies – so that members could be alerted to any fire threat.

It was a very emotional session. Even though we knew everyone was okay, we still needed to see each other. Fortunately, nothing bad happened to anyone the next day, and on the following day there was a huge downpour of rain, which we were so relieved to see.

We have been deeply moved by the response to this catastrophic event. The Red Cross has received more than \$260 million in donations from all over the world. A fellow Toastmaster from Brisbane even called and offered to pay for any Toastmaster’s items that were lost in the firestorm. The offer was so unexpected, it brought me to tears to think of how kind and giving so many people have been in the weeks since the bush fires.

Toastmasters I have met in my own district and districts around the world have contacted me to find out how we are. Toastmasters International has sent a letter of condolence, with a generous offer to replace any club and member materials.

The members of District 73 thank Toastmasters International and Toastmasters around the world for your thoughts, support and prayers. It is very much appreciated. 

Judy Murphy, DTM, is a dual member of the Healesville and Lilydale Toastmasters clubs, in Victoria, Australia. She can be reached at toastmaster@netspace.net.au.

Globetrotting Toastmaster shares tales from “spiritual safari.”

On the Road to Self-Discovery

Ron Miller considers himself successful when he makes his audiences rethink their most basic cultural beliefs. The author, who speaks regularly about the years he spent traveling the world, loves sparking an “Aha” moment among his listeners – and sometimes that moment comes when he explains the title of his book, *Escape from the Happy Cannibal: A Journey of the Soul*.

Says Miller: “The title of my book is a play on the ultimate cultural question we can all ask ourselves: If we were born into a society of cannibals, would we question the values and behaviors of our society – or just be happy cannibals?”

In the book, the author chronicles his travels through 85 countries, on six continents. Miller, a member of Shaw Speakers in Knoxville, Tennessee, describes climbing active volcanoes such as Mount Merapi in Indonesia, harvesting rice in China, and narrowly escaping execution by rebels in Uganda. He reflects on the wide range of societies he visits, examining spiritual and cultural issues. His account shares how much he learns in his encounters with poverty, tyranny, racism and even revolution, and he relates the value of hearing the distinct perspectives of the people he meets.

The Knoxville resident joined Toastmasters in 2000, largely so he could develop the skills needed to promote his book. He says being a Toastmaster has helped greatly in that regard, and he has used those

skills at book signings and during appearances on radio and television.

Originally, Miller embarked on his travel adventure as a quest for spiritual enlightenment. By age 29, he had lived what many would consider the American dream. A successful civil engineer, he owned a three-bedroom home in the suburbs and could buy just about anything he wanted. But he yearned for something more.

“I had become dissatisfied with superficial contentment, and began noticing that societal pressures were dragging me into a lifestyle valuing materialism and pleasure over more meaningful experiences,” he says. In response, he quit his job, sold his home and most of his possessions, and set out on a “spiritual safari” to learn more about himself. Miller had originally planned to wander for just five months, but he was bitten hard by the travel bug and ended up spending a total of more than three years abroad in a series of trips from 1991 to 2001.

“I discovered that roaming about the face of the planet offered many benefits beyond sightseeing,” Miller says. “Although I initially traveled just to look upon spectacular landscapes, I quickly realized that the unique cultures and fascinating people left the greatest impressions.”

Seeing History Up Close

Some of the countries he visited were experiencing domestic unrest and historic upheaval, like the Soviet Union. During Miller’s

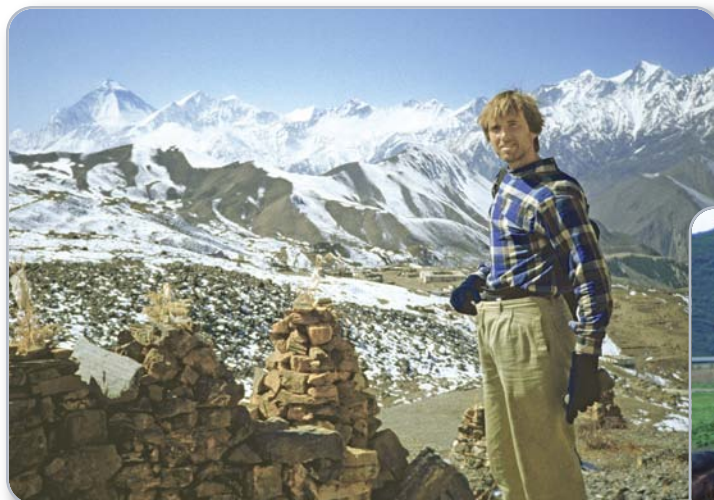
August, 1991 stay, a rebel government tried to replace President Mikhail Gorbachev.

He recalls being in the Soviet Union and finding out that a group of hard-line Communists had placed Gorbachev under house arrest, while protesters stormed the Russian Parliament building. Miller wrote about the experience in his travel log:

We had little idea what a momentous day that was in the Soviet Union and that the nation was at a critical point in which its citizens would either continue down the road toward freedom and democracy or return to an oppressive dictatorship.

For several days, Miller and his travel companions feared they would be rounded up and arrested. Finally, their guide told them the coup had been foiled and Gorbachev returned to power. “We were probably the last Westerners in the entire world to get the facts about the coup, and we were inside the country when it happened!” he says, marveling at the situation.

On the same trip, Miller had the pleasure of meeting relatives who live in the Ukraine. It soon became apparent to him just how poor their living conditions were. When he went to buy groceries for them, he found the store shelves nearly empty. “Ukrainian citizens waited in line for staples such as bread,



- ◆ Ron Miller pauses during his 1992 trek up to the Muktinath Temple in Nepal – and shows off the weight he lost from all the mountain hiking.
- ▼ Miller pulls up seedlings in the rice paddies in Moon Hill, China, during a 1992 trip.



milk and butter, and the water would only turn on at certain times of the day,” he says. After a month-long, memorable visit with his relatives, Miller departed having made strong attachments and learning a great deal about the important things in life.

“Visiting the Ukraine impressed upon me the aspects of life that should be cherished. It isn’t the clothes I wear, the car I drive, or my status in society that matters – what matters most are my relationships with my fellow man. I formed a close bond with relatives who practiced dissimilar customs and, in some instances, believed in ideologies contrary to my own.”

Time for Toastmasters

When he returned to the United States after his final trip – which included excursions to Africa, India, Iceland, Greenland and another visit to relatives in the Ukraine – Miller thought his travel journals would make a good book. Publishing his story, though, would mean marketing the book, and that terrified him. When a colleague invited him to a Toastmasters meeting, he immediately accepted, knowing that it could help make him more comfortable with communicating his message and promoting his work.

“Becoming a Toastmaster was the best decision I ever made,” says Miller. “The group showed me how

to get my message across in a meaningful way.”

Robert Schwall, president of the Rotary Club of East Cobb County in Georgia, praises Miller, who gave a talk to the club about his travels. “We hung on to Ron’s every word and were especially amazed at how his innate curiosity [caused] him to sell everything and travel the world with no particular agenda in mind other than to find out why the world is how it is,” Schwall says. “As he talked about the various cultures he experienced, we got the message that though we are all raised in different environments, people are all the same.”

Miller has also started speaking to children’s groups. “It’s valuable to expose younger folks to the concept of cultural assimilation and the cultural disparity that exists around the world,” he says. “Simply telling elementary school students that they would be different people if they were born in another culture seems to have tremendous power. I think this message is important for them to hear in our multicultural society and global economy.”

Karen Mull, a fifth-grade teacher in Morganton, North Carolina, was impressed with Miller’s talk to her class. She believes he is good at opening the eyes of youth.

