

TOASTMASTER®

August 2009

Special Issue:

Strengthen Your Speeches

When You Are the VPE:

Promoting continuing education
is your No. 1 job.

In Defense of Using Notes

Evaluations: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly





The Courage to Conquer!

✦ A Toastmasters International President never really knows when he or she decides on a theme for the year just how the theme will play out, although the hope certainly is that it will be relevant, timely and inspiring to the members.

Indeed, throughout this past year so many of you have been called upon to find the Courage to Conquer devastating events in your districts. There were violent attacks in Mumbai right before the District 82 fall conference in India. District 73 in Victoria, Australia, witnessed the tragic "Black Saturday" fires. The H1N1 virus (more commonly known as the swine flu) threatened to derail the District 80 spring conference in Hong Kong. District 56 waited as Hurricane Ike decimated the island of Galveston in Texas. The economic crisis has extended across the globe, affecting many of our members.

Yet in each case, and I know there were others, the Toastmasters in those districts not only rose to the challenge, they found the Courage to Conquer!

In addition, many of you have experienced personal challenges. Thank you for sharing those with me, and explaining how, through the skills you have learned and the support of fellow Toastmasters, you found the Courage to Conquer!

To our club and district leaders, *thank you* for the courage you have shown this year. We could not exist without you, our volunteer leaders. Despite the economic downturn, we have had a *tremendous* year. Thanks to your efforts Toastmasters has, for the first time, reached 250,000 members, surpassed 12,000 clubs and is now in 106 countries! We have reached these milestones because of your Courage to Conquer!

To Districts 53, 14, 62, 3, 2, 49, 54, 22, 28, 42, 72, 73 and 70, thank you for having the Courage to Conquer the added stress and logistics of hosting a presidential visit! Bob and I will never forget the overwhelming welcome and generous hospitality you so graciously showed us. You blessed us with memories we will cherish and will relive every year when we place your Christmas ornaments on our Toastmasters tree!

To the Toastmasters in District 23 and all of Region III, I offer you a heartfelt thank you for being the first to provide me the opportunity to find my own courage. You have never allowed me to settle. You have always pushed me to be better and do more, and have held me to the highest of standards, which I appreciate more than you know.

To every one of you, I thank you for the humbling opportunity to serve as your International President. We are so fortunate to be part of this incredible organization. Never forget the Toastmasters Vision: "... to empower people to achieve their full potential and realize their dreams!" Never stop learning. Never stop growing. Never stop having *The Courage to Conquer!*

Jana Barnhill

Jana Barnhill, DTM, Accredited Speaker
International President

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Editor Suzanne Frey
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Editorial Assistant Jamie Reynolds
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TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

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

CONTACTING WORLD HEADQUARTERS

For information on joining or building a club, visit: www.toastmasters.org
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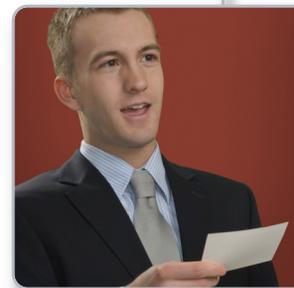


The Script as Friend and Foe

When the notes you hold
are as good as gold.

By Bill Matthews

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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.

Here's How to Write an Article!

Please accept my sincere appreciation for an outstanding article: "Here's How to Work a Room" by Lin Gensing-Pophal (June). The article was quite enlightening, and I wanted to know more.

Further, the short sidebar ("Networking Styles – Which Are You?") featuring the ideas of author Don Gabor was right to the point and superb! Kudos to both authors. To the *Toastmaster* magazine staff, please keep up your hard work and diligence. I appreciate it!

Marshall Cardesh Lewis, DTM • Rockville, Maryland

Remember to Smile!

Thank you for publishing "Here's How to Work a Room" (June). Lin Gensing-Pophal did a fine job giving us all the essentials to make a networking event a true success. The listening part is one I think many of us are still challenged by. I notice this every time I attend a trade show or a district meeting. As a wellness coach I am trained to ask lots of open questions, reflect back and carefully listen. I consciously refrain from speaking too much at these kind of events.

Patricia Fripp, featured in your article, gave the best advice I ever heard about meeting people: Stick out your hand, shake theirs, introduce yourself and smile. Interesting to see how many people are still reluctant to do this. Try noticing how many people do this at your next networking event.

Marilyn E. Jess, DTM • Last Word Club • Burlington, Massachusetts

Persuaded to Try to Persuade

The article "The Equation for Persuasion" (April) gives a lot of advice on the art of persuasion and I'll read it several times.

I recently gave my 10th speech, titled "Yes we can!" It was a great

challenge for me, because I had to inspire the audience by appealing to noble motives and challenge them to achieve a higher level of beliefs. The day arrived, I made my speech and when I received the comments, I was happy because I achieved my goal!

I think this article will help me with my next speeches in the Advanced Communication program.

Danaë Dereau, CC • Rosemasters club • Toulouse, France

You Are Not Alone

The words of Steve Richards in his letter "Am I the Only One?" ring true to my ears. My club, Good Morning Toastmasters, in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, meets twice a month at 7 a.m.

Always, I feel invigorated after this early morning meeting with fellow Toastmasters who show up on sunny mornings but also through snow, sleet and rain. We face the world with a positive approach and fun in our hearts. I've been a member for 1½ years now and wonder why I didn't join earlier. Yes, speaking skills most certainly improve, but we learn so much from each other in our various professions, interests and outlooks on life.

Jeanette Allenbick • Good Morning Toastmasters
Peterborough, Ontario, Canada

For the Fun of Toastmasters

In his letter "Am I the Only One?" (June) Steve Richards wondered if others join Toastmasters just because it is fun.

I am one who did. Unlike others who join Toastmasters for "purely selfish reasons" (building self-confidence, speaking skills and self-improvement – all of which I needed too), I originally joined Toastmasters out of boredom. (My then-employer did not have any lunch-time employee socializing activities.)

Toastmasters opened my eyes! I became hooked. I started attending area, division and district-level contests as well as district and regional conferences to be entertained and educated by speakers more skilled than myself. I couldn't wait to become an area governor and sponsor a new club, both of which I did within my first eight years.

Over 19 years I have made dozens of new Toastmasters acquaintances. Yet I remain an average rather than a polished speaker. I stay in Toastmasters for the fun of mentoring rookie Toastmasters and being an occasional club or district officer. And every so often, I climb another rung on the Toastmasters ladder.

Ralph Dellar, ATMB, CL • Des Plaines Toastmasters
Des Plaines, Illinois

Listening as Fast as He Can

Sher Hooker's article, "Turning Accents Into Assets" (June), was interesting and informative.

As someone who is hearing impaired, I can completely understand the well-trained announcers on television or radio, but have difficulty with people who talk fast. It is not that they talk too fast, it is that I hear too slowly. Of course, any accent different from the norm exacerbates the situation.

As far as a heavy accent is concerned, years ago I encountered a public speaking manual that described, with illustrations, the positions of the tongue, lips and teeth for various sounds in a number of European languages. This has helped me speak a number of languages with only a moderate accent. Such books are available through most libraries. I concede that to get rid of the moderate accent would require serious professional training.

Matthew W. Slate, ATMB • Raytheon Sudbury club
Sudbury, Massachusetts

Are you CC savvy? Try Toastmasters' alphabet soup!

CCs and Other ABCs

† From TM to TMI, all the way to today's TI, the Toastmasters world has historically been filled with initialisms – right down to the organization's name. So how expert are you when it comes to this particular alphabet soup? Take a look at this list and see if you know the real meaning of each arrangement of letters. Caution: Some are outdated. **Check your answers on page 7.**

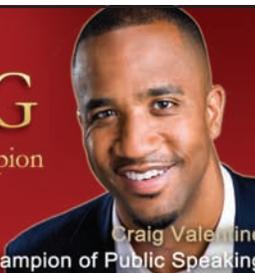
- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. CTM _____ | 17. VPM _____ |
| 2. ATM _____ | 18. VPPR _____ |
| 3. ATM-B _____ | 19. SAA _____ |
| 4. ATM-S _____ | 20. AS _____ |
| 5. ATMB _____ | 21. PID _____ |
| 6. ATMS _____ | 22. PIP _____ |
| 7. ATMG _____ | 23. AG _____ |
| 8. CC _____ | 24. DG _____ |
| 9. ACB _____ | 25. DSP _____ |
| 10. ACS _____ | 26. DDP _____ |
| 11. ACG _____ | 27. AVP _____ |
| 12. CL _____ | 28. EVP _____ |
| 13. ALB _____ | 29. DCP _____ |
| 14. ALS _____ | 30. LGET _____ |
| 15. DTM _____ | 31. LGM _____ |
| 16. VPE _____ | 32. WHQ _____ |

Editor's Note: *Did we miss any?* If you know of an initialism that doesn't appear in this list (and applies to the organization as a whole), please e-mail letters@toastmasters.org and tell us about it. Your suggestion might appear in next month's issue! †



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“...look at who has already accomplished what you want to do and enjoys world-wide credentials to prove it.
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– Patricia Fripp; Hall of Fame Speaker; Past President of the National Speakers Association

Toastmaster finds National Hall of Fame for Persons with Disabilities.

Silencing the Doubters

John Clark Jr. is grateful for the word “can’t.” Without it, the disabled Toastmaster might not have accomplished all that he has.

“When I hear doubt in people’s voices or they tell me I can’t do something, I get really inspired and I like proving them wrong,” says Clark, who is partially paralyzed on his right side and has a speech impediment. He uses a cane to walk. An automobile accident at age two led to three months in a coma and a brain hemorrhage, causing his disabilities.

In the mid-1970s, Clark created the National Hall of Fame for Persons with Disabilities. He started the organization to educate people about how valuable the disabled population can be to society. A non-profit based in Columbus, Ohio, it’s designed to honor outstanding disabled Americans for their achievements and contributions to humanity.

Clark was first inspired to act after getting laid off from a job he’d held for nine years and then trying to no avail – for a year – to land another position. Taking his knowledge of the challenges facing the disabled, he started working on the local level and fighting for their rights.

By 1979, he’d moved up to the Ohio state level, and at that point

he had the idea for the Hall of Fame.

“I called every state’s Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and told them what I wanted to do,” recalls Clark. “No state in the country had a Hall of Fame for the handicapped, so I decided to go national with the idea. Some of the various state agencies told me they didn’t think I could do it because of my disability, but they didn’t know how tenacious I am, and their doubt made me try even harder.

“That was a very exciting time for me. As things came together, I realized that I had the strength and courage to do what needed to be done and make my vision a reality.”

Launching the Hall

By June 1981, Clark had acquired tax-exempt status for the Hall, and in October 1983 the nonprofit had its first induction ceremony. To date the organization has had 17 such ceremonies and inducted nearly 100 people from 25 states.

Clark, who uses public transportation to get to places, joined Toastmasters in 2002 at the advice of a friend who felt he would benefit from the experience, since Clark was increasingly called on to speak



▲ John Clark Jr. received a 1985 letter from then-U.S. president Ronald Reagan, commending him for his work to honor the disabled.

for the Hall of Fame. A member of the Greater Columbus Toastmasters in Columbus, Ohio, Clark says Toastmasters has made him a better speaker and also helped with his speech impediment. “In the past, people made fun of me because I have difficulty speaking, but no one in Toastmasters has ever done that,” he notes. “As a result, I was able to improve.”

Rick Driscoll, a fellow member of the Greater Columbus club, says, “Despite the fact that it’s 10 times harder for him to talk than it would be for you or me, John has grown quite adept at speaking in public and getting his point across.”

Those who have been honored by the National Hall of Fame for Persons with Disabilities include Helen Keller and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who both were recognized posthumously. In 2004, the Hall honored Susan Dickinson, who is hard of hearing and chairs the Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of

Hearing. At the 2000 induction ceremony, Clark himself was surprised when the group honored him for his efforts and accomplishments.

As the longtime CEO of the organization, Clark worked tirelessly to bring about recognition for the disabled and their accomplishments. In October 1985, at the Hall's third induction ceremony, he started a tradition of presenting each inductee with a letter of congratulations from the current president of the United States. In a letter dated October 22, 1985, President Ronald Reagan honored the inductees and Clark when he wrote, "I congratulate the Hall's founder, John Clark Jr., and those who work with him to search out disabled persons whose achievements will be an inspiration to others like them, and indeed to all Americans."

Serving up business savvy

While building up the Hall, Clark also earned a college degree in business management with a Social Services minor. Those who have worked with him praise his business acumen.

"John is a real go-getter with a great sense of humor who never lets his handicap slow him down, even though it's hard for him to get

around," says Bill Morrow, another member of the Greater Columbus Toastmasters. "Through the Hall of Fame, he has made a difference in many lives and how the public views people with disabilities. For example, he often has TV anchors from local stations attend and emcee the awards ceremonies, which results in television coverage."

In 2007, Clark was president of the Greater Columbus club and thinking about trying to become an area governor. In order to have enough time for such a position, he decided to retire as CEO of the Hall of Fame the following January, after 28 years in that job. He became Area 13 governor in the Central division of district 40, and served until his term ended in June.

Merle Shinault, past District 40 governor and a member of the Nationwide Insurance club in Columbus, Ohio, notes his initial reservations about giving Clark a shot at being an area governor.

"I have to admit that when I first met John, I was really concerned about his ability to get around, and wondered if he could participate to the level necessary to feel fulfilled by the experience," Shinault says. "Once I started observing him, how-

ever, and noted his huge interest in the program and his ability to get along with people and make contacts, I began to think that he could take on the position.

"My instincts were right: He has done a fantastic job as area governor. I can honestly say that he has an indomitable spirit....He's already proven to me that he can do more than I ever imagined."

One person who isn't surprised at all about Clark's success is Clark himself.

"Even though I have some limitations, I never let them stop me from pursuing my goals in life," he says. "I really believe that anyone – even individuals with disabilities – can reach their dreams if they are sincere about them and are willing to go the extra mile to achieve them."

For more information about the National Hall of Fame for Persons with Disabilities, Inc., contact John Clark Jr. at johnclarkjr@sbcglobal.net.

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.

CC and Other ABCs

Continued from page 5

ANSWERS

Initialisms	What They Mean	Initialisms	What They Mean
CTM	Competent Toastmaster	VPM	Vice President Membership
ATM	Able Toastmaster	VPPR	Vice President Public Relations
ATM-B	Able Toastmaster - Bronze	SAA	Sergeant at Arms
ATM-S	Able Toastmaster - Silver	AS	Accredited Speaker
ATMB	Advanced Toastmaster Bronze	PID	Past International Director
ATMS	Advanced Toastmaster Silver	PIP	Past International President
ATMG	Advanced Toastmaster Gold	AG	Area Governor
CC	Competent Communicator	DG	District Governor
ACB	Advanced Communicator Bronze	DSP	District Success Plan
ACS	Advanced Communicator Silver	DDP	Distinguished District Program
ACG	Advanced Communicator Gold	AVP	Administrative Vice President
CL	Competent Leader	EVP	Educational Vice President
ALB	Advanced Leader Bronze	DCP	Distinguished Club Program
ALS	Advanced Leader Silver	LGET	Lieutenant Governor Education and Training
DTM	Distinguished Toastmaster	LGM	Lieutenant Governor Marketing
VPE	Vice President Education	WHQ	World Headquarters

Cooking Up a Learning

By Craig Harrison, DTM

The VPE's main job is to promote continuing education.

The success of Toastmasters is based largely on how much its members learn and grow. As such, a club's vice president education (VPE) plays a vital role; in essence, the VPE is the CEO – chief educational officer, that is.

It's a mighty responsibility, but it's also a rewarding experience. Granted, there is a great deal to do, and at times it can feel overwhelming. The good news: There's an array of tools available to assist VPEs, just as they assist you. And it begins with an understanding of how you learn.

Did you know we as humans learn well in groups? Marianne Gunther-Murphy, CC, a certified group therapist in Oakland, California, says, "We are herd animals. We are hard-wired to be in a group, and thus we learn more and learn better in a group."

"Creating an environment – a learning lab – that promotes continuing education is the Number One job for a VPE."

And a group whose focus is on education provides support and accountability for member and club achievement. "In group work, we see models of success which spark new thoughts and ideas," adds Gunther-Murphy. "That, in turn, activates our own creativity. The supportive group setting of Toastmasters is also an antidote for fear and embarrassment."

A shark must keep swimming in order to breathe. Likewise, as a learning organism, your club and its members must keep training in order to grow. Creating an environment – a learning lab – that promotes continuing education is the Number One job for a VPE.



Lab



Creating a Learning Lab

So how does one transform a club meeting into a learning lab? It's not as hard as it sounds. Here are some steps a VPE can take:

- **Emphasize manual speeches:** Give priority to manual speeches, and use copies of the appropriate speech eval-

uation form for each speech. Also, plan for oral and written evaluations for every speech. Be sure to cite the manuals and speech assignments being delivered in all introductions so everyone can become familiar with the manuals.

“As Chief Educational Officer, you already know that what is measured and rewarded is what often gets done.”

■ **Provide educational programming:** Mix in modules from the Successful Club Series and the Better Speaker Series, to be delivered by your more experienced members as well as novice speakers looking for a growth opportunity, where appropriate.

Prepare the *Moments of Truth* module using existing materials that a member can customize to the club. Tapping a veteran member to deliver this engaging program helps clubs improve their climate and effectiveness.

Success/Leadership and *Success/Communication* modules offer educational programming in everything from conducting effective meetings to being creative to providing effective leadership. These modules can help strengthen the club and its cohesion.

■ **Promote advanced manuals:** Every club should have a few of the advanced manuals to show members. The formula works this way: Familiarization leads to engagement and then culminates in completion of the Toastmasters curriculum. Periodically, the VPE or another team member can speak about the different manuals. (Don't forget to point members toward www.toastmasters.org where they can review all 15 advanced manuals and order what they need.)

■ **Have a weekly educational moment:** Use one minute each meeting to share an educational nugget related to Toastmasters programs and materials. Topics abound. The VPE can discuss the TI Catalog, educational tracks, a particular advanced manual, or the educational value of contests, Speechcraft or other resources.

■ **Create a club library of resources:** In addition to copies of the *Competent Communication*, *Competent Leadership* and a few advanced manuals, keep copies of past magazines, DVDs, VHS tapes and other educational materials from Toastmasters that you can lend to members. Booklets and tapes on evaluating to motivate, the magic of mentoring and other aspects of education are a boon to club members intent on learning. Experienced members can present information to the club about the various resources available at members.toastmasters.org.

■ **Create a Wall of Fame:** Post your club's Member Achievement Wall Chart so that members can track

the educational progress they are making.

■ **Make members aware of the catalog and online store:** The Toastmasters Catalog is your silent partner in success; it is laden with items to assist a VPE in

educational responsibilities. There is literally something in it for everybody! And all the same products are also available at the click of a mouse:

- ▶ For new members, there are pamphlets, booklets and other resources to help with everything from overcoming nervousness to speech introductions to finding topics to speak about.
- ▶ For members seeking new challenges, there are modules from the *Leadership Excellence Series*, complete with scripts and PowerPoint slides.
- ▶ For advanced members, there are modules on transitioning from speaker to trainer, improving management skills and conducting productive meetings.

■ **Go to Contests:** Semi-annual club speech contests are an educational opportunity for all. You can experience the thrill of competition and have an opportunity to perform under a different kind of pressure. You might get the chance to judge fellow Toastmasters' performances in an impartial manner. You can be a contest chairman, vote counter, timer or even a test or target speaker. Each is a growth opportunity. The VPE involves the entire club in the planning and staging of contests, and makes sure *everyone* wins through the positive experience of participation.

■ **The Distinguished Club Program:** While every club is different, each earns points in Toastmasters' Distinguished Club Program (DCP). VPEs learn the DCP system and then teach their fellow club members how to contribute toward the club's President's Distinguished status. A blend of teaching and cheerleading can motivate members to achieve points for completing manuals, voting, delivering educational modules and more.

■ **Recognition for All:** Acknowledge and reward educational achievements. When members reach a milestone, the club's VPE can recognize their accomplishment in front of the club. This rewards members and reinforces the Toastmasters value of educational achievement. You can publicly present them with ribbons, pins, plaques, trophies or other tangible symbols of success.

As Chief Educational Officer, you already know that what is measured and rewarded is what often gets

done. The Toastmasters Web store offers many items for recognition and gifts for high achievers – those who reach beyond the basic program. There are wonderful pens, pins, mugs, frames, medallions, champagne flutes for toasting, leather portfolios and much more. And remember, the fanfare that comes with publicly recognizing members is itself an educational opportunity.

Master the art of giving praise, recognition, awards and rewards. Make sure certificates are signed, and present them facing outward to the recipient for all to see. Remove items from their plastic protectors before presenting them to recipients. Don't just hand someone their pin wrapped in plastic. With permission, affix it through a buttonhole of the awardee's jacket or on a lapel. Shake hands with the recipient just as ambassadors shake hands with heads of state – long enough for photographers to capture the moment!

▪ **Motivate the LTMs, UTMs, JTM and BTMs:** As you peruse your club roster you see acronyms such as DTM, CC and AL next to members' names. Your club may also have an LTM, UTM, JTM or BTM. Don't recognize those designations? They refer to *lackadaisical*,

uncommitted, jaded or bored Toastmasters – all in need of inspiration.

A VPE's job, just like any CEO's, is to appeal to these members' needs and motivations, and to find something in the Toastmasters curriculum to engage them. For some it's the fun and challenge of contests; for others it's an officer role with the club or district. Or an invitation to lead a Youth Leadership program. For others it's a chance to participate in the club's mentoring program – as mentor or mentee (or both).

VPEs, you deserve a toast for all you do for our clubs. Members, let's help them as we help ourselves through educational development. Here's to our CEOs!

Editor's note: Please visit www.toastmasters.org/shop for any of the products mentioned in this article – and many more! 

Craig Harrison, DTM, is the founder of LaughLovers club in Oakland, California. He is a professional keynote speaker, trainer and principal of Expressions Of Excellence! For more resources, visit www.ExpressionsOfExcellence.com.

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Who Said That?

The Yale Book of Quotations
sets the record straight
on who said what.

"It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool, than to talk and remove all doubts."

~~- Mark Twain~~

~~- Abraham Lincoln~~

- Benedict J. Goltra

As Mark Twain, Samuel Clemens offered the world a number of remarkable witticisms. But today, we often give him credit for coming up with some tidbits of wisdom that – as revealed by careful new research – were in truth first uttered by other people. In the past, writers and speakers often made the assumption that if an expression was wise and witty, it could safely be attributed to Twain or Abraham Lincoln. But with the advent of Internet-based research and the modernized, combined talents of major universities and research institutions, some scholars are finding surprising new answers to the question, *Who said that?*

One such scholar is Fred R. Shapiro, who has researched and documented more than 12,000 phrases and famous sayings that can now – surprisingly – be attributed to people other than originally thought. This editor of *The Yale Book of Quotations* presents many new attributions that we, as speakers, need to know about, so when we quote someone in a speech, we give credit to the right person.

Of course, it's possible (and in some cases, probable) that these quotes were restated by the formerly credited famous speakers. But they weren't the originators of the quotes. Perhaps Lincoln repeated something that he had read, and through the years those concepts were simply attributed to him. Or perhaps Twain paraphrased a story he'd heard and it was later credited to him. After all, how many of us had ever heard of Benedict J. Goltra? Ultimately, the question changes from *Who said that?* to *Who said it...first?*

Now with the help of the *Toastmaster*, you can learn some corrected attributions and apply them to your speeches right away. The magazine has teamed with Shapiro to provide our readers with the latest discoveries in *who said what*...and

who said it *first*. From time to time, turn the pages of the *Toastmaster* and you'll see some familiar quotes...with new names attached.

Here are some quotes on the subject of clarity, as verified by Fred Shapiro: **T**

"The most important quality in diction is clarity."
- Aristotle, *Poetics* (4th century B.C.)

"The chief merit of language is clearness."
- Galen, *On the Natural Faculties* (2nd century B.C.)

"Better a slip on the pavement than a slip of the tongue."
- Ecclesiasticus 20:18

"Speak clearly, if you speak at all; carve every word before you let it fall."
- Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., "Urania: A Rhymed Lesson" (1846)

"Precision of communication is important, more important than ever, in our era of hair-trigger balances, when a false or misunderstood word may create as much disaster as a sudden thoughtless act."
- James Thurber, *Lanterns and Lances* (1961)

"There is no saying without a double meaning."
- African proverb

"Every word has three explanations and three interpretations."
- Irish proverb

"Nothing can be so clearly and carefully expressed that it cannot be utterly misinterpreted."
- Fred W. Householder, *Linguistic Speculations* (1971)

"If I seem unduly clear to you, you must have misunderstood what I said."
- Alan Greenspan, speech to Congress, 1987

"I worry incessantly that I might be too clear."
Alan Greenspan, quoted in the *New York Times*, June 25, 1995

Fred Shapiro is a world-recognized authority on quotations and on reference in general. He edited the award-winning *Oxford Dictionary of American Legal Quotations*, and his research has been the subject of numerous articles. Shapiro has also edited four other books, and he serves as associate librarian and lecturer in legal research at Yale Law School.



One day, his son would speak to the world.

He wanted them to understand.

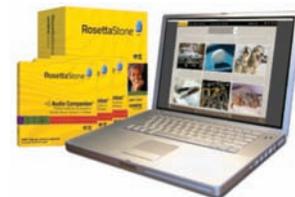
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How to prepare a ribbing that's appropriate.

Make Your Roast a Tip-Top Toast

What better way to honor “Good Old Charlie” for his outstanding dedication to your organization, profession or community than to invite all of his family and friends to a special banquet in his honor...and then *insult* him? That's right – insult him. Tell all of those assembled that “Good Old Charlie” doesn't have an enemy in the world...*although a lot of his friends don't like him.*

You express your admiration and appreciation for your guest of honor with a “roast.”

The basic idea is to show respect for a colleague with a generous helping of friendly, harmless “disrespect.” The Friars Club, a group that is today composed mostly of comedians and other celebrities, first introduced the roast in the early 1900s to honor distinguished members of its organization, mostly those in the theatrical profession. Entertainer Dean Martin popularized the concept with his television show, *The Dean Martin Celebrity Roasts*, which aired from 1973 to 1984.

Like most good comedy, the roast appears spontaneous, as if it's almost being delivered off the top of your head. However, it actually requires much research, preparation and planning to produce an effective evening of friendly, dignified, put-down humor. (For Toastmasters members, the Advanced Communication manual *Special Occasion Speeches* [Item 226N] provides information about how to present a roast. You can purchase the manual at www.toastmasters.org/shop.)

Once you decide to roast “Good Old Charlie” (or “Good Old Charlene,” for that matter), your first task is research. Begin gathering information about your guest of honor. Where did he go to school? What activities did he participate in back

then? Does she have any hobbies? Any heroes? In short, assemble as much background data as you can.

Even though you may know the person pretty well, there are good reasons for trying to learn even a bit more:

- The information may provide material for writing gags about him, or even provide a unique subtext for those things that you do already know.
- For a full evening's presentation, you'll need diversity. You'll have to provide jokes on more than just those attributes that people already know about your guest of honor.
- Humor is a big part of this event and *surprise* is a major element of humor. The more detailed facts you can uncover about your roastee, the more surprising the material will be to the honoree and to the audience.

You can begin your research by meeting informally with a few close friends of “Good Old Charlie.” Brainstorm ideas that you might kid the roastee about. The friends may relate a few embarrassing or funny stories that could become part of your show. This is not a writing session, so nothing has to be finalized. At this point, you're simply gathering information.

Next, contact Charlie's family. They'll provide a different perspec-



tive than his friends and colleagues. How did he and his spouse meet? Do his children have any anecdotes about him? Do they have any interesting family photos or mementos that could possibly be used?

Obviously, you won't use all of the information you uncover, but it will add depth, variety and surprise to your final script.

Limit the Time

The next assignment is to plan the presentation. You'll probably want a few speakers, presenters or performers to populate this event. It's advisable, though, to limit each segment of the show to a reasonable amount of time. This helps to keep the evening fast-paced. Some of the presentations will be sparkling, others less so. Your audience can endure the less-impressive segments if they're short.

Once you decide on your cast of presenters, you can assign each one a different facet of Charlie's life to focus on. Presenter "A" might talk about his childhood and early years. Presenter "B" could handle his college years. Presenter "C" might discuss his hobbies. And so on.

Delegating different topics to various presenters gives the entire presentation a continuity, avoids monotony and sidesteps any conflict among the presenters.

It's also wise to vary the style of each presentation. For example, you might begin with a clever monologue explaining why Charlie is deserving of this honor. Then if you have a presenter with musical ability, you could do a song parody about the roastee. The next presenter might have a slide show featuring some of those old photos the family thoughtfully provided, accompanied by appropriate, and amusing, commentary. Then a series of speakers might present the honoree with several "gag" gifts. All of this, of course, depends on the

talent and preferences of the people you've selected as presenters. The different formats provide a variety that helps keep the presentation interesting for the audience.

Once you've decided on the presenters, assigned topics and selected the style for each segment, the roast must be written. Here you can do the writing yourself, assign a team or several teams of writers, or allow each presenter to fashion his or her own script. One person or committee, though, should approve and finalize each segment and position it in the program.

Make Jokes, but Don't Offend

The most daunting challenge of pulling off a successful roast is to guarantee that the evening is not offensive. But how can you have insult humor without insulting? Following are three guidelines to help you accomplish this:

1 Kid about things that are obviously fabricated or generally not true.

At one recent roast, an association was honoring a man who had organized parties for the group for several years. The emcee said, "He doesn't do it for applause or for the thanks he might get. No, he does it simply for the few bucks he can manage to skim off the top." At another farewell dinner for a different honoree, the speaker kidded the man about his "drinking." He said, "The local tavern is going to light a perpetual flame in his honor: They're going to set fire to his breath." These jokes could not have been used if the basic premise might be believed. However, as gags that none in the audience would take seriously, they were usable.

2 Laugh at things that the guest of honor jokes about.

A speaker at one party ribbed the honoree about his erratic golf. He said, "He never uses a golf cart when he plays.

Where *he* hits the ball, it's cheaper to take public transportation." Because this person told jokes about his own bad golf, it was acceptable for the presenter to do so.

3 Poke fun at things that are of no real consequence. One speaker kidded the guest of honor about his former athletic prowess. "When he was younger he was a powerful man with big muscles and a barrel chest. Of course, that's all *behind* him now." That's just a generic type of gag that has no real relationship to the person or his accomplishments. It's an insult gag, but a harmless one.

In the final stages of the roast's preparation, be sure to double-check the tastefulness of all of the humor in your presentation. If any gag seems suspect to you, try it out on a friend or family member of the honoree. And if they agree it's inappropriate, it's out. Drop it or replace it.

Then be your own ultimate censor. *If you're in doubt, the gag is out.* It's better to lose a joke than a friend. Keep in mind that this is an event to honor a colleague. Keep it fun, keep it slightly irreverent, but keep it dignified. Someone once asked Will Rogers how he could kid so many prominent people of his time and yet remain friendly with all of them. Rogers said, "If there's no malice in your heart, there can't be any in your jokes."

So prepare, plan and pull off a fine roast. Have fun doing it and make sure "Good Old Charlie" has fun too. ■

Gene Perret is a three-time Emmy winner who has written for Carol Burnett and Phyllis Diller, and was the head writer for Bob Hope. To learn more about his latest book, the comedy novel *Breakfasts with Archangel Shecky*, visit www.writingcomedy.com.



Some time ago I presented a three-hour workshop called “Push-ups for Self-Esteem.” After the session, the meeting planner and I looked over the evaluations. The first three I picked up were from people who had graded the workshop “poor” on everything: the room, the food, the location, the hotel and the speaker. The third person even wrote, “I have been more stimulated at a Tupperware party!”

The **GOOD**, th

I put the papers down and said, “I quit! If I am that bad, I don’t need to be speaking anymore.”

Trying to reassure me, the meeting planner said, “I know exactly which three people wrote these. They do this type of thing every year at our convention. I don’t even know why they come. Do not pay any attention. And read the rest of the stack.”

I did just that. All the rest had great comments, encouraging comments. Before I left, I said to the meeting planner, “Cecil, I want to know one thing: What on earth do you folks do at Tupperware parties for that woman to like those parties better than my presentation?”

Despite the many words of praise I know were expressed that day, the only observations I remember now are those negative comments. There is a saying: “It takes 11 positive statements to erase the one negative one.” Negative remarks stay with us a long time, whether or not we

“It takes 11 positive statements to erase the one negative one. Negative remarks stay with us a long time, whether or not we deserve them.”

deserve them. So I learned to be careful when offering feedback. And I consider it a lesson worth sharing.

Let's look, then, at how we can offer speaker evaluations that are helpful rather than hurtful. There are basically three kinds of evaluations: the good, the bad and the ugly. Here's a breakdown:

- **The Good:** These evaluations can help you become a better speaker. They usually include comments on things you did well and suggestions to help you improve your speech. If the opinions are expressed in a constructive manner, even tough issues can be addressed. This spirit of helping a fellow speaker improve a presentation leaves everyone smiling.
- **The Bad:** These evaluations are generally non-constructive, petty, or so flowery they convey that the evaluator has not been listening or is too busy giving a speech of his own.

materials the organization makes available on this topic. (See sidebar on page 18).

Depending on the methods of your club, the General Evaluator's role may include evaluating the speech evaluators. If a speech evaluator does not give supportive or constructive feedback, it's the General Evaluator's responsibility to point it out and describe for the group how to present suitable evaluations. This can be beneficial to a club, even if performed on an occasional basis, because it lets members know what is expected in an evaluation and what is inappropriate.

If the General Evaluator does not handle this sort of task in your club, you should still seek ways to improve this important portion of the Toastmasters experience. In any case, be sure to take advantage of the information and assistance provided by the *Competent Leadership* manual. This part of the Toastmasters education program

e **BAD** and the **UGLY**

By Carol Dean Schreiner, DTM

How speech evaluations can help – or hurt.

- **The Ugly:** These evaluations spurn the idea of contributing anything helpful. They're so hurtful that a member could drop out as a result of being victimized by one.

Talk About It

It takes skill to give a good evaluation. And members join Toastmasters in order to build their communication skills – which include giving evaluations. Take the opportunity in your club to discuss how to give evaluations properly. It can also help to have a member present Toastmasters' *The Art of Effective Evaluation* program or review some of the other informative

offers suggestions and feedback forms for evaluations of speech evaluators. Several questions determine whether the evaluator appeared biased or thoughtless in evaluating a speech. And such reviews are usually performed at the same club meeting. Don't let weeks go by without addressing evaluation problems in your club. No club can afford to take a chance on losing members because of a bad or ugly evaluation.

When to Try and When to Shy (Away From Something)

When you first begin giving evaluations, look at how some of the veterans in the club give them. Try out the techniques you like, to see what fits your per-

Evaluate Your Options:

Toastmasters offers a variety of materials to help improve the quality of evaluations in your club. *Effective Evaluation*, *Evaluate to Motivate*, and *The Art of Effective Evaluation* program offer a variety of options to suit your club's needs. Find these and more at www.toastmasters.org/shop.



sonality and abilities. This will allow you to grow and learn.

I'm a humorist, so when I deliver an evaluation I try to mix playfulness with pointers. For example, I might have fun with words by saying something like, "You had a great opening and a fantastic body, but you need to *change your close*." When I say the last few words, I tug on my own clothes, yanking at the sleeves, to sell the pun. After the chuckles die down, I switch gears and explain what I think truly needs to be *changed*. Whether or not my suggestions are about the "close" of the speech doesn't matter at that point. My little one-liner has helped to put the speaker and fellow club members in a lighter mood so they're more relaxed and receptive to my suggestions.

A little light humor is one thing, but you should be careful to avoid a combative or hurtful evaluation. And you should dismiss any such evaluations that come your way. That is not what evaluations should be. Speaker feedback is meant to be given with encouragement and in a friendly environment – especially verbal evaluations. No one should ever cringe when hearing their speech assessed by a fellow member.

There are times, of course, when certain points need to be driven home – particularly if the speaker has been a member for several years – but that doesn't mean to get ugly. No one wants to hear degrading remarks. If a presentation was truly bad, you should talk to the speaker in private to offer suggestions for improvement. And make sure you're always as respectful as possible in your comments.

Experienced Toastmasters agree. "In my early days in Toastmasters we had a guy in our club who was downright *mean* in his evaluations," says Past International Director Frank Slane, DTM. "I made a vow at that time to make my evaluations acceptable and useful in a kind, courteous and truthful way."

That positive practice served both Slane and his fellow members well. "Applying my philosophy once saved a Toastmaster from quitting," he says. "She told me after the club meeting that she had come that evening to

make that her last speech, and to drop out, but because of my evaluation she decided to stay."

Being respectful and encouraging in an evaluation doesn't mean making such flowery remarks that you gloss over any constructive criticisms. If that were the case, a speaker

would never know how to improve. You can be honest while still being polite and supportive. It's helpful to preface your remarks by reminding the speaker that you are about to give your own opinion of the speech, and that other opinions may vary.

Give and Take

Just as there's a good way of giving evaluations, there's also a good way to *receive* them. A speaker needs to be open to instructive feedback. When you get the same comments again and again about ways you can improve or things you did incorrectly, it's a good idea to examine them. There is probably some truth in the remarks, and it may be time to figure out how to change certain habits. Sometimes we are not aware that we have nervous habits that are distracting to our audience. As a professional speaker, I don't want those kinds of issues to stay with me. It's much better to hear about negative or distracting problems from my Toastmasters family than to read it on an evaluation form from a meeting planner or an attendee.

When receiving critical evaluations, look at them carefully. What can you learn from them? Have you heard this feedback before? Did you disregard it because you didn't like the evaluator?

However, sometimes it's appropriate to consider the source. Does this person ever give good evaluations? Does he ever have anything constructive to say? Does she give everyone a bad evaluation? Does he like to pick on certain people? Could she be jealous or a bit intimidated by you? Do you respect this evaluator as a speaker and person?

It's also important to remember that all evaluations are opinions. The assessment offered isn't right or wrong – it's just one person's thoughts on your speech. Take what you can use, and don't worry about the rest. Be positive and receptive to the advice that evaluators offer – not defensive. After all, if their suggestions helped you improve, wouldn't you be thankful for it?

In the stories that follow, two speakers reacted very differently to evaluations they received. The value of the experiences were affected by their reactions.

Handy Evaluation Checklist

Place a “+” next to aspects of the speech that were noteworthy for their effectiveness.

Place a “-” next to those parts that could be improved. Be sure to note suggestions for improvement where needed.

Leave blank any that do not require a comment.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Opening captured the audience's attention. | <input type="checkbox"/> Pauses were used effectively, where needed. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Main points in body were supported by examples, statistics or illustrations. | <input type="checkbox"/> Stood at ease with confident body language. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Closing was effective and memorable. | <input type="checkbox"/> Facial expressions conveyed emotional content. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Made sufficient eye contact with the audience. | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved about the stage with purpose. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vocal variety added to the message. | <input type="checkbox"/> Gestures were significant and appropriate. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pace of speaking changed to match portions of content. | <input type="checkbox"/> Humor was appropriate and supported the theme. |

Suggestions: _____

The part I could really appreciate was _____

The best suggestion I can offer is _____

The best thing about this speech, overall, was _____

One night at a club meeting, I observed a speaker who usually gave extremely interesting and prepared speeches. However, this night anyone could tell she was woefully ill prepared. She stammered and stuttered, stumbled over words and ideas. When she received an evaluation pointing out the awkwardness of her delivery, she said she wasn't surprised by the criticism. Furthermore, she used the input as helpful advice. From that experience and evaluation she resolved to do several things: take more time to prepare, not allow her own speech to intimidate her, and remember that as long as she does the best she can, that's all she can ask.

The point is, she used constructive criticism as a springboard for growth and improvement – not something to get angry or depressed about.

Here's the other example: At a club meeting one night, a speaker made a controversial political statement that was not integral to the speech. The evaluator told him she was uncomfortable with the comment. The speaker never returned to the club.

When he received that evaluation, he had several choices in how to respond: He could have continued to attend club meetings, and learn and grow; talk to the evaluator, his mentor or a club officer about the evaluation; or just decide that he disagreed with the

evaluation and continue to deliver the speeches he felt comfortable giving. But by forming a defensive response and dropping out completely after one remark, he did himself a disservice.

We all need to take well-meaning evaluations as helpful, not critical. As Eleanor Roosevelt once said, “Nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent.”

Speakers who truly want to improve want concrete evaluations. If we don't get our flaws corrected, they could block our effectiveness and our progress. Asking for and accepting evaluations will boost your ability to see these pesky yet critical behaviors that, when faced and mastered, become stepping stones to success. **T**

Carol Dean Schreiner, DTM, is a member of the Sooner Club in Norman, Oklahoma, and the Boomer Storytelling Club in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. A motivational speaker and humorist, she is the author of four books, including *Wonder Woman Doesn't Live Here Anymore*. Reach her at **www.caroldean.com**.

Editor's Note: Carol will lead a session at this year's Toastmasters International Convention, on Saturday, August 15. The title of her presentation is “Taking Care of Your Favorite Speaker: You!”

When the Ace of Hearts Refuses to Flutter...

As Toastmasters we spend a lot of time demonstrating, discussing and practicing public speaking. We analyze content, method of delivery and use of voice, as well as gestures and body language. Yet our speeches can become even better if we add depth to them with props and sound effects.

Props: Anchoring the Audience's Attention to the Speaker

A prop is any item that the speaker interacts with physically. Toastmasters are encouraged to use visual aids in their speeches, but only a few advanced projects have the use of props as a focus. Props are distinct from visual aids in that their role is more than simply visual: Props are thrown, dropped, picked up, put down, talked to, fondled, broken, swung, flung and more. This active quality adds spice to your speeches.

For one of my own advanced projects, I stood in front of a crowded meeting of my club – the Dubai Men's College Toastmasters in Dubai, United Arab Emirates – to tell the legend of John Henry. John Henry was a big man, and as the great singer Johnny Cash once told the tale, "From his heels all the way round to the ground he had a stroke of nineteen feet." In the modern world, less and less of us

have experience with driving fence posts, splitting rocks and hammering spikes, so talking about John Henry's mighty swing will not convey much real meaning to your audience. To give that deeper understanding of John Henry's swing, I pulled out a sledgehammer and swung it through that arc from the back of my own heels, up over my head, and all the way around to the ground in front of my toes.

With this simple use of a prop, I helped the audience visualize that big, muscular hero driving a spike with a single blow.

It just takes a little advance planning to bring a speech to life. Add a few more-than-just-visual items, and you'll discover amazing results. In some cases props may make a difficult point easier to express. *The daily portion of food for a refugee, the uniform worn by George Washington's troops at Valley Forge, a bear trap or a bag of coins* – all can have their place in your speeches, given the right context. "When you are struggling to find the right words, sometimes a prop can speak for you," says Srinivas Achar, a former Toastmaster who recently moved from Abu Dhabi to Dubai.

When you use props, the audience feels like it can see and touch what you are talking about. But if you feel that there is still something missing, there's another avenue to

explore. To add even more depth to a talk, you can use sound.

Sound Effects: Adding Depth to Visual Images

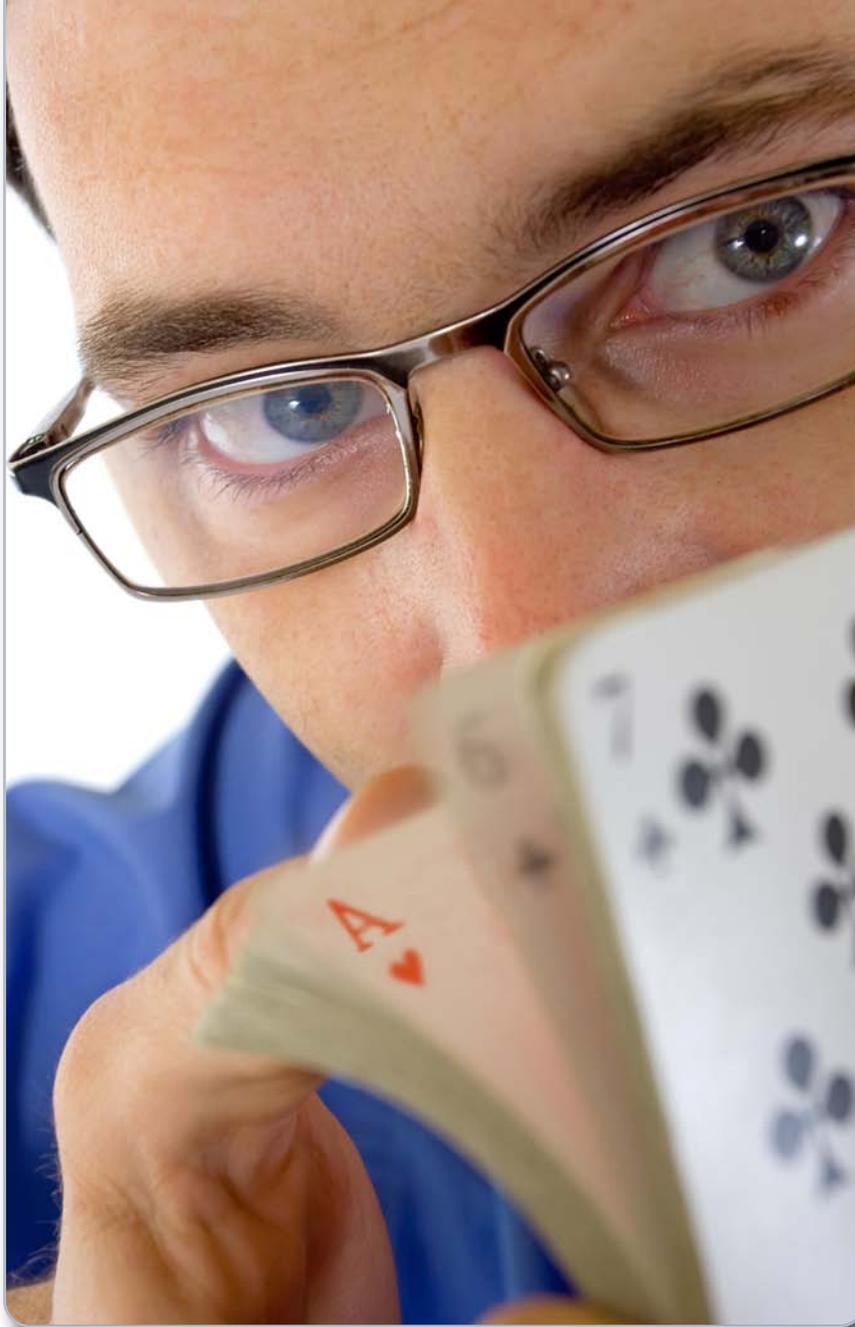
"We shall see about that," said Vulic. Again he cocked the weapon and aimed at a forage cap hanging over the window; a shot rang out..."

– from the story "The Fatalist" by Mikhail Lermontov

For my first project in the *Interpretive Reading* manual, I read a selection from this Lermontov story. In my initial practice session, I quickly realized that saying "a shot rang out" is not nearly as dramatic as hearing the sound of a real gunshot. Sound triggers physical responses in the body that can't be activated in any other way. Imagine if the "shot" in my speech could be punctuated by a real shot.

Of course, I didn't bring a gun to a Toastmasters meeting, but with a little planning I was able to surprise the audience with the *sound* of a shot and got much the same reaction.

Props are seen by the audience, so it can be difficult to find an object that fulfills your purpose; sounds, on the other hand, are usually easier to simulate because they are only heard. Popping a balloon, for example, can simulate explosions, gunshots, squeaky shoes and flatulence.



A metal spoon clanking against a tea mug can simulate the sound of a hammer hitting a rail spike. Riffling a deck of cards can simulate tearing clothing or, well, the sound of a deck of cards being shuffled.

A large number of sounds can be replicated by common, everyday objects found around the home or office. Of course, the ever-adaptable human voice can also be used to imitate an incredible range of sounds.

The only limits to the use of props and sound effects in public speaking are the limits of your imagination. If your imagination needs a jump-start, however, you should focus on applying four fundamental principles:

1 Support Your Words. The use of props and sound effects can engage your audience more in your presentation. But it can also easily distract them and send their minds wandering. Thus, the **number one rule** is: Whatever you do must directly support your words. The impact should be carefully calculated. Props and sound effects are not used to set a general mood: You can introduce items into your stage “set” for that. For example, if you’re giving a presentation about gambling, you can place a deck of cards and some poker chips within view of the audience to set the tone. However, if you’re going to show people how to play poker, the cards are props and

every interaction must be directly related to your presentation.

2 Timing. It may not be everything, but I learned of its importance the hard way while presenting the following quote in a speech:

“I picked up an ace of hearts from the table and threw it up; we watched with bated breath, our eyes wide with fear and an undefinable curiosity, shifting back and forth between the pistol and the fateful ace which was now fluttering downwards.”

– “The Fatalist” by Mikhail Lermontov

In the 19th century, playing cards may have “fluttered,” but modern-day playing cards drop to the floor like rocks. Fluttering is the last thing you can get them to do. I found that out when I used playing cards as a prop in my presentation of the Lermontov story. The above excerpt took 16 seconds for me to read to the audience – while the cards took one second to reach the floor. This is an example of how poor timing negated the effect of a prop.

Props require proper planning and rehearsal to achieve exact timing. A prop should be immediately at hand when needed. Plan and practice your movement about the stage so that the prop you need will be ready at the precise moment. Timing for sound effects is even more critical. Saying, “A shot rang out,” and then pausing to run behind the podium to pop a balloon will not work. There must be just enough time between what you are saying and the sound that accompanies it for the audience to build up an expectation – less than half a second. In the case of repetitive sounds, you must plan the timing for both the introduction and the cessation of the sound.

(Continued on page 28)

Presenter Remotes

This is the first in a series of reviews for the Toastmaster magazine, assessing new presentation-related technology products.

For speakers who like to unchain themselves from the podium but still control their PowerPoint slides and use a laser pointer from a distance, a good presentation remote is a must. But not all presentation remotes are created equal. Here are three user-friendly and feature-rich models under \$100 that are worth a look.

Power Presenter Remote from Honeywell

Many speakers have come to appreciate that less is more when it comes to these devices. The more buttons on a remote, the more difficult it can be to use, and the last thing speakers want to worry about during a presentation is figuring out the right button to push – and risk, say, reversing slides when they want to go forward.

There are no such concerns with Honeywell's *Power Presenter* remote, which scores high on the ease-of-use scale. The remote only has three buttons – forward, back and laser pointer – and each is easily accessible and responsive, with little lag time in triggering action. Simply press two buttons simultaneously to achieve a blank screen mode and then return by pressing any button. The device also fits comfortably in your hand, an important ergonomic feature if you're presenting for long periods.

Speakers who like to roam a stage often worry that they're not close enough to the screen to remotely change PowerPoint slides. *Power Presenter* enables you to advance slides from up to 150 feet away – with no direct line of sight needed to the receiver. The benefit

of RF (wireless radio frequency) remotes is their *omnidirectional* nature, meaning you don't have to point the remote directly at the screen for it to work.

There's no software to load before operating the remote; all speakers need do is plug the remote's receiver into a USB or PS/2 port on their PC or MAC and they're ready to roll. The integrated laser pointer also features a healthy-size dot (not a given with all pointers) that allows you to effectively highlight portions of your slides.

The *Power Presenter* retails for \$99, which includes a base unit, one USB cable and one PS/2 cable. The product carries a one-year limited warranty. For more information, visit www.powerremote.com.

Kensington's Wireless Presenter with Laser Pointer

The first thing you notice about Kensington's palm-size presenter remote is its novel design. Speakers who've ever misplaced their USB wireless remote receivers will appreciate that the receiver can conveniently be stored inside the remote.

As for the remote's functionality, it is plug-and-play with both PCs and Mac laptops, and the device's 2.4GHz wireless technology allows you to operate PowerPoint presentations with finger point control from up to 60 feet. A brighter-than-average laser beam generates impressive pointer visibility.

The Kensington remote features an ergonomic, figure-8 body style with a rubber texture grip. And for lovers of simplicity, there are just four command buttons: forward,

back, blank screen and laser pointer. The product comes with a one-year limited warranty.

Finally, one of the best features about this remote is its price: \$59.99. For more information or specifications, visit <http://us.kensington.com>.

Logitech's Cordless Presenter

The Logitech *Cordless Presenter* has all accoutrements of a speaker-friendly remote – built-in PowerPoint controls that are easily accessed under your thumb and an integrated laser pointer – but what sets it apart is a unique timer feature. The remote's LCD timer allows you to set automatic, inaudible warnings – the timer vibrates in your hand – to let you know when your presentation is running out of time. Another handy feature: a volume control button along the remote's left side.

There is no cumbersome software to download – simply plug the wireless receiver into your laptop USB port and launch your presentation. A 50-foot operating range lets you roam freely on stage or at the front of your presentation room. One of the few downsides of this remote is it's not Mac-compatible.

The Logitech remote sells for \$79.95 and comes with a three-year limited hardware warranty. For more information, visit www.logitech.com.

Editor's Note: These reviews reflect the assessments of the author and not necessarily the opinions or endorsements of the *Toastmaster*.

Dave Zielinski is a freelance writer who lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

A speaker without a book is like a suit without slacks...

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The Script as Friend and Foe

When the notes you hold are as good as gold.

By Bill Matthews

Articles in this magazine have made comprehensive arguments for the virtues of speaking without a script. This may be the ultimate aim of most Toastmasters, but we should also consider that notes do have their place. And it may be a surprise to learn that their place is larger than many members think.

I joined my first Toastmasters club, the Dublin Club in Dublin, Ireland, 30 years ago and I can't remember when I last used notes or read from a script in giving a speech, except when required to do so by the manual. What I can remember, vividly, is how I clung to my scripts like a drowning man clutching a plank during my early attempts at speaking in the club.

For most of us, our early days as speakers were fraught with terror. First, the prospect of simply standing up in a room full of people, with every eye on me, was enough to make my heart race. Then the task of actually giving a speech to all those people – sitting there, staring at me – would freeze my blood. There was the dry mouth, the sweaty palms, the feeling that my shirt collar was getting tighter. But worst of all, there was the fear that I would go completely blank in the middle of a presentation.

The life saver in all this was the script. It carried the assurance that if my mind did go blank – even if I lost the thread of what I was saying in the middle of a sentence – help was always at hand. And steadily, encouraged by my fellow members, I graduated from a full script to summary notes, to headlines, to single cue words, to no more paper.

It's not always that simple, however. I have visited some clubs and heard gung-ho evaluators pressing people barely past their Ice Breaker project to go for it and make their next speech without notes. This, I feel, is like asking somebody who has learned just enough about swimming to stay afloat, to dive into the open sea off

the highest board on the tower in a storm. The result can be a disastrous blow to a fragile confidence. But, used sensibly, scripts can help turn a dog paddler into a long-distance swimmer.

There is a catch, though. It is all too easy to regard a script as just a convenient crutch for beginners. In reality, the script is the end product of the creative process that leads to a great speech. Whether that script finishes up on the lectern in front of the speaker or at home in the desk at the time of delivery, is irrelevant. It's the tool that lets the speaker put together a well-crafted, well-developed and well-rehearsed speech. Also, without the script, it would not be possible to get the timing right.

What's more, there are times when even the experienced speaker will have to read from a script. For example, it's not uncommon for a professional speaker to be handed a speech that was to have been delivered by a colleague at a conference and asked, "Would you do it for him? He's ill."

An experienced speaker knows to value and develop the specific skills that can help her survive this kind of challenge. The chief hazards

include the difficulty of maintaining eye contact and in finding your place after looking up to make eye contact. How to overcome this?

I was lucky enough to once see a master in action. The late actor and film director John Huston gave the readings from the Bible at a Christmas carol service in Saint Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin. His eye contact

“Whether or not notes belong in a speech performance depends both on the nature of the speech and the temperament of the performer.”

throughout was impeccable, his voice mellow and beautifully clear. To the casual onlooker he appeared to be just standing there, speaking freely to the congregation. He hardly seemed to be aware of the Bible open before him on the lectern. How did he do it? Here are four tips for success:

1 Ensure that the lectern is high enough so you can stand straight and make eye contact with the audience without having to bow your head to read.

2 Work on your speed-reading skills, at least enough to take in a sentence at a glance. Then you can make use of an unconscious habit we all have when we speak. When talking, most people don't fix their audience with an unblinking stare throughout. We make frequent mini-pauses during which we glance away from the person – and often we glance down.

These are natural breaks in private conversation often

“Paradoxically, speaking effectively from a script is actually more difficult, and demands more skills (and better use of them), than speaking from memory or ad libbing.”

seen as cues to other people to reply, if they wish. In *public* speaking, these brief pauses allow time for a very quick glance at the page – hence, the speed reading. Since the head is not bowed when you glance down, there is no sense of lost eye contact and the voice is not affected. Caution: Don't let your concentration lapse, at all, or you will lose your place and break the rhythm of your speech.

3 Adjust your body language. It will, of course, be somewhat constrained by your need to stay behind the lectern (or hold a script). But this is not a big problem. You can use facial expressions and hand gestures where appropriate.

4 Put more expression into your voice. Martin Luther King's "I have a Dream" speech is every bit as moving listening to it with your eyes closed as watching it on television. You should always try to paint vivid pictures with words. In Ireland, the *seanachai* (pronounced "shan-a-kee"), a traditional storyteller, can create whole worlds while sitting in a chair and chatting conversationally with his audience. (In passing: I find the practice, common among business gurus, of

spacing up and down like a caged tiger while speaking, an annoying distraction.)

Aim for True Excellence

Considering all of the above, I would say that, paradoxically, speaking effectively from a script is actually more difficult, and demands more skills (and better use of them), than speaking from memory or ad libbing. And ideally, we should think of aiming for excellence in all three areas.

Last year I gave a speech to my current Toastmasters group, the Engineers Club in Dublin, advocating the use of notes. They hadn't heard an argument like this before and had not thought about presentations in that way.

In speaking, I actually worked from notes, using them as a prop to demonstrate my points about the techniques. My evaluator that evening, veteran Toastmaster Liam Browne, was impressed. He later commented, "I have seen Ice Breaker speakers perform without notes of any kind and give a reasonable performance. I have also recently seen an Ice Breaker where the speaker used a script and gave a much better performance."

Whether or not notes belong in a speech performance depends both on the nature of the speech and the temperament of the performer. Browne advises getting

rid of your dependence on scripts gradually: steadily shrinking it from full scripts to longer notes, to shorter notes, to working without notes. This is better than leaping from one extreme to the other.

It's fair to expect a Toastmaster who is moving into the advanced manuals to start "flying solo." Just remember, the Toastmasters program does occasionally require the presenter to *read* a speech. Browne notes, "This [working effectively from a script] is a high-definition skill requiring practice, practice, practice, and calling for poise and assurance, pace variation, pause, emphasis, eye contact, facial expression, 'reading ahead' and delivering with your eyes off-script. Reading from a script is a skill essential to politicians and top business executives and should not be dismissed as only a crutch for new and timid speakers."

So why not spark a discussion in your club on the value of notes and scripts? This may be a good article to read aloud to your fellow Toastmasters. Just be sure to follow the four tips for success when you do! 

Bill Matthews is a psychologist and a member of the Engineers Club in Dublin, Ireland. He can be contacted at bmatthewstx@eircom.net.

Global Representation & Support

In August 2009, every Toastmasters club in the world will be asked to 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 the member.

Toastmasters is Global. Toastmasters is You.

The heart of the Toastmasters world is the club, and the lifeblood of each club is the satisfaction of its members. But how does each member relate to Toastmasters International on a global scale?

The answer lies in the structure of Toastmasters, and all the various ways we provide support and service to the member.

The purpose of the governance proposal is to improve the organization's structure, with the aim of achieving the following two goals:

- A more fair and equitable system of global representation.
- Improved service and support for every member, regardless of where he or she may live in the world.

Global Representation.

Toastmasters International has grown into every part of the world, but the way we currently operate does not adequately accommodate and support this growth.

The proposed solution is:

- 14 regions spanning the entire globe.
- One board member from each region.
- One region advisor per region.

Local Support.

Member satisfaction is the key to our ongoing success. By regionalizing the Toastmasters world, we ensure that every member gets the support he or she needs to succeed.

Through the enhanced training of our leaders, we enable improved

support to our clubs. As the club is strengthened, the member experience is enriched. As the member experience is enriched, each Toastmaster is better able to achieve his or her personal and professional goals. This is the heart of the Toastmasters program.

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



Small Impact. Big Effect.

These improvements (summarized in the table below) will not change the way your Toastmasters club operates, but they will improve the quality of service your club receives. This will result in a more enriched experience for you, the 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.

Toastmasters is Global. Toastmasters is You.

Proposed Plan	Status Quo	Benefits of Change
Global representation with 14 regions/directors*	8 regions plus districts not assigned to a region, 18 directors	Equal support and service for all Toastmasters clubs worldwide
14 region advisors marketing	No region advisors	District-level marketing and leadership support
International Leadership Committee*	International Nominating Committee	Improved system for identifying volunteer leaders
Year-round training opportunities for district leaders (e-learning and face-to-face)	Two district leader training opportunities: mid-year and regional conferences	More leaders trained; flexible, convenient, enhanced and consistent training
Move regional business and speech contests to International Convention	Regional conferences	More efficient use of funds and time

* Indicates an issue included in the proposal to be voted on by the membership.

Note: For more information on any of these issues, visit www.toastmasters.org/future.

When the Ace of Hearts Refuses to Flutter...

(Continued from page 21)

3 Moderation. Choose your props and sound effects well. In a good speech, the audience's focus must stay on the topic and not shift to the mechanics of the presentation. Too many supporting elements will be distracting. Don't become like the one-man band where the music becomes secondary to the sheer spectacle of one person doing so many things at once. Like a good coach, you must assemble only a top lineup of props and sound effects that add the most value to your speech. Leave the second stringers at home.

4 Assess the mess! This rule is very closely related to the principle of moderation. When you choose your

props, think about how you will use them and, even more importantly, think about what mess, damage or injuries may result. If you throw *one* deck of playing cards into the air, you will have 52 things to pick up. If you set fire to a love letter, you'll want to put the fire out without involving the fire department. You must realistically evaluate your physical condition (and double-check your health insurance policy) before you start swinging that 20-pound sledgehammer around. If your speech involves a frenzied exchange of cream pies with your audience, cover yourself (and everything else in the room) with plastic first.

Preparation: The Key to It All

When planning the use of props and sound effects, always think about the mechanics of what you will do. When should such perfor-

mance tools be introduced? How? For what purpose? When will they stop being the focus of attention? How will you make sure the audience's attention leaves your props and comes back to you when you need it to? These questions all must be answered in order to ensure that such elements add value to your speech.

Remember the four fundamental principles for using props and sound effects, and you should be well on your way to making a big impression with your next speech.

And always keep a few balloons in your pocket...just in case! **T**

Dean Sheetz, ACS, CL, is a member of Dubai Men's College Toastmasters in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. You can reach him at sounds.symbols@gmail.com.



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FUNNY YOU SHOULD SAY THAT!

By John Cadley

Something Catchy

I write catchy stuff for a living. That isn't my phrase. It doesn't begin to describe the marketing knowledge, business insight and conceptual problem-solving skills that go into being an advertising copywriter. "Catchy stuff" is, however, the phrase I hear most often when I tell people what I do. "Advertising, huh? You mean you write that *catchy stuff*? Did you write that commercial where the bear eats the bar of soap and then takes a swig of the stomach medicine and gets a big smile on his face? Was that a real bear?" This is when I have to make the startling revelation that one copywriter does not write all the commercials on television.

Even clients say it. These are seasoned businesspeople with MBAs, and yet when it comes to giving an assignment, they will end a long, sophisticated briefing by summing up: "You know, give us something catchy."

So *catchy* it is. I don't mind catchy. It's better than saying, "Oh, you mean you lie for a living." This came from a person who wrote political speeches that used 10,000 words to say absolutely nothing. Still, it wasn't very nice.

At any rate, one of the catchy things I'm asked to write is something called a "tag line." This is a short, memorable phrase or sentence that encapsulates the soul of the brand. (Yes, brands have souls. Never mind how.) "You're in good hands with Allstate" is a tag line. Home Depot's "You can do it. We can help," is another. It's a little tricky, because it has to imply a lot

more than it actually says. Some companies take this to extremes. (Notice I say companies, not copywriters, since companies frequently reject everything the copywriter submits and instead choose a line written by the CEO's wife.)

Among my favorites are tag lines that talk about "solving tomorrow's problems today." It has a nice ring to it. Clever juxtaposition of words. Pleasing cadence. The only problem is that it's complete nonsense. Never mind that if the human race has demonstrated one consistent trait throughout history, it is that tomorrow is the last thing we think about. If we could really solve tomorrow's problems today we would have avoided every war, depression, epidemic and natural disaster that has ever befallen us, with the possible exception of *American Idol*, which appears to have been preordained from time immemorial.

The real issue is that a line like this is meant to convey ultimate control and foresight, and yet I can tell you from personal experience that it usually comes from a business operating on the brink of chaos, with people running around trying to fill *yesterday's* orders, never mind about tomorrow. If one of "tomorrow's problems" showed up on their doorstep they'd say, "Not now. I'm busy."

Another favorite is the tag line embodying the notion that "our people make the difference." Folks, I have to tell you that when a company says this it's because there is *absolutely nothing different about it.*

What that company is saying is, "We make the same product as everyone else, which you can get for virtually the same price, at most of the same places. *But* – you should buy from us because we're really nice people." Which they undoubtedly are – just like all the really nice people who work for their competitors.

And finally there is the local bank tag line, which is almost guaranteed to have the word "friendly" in it somewhere. For some reason every local bank wants you to think that doing business with them is as easy and carefree as talking to your neighbor across the backyard fence. They even say that in their ads: "We're folks who live in the community just like you and when you come in we treat you like family." This presumes that you would feel safe and secure having your neighbors and/or family members managing your money. I, personally, would not. My family members are more inclined to borrow money from *me*, and my neighbor is currently on parole.

Now I have to get back to writing a tag line for a hospital. I'm thinking of something like: "Solving your health problem today before it becomes even worse tomorrow, with friendly people who make a difference, because if they don't, your prognosis is not very good."

Catchy, don't you think? ■

John Cadley is an advertising copywriter in Syracuse, New York. Reach him at jjcadley@mower.com.

Seriously, I couldn't have done it without you!

It was 1994, when I first walked into a Toastmaster meeting... terrified!

From the desk of Darren LaCroix, World Champion of Public Speaking

Dear Fellow Toastmaster,

Thank you, Toastmasters! Thank you, leaders! Thank you all who trusted me enough to invest in my Boot Camps and educational tools. I've enjoyed meeting so many of you during my travels.



I wanted to use this ad to say "Thank You" — to show my appreciation for all the people of this organization and what they have meant to me, my life, and my career. My club gives me great feedback on new stories... and still counts my um's and ah's!

Leaders of all levels... Thank you... **please remember**, many of your club members may not get ANY encouragement at home, *you* may be the only one. **Please remember** some of our most important motivational speeches are not given from the front of the room, they are **one-on-one conversations of encouragement**.

My club President, Dan Jones, in 1994, asked me one question before a meeting that literally launched my career. (Find the entire story... go to www.YouTube.com, search box "Thank You Toastmasters")

Do you give back? Even when I was only earning \$75 per speech, I started giving 10% of my speaking income to foundations for abused and homeless women and children. (Inspired by a fellow Toastmaster's speech!)

As I walked off stage with the World Championship Trophy in 2001, I told Alfred Herzing, DTM, PIP, *"I will be the greatest ambassador Toastmasters has ever had."*

I will continue to speak for Toastmaster Districts anywhere I'm invited. **How do you give back?**

Stage time, Stage time, Stage time,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Darren".

2001 World Champion of Public Speaking

(Just a guy that used the tool of Toastmasters better than most!)

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