

TOASTMASTER®

APRIL 2005

Special Issue:

Online Etiquette

Get Blogging

**Keeping E-mail
in Top Form**

**Say Touché
to Clichés**

Well-worn phrases
just don't wear well.

**Slang as
It is Slung**

**Come to Toronto, Canada, for the
74th Annual Convention, August 24-27!**

See inside for complete details and registration forms

It Starts With You!



When Harry and Ada Mae's first child Sandra was born, they had to travel 200 miles to El Paso, Texas, for the delivery. They brought their new daughter home to their ranch on the Arizona/New Mexico border where life was not easy. Their little adobe home had no electricity or running water. There was no school within driving distance. With such limited resources, Sandra's future did not look bright.

Ada Mae began home schooling Sandra when she was four years old, reading to Sandra hour after hour. At age five, Sandra was sent to live with her grandmother so she could attend better schools. Her parents knew the value of education and wanted her to go to college.

Sandra learned persistence and determination from her family, and when she decided to attend Stanford University, she let nothing stand in the way of achieving that goal. To prepare, she enrolled in the most difficult classes in high school and studied continually. At Stanford, she again set her sights high. She graduated near the top of her class, then went on to law school. Today, she is known as Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman Supreme Court Justice in the United States.

Why did Sandra Day O'Connor become so successful? Those who know O'Connor attribute her success to her determination and persistence in overcoming obstacles. She established firm goals and then looked for help and support in an unwavering quest to achieve those goals.

A fierce determination to succeed is characteristic of those who survive and thrive in all arenas. Persistence and determination are fundamental to success in Toastmasters as well. With all the day-to-day activities and distractions competing for our attention, completing that next speech toward a CTM or ATM can sometimes seem very difficult. But it doesn't need to be.

Your Toastmasters club is there to provide the help and support you need when you are faced with challenges. All you need to do is ask. O'Connor was determined to reach her goals; she depended on others for help when faced with challenges. Your Toastmasters club provides the same support. A portion of the club's mission is to provide "a mutually supportive and positive environment" in which you can achieve your goals. Do you have a mentor? If not, ask someone you know and respect to be your mentor. Yes, help is all around you in your Toastmasters club. Your fellow club members can help you reach your goals, but just as with O'Connor, the rest is up to you!

Jon R. Greiner

Jon R. Greiner, DTM
International President

TOASTMASTER

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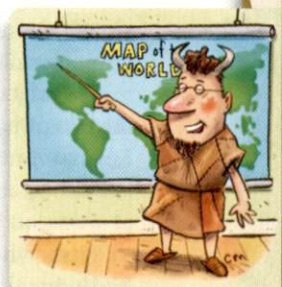


Say Touché to Clichés

Well-worn phrases just don't wear well.

By John Cadley

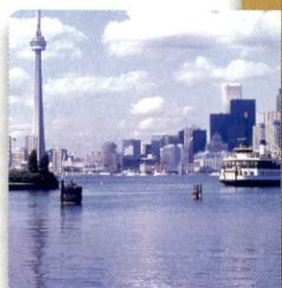
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Toronto: A World Within a City

A complete schedule of events and registration forms for Toastmasters' 74th Annual Convention, August 24-27 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

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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 300 words or less, sign it and send it to letters@toastmasters.org.

Point

It is with some incredulity that I read the November article by Patricia Fry, "Protocol, the glue that holds the club together." Fry quotes Anna Reymann from Ohio, among others, to support her dubious argument that, without adherence to "Toastmasters protocol," a club cannot be professional, attendance will drop and guests won't return.

The blatant errors in logic and the misuse of unsupported opinion from Reymann render this article amateurish at best and off-putting to members at worst.

First, who is President Reymann, and why should we regard her opinion with any authority? Her comment that "having a built-in structure takes the pressure off of club officers when members want to change the way the meeting is run," suggests to me that she has found an ideal excuse to do nothing and maintain her established status quo. Does she not see the benefit of feedback and development?

In total contrast to Reymann's comment, I would suggest that a non-Toastmaster master of ceremonies can easily be as good or better than most Toastmasters and that they are not necessarily disorganized or clumsy on stage.

Like it or not, Toastmasters do not have the monopoly on professionalism, learning opportunity or talent; we merely offer one way of practicing. Toastmasters clubs are clubs of members, who might like to have a say, and might have valid feedback and proposals to offer if the club officers would only listen.

To borrow a phrase from recent elections campaigns, I hope that in the future your magazine can curtail the "evangelical" opinion of the "moral majority" and avoid the publication of over-simplified arguments presented as facts.

Simon Quick • Toastmasters Zug Club 7332 • Zug, Switzerland

Counterpoint

I agree wholeheartedly with Patricia Fry's premise that process and procedure for meetings at Toastmasters clubs or in any organization is important. It just helps make the entire "thing" run a whole lot smoother.

My belief is that *Robert's Rules of Order*, while useful for very large organizations or in true parliamentary process such as our own Canadian House of Commons, is unwieldy for most Toastmasters clubs. Robert's was always intended for use by these very large organizations with complex structures and meeting processes. When dealing with amending bills and laws and recognizing the order of speakers, Robert's rules. I am also well aware that Robert's is the Toastmaster "standard" at the International meeting level. At the local club level though, this might be considered overkill on the process and rules. Large organizations such as the American Library Association has moved away from Robert's, as have other similar associations.

I am a fan of Sturgis and Bourinot, both are easier to use and manage than the weighty Robert's and both are sufficient for clubs of the sizes we see in Toastmasters. Indeed there are even easier "meeting rules" books that lay out standard terms for chairing meetings and managing process. The bottom line is, as Fry suggests, to run an organized and orderly meeting that follows etiquette and protocol

but perhaps does not lose some of its informality.