“Ron instantly captivated the students by engaging them through the use of visuals,” says Mull, a reading and language arts teacher at Forest Hill Elementary School. “We have a very diverse student population, and many of the visuals were relevant to the students’ [native cultures]. He left them with an understanding of the need for all humanity to cooperate with and appreciate one another.”

In the future Miller plans to reach out to as many people as possible with his message. “In spite of different beliefs and customs among cultures throughout the world, it is important to value – above all else – our common humanity,” he says. “Our planet’s diverse people are the true wonders of the world.”

For more information about Ron Miller and his book *Escape from the Happy Cannibal*, visit <http://www.rontravel.com/>. 

Julie Bawden Davis is a freelance writer based in Southern California and a longtime contributor to the *Toastmaster*. You can reach her at Julie@JulieBawdenDavis.com.

Turning Accents Into Assets

I belong to a fabulous Toastmasters club in central Florida. A few years ago, a club member (a born and bred Southerner) openly criticized the accent of a native New Englander when evaluating this fellow member's speech. "A Southern boy like me can't hope to understand what you're saying," he lamented. "If you want to improve your speaking skills, you'd better get rid of that accent!"

This thorny character was, of course, unaware that his own honey-dripping Southern drawl might be difficult for some members to decipher as well.

Should Toastmasters be expected to conform to a certain standard accent when delivering a speech? Or is it a benefit to the club to celebrate regional or foreign accents?

There's a lot to be said for allowing a speaker to remain unique and passionate. Peter Strevens of the academic journal *English Today* says, "It has long been recognized that non-standard dialects can embrace some kinds of activity with a force and feeling which may be lacking in standard forms and usages." Perhaps, then, there is value in allowing a speaker to be natural when expressing himself, even if this represents a departure from the accepted "standard" delivery.

One of the greatest benefits of being a Toastmaster is the exposure to all kinds of people. We learn as much from each other as we do from our own participation.

If we attempt to "normalize" a person's speaking style, eliminating idiosyncrasies in pronunciation, accent, language usage and word choice, we run the risk of cheating ourselves out of some of the most valuable and enjoyable experiences available to us as Toastmasters members.

For instance, my club boasts a native-born British member. After many years of living in the United States, her accent is still very prevalent, and it's a pleasure to listen to her lilting voice. She has an amazing ability to "turn a phrase," and fellow club members marvel at her choice of words, rejoicing in idioms and expressions that Americans would seldom employ in common parlance.

Adding diversity and depth

Multilingual members can also bring a rich diversity of ideas to the speaking arena. Although heavy accents can at times be challenging to understand, a person who speaks more than one language has learned the valuable skill of



processing their thoughts in more than one way. Anyone fortunate enough to be familiar with multiple languages knows this skill adds depth and variety to sentence structure, word choice and the verbalization of concepts.

Regionally diverse club members can create a goldmine for comedy and learning. When a variety of dialects and colloquialisms collide, the effects are often fun and fill meetings with natural humor. In addition, it's always exciting to listen to a speech delivered by a Toastmaster from an unfamiliar part of the world. We learn new things and discover vernacular and phrases we haven't heard before.

Of course, we can't enjoy a speaker if we can't understand her, and heavy accents can make heavy weather of an otherwise excellent speech. Whether your "accent challenged" speakers hail from around the globe or around the corner, there are ways to help them get their point across yet still reap the benefits of their verbal variety and unique impact. On the Web site www.accurateenglish.com, Lisa Mojsin lists 10 tips for speakers trying to overcome a strong accent or speak in a new language:

- Observe the mouth movements of native speakers and try to imitate them.
- Until you learn the correct intonation and rhythm of the language, slow down your speech.
- Listen to the "music" of the language.

- Use your dictionary.
- Make a list of frequently used words that are difficult for you to pronounce and ask a native speaker to pronounce them for you.
- Buy books on tape.
- Pronounce the ending of each word.
- Read aloud in the language for 15 to 20 minutes each day.
- Record your own voice and listen for pronunciation mistakes.
- Be patient.

For detailed information and a discussion regarding these tips, visit www.accurateenglish.com.

Although the desire to be understood is paramount in our global society, it is important to encourage, embrace and appreciate speakers with varying levels of native language proficiency. Here are a few tips to remember when welcoming these members to your club:

- If a speaker has a heavy accent, ask her to slow down her delivery, making it easier for listeners to understand. Encourage her to practice her speech on native speakers before giving a presentation.
- Don't allow the speaker to assume that everyone automatically understands her. Be aware of audience reaction and take the time to ensure club members understand what the speaker has said.

“When a variety of dialects and colloquialisms collide, the effects are often fun and fill meetings with natural humor.”

- When a speaker uses regional phrases or words, the evaluator should welcome their usage, but encourage the speaker to explain their meaning. Don't be afraid to ask the speaker to repeat or use other terms to enlighten the audience.
- As a rule, the meeting grammarian should point out unusual language usage in a speech. By remarking on unique usages, the grammarian can ensure group understanding and initiate valuable discussion on diverse forms of speech.
- Encourage club members to ask questions regarding a particular word, phrase, accent or choice of delivery, thereby maximizing the educational benefits for the audience and eliminating confusion. This can work for a native-English speaker asking about a nonstandard or foreign word or an English-language learner asking for the standard pronunciation of an English word. It can also work for people who speak the same lan-

guage but with varying dialects. Establishing a forum free from criticism opens the door to understanding.

In short, listening to people who speak differently from you is good for you! Beyond the obvious benefits of learning new words, phrases and ideas from your members, you will gain the additional benefit of increased understanding across regional, national and international boundaries. You may even forge relationships that will bring lasting and positive change to you, your club and your community. Welcome that which is unfamiliar, and grow in ways you cannot yet fathom. 

Sher Hooker, CC, CL, is vice president education of the BoCC Toastmasters in Bartow, Florida. She is an Employee Development Specialist for the Polk County Board of Commissioners in Bartow. She can be reached at sphooker@msn.com.

Check out these items at www.toastmasters.org/shop for a fun way to practice enunciation, word choices and speech patterns:

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Route 66-Speak

*"If you ever plan to motor west,
Travel my way, take the
highway that is best.
Get your kicks on route 66."
– Bobby Troup*

Folks on wheels from all over the world have been getting their kicks on Route 66 since long before Bobby Troup's iconic song first celebrated the cool, hip allure of what has come to be called America's Main Street. Route 66 – what's left of it, anyway – still carves a westward, sweeping, parabolic swath across the map of the United States, from Chicago to Santa Monica. And every day, hot rodders

from Oregon, cruisers from Florida, RV-ers from Vermont and leather-clad Scandinavians astride roaring Harleys gleefully watch the miles slide – modern-day pioneers chasing the sun.

They pass gleaming city skylines, low-rolling farmlands, desolate prairie, craggy mesas, deserts both high and low, and miles of suburban sprawl. Also, if their ears are attuned, they experience a rich variety of accents, dialects and vernacular language. When these travelers pull off the road for a meal, an overnight stay or just a quick stretch of the legs, it's possible that they can hear different voices or a different vocabulary each time.

"In the early part of the last century the conventional wisdom was that most of the dialect diversity was in the eastern half of the country," says Elizabeth J. Pyatt, who holds a doctorate degree in linguistics and teaches at Pennsylvania State University. "But what you find today west of the Mississippi is dialect diversity, and more of it all the time. Dialect is really influenced by the people you speak with on a day-to-day basis. There's an element of people wanting to have regional cultural identities."

Take Chicago. If the Route 66 road warrior begins the journey in

the Windy City (the more traditional way, according to purists), they're likely to, at least occasionally, hear the sibilant "s" endings on certain words – popularized by a recurring *Saturday Night Live* sketch featuring Chicago bratwurst-and-beer buddies discussing their favorite local sports teams: "da Bullss" and "da Bearss."

Once you're out of Chicago and heading south, however, a pair of phenomena occur. According to Pyatt, the speech along the route begins to turn to "more of a standard American dialect." If this speech sounds familiar, says Pyatt, it's because it is the language of television news personalities throughout the United States. It is the speech that "broadcasters use if they want to be taken seriously," she says.

However, there is at least one more influence on the speech of this region.

"Chicago to St. Louis is a very interesting corridor," says Dennis R. Preston, an English professor at Oklahoma State University. "St. Louis turns out to have some Northern speech characteristics that it should not have. It should have plain old Midwestern speech characteristics. But as we recently discovered, especially work [done] on pronunciation, the Northern speech area...has established a corridor of influence right along Interstate 55 straight down to St. Louis, right through a bunch of small towns and farms and places which should all be Midwestern but which have Northern influences."



Twentieth century mobility likely accounts for this, says Preston, who added that “Northern cities’ pronunciation only developed in the middle of the 20th century.” Most noticeable, he says, is the short “a” sound in such words as *pat*, *hat* and *dad*. In Chicago those words would sound like *pet*, *bet* and *ded*. “If you move a vowel, you move something that’s part of a system,” he says. “Chicago people say *bat*, *nat* and *lat* for hot, not and lot. None of that vowel rotation takes place after you move into the northern part of the Midwest. Pot is still pot and bat is still bat.”

You’ll still hear vestiges of that along the road from Chicago to St. Louis. Route 66 opened up that corridor to so much travel that speech migrated along with the travelers. Also, says Preston, “Maybe the people of St. Louis were a little bit unhappy about the possibility of being confused with Southerners.”

Continuing southwest from St. Louis, the Route 66 traveler passes diagonally through Missouri and barely nicks the southeast corner of Kansas before entering Oklahoma. It is here that one of two main varieties of the Southern accent holds sway. Dialectologists call this particular area of speech influence “South Midland” but the actual sounds come from Appalachia, brought there by Appalachian people who migrated to those territories, says Preston.

Once in western Oklahoma, the distinctly Western tones of the speech of, for example, Will Rogers, begin to take hold and with slight variations, hang on until the Route 66 traveler crosses the Texas panhandle, northern New Mexico, Arizona and the Mojave Desert, and finally enters the Los Angeles basin. (A distinct departure, says Pyatt, can be found in parts of the Southwest where large Spanish-speaking populations live. In places

like Tucumcari, New Mexico, or Winslow, Arizona, a lively hybrid of English and Spanish – Spanglish – often can be heard.)

California appears to be, as always, a melting pot. According to Preston, the rules of Western speech

hold in most of the state except for places in the Central Valley “where there is some Appalachian influence – families who came from Appalachia and the South who were relatively isolated from cities.” Elsewhere, says Pyatt, “Many people classify California as having a generic accent, but California has been its own cultural entity so long that it’s developing its own quirks,” such as surfer slang and its offshoot, Valley-speak. You’re likely to hear both of those at the western end of Route 66: the Santa Monica Pier.

Ultimately, wherever one is on Route 66, the sound of the English language and the use of its words are all about home.

“In some ways American English has become less homogeneous than it used to be,” says Kathleen Ward, a lecturer in linguistics at the University of California, Davis. “Generally, in more recently settled areas, you hear less difference than in long-settled places. And cities, which often have extreme differences in class identification, are a better field for studying class accents than rural or small-town areas.”

Also, she says, everyday terms for things such as weather or food or geography can change within a day’s drive along Route 66. In St. Louis it’s a “canyon.” In New Mexico, it’s an “arroyo.” In Southern California the seasonal wind is

called a “Santa Ana.” In Texas it’s a “blue norther.”

“Rural versus urban is a very strong marker in American English,” says Preston, “but social status can be more important than geography. People take great comfort in using

“Route 66 opened up that corridor to so much travel that speech migrated along with travelers.”

the local variety [of English] because the local variety is what attaches me to my people and my family.”

Preston cites a group of people known to dialectologists as Ypsituckians – “they came to the auto industry in the North after World War II because there was little employment available where they came from in Kentucky and Tennessee and such. After three generations in the North, none of the third generation of them showed any evidence [in their speech] of having been from Kentucky or Tennessee.”

Like Route 66 itself, the dialects and usage along the Mother Road are evolving. “When you go from town to city, from old person to young person, from female to male or working class to middle class,” says Preston, “you can almost hear history in the making.”

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

Editor’s Note: *How is spoken language affected by geography in your part of the world? The Toastmaster would like to read about it. Send your story about a club’s challenges and successes with various dialects and accents to submissions@toastmasters.org.*

**How speaking to the sick
can be good for you.**

Bringing Comfort and Hope

If you are looking to build a reputation as a credible public speaker within your community, why not volunteer to give presentations for one of your local organized patient associations?

In Canada, associations such as the Canadian Cancer Society, Canadian Diabetes Association and the Heart and Stroke Foundation look for public speakers to talk on their behalf at community venues. The month of October, for example, is recognized in Canada as breast cancer awareness month, and this is when the Canadian Cancer Society

needs speakers to talk to women about how they can protect themselves from breast cancer, or tell women who have the disease how the Cancer Society can assist them throughout their treatments.

I joined the Canadian Cancer Society myself as a speaking volunteer and discovered that there were many benefits in doing so. Originally, my goal was to enhance my speaking skills and gain experience and visibility within my community as a competent public speaker. Achieving those things was terrific, but I have also been gratified by the fact that my speeches can help patients and their caregivers deal with cancer.

The first thing to tell each audience is about the services the association can provide. I can also help people at risk make informed decisions about protecting themselves from a disease. (An unexpected benefit is that I've changed some of my own lifestyle habits based on what I'm learning from the presentations.)

Speaking for patient associations has also provided me with excellent networking opportunities. Some contacts have taught

me about how to stay healthy, while others have helped me find more speaking engagements.

Share Your Own Experiences

If you have, or have had, the disease that a particular patient association represents, it could make you a valuable resource for that association. It can also present you with an opportunity to help others as you help yourself. Patients like you often want to tell their stories because they can provide hope or coping tips to others in a similar situation. Patients sitting in the audience, their caregivers or people who are interested in learning about a particular disease connect quickly with a speaker who can offer personal experience. For example, diabetes patients who have overcome an intense fear of needles may wish to share their tips on how they learned to manage this aspect of their disease with other patients who face similar fears. It's a very personal decision to go public with stories about your health. But if you decide to do so, the patient association will appreciate hearing from you, because it's challenging to find former patients who are willing and able to provide testimonies for current patients.

Before you sign up as a volunteer speaker, be aware that there are limitations on these kinds of speeches. As a representative of an organized patient association, you don't have too much room to be creative with the content of the message; you must deliver it according to the



organization's instructions. Some associations may be more flexible than others. Some may provide you with a slide kit that you're not allowed to modify because the association is following branding guidelines and also trying to maintain consistency between speakers.

Where you do have creative license is in your delivery style. You can determine when to include pauses in your presentation, when to carefully gaze into the eyes of your audience members, and so on. You may also be at liberty in how you open and close the presentation and how you transition from slide to slide. Each patient association has its own set of speaker guidelines.

Many of the speaking engagements take place during the day. Therefore, if you work full-time, you may have to coordinate brief absences with your employer. It might be better to request to speak during a time when you would be more easily available. If you decide to join a local patient association, take the time to meet with the volunteer coordinator or manager to clearly identify what is expected of you as its speaker representative. Learn where you have creative liberty and where you do not.

Find the Right Fit

Finding the patient association that is right for you might require research. You may wish to first explore organizations that represent a cause you already support with volunteer activities or donations. Although most of these are non-profit groups and thus require *financial* support from the community, they are also in need of people willing to volunteer their *time*, especially those who can offer a specific skill such as public speaking. Your time and expertise are valuable assets to the association.

You'll also need to see if there's a local unit near your home or

workplace. Such places typically cater to the nearby community, which will alleviate any travel concerns that you may have. Moreover, you can meet the people working there face-to-face, enabling you to better understand the association's needs and expectations.

Toastmasters have a lot to offer their local patient associations, and they also have a lot to gain from them. I gave a speech at my Toastmasters club on the benefits of speaking for the Canadian Cancer Society, and five club members signed up as volunteers that evening.

Let's be assertive in applying our Toastmasters speaking skills to benefit our communities and also ourselves. Volunteer to speak for a patient association and your abilities will improve, you will be recognized as a community leader, you will help people with their health, and you'll get the chance to network with some wonderful people. What a way to improve your life professionally and personally! **T**

Natalie Bourré, CC, is a former member of the Richmond Hill Toastmasters club, located in Ontario, Canada.

A Sampling of Web Sites

Use this list to begin searching for the association that is right for you. Internet search engines can help you find more around the world.

Canada

Canadian Cancer Society
Heart and Stroke Foundation
Canadian Diabetes Association
Canadian Lung Association
Canadian National Institute for the Blind
Arthritis Society of Canada
Asthma Society of Canada
Canadian Liver Foundation
Canadian Women's Health Network
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

www.cancer.ca
www.heartandstroke.ca
www.diabetes.ca
www.lung.ca
www.cnib.ca
www.arthritis.ca
www.asthma.ca
www.liver.ca
www.cwhn.ca
www.camh.net

United States

American Cancer Society
American Heart Association
American Diabetes Association
American Gastroenterological Association
American Arthritis Society
AIDS Community Research Initiative of America

www.cancer.org
www.americanheart.org
www.diabetes.org
www.gastro.org
www.americanarthritis.org
www.acria.org

Around the Globe

Société Française du Cancer
Diabetes UK
Arthritis Care
Osteoporosis Australia
SANE Australia
Irish Cancer Society
Cancer Society of Finland
Malaysian Association for the Blind
Qatar Diabetes Association

www.sfc.asso.fr
www.diabetes.org.uk
www.arthritiscare.org.uk
www.osteoporosis.org.au
www.sane.org
www.cancer.ie
www.cancer.fi
www.mab.org.my
www.qda.org.qa

Be the Star of the Show

By Patricia Corrigan

A veteran of broadcast interviews shares how to make the most of your moment in the limelight.



You know your stuff – and now you’ve been asked to talk about it on the radio or television. This will definitely please the family, impress the neighbors and score points with the boss, all at the same time. You’ve seen and heard people interviewed every day, so how hard can it be?

“Tricky” may be a better word for it. When you give a speech or deliver a report, you control many of the variables. When a radio show host or an anchor on a local news program leads the conversation, you control almost nothing.

What if the host mispronounces your name? What if he or she asks a question that’s off your topic and you cannot answer? What if – oh no! – you suddenly sneeze? Even seasoned interviewees sometimes confront on-air dilemmas unrelated to their material, because every live interview can be fraught with unexpected challenges.

In a two-month period, I was interviewed on five television stations and four radio stations about my latest book, *Eating St. Louis: The Gateway City’s Unique Food Culture*. None of the interviewers had read the book and only half seemed familiar with the material provided in the media release. Ten minutes before one interview, I was shown a list of potential questions, and I was able to point out that two of the questions were irrelevant and one question included a factual error.

For an interviewee, it would be ideal if every radio and television show host provided a list of proposed questions in advance, or asked what questions you would like to answer. Unless you are a regular guest on a show – and sometimes not even then – that’s not how it works. Should you turn down the interview? Of course not.

If you’re going to be on the radio to promote your project or talk about some other topic, here are six survival tips to help you make the most of your moments in the limelight:

1 Get the facts. Most likely, your initial contact will be with a producer or a producer’s assistant. Find out exactly what the interview will cover. Ask how long the interview is expected to last. If you will be on the air for five minutes, you want to make a short list of key points. If the show lasts an hour and listeners may call in, you need to be prepared with some background material, an assessment of the current situation and some comments on the future relative to your topic. Also, ask if you will be part of a panel or whether you will be the only guest, and tailor your remarks accordingly.

Take time a few days before your appearance to listen to or watch the host in action so you are familiar with the format of the show. To avoid embarrassment on the day of your interview, make sure you know the

name of the show and how to pronounce the host’s name. You may also want to make a point of pronouncing your name for the host before your segment begins.

2 Make notes on your key points. Once you know the length and the theme of the interview, determine your most important message. “I like to write down my main point in one or two sentences, and then rehearse it aloud as I drive to the interview,” says Ken Haller, a physician and associate professor of pediatrics at the St. Louis University School of Medicine and a frequent media spokesperson on all things pediatric. “You want to get that message out at the top of the interview. Then you can elaborate on it during any remaining time.”

You may want to make a list of questions that you likely will be asked, but don’t count on the interviewer to stick to the topic. The host of a television program recently veered away from the topic of my new book and asked instead three questions about a food-related job I had held six years prior. I gently steered him back to the topic at hand. Sometimes, interviewers start with “Tell us about...”, so you need to be ready with a brief overview that will lead directly to your main point.

3 Never read from your notes. The best on-air interviews are interactive. Take your notes to the station, review them while you wait to be escorted into the studio and then tuck them in your pocket or purse. If you are concerned about remembering a certain statistic, jot that on a Post-it note and keep it close by during a radio interview. If you are on a television show promoting an event, ask the producer’s assistant to put the relevant telephone number and ticket information up on the screen.

To engage viewers and listeners, TV and radio show hosts strive to keep conversations lively. Some do this with rapid-fire questions, some prefer pointed “big picture” conversations and some engage in informal chat.

“I like to write down my main point in one or two sentences, and then rehearse it aloud as I drive to the interview”

Experienced hosts never ask questions that can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.” They will also not hesitate to cut you off or rephrase a question, especially if you are reading from your notes.

4 **Speak in an animated, friendly manner.** You want to be ready with short answers, delivered in a conversational tone. “I try to engage with the host as if we were friends, to make the interview sound more like a natural conversation,” says Gail Pennington, television critic at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. For 15 years, Pennington has talked about TV on numerous radio shows, in guest spots that have ranged from one minute to an hour.

Pennington adds, “I always answer promptly, so there is no dead air, even if I have to say ‘That’s a good question’

to give myself a chance to think of a good answer. Also, I talk in short sentences, and pause from time to time so the host can jump back in with a comment or another question.”

5 **Be willing to admit what you don’t know.** Some years ago, I wrote an article for a regional magazine about unemployment among veterans. A television talk show host invited me on to discuss the topic. “Please don’t ask me numbers,” I said to the host just before we went on the air. “I’m more comfortable with concepts.” The first question was this: “Exactly how many unemployed veterans do we have in this country, in our state and in the metropolitan area?”

I smiled and said that though I could not provide the exact statistics, recent surveys showed that the high

Speech Project #2:

TV Star!

By Diana J. Ewing

How my club helped me survive my TV debut.

A couple of years ago, I was a happy beginner in Toastmasters, looking forward to developing my skills in the usual way – over time, at leisure, and with the personal support of my close-knit club. I’d given my Ice Breaker speech and was preparing for the second of 10 speeches needed to complete the *Competent Communication* manual. Several days before this presentation, I received a surprising e-mail from my club president: Our meeting was going to be televised! A film crew would cover it for a local daytime TV show called *Your LA*. This was no common occurrence, he wrote me, and it would mean good publicity for our club, UniMasters, in Lake Forest, California.

Me? Speaking on television only four months after becoming a Toastmaster? Perhaps I missed something in the fine print when I signed up. Surely this was a joke or a rookie hazing tradition. It wasn’t. What amazed me was that the club officers had so much confidence in my abilities, they decided not to replace me with a more-seasoned speaker. Now, that’s pressure!

For my speech topic I had chosen procrastination, something with which I have vast experience. Yet in this instance I didn’t procrastinate. I wrote the speech in plenty of time and was feeling good about my delivery as I practiced, right up until I read the letters T and V in my e-mail. That’s when the inevitable panic crept in.

As I continued to prepare during the 48 hours prior to the meeting, I tried not to think about everything that could go wrong. What if I stood up there and forgot my speech entirely? What if I fainted?

Surprise, Surprise

The two-man film crew arrived on the big day with yet another shocking request. Their host for our segment of the magazine-style show couldn’t make it, so would I tape some quick spots to introduce and close the segment and provide a little narration along the way?

Sure, guys. Do you want me to sing and dance, too? Things had progressed from merely nerve-jangling to downright surreal as I took on TV host – my other role for the day.

Prior to this, my television experience was limited to the haunting memory of being a contestant on the TV game show *Wheel of Fortune*. In that equally surreal episode, I suffered horrifying embarrassment when host Pat Sajak reminded me to “watch the board” after I repeated a letter that another contestant had already called. My brain had failed me then. Who’s to say humiliation wouldn’t strike again?

In the final precious moments before the filmed Toastmasters meeting began – a time when I had hoped to review my speech – I was outside, wearing a tiny microphone and welcoming TV viewers to join the fun. Fortunately, the guys from *Your LA* gave me a general idea of what to say for my various on-camera greetings.

In my memory bank, that meeting and my speech are a blur; but when I watch the video, I’m proud of how well it went. Only snippets of my speech actually made it onto TV, and though I didn’t look quite as relaxed as I would have liked, I did manage to get all the words out

percentage of unemployed veterans everywhere indicated a troubling trend. When you are asked to go on the air as an expert, you want to sound confident and informed. Sometimes, that means making a point by answering a question you were not asked. Sometimes, you may have to apologize and simply say, "I don't know the answer to that."

Be yourself. On television, you want to sit up straight and look directly at the host during the interview. Wear something professional that fits you well so you are comfortable, and keep in mind that colors look better than black or white. On most occasions, you are responsible for your own hair and make-up. On the radio, of course, your appearance is not as important, but if you

are nicely dressed, you may make more of an effort to sound professional. Whatever you wear, don't forget to turn off your cell phone before you go into the studio.

Sometimes, the excitement of going on the air can dry out your throat, or you may be one of those people prone to a nervous cough. Take a water bottle with you for either circumstance, and keep it close. If you do cough or sneeze during the interview, simply apologize and move on.

Before you know it, the interview will be over and you will be back out in the parking lot, ready to turn the cell phone back on and accept congratulatory calls. 

Patricia Corrigan, a former newspaper reporter, is a book author and popular public speaker based in St. Louis. Reach her at patriciacorrigan.com.

with only a peek or two at my notes. That was good enough for me in my second speech ever. I even earned a few laughs in the right places.

The show highlighted other club members in various meeting roles and on-camera interviews, too, and everybody did well. There's something about being in the unique and nurturing Toastmasters environment that helps people do their best.

At the time, our club was in transition from a small, closed company group to one that welcomes the general community. Several former UniMasters members, our area governor and a past district governor also came to the meeting – boosting attendance for the TV debut of our club. I've learned that this is the kind of support and camaraderie that Toastmasters provides on every level.

Ironically, while my speaking abilities and self-confidence have grown immensely since that afternoon

when the camera rolled, I can't help but wonder if I might be even more nervous in the same situation today. Back then, I had little awareness of the various speech techniques, such as vocal variety, effective gesturing and moving around the stage – so I didn't know to be concerned about such things. Could I be more nervous today, simply because I know more about what can go wrong?

I may never know the answer to that question, but there's one thing I am sure about: I'm definitely sticking with my Toastmasters friends who helped me survive my second project, a TV debut. This group will be there for me, no matter what the project. If Oprah calls, I'm ready! 

Diana J. Ewing is a freelance writer and a member of the UniMasters club in Lake Forest, California. Reach her at dewing123@cox.net.

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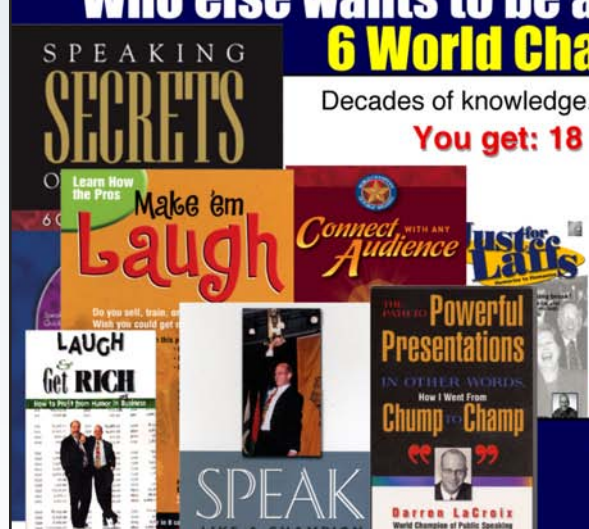
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British Columbia Toastmaster paves a fresh path to success.

Finding Sunshine in Sechelt

When I joined Toastmasters in the fall of 2003, I was a brand new divorcee, aged 48. I was starting over in a new-for-me community, Sechelt, in a new-to-me Canadian province, British Columbia. How would I ever fit in?

I was determined to make this new place home. At the very least, I promised to meet the challenge half-way. Still, I didn't know one soul in town. So when I heard I could meet new people at Toastmasters, off I went to my first meeting. Like others who had been newcomers before me, I carried a lot of apprehension in my pockets. Luckily, I wasn't called on to speak the first time I attended a meeting of the Sunshine Toastmasters in Sechelt. The second time, I was asked to participate in Table Topics. Feeling shy, I declined.

But over time, I felt comfortable sharing information about who I am and what I feel passionate about with the caring people in this group.

A Sudden Opportunity

About a year after joining Toastmasters, I received a call from a fellow member who had been scheduled to moderate a political debate for candidates seeking a federal seat. Unable to make it, he asked me to fill in. Did I mention the debate would be televised?

At first, a nasty voice in my head said, "You can't do that! What do you know about politics?" But aloud, my mouth said the words, "I'm glad you asked me. I'd be happy to stand in for you."

My part in this debate went off without too many hitches. Several

times I had to think and act skillfully, and speak quickly, to maintain the tone the sponsors were looking for. I gratefully thought to myself, "Toastmasters has been my blessing in disguise." Not only had I made a group of new friends among the Sunshine Toastmasters, but I had developed skills and confidence that helped me meet this unexpected challenge.

Several months later, I bumped into one of the camera people who had been part of the team televising the debate. "Would you host the TV interview program for the local cable station occasionally?" she asked me. "I'd love to," I responded. When the show's producer called soon after to see if I would host the politically oriented program, again that nasty voice in my head said, "Margaret, you can't do that." But my mouth said the words, "I don't know much about politics, but I'd love to try."

I went on to host six programs for this producer and became a regular on the annual *Elves Club Telethon*, a TV fundraiser for Christmas charities. And not long after that came an opportunity to do a TV clip for Business News Network out of Toronto. My Toastmasters experience helped make that a successful adventure as well.

A New Career

Professional opportunities continued to come my way. In the spring of 2005, a seasoned Toastmaster asked if I'd meet with a political candidate running for a seat in the provincial legislature. My job would be to coach her in delivering speeches

and communicating her message to audiences. This time, no nasty voice spoke up; I enthusiastically embraced the invitation. That meeting has led to a new career and passion: supporting women running for political office and, through their successes, helping create changes in their communities.

In March of 2008, I chaired the Sunshine Coast Women's Dialogue, an event where 120 women came to discuss issues of importance to them. The emcee was Toastmasters Past International Director Dawn Miller. Two months after that, I helped create an all-day program to discuss such issues as campaign strategies and campaign ethics for female political candidates. We particularly praised the learning value available through Toastmasters.

Why am I writing about all this? So you can see that, through Toastmasters, the people you'll meet and the things you'll do can go beyond your imagination. Six years ago, I was in a crucial transition period in my life. Toastmasters enabled me to have wonderful new experiences and opportunities, leading me to work that I care deeply about. Today, I can clearly say that I've made this community – and my Toastmasters club – the place I call home. 

Margaret Page, ACS, ALS, is the president of the Sunshine Toastmasters in Sechelt, British Columbia. In addition to her work on behalf of women in politics, she is a Vancouver-based etiquette and protocol consultant. Reach her at www.pagethecoach.ca.

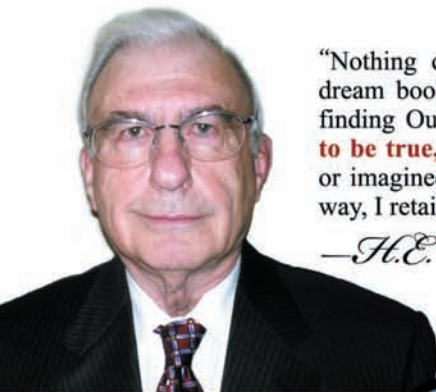
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**Facing an
event full of
strangers?**

Here's how to

By Lin Gensing-Pophal

Some people seem to have a knack for automatically connecting with others in any setting. For those who don't, learning how to interact quickly and comfortably with others is critical. Businesspeople need to connect on a professional level and

seamlessly build in information about their businesses and services without coming across as hucksters. Too little emphasis on work-related information can mean wasted time and effort. Too much emphasis on business can be a turnoff.

Networking experts know dozens of tips, strategies and techniques that can help people connect in virtually

Work a Room

**Networking experts offer tips
on connecting with others.**

any setting. And while this is great news, the job of collecting all that information might be daunting to any one person. The good news is, you won't have to track down all those experts to improve your skills, because the answers you need can be found right here. And from the first step, you'll know where and how you'll want to apply your new-found knowledge.

Networking Styles – Which Are You?

Don Gabor is a professional speaker and the author of eight books on communication skills, including *How to Start a Conversation and Make Friends*. He has identified four different styles of successful networkers:

1. **Competitive Networkers.** Action-oriented and direct communicators, competitive networkers are motivated by fast and measurable results. Confident and outgoing, they're usually the ones who start conversations at networking events and they speak with purpose and get to the point.
2. **Outgoing Networkers.** People-oriented and friendly communicators, outgoing networkers are motivated by recognition and personal contact. They love to make small talk while they effortlessly mix and mingle in business and social situations.
3. **Amiable Networkers.** Emotion-oriented and caring communicators, amiable networkers are motivated by personal loyalty and teamwork. They are generally detail- and goal-oriented people who work hard to achieve high standards for themselves and others.
4. **Analytical Networkers.** Extremely detail-oriented and careful speakers, analytical networkers are motivated by accuracy and strive for deeper meaning and understanding in conversations. They communicate in a systematic, step-by-step manner, making sure they thoroughly cover each point they make.

The best networking practice, says Gabor, is to accurately identify the networking styles of others within the first few minutes of a meeting or conversation and then quickly adapt your networking style to best fit theirs.

Have a Goal in Mind

Alice Waagen is president of Workforce Learning, LLC, a leadership training firm that helps C-level executives and managers improve relationships. Networking should be considered a professional activity and not a casual event, says Waagen, adding that it's important to start with the end in mind. "The most important lesson I learned early on is to establish for yourself your goal or objective before you go to the event," she notes. "That way you keep focused and don't get distracted by the hors d'oeuvres, the drinks or your best buddy across the room."

Craig Bott, president and CEO of Grow Utah Ventures, a company that works with entrepreneurs to help them get started, agrees. "While everybody networks and eagerly hits all of the big events with a fistful of business cards, ultimately the success of any networking event hinges on making real and lasting connections with people," says Bott. He adds that choosing the right event is closely tied to the goals you have in mind. "Be selective and focused," he recommends.

Prepare Your "Key Messages"

The goals you've established for a particular event should provide you with the basis to develop the "key messages" you wish to convey to those you meet. Never just "wing it," regardless of how comfortable you feel in social settings.

"Crystallize the topic knowledge you have that will be of interest to the group," suggests Bott. Knowledge, insight and expertise are what you exchange with others as you network," he says. "The more you determine what you know and what you are passionate about, the more likely you are to truly connect with others."

Cliff Flamer is a career counselor who has coached numerous clients on their networking tactics. He warns networkers to avoid jargon, especially when it comes to talking about what they do. Instead of leading with your job title and credentials, use layperson's terms, he advises. So instead of saying, "I coordinate human resources software installations," you might say, "I install HR software on peoples computers."

Dan Weedon is a Seattle-based executive speech coach and an experienced Toastmaster. Personal stories can provide excellent opportunities to connect with people, says Weedon. "If you have a chance to relate a personal story, do it," he says. "Fun stories are well received, especially when humor is involved. Use your best story – especially if a little self-deprecating – to connect with your audience."

Bott, of Grow Utah Ventures, offers the following list of questions to help prepare for any networking event:



- Is this the best place for me to meet those who will value what I know?
- Is this the best place for me to meet those with knowledge that I need?
- What do I specifically have to share with others at this networking opportunity?
- What am I looking to find at this event?
- As I make connections, am I willing to invest in this relationship by sharing my knowledge and expertise with others?

Listen!

Even though you should come prepared with a good sense of what you hope to convey about yourself, you must focus first on others, say networking experts.

"The biggest problem that I've noticed at networking events is that people talk too much about themselves," says Steve Clements, a speaking professional for more than 40 years. "People like to talk about themselves. [But] doing a pitch is a real turnoff."

While knowing how to clearly describe yourself and what you do is important, you shouldn't lead with this information, agrees Thom Singer, a longtime Toastmaster and the author of three books on the power of business relationships and networking.

What you *should* do, he says, is ask five to seven questions of the other person when you first meet. "More than likely, the other person will then ask questions back," he says.

"Those who are the best at networking look first to offer what they know freely to others," says Bott. "Relationships are then quickly formed with those who will remember your name and stay connected long after the social hour."

Pay Attention to "The Small Stuff"

Little things can make a difference and sometimes the smallest detail can make the wrong impression – an impression you did not want to make.

"Make sure when you introduce yourself that you make good eye contact, *smile* warmly, give a firm handshake and repeat the person's name," says Weedon. "These seem like simple steps, but it's surprising how often they aren't done correctly."

It's also important to keep in mind that it's not just what you *say* that people will notice, but also what you *do*.

"Remember that people are always watching each other," notes Singer. That means, for instance, to monitor your eating and drinking behaviors. "Like free food, free booze is tempting, but try not to have more than one drink at an event," he says. "People too often think they can handle their liquor better than they can and embarrass themselves at networking events when they are a bit tipsy."

Flamer encourages Toastmasters to maximize connections with others at events. "At most networking functions, *everyone's* intimidated and quick to feel alienated in a room of strangers," he says. "Instead of sticking with a one-on-one format [if conversation lags], bring in a third party to your discussion by asking their opinion on a subject, recalling the conversation you had earlier or simply making an introduction for you and your new friend."

"Three is a magic number," adds Flamer. "No one feels scrutinized and each party gets to talk as much or

Travel With Your Own PR Agent!

Here's a great tip from Patricia Fripp, a longtime Toastmaster and past president of the National Speakers Association: Travel with your own PR agent. *How?* It's easy and free!

When Fripp attends networking events, she brings a buddy – Susan RoAne. "When we arrive at an event, we alternately separate and come together. I'll walk up to Susan as she is talking to someone and she'll say: 'Larry, let me introduce you to Patricia Fripp... *Meetings and Conventions* magazine says she is one of the 10 best speakers in North America.' And I will turn around and say: 'Larry, I bet Susan is too modest to tell you she's the best-selling author of four books...'"

When you take this approach, says Fripp, "You're saying great things about each other that you'd love your prospects and contacts to know, but modesty prevents you from telling them."

little as they want. And, most important, you get credit for making it happen.”

Here are some quick tips for making connections:

- **Wear nametags wisely** – pinned to your upper right shoulder area. Most people are right handed and will extend their right hand and your nametag will be easier to view.
- **Station yourself in a “destination location”** – near a registration table, the buffet or the bar.
- **Always go to the people who are standing alone.** It’s easier to start a conversation with one person than with two or more.
- **Remember your “ears and mouth”** – you have two ears and one mouth because you should be spending most of your time listening!

After the Event

Of course, successfully “working a room” is just the beginning. The real networking begins after the event is over, say the experts.

“Networking should be considered a professional activity and not a casual event.”

“Networking is *not* about meeting and trading business cards,” says Singer. “It *is* about establishing a meaningful and mutually beneficial relationship. This takes time to create and cultivate.”

Immediately after an event, Patricia Vaccarino, managing partner of Xanthus Communications, LLC, a PR firm, makes a note of its date and location on the back of each business card she’s collected. She then triages the cards between “the drones and the connections” and take the time to solidify the connections with LinkedIn or Facebook.

And, again, Singer stresses: “Look for ways to assist them before you look for ways that they can help you.” **T**

Lin Gensing-Pophal is a freelance business journalist in Wisconsin, where she also runs a communication consulting firm – Strategic Communications, LLC (www.stratcommunications.com). She can be reached at linda@stratcommunications.com.

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Officer Candidates and More

Here's your introduction to Toastmasters International's 2009-2010 officer candidates and your official notice of the Annual Business Meeting. On Friday, August 14, you'll have the opportunity to vote for the candidates of your choice and important bylaws amendments while attending the International Convention in Mashantucket, Connecticut, United States. Candidates were nominated for the positions of President, Senior Vice President, Second Vice President and Third Vice President by the International Nominating Committee. The committee's selection is presented here in accordance with Article VIII, Section 1, of the Bylaws of Toastmasters International.

It is the right and duty of all clubs to participate in the vote, either through their representatives at the Convention or by proxy. All members are urged to carefully consider each candidate's qualifications. If you are attending the Convention, you'll have an opportunity to meet and talk with all the international officer and director candidates before the election.

International director candidates will be nominated at the eight regional conferences to be held this month. Additional nominations for officers and directors may be made from the floor at the Annual Business Meeting. International director candidates from districts not assigned to regions are endorsed by their districts.

Official Notice

The 2009 Annual Business Meeting will be held on Friday, August 14, at 8 a.m. during the International Convention, August 12-15, 2009, at the MGM Grand at Foxwoods, Mashantucket, Connecticut, United States.

Nominating Committee

Dilip Abayasekara, DTM, Chairman
Johnny Uy, DTM, Co-Chairman
Edward Bick, DTM, Co-Chairman
Lawrence Kuga, DTM
John Fenwick, DTM
Nancy Starr-Cassidy, DTM
Cliff Heinsch, DTM
Dick Poirier, DTM
Tammy Miller, DTM
Joe Jarzombek, Jr., DTM
Gwendolyn May, DTM
Susan Haynes, DTM.



International President

Gary Schmidt, DTM – Senior Vice President, Second Vice President, Third Vice President, International Director 2003-2005, and District Governor 2001-02. A Toastmaster for 14 years, he has received numerous Toastmasters awards and has helped start more than 60 Toastmasters clubs. His home club is Clackamas Stepping Stones 3697-7. Gary is Public Affairs Manager for Clackamas County, Oregon. He has worked in the arena of politics for several years and has served on staff for two United States Senators from Oregon – Mark Hatfield and Gordon Smith. Schmidt worked as a field office manager, speechwriter, constituent service coordinator and field representative. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and a Master of Arts degree in Public Administration. He has held leadership and board roles in numerous settings, including government service, political campaigns and corporate, community and non-profit organizations. Gary resides in Clackamas, Oregon.



For Senior Vice President

Pat Johnson, DTM – Second Vice President, Third Vice President, International Director 2004-2006, District Governor 2001-2002. Pat's home club is Rise & Shine 331-21. As district governor, she led her district to Distinguished

District. She has received the Excellence in Education and Training and Area Governor of the Year awards and has completed her fourth DTM. Pat is the Assistant Director, Business Education for BC Pension Corporation and has business experience in corporate, government, not-for-profit and self-employed business environments. She has 26 years experience of strategic and financial planning, education, as well as writing and revising policies and procedures. Pat has a Provincial Instructor's Diploma, Adult Education Certificate, Conflict Resolution and Negotiation Certificate, Certificate in Facilitation, and is a Graduate of Women's Leadership Seminar. She has served on boards of various organizations and currently is chairing a transitional management team dealing with corporate changes. Pat resides in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. She has one adult son.



For Second Vice President

Michael Notaro, DTM – Third Vice President, International Director 2005-2007, District Governor 2003-2004. A Toastmaster for 23 years, Michael's home club is Oakland City Center 1250-57. As District 57

Governor, Michael led the district to Distinguished status. He received the Excellence in Education and Training award and helped sponsor 11 new clubs. Michael is a practicing real estate attorney with critical thinking, problem solving and team building skills. A former congressional intern, his professional experience ranges from trial advocacy to realtor training and motivational speaking. Michael is a member of the Alameda Kiwanis Club, Alameda Elks Lodge (#1015), Alameda Special Olympics, the Federalist Legal Society and the Kaufman 100 Club, and he has served on the board of directors for the Italian-American Bar Association and the Alameda County Bar Executive Committee. He is co-author of *Law of Easements: Legal Issues and Practical Considerations*. Michael resides in Alameda, California.



For Third Vice President

Dietmar Wagenknecht, DTM – International Director 2006-2008, District Governor 2004-2005. A Toastmaster for 27 years, Dietmar's home club is Kan Pai 8564-30. As district governor, he led his district to Distinguished District

status. He has received Distinguished Area and Division awards, and District Toastmaster of the Year. Dietmar recently retired from a four-decade career in the pharmaceutical industry, where he held the position of Vice President of Development and was member of the management board. He has experience as an international speaker, moderator, panelist and university instructor. Dietmar holds bachelor's degrees in Science and Pharmacy, an MBA degree in Management, and has earned Certificates in Microbiology and Medical Technology. He has served on a variety of volunteer organizations, is the holder of multiple patents and has been recognized in various scientific publications. Dietmar and his wife Heidi (an ATMS) reside in Lake Bluff, Illinois.



For Third Vice President

Ralph Wallace, DTM – International Director 2005-2007, District Governor 1999-2000. A Toastmaster for 18 years, Ralph's home club is Daybreakers 4357-23. Ralph has received the District Toastmaster of the Year award three times.

He also has received a Presidential Citation and the Excellence in Marketing award. Ralph has a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology and Latin American Studies, an MBA degree in Accounting and Information Technology, and another MBA in Technology Management. He is also a certified Project Management Professional. He has enjoyed a 25-year career in the field of healthcare and is a manager of information technology with Presbyterian Healthcare Services. His duties include systems development management and project management. Ralph has served for 12 years on the board of directors for the \$900M New Mexico Educators Federal Credit Union, overseeing strategic and financial planning. Ralph and his wife, Brenda, reside in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Cast Your Vote *For*

Global Representation & Support

✦ In August 2009, every Toastmasters club in the world will vote on a very important set of governance changes that would take effect in 2010. If passed, these changes will improve the way Toastmasters is structured on a global scale, ultimately enhancing service to every member.

The Future is Yours.

When it is time to vote, mark "YES" on your ballot. In doing so, you stand for a global organization that is committed to making a difference by representing, supporting and ensuring success for every Toastmaster in the world.



The Board of Directors recommends voting for Proposal A



Watch International President Jana Barnhill's video message about this proposal:
www.toastmasters.org/future

For more information visit:
www.toastmasters.org/future

Or e-mail questions to:
governance@toastmasters.org

More effective leaders = enhanced club support = an enriched member experience.

Amendments to the Bylaws of Toastmasters International will be presented to the voting membership at the 2009 Annual Business Meeting.

The Board of Directors of Toastmasters International, at its February, 2009, meeting, unanimously recommended approval of the Bylaw amendments.

Summary

The heart of the Bylaw amendments is a plan to replace the current structure of eight regions, based in the United States and Canada, with more regions (14 to start) spanning the entire world. The Board of Directors would have one director from each region, and all directors and officers would continue to be elected by the worldwide voting membership at the Annual Business Meeting.

In order to achieve the goal of Global Representation and Support, there are several types of Bylaw amendments submitted to the 2009 Annual Business Meeting as a single package. They are:

- Changes to the composition of the Board of Directors.
- Supportive governance changes, such as new nomination processes and new titles and terms for the International Presidents and Vice Presidents.
- Transitional provisions at the end of each Article of the Bylaws, describing how the organization will move from the old structure to the new one, year by year.
- Other wording changes to improve the functioning of the organization, such as procedures for internal discipline and for supervision of the Executive Director,

based on experience since the last comprehensive amendment of the Bylaws in 1994.

- Minor changes to improve consistency and readability.

Two elements of the Global Representation and Support plan are Bylaw changes and will be voted on by the membership:

- Global representation with 14 regions and 14 directors.
- The International Leadership Committee (ILC).

Three elements of the plan are policy changes enacted by the Board of Directors:

- 14 region advisors marketing.
- Year-round training opportunities for district leaders (e-learning and face-to-face).
- Move regional business and speech contests to International Convention.

To view the full text of the Bylaw amendments, go to **www.toastmasters.org/future**.

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FUNNY YOU SHOULD SAY THAT!

By John Cadley

No Parking Any Time

Finding defeat on the street.

I'm writing this column in my car, where I've been sitting for the last several minutes trying to figure something out. Perhaps you can help. I'm looking at a street sign that reads: **"Parking Permitted from 6 p.m. on odd days to 6 p.m. on even days."** Do you have this sign in your city? If you do, could you please tell me what it means? I don't want to get a ticket.

My problem is that it seems more like a math problem than a traffic sign, and I'm not very good at math. It reminds me of those test questions that start: "If Mary travels 40 miles at 30 mph and Jane travels 30 miles at 40 mph, how long will it take...?" At this point I find myself wishing that Mary and Jane would drive off a cliff together like Thelma and Louise.

keep asking them the date. I ask them anyway.

I'm trying to work forward from the last date I *do* remember, which would be New Year's Day (January 1st, right?), but then I can't remember which months have 30 days and which have 31. Why can't we just have one big month with 365 days? Call it Januember, so we have dates like Januember 212th. True, there wouldn't be any horoscopes, but is that such a bad thing?

So let's see...I wrote a check two days ago and put down April 7th, but that was a guess. I knew it wasn't April 15th because I haven't broken out in hives yet from doing my taxes. Besides, it just *felt* like April 7th. That would make today April 9th.

not the right kind of odd day, which would be an "after 6 p.m." odd day. I can't wait til 6 p.m. My meeting starts at 3:45.

So then it's an even day – or it's an odd day that I should treat as an even day. Let's make sure this is right. Parking is permitted to 6 p.m. on even days. So that must mean *up until 6 p.m.* on even days. *But it's an odd day!!* So I'm on the right side of the street at the wrong time. And if I cross over I'll be on the wrong side of the street at the right time.

I have a headache.

Okay, let's take a deep breath and start over. (Deep breath). Fact: It's 3:30 p.m. on April 9th. Fact: It's an odd day that won't become officially odd for another two and a half hours. Fact: I can't wait that long. Not only is my meeting in 15 minutes but I really have to go to the bathroom. Conclusion: The other side of the street is my only alternative. But the sign there says parking is allowed "*from 6 p.m. on even days*" and my meeting goes til 6:30. So at the stroke of 6 p.m. I will be legal on the odd side while I'm still on the even side.

This sign has no right answer. The Department of Public Works has given me a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. I have no choice now but to stop writing and accept my fate. Perhaps you'll hear from me again, perhaps not.

I've just entered the Parking Twilight Zone. ■

John Cadley is an advertising copy writer in Syracuse, New York. Reach him at jcadley@mower.com.

The Parking Twilight Zone:

"Parking Permitted from 6 p.m. on odd days to 6 p.m. on even days."

In fact, the more I look at this sign it reminds me of a Zen koan, which is supposed to give you wisdom by making you contemplate a question that has no answer, like: "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" If you try to answer that question logically you will go mad and start claiming you know the formula for Coca-Cola®. I feel like that: This sign is making me crazy.

First of all, I don't know today's date. I never know the date. Nobody knows the date except bank tellers, and that's only because they have that little display so people won't

Now, what time is it? This is when I wish I'd figured out how to set my dashboard clock. Right now it says 2:23 a.m. and I'm sitting in bright sunlight, so that can't be right. I'm guessing mid-afternoon – say, 3:30.

Okay, so it's 3:30 p.m. on an odd day. Now, let's plug those figures into the algebraic equation on the sign. It says, "Parking permitted *from 6 p.m. on odd days to 6 p.m. on even days.*" What does "*from 6 p.m.*" mean? *After 6 p.m.*? It's not after 6 p.m. yet, so it's not an odd day. Or wait – it is an odd day but

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