Terri Tomchyshyn • Cultivators of Self Expression Club 6728
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Thanks for the Info

We spend most of our time in Toastmasters trying to improve our communication skills, mainly those relating to giving good speeches. However, we have another side: the challenge of giving effective evaluations. We read and hear a lot about speaking but not about evaluations. That is, until the January special issue of the magazine.

In this issue there are four excellent articles relating to giving evaluations – one even covers the subject of giving a winning evaluation in a contest. Thank you for publishing this special issue. It can be used as a valuable source of reference as we work toward improving those skills so necessary for effective evaluations.

John McLaughlin, ATM-S • Vernon Club 4425 • Vernon, Connecticut

About Evaluations

I'm sorry, Regina Jaslow, but I don't rank highly your "Want to Win an Evaluation Contest?" (January 2005). After reminding us that an evaluation will primarily cover content and delivery of the speech, and that it is only three minutes, you recommend two diversions into personal reminiscence. Your two examples total 150 words and barely refer to the speech.

At public speaking (and evaluating) speed, 150 words must take at least a minute, more like a minute and a half. The evaluation of the speech and speaker must now be compressed into less than two minutes! In a contest! And Regina also wants us to "weave in humor"!

An evaluation is surely all about the speech and speaker, not about the evaluator.

Ray Morgan, CTM • City of Perth 6428 • Perth, WA, Australia.

Have more than you show,
say less than you know.

What Makes A Great Speech?

Recently, a visitor to our Monday night meeting arrived early and sat down next to me. After we chatted briefly around social niceties, she asked, "What makes a great speech and speaker?" To a Toastmaster, that's like saying, "Explain physics at a glance." I grappled with her question and managed an acceptably academic, sensible answer. Although a relatively new Toastmaster, I had certainly pondered this question at length. (I've even served as a contest judge and meticulously studied judging criteria.) Still, I went away from that encounter determined to apply further, piercing thought to the matter of excellence in communication.

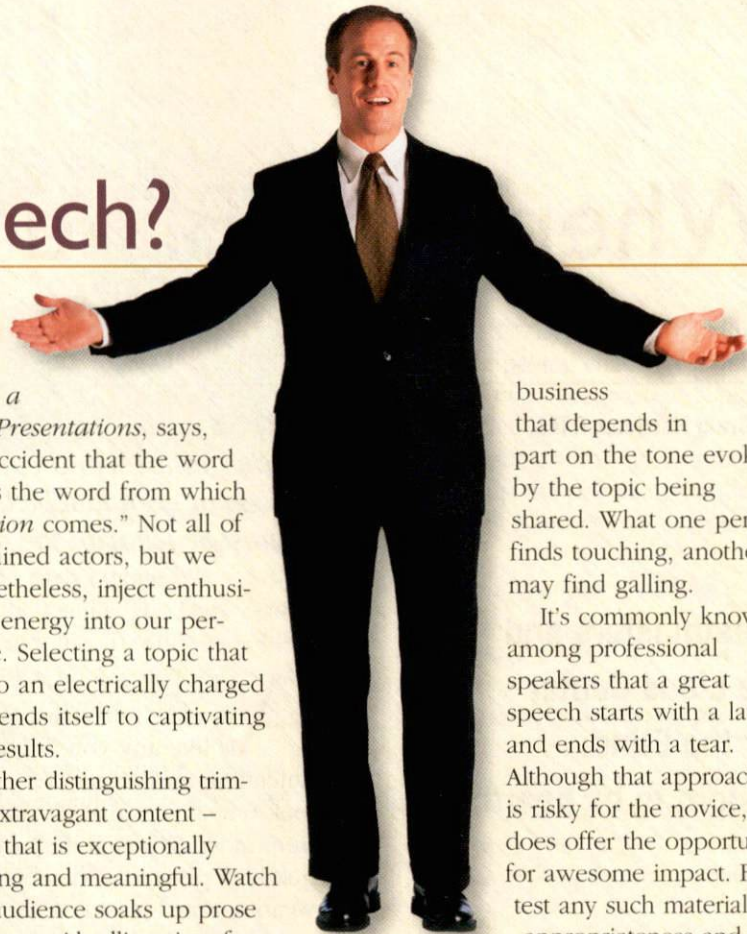
How does one turn in a consistently winning performance commensurate with "great speech" status? Is there some magic formula, some fail-proof recipe? Are there certain commonalities to capture, catalog and replicate? Yes, of course we know the mechanics: preparation, practice, use of appropriate hand gestures, appealing vocal variations. We know that without direct eye contact, there is no emotional contact. We know pauses add drama and flair – even that stronger consonants provide emphasis and color. We know all these basics if we've paid attention to Toastmasters training resources and dared to learn.

Yet, that doesn't quite capture the extra something I've observed in speeches that have totally charmed, inspired or amused me. Although it's challenging to empirically define that extraordinary bonus, one obvious characteristic of charismatic speakers is they're "on stage." My live-wire friend,

Tony Jeary, author of *Life is a Series of Presentations*, says, "It's no accident that the word *present* is the word from which *presentation* comes." Not all of us are trained actors, but we can, nonetheless, inject enthusiasm and energy into our performance. Selecting a topic that plugs into an electrically charged passion lends itself to captivating speech results.

The other distinguishing trimming is extravagant content – language that is exceptionally outstanding and meaningful. Watch how an audience soaks up prose that's woven with alliteration, for instance. Besides the speech's central organization: a strong opening, well-thought-out body and clincher ending, compelling communication has an arsenal of interesting information. The most noteworthy and engaging speeches I've ever heard have been a mix of these elements plus stories, examples, statistics, quotes – substance that's worthwhile.

Statistics and quotes are no longer difficult to unearth with online encyclopedic data available at the tip of the fingers. Examples and stories from your own experience or that of others can be most memorable when used properly. For my part, I find it problematic to use personal examples because I tend to become overly emotional. Emotion under control can create a power-packed moment, but an off-the-chart sentimental display tends to make an audience uneasy. It's a fine line, a tricky



business that depends in part on the tone evoked by the topic being shared. What one person finds touching, another may find galling.

It's commonly known among professional speakers that a great speech starts with a laugh and ends with a tear. Although that approach is risky for the novice, it does offer the opportunity for awesome impact. Field test any such material for appropriateness and also

for audience comfort level. Plan your words and mannerisms cautiously to make sure it's not you who's tearful at the end of your speech. A free-fall dive from shining stage champion to humiliated platform casualty can happen in a split second.

We live in a busy age and time, where take-home value in a well-crafted speech delivered by a geared-up speaker is enormously appreciated. "Have more than you show, say less than you know," is more than an old adage, it's sage advice for savvy Toastmasters striving for superlative speaking. **T**

E. Corinne Byrd, CTM, is a newspaper columnist, former director of marketing for The Zig Ziglar Corporation, and president of Santa Rosa Club 182 in Santa Rosa, California. Contact her at cbyrd@starproductioncareers.com.

Where the Blind Lead the Blind – to Success!

By Craig Harrison, DTM

**Toastmasters and
the Lions Center
for the Blind:
A sight to be heard.**

Facts About Lions Clubs

- A service organization founded in 1917.
- Comprised of nearly 1.4 million Lions members in 46,000 clubs in 193 countries and geographic areas worldwide.
- Its motto: "We serve."
- Operates centers for the blind and visually impaired worldwide since 1847.

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart."

– HELEN KELLER

At first glance, club 7509's weekly Toastmasters meeting is like any you might find at lunchtime on Fridays. Yet a closer look offers clues that it's different from most. Although the meeting is held indoors, many members are wearing tinted glasses. The published agenda has no ink on it, just Braille dots. And guide dogs are seated at the side of members. Welcome to the Lions Blind Toastmasters club, which meets at Lions Center for the Blind in Oakland, California.

Meetings begin with a tap of the gavel and members sounding off in a form of a roll call: Iona, Dan, Virgil, Edna, Asia, Betty, Josie, Larry, Mona, Peggy and others announce their presence. As each name is heard, other members murmur in recognition.

Like many clubs, the Lions Blind Toastmasters meeting begins weekly with the pledge of allegiance, followed by the president's introduction of that week's Toastmaster. This week's meeting is especially poignant with the recent passing of President Ronald Reagan and legendary blind jazz pianist and singer Ray Charles. Club members share their remembrances of these

stellar communicators in the week's Table Topics.

The prepared speeches this week come from the *Communication and Leadership* manual. Speaker Dan Peterson's "show what you mean" speech is about the jitterbug. Remarkably, he does more than describe it. He asks for a partner and narrates the steps as he and his partner dip and sway. "Toe and heel, toe and heel, back-step...."

Why, you ask, would he dance when nobody can see him?

Just as a smile comes through over the telephone even though we can't see the smiler, so too is Dan's message authenticated through his movements. Members feel his energy and hear his exhilaration. As I close my eyes and listen, I am struck by the vitality in Dan's voice and the positive vibrations emanating from the makeshift dance floor behind the lectern.

Another speaker, Daniel Everett, gives speech No. 3 about fishing. He explains the license procedure, then describes his pole and narrates the casting action of his rod on the river. We're on the expedition with him.

Expanding a Contracting World

Some club members have been blind for years. Others are currently succumbing to blindness at various ages. Others are partially sighted.

"It can be harrowing," says Peggy Nichols, executive director of Lions Center for the Blind. She explains the



◀ Members of the Lions Center for the Blind Toastmasters Club learn to speak up.

special role Toastmasters plays for those whose *retinitis pigmentosa* is advancing.

"When members lose their sight, they have a tendency to draw inward and their advocacy for self goes away," she says. "Their world closes in on them. Toastmasters helps them expand that world again. It helps them negotiate their world powerfully at a time when they may be feeling powerless and victimized.

"Toastmasters fits in well with the vocational training the center offers. More than a few members tell me it's their favorite activity of the week."

Advocating for Themselves

Nichols continues: "Some take no for an answer instead of asking questions that sighted people might ask, such as: Why not? When can I...? How can I...?"

"They have a tendency not to push. Toastmasters helps our people develop the courage to ask questions for themselves and speak their minds. They become advocates for themselves."

There's something intrinsically gratifying about experiencing people supporting each other while actively building their skills. The Lions Center for the Blind, like Toastmasters, fosters understanding, community and a learning environment where mastery builds self-esteem.

While helping prepare its members for independence in a sighted world, the best of the human spirit comes together each Friday at the Lions Blind club. I invite all of you to visit this extraordinary club, or build one within your district in conjunction with your local Lions Blind Center.

Meeting the Challenges of Life

In conversations with Dana LaMon, Toastmasters' 1992 World Champion of Public Speaking, I came to learn that two world champions were blind at the time they won their awards.

LaMon is now a professional speaker. The other, Evelyn Jane Burgay, won the International Speech Contest in 1977. She served as international

director in 1991-1993, Clearly, blindness, while posing challenges, didn't limit these two Toastmasters' aspirations or achievements.

The meeting's closing thought this day sums up the prevailing attitude of the Lions Blind club's members:

I will walk for you if you have no legs.

I will reach for you if you have no arms.

I will speak for you if you are mute.

I will interpret the sounds of the earth if you are deaf...

I will move your fingers over the shapes of the world if you are blind...


All these things I will do for you, if you ask me to.

But if you should ask for sympathy, I would give you none! For in obliging your wish

I would surely rob you of the spirit to meet the challenges of life!

— Claude McPhee

Lions Center for the Blind Club
7509 meets Fridays 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. at:

Lions Center for the Blind
3834 Opal Street
Oakland, CA 94609-2625 USA
(510) 450-1580
e-mail: garycwong@aol.com. 

Hellen Keller Incites Lions!

Lions Club International is recognized worldwide for its service to the blind and visually impaired. This service began when Helen Keller, a pioneering advocate for the disabled, challenged the Lions to become "knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness" at the association's 1925 international convention.

For more info visit: www.lionsclubs.org

Craig Harrison, DTM, a member of Laugh Lovers Club 596430 in Oakland, California, is a professional speaker. For more information, visit www.ExpressionsOfExcellence.com.

Mind Your Online Manners

A Toastmaster's guide to e-mail etiquette.



Toastmaster George Tomlinson calls e-mail “the most beautiful system for communicating.” And it is. By simply pressing Send, you can pass on a message to your entire club. Tomlinson experienced the convenience of e-mail first-hand just before a recent meeting of his club in New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada. He sent out a

copy of the agenda the night before the meeting, asking members to fill in any available roles. Within a couple of hours, each role was filled. “It used to be I had to phone everyone,” he says, adding that it’s a challenge to get in touch with people via telephone, and many times he would end up just leaving a message on an answering machine, never knowing whether it was even heard.

Like many, however, Tomlinson realizes that e-mail is not a perfect medium. When abused, e-mail can cause bad feelings and upset members. “Some people have an addiction to e-mail,” he says, admitting that he may be one of them.

If used responsibly however, e-mail can be a great way to notify members of the next meeting’s agenda, of upcoming events and club accomplishments. But when used haphazardly, e-mail can transmit viruses, put members in compromising situations with their employers and generally be a time-consuming nuisance.

Sticking to a few rules of etiquette (also known as Netiquette) when corresponding by e-mail is very important. Following are a few guidelines, specifically geared toward Toastmasters, for making e-mail a tool for positive interaction within your club.

Keep the Messages Strictly Toastmasters-Related

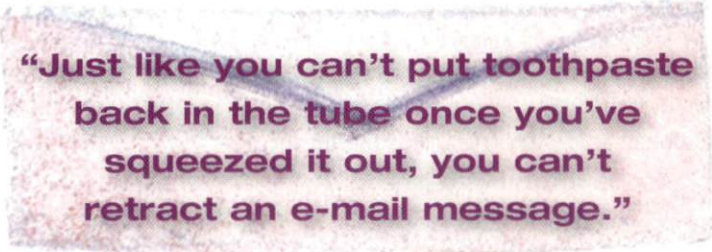
Don’t send messages that aren’t specifically relevant to Toastmasters. That means don’t send virus alerts (they’re usually hoaxes, anyway), don’t send jokes or news updates and, above all, don’t send chain letters, marketing schemes or other forms of spam. If you wouldn’t send that same message by regular mail or call by phone to pass on the information, then don’t send it by e-mail. Keep in mind that many Toastmasters use their work e-mail addresses for club correspondence. And even those who don’t may not appreciate the added traffic to their home accounts.

Before sending any e-mail to a fellow Toastmaster, consider the advice master networker and author Darcy Rezac gives in his guide to networking, *The Frog and Prince*: “Ask yourself, ‘Is what I am about to send going to add any value to this busy person’s life?’” If the answer is no, press Delete rather than Send.

Don’t Forward E-mail from Others

E-mail, just like a personal letter, is copyright-protected in many countries. That means the owner (the original writer of the material) has sole control over the message’s reproduction and distribution. To forward that material without the writer’s permission is a violation of copyright law.

Legal issues aside, consider the ethical implications of forwarding a message without the original author’s knowledge or consent. For example, if a member of your club confides in you that he or she is taking a leave of absence from Toastmasters to deal with personal issues, don’t forward that message to the entire club. Put yourself in the other person’s place. Would you want confidential material circulated to the entire group? Just like you can’t put toothpaste back in the tube once you’ve squeezed it out, you can’t retract an e-mail message. Best to not send it in the first place.



“Just like you can’t put toothpaste back in the tube once you’ve squeezed it out, you can’t retract an e-mail message.”

Don’t Send Highly Elaborate, Singing, Dancing E-mail Messages or Greeting Cards

Unless you’ve been given permission to do so, don’t send out the singing telegrams of the e-mail world.

Nothing is more frightening or annoying than surprise music and voices in the middle of quiet time at home or in the office.

What’s more, all those bells and whistles take time to download. Don’t tie up somebody’s e-mail system with a fancy greeting. In most cases your efforts go unappreciated (but not unnoticed). You might want to be remembered in a more positive light.

10 Netiquette Tips

Barbara K. Adamski, CTM

1. **Don't YELL.** In cyberspace, using all uppercase letters is considered yelling. Don't do it.
2. **Edit past messages.** When replying to messages, or to a thread of messages, edit out repetitive information. Do, however, leave the question or portion of message you're replying to. Nothing is more frustrating than getting an e-mail that merely says "Yes" or "Works for me," without any indication of what the original question or proposal was.
3. **Provide detail in the subject line.** Not only does "Important information for you" not tell the recipient what your message is about, certain anti-spamming systems may flag your message as spam and delete it.
4. **Request action.** If you're sending out an e-mail to several people, specify what sort of action needs to be taken. Do you want all 20 recipients to reply? Should they reply just to you or to the entire group? Clarify your expectations.
5. **Assume goodwill.** Assessing the tone of an e-mail is difficult. Don't assume that the sender is angry or rude.
6. **Don't send an e-mail when angry.** Take a deep breath, go for a walk, but definitely calm down. Once you send an e-mail, you can't take it back. Make sure the message is not one you may later regret sending.
7. **Fill in the "To" line last.** Messages often get sent to the wrong person because someone pressed Reply rather than "Start a new message."
8. **Ask before you attach.** Because many viruses are sent by way of attachments, people are reluctant to open attachments they are not expecting. Don't send an attachment without first checking with the recipient.
9. **Don't forward unnecessary messages to large groups of people.** More often than not, your forwarded message is something the recipient has received before. Virus hoaxes, chain letters and jokes get circulated and recirculated. Don't waste people's time; don't be a spammer.
10. **Don't display others' addresses.** When sending to a large group of people, put your own e-mail address in the "To" line and "bcc" (blind copy) everyone else. That way, you are respecting people's privacy.

Respect Others' Wishes

Give people an opt-out option. If a fellow Toastmaster doesn't want to receive messages by e-mail, remove that person from your list. Don't argue about it, and don't question the reason behind the request.

Create a Policy Within Your Club – and Stick to It

Coming up with a clear club policy regarding the use of e-mail can go a long way in creating an environment of respect. Many people are reluctant to give out their e-mail addresses. Doing so makes their computer systems more vulnerable to viruses and spam messages. Having a written policy and passing it out to both current and prospective

members will show that you respect their privacy and online security concerns.

Toastmasters International's core values are "integrity, dedication to excellence, service to the member and respect for the individual." Keep those values in mind as you write your message, and think about them before you press Send.

Above all, make sure your club's e-mail policy reflects these values. Your members will thank you. ■

Barbara Adamski, CTM, is a freelance writer and member of Tillicum Club 3435 in New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada. Visit her Web site at www3.telus.net/freelancewriter.

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Help with your clubs officers: clubofficers@toastmasters.org

Questions about awards: educationawards@toastmasters.org

Need your club/district password? lostpassword@toastmasters.org

Have a membership-related problem or missing your magazine? membership@toastmasters.org

Questions about dues renewals: renewals@toastmasters.org

Questions about the proposed dues increase? duesincrease@toastmasters.org

Help with club statements? statements@toastmasters.org

Want to place an order? supplyorders@toastmasters.org

Still not sure? Visit the Contact Us page on the TI Web site or e-mail tminfo@toastmasters.org

Remember:

- **Only send your e-mail to one address.** Sending to multiple addresses will delay response time. If the person you sent the e-mail to can't answer your questions, he or she will forward it to the person who can best help you.
- **Include your member or club number on all correspondence.**
- **Please be patient:** Our goal is to respond to all e-mail within 48 hours.

An online newsletter, in the form of a Web log, is an easy way to give your club a Web presence and personality.

Get Blogging

When I first joined the Tillicum Toastmasters club a year and a half ago, I wanted to contribute to the club in a positive way. And since I'm a writer by trade, getting involved with the club's newsletter seemed perfectly natural. There was, however, a glitch: Our club didn't have a newsletter.

Fairly new to (and passionately in love with) the Internet, I decided to create an online newsletter, in the form of a Web log, which is more commonly known as a blog. For many people, blogs are online journals containing personal anecdotes, rants, and sometimes monologues about absolutely nothing at all. I wanted to use our club blog to not only give the Tillicum club a Web presence, but also a personality.

Some of the advantages to having an online newsletter were obvious. I could update our club information quickly and conveniently. I didn't have to liaise with a design team and printers, nor did I have to lick any stamps or envelopes. And operating costs were virtually non-existent. By signing up with a free blog hosting service (I used Blogger at www.blogger.com, but there are several others), I was able to create a site in minutes. And the best part? Our Toastmasters blog is environmentally friendly – no ink, no paper. If you can save a tree, why not?

Another great thing about blogs is that they can link to other sites. This is particularly useful when a speaker mentions a Web site as a reference. I include a link to the site in the blog, and with a click of the mouse, members can go directly to the site.

Prospective members who happen upon the blog, which can be accessed from our division Web site,

are able to check out our club's activities – and to a great extent our club's personality – prior to attending that first meeting. Even before they arrive, they know a few names!

Current members who have been absent for a while due to work, family or personal commitments appreciate being kept up-to-date on what's going on in the club. And members who regularly attend meetings enjoy seeing their names in print as Best Speaker, for doing a great job as chairman or for giving their Ice Breaker speech. The blog is an online record of the comings and goings of our club – a place to brag, encourage and provide information. And, best of all, the information is archived, allowing anyone to review our members' accomplishments.

Since its start in the mid 1990s, the blogging scene has rapidly advanced technologically. While original blogs were designed to merely scroll, modern blogs are capable of handling images, audio files and interactive postings. They can be set to allow visitors to comment on what's written (they may need to first register with the server, but this is free of charge). Several members can share the responsibility (and fun!) of updating the blog, or even the entire Toastmasters membership can be given access, so they, too, can create blog entries.

And there's no need to fear a lack of technical skills, either. With many services, bloggers have the option of working in html (hypertext mark-up language), but if they aren't familiar with Internet formatting codes, they can click icons and have the server change text to bold, link to other sites and more.

If you want to start blogging, just sign up with a site (I recommend Blogger for its ease of use and efficient technical support) and follow their simple instructions. Using one of their ready-made templates makes the process ultra-convenient. You can edit the template to suit your needs, or switch templates to create an entirely new look when you tire of the first one.

Once you get started, you'll have a great time documenting your club's social life, informing members of upcoming events and contests, and providing useful information to prospective members.

Remember, though, that everything on the Internet is searchable, so be careful what you write – computer-archived information will be accessible for years to come. If you don't believe me, enter your name in a search engine such as Google and see what happens (use quotation marks around your first and last names to narrow the results). Who knows? You may even be the subject of someone else's blog! At our club, we protect members' privacy by not posting last names unless we've been given explicit permission to do so. It's a good policy to follow.

A recent article in *Business Week* estimates 20,000 blogs exist in cyberspace. Why don't you join us in the exciting world of push-button publishing? You'll be glad you did. **T**

Barbara K. Adamski, CTM is a writer and editor based in New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada. The original Tillicum Club 3435 blog can be viewed at tillicum-toastmasters.blogspot.com/.

The little things cause the greatest problems.

By Lin Gensing-Pophal

The Dos and Don'ts of Online Etiquette

While it is most often the Internet "newbies" who commit the most heinous of online etiquette blunders, even "old pros" can find themselves inadvertently committing online faux pas. As in other endeavors, it is often the little things that cause the greatest problems. Online communication is no exception. Following are some "little things" that you should be aware of when communicating online.

- **Be cautious** about the information you include in your e-mails, and do so only with the knowledge that e-mail is not private. Your e-mail message can be readily forwarded to others individually, or through newsgroups and message boards.
- **Respect copyright laws.** Don't include full-text articles in your e-mails (instead include a link to that information if it is available online). If you quote from published material, always cite the source of that information. Don't forward e-mail you've received from someone else without that person's express permission.
- **Use "emoticons" judiciously.** Emoticons are symbols formed with letters on the keyboard and arranged in such a way that they represent various facial expressions. The most common is a smiley face, but there are dozens of others. While emoticons can be helpful for conveying meaning when you don't have the benefit of facial expression or voice inflection, don't overdo it.

- **Keep your messages short and to the point** – and proofread your messages! While e-mail is a very informal communication medium, sloppy e-mails will reflect negatively on you.



- **Be responsive.** Check your e-mail regularly and respond promptly to the messages you receive. But don't be too impatient with slow response from others. Generally, 48 hours is a reasonable timeframe for a response.

Using NewsGroups

Newsgroups are electronic bulletin boards that allow multiple individuals to post and read messages created by group members. There are hundreds of newsgroups available representing a wide range of personal, professional and avocational interests. When participating in newsgroups, keep the following points in mind:

- **Make sure the newsgroup you select is appropriate for you**, particularly if you plan to be an active participant. It is perfectly acceptable, and quite common, for newsgroup participants to "lurk" (read the messages of others without actively posting). But if you plan to be a participant, make sure that you "fit in," or other group members may become frustrated with you.
- **Follow the rules of the newsgroup.** Visit the FAQ (frequently asked questions) area before participating in the newsgroup. This is where you'll find answers to basic questions about the site, as well as tips and "rules" for participation.
- **Save the instructions** you receive when you first subscribe to the list. This information can come in handy later, as you'll see in the next point...
- One of the most common errors made by newsgroup participants is **sending an "unsubscribe" message to the general list, rather than to the list manager.** The appropriate address for unsubscribing from a list will be provided in the instructions you receive when you join and can also be found in the FAQs.
- One of the most frustrating errors made by newsgroup participants is **using the automatic "out of office" response function** that most e-mail programs come with when participating in a newsgroup. This function can be helpful when your e-mail

correspondence is limited to individuals within your company or to select personal acquaintances. When you participate in a newsgroup, however, every message posted will generate an automatic response from your e-mail address, filling the list with dozens – sometimes even hundreds – of “Joe will be out of the office until...” messages.

- **Post group messages to the group,** but send individual messages “offline” to the individual you wish to communicate with. Any message posted to the newsgroup can be viewed by all participants and sometimes this is appropriate. But, if you become engaged in a private conversation with one participant, or wish to comment privately to an individual message, make sure you use that individual’s e-mail address for your reply and not the group address.
- **Remember that the messages you post to the group are public** and will

be read by all. Use tact and diplomacy in criticizing the ideas and comments of others. Personal attacks online are known as flaming. You do not want to be the victim or the perpetrator of a flame.

- **Keep in mind that not all newsgroup participants will be from the United States.** There is a tendency to be very ethnocentric online, so be careful not to inadvertently make comments that can be offensive to members of other countries.

Promoting Yourself and Your Products

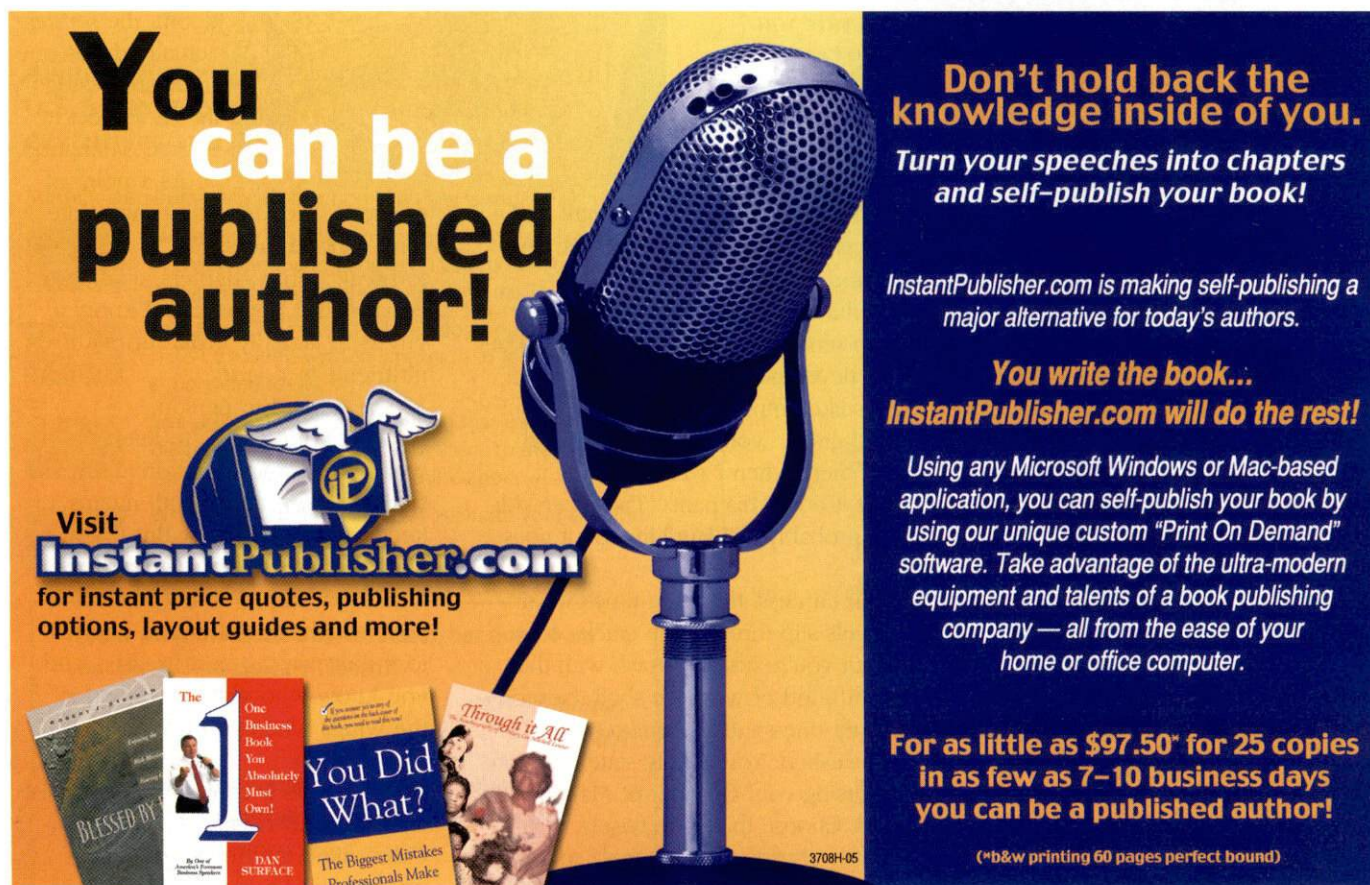
While promoting your business and its products and services online can be a great way to generate sales, there are right ways and wrong ways to generate sales.

- **Go ahead and use a signature line at the bottom of your e-mails,** including your name and other pertinent information, but don’t get carried away. It is appropriate to include

your business name and Web site address here, but don’t include a great deal of additional information or promotional material. In general, four lines should be the maximum length of your signature file.

- **Don’t send spam.** Spam is online lingo for unsolicited e-mail promoting products and services. Never send information about your product or service to recipients that have not specifically asked for that information. And, by all means, never send information to *groups* of individuals whose names and e-mail addresses you have compiled or obtained – unless they have *expressly* asked for that information. Not only do you risk making large numbers of people angry, but your ISP (Internet service provider) may cancel your account if complaints are received. **T**

Lin Gensing-Pophal is a freelance writer living in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin.



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Respond to your friends' e-mails or face the consequences.

E-Mail Snubs

I've never had a best friend. I've always been the best friend runner-up, as in, "You'll be my best friend if *he* dies." So I work extra hard to be pleasant in the hope that some day, when no one is looking, I'll catch the best-friend bouquet. That is why it burns my briefs when somebody snubs an e-mail. "Me? Snubbed? But I was so *good* to him."

Everywhere you turn, e-mails are being dismissed by friends, colleagues, suicide prevention centers.... It's an outbreak of global proportions that should be addressed formally, maybe in Geneva. Granted, everyone catches up with technology at their own pace. When my grandma leaves a voicemail, she still sounds like she is physically trapped in the machine.

Jason, is that you? It's your grandma. Can somebody give this message to my grandson?

She doesn't get the whole voice-mail thing, just as loads of people don't get e-mail. They imagine that e-mails are like memos that don't require an answer – even when you ask for one.

Rule #1: E-mails are not memos.

They are, in contrast, a courteous kind of phone call. E-mail invites you to reply at your own convenience without pulling you away from the momentous affair of watching TV. And every time you don't reply, the sender gets the message.

Rule #2: Friends do not snub friends.

They may write back to say, "Quit buggin' before I smack you," but they do not snub. The moment you slight a friend's e-mail, you fall from a Category One friend to a Category Two friend, otherwise known as *acquaintance*. Please note that you may not pass bodily gas around an acquaintance, nor

may you ask them to drive you to the airport.

When confronted, some friends claim that they never received an e-mail, to which I say, "Bleh." Newer editions of the Bible affirm that sidestepping e-mails is, in fact, punishable by eternal damnation. It is God's way of preventing the following madness:

"Did you get my e-mail? I sent it this morning. Hmm. I wonder what could have happened. You sure you didn't get it? I know I sent it...."

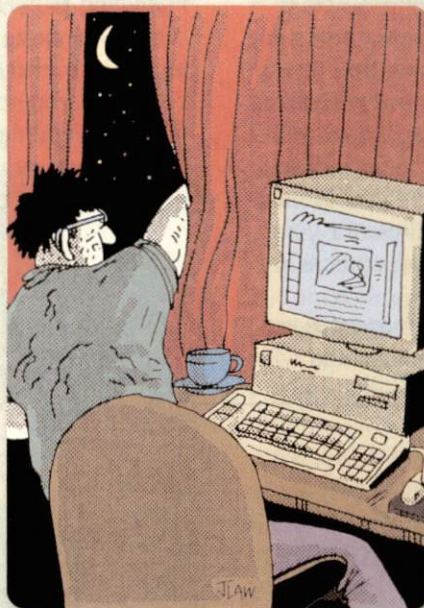
Rule #3: Unless you get an error message, the addressee received your e-mail and has snubbed you. I'm sorry you had to find out this way.

I have a friend – er, acquaintance – who sends me e-mails all the time but has never, not once, replied to mine. He's like Jimmy Bitzer who, in the third grade, would extend his hand and then, when I went to shake it, stuff it down his pants. The other kids are probably still laughing. So it goes.

In fairness, there are times when e-mails slip through the cracks or when you're just in a trash-with-the-world kind of way. We shall therefore permit one snub per quarter, no questions asked. You simply state that you are using your Get Out of Mail Free card. Choose this snub wisely.

It is always okay to snub spam, which includes, but is not limited to,

offers to refinance your home, sell you a Rolex, fill your prescription, or hand over a jillion dollars on behalf of the ousted leader of Zubufulu, who desperately needs your help.



Some e-mails resemble spam but are composed for hand-selected victims. We will call this *spam lite* and await a ruling from Geneva. If you ever receive an e-mail that requires you to perform some action to save you from pending doom, the *sender* actually drops one friendship category and is subject to eternal damnation.

As a point of etiquette, friends also do not write long-winded messages. If you have to break it into chapters, it's not an e-mail; it's a phone call. I know a guy who actually broke up with his girlfriend *by e-mail*.

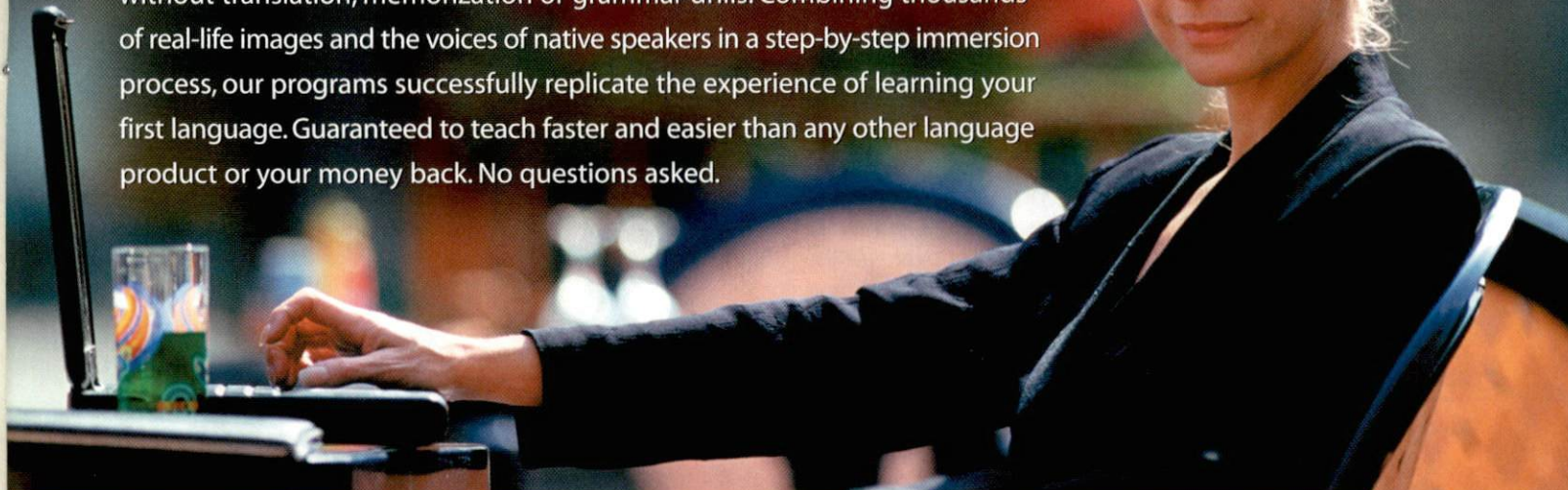
She replied in person.

So, if your goal is to keep the world away and never drive anyone to the airport, then by all means keep ignoring e-mails. But if you want to have a real, live Category One friendship, you might rethink your snubbery. Otherwise you risk losing even your best friend... and you-know-who will be waiting in the wings when you do. **T**

Jason Love is a comedian, cartoonist and writer living in Southern California. Visit his Web site at www.jasonlove.com.

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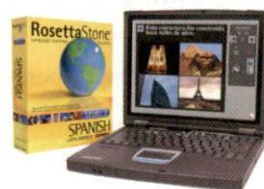
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Say Touché to Clichés

I know a history buff who is a voracious reader of eminent historians. He studies their work with clinical precision, showing particular interest in historical figures who experience a meteoric rise followed by a precipitous drop and an untimely demise. Their stories take him on an emotional roller coaster from which he can only recover by hitting the links as an avid golfer.

Question: While reading the above paragraph, how many times did your cliché meter go off? If it was fewer than nine, you may need a remedial course in Original Self Expression 101.

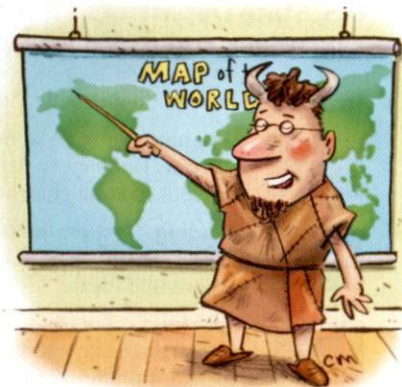
Cliché #1:

History Buff

Is it a law of the land that every human being with an interest in events of the past must always and everywhere be known as a history *buff*? These words have become linguistic Siamese twins: You can't have one without the other. And for just that reason they display a startling lack of originality, not to mention imprecision. Does anyone know what a buff is? Its first and primary meaning is leather made from buffalo hide. Using it to denote a devotee of some activity or subject comes way down the list,

and only as an informal usage. I'm sure there are plenty of word mavens who can tell me when, where, and why *history* and *buff* became joined at the hip, but that's not the point. It's a cliché! It's been beaten to exhaustion like a rented mule.

As practitioners of artful communication, don't we owe our listeners something better? When we mention a friend who knows the exact number of cigars Ulysses S. Grant smoked at the Battle of Shiloh, and when we say, "Oh yes, he's a real Civil War..." do we really want them to say *buff* in their minds before we even get it out? Wouldn't it be better to jar their expectations with the unexpected? And in this case *anything* besides *buff* would be unexpected. Even something as prosaic as "Oh



History buff

yes, he's a real Civil War *student*" would cause the neurons in your listeners' brains to short circuit and blow smoke out their ears as the anticipated *buff* failed to register in the auditory nerves.

Want to get more creative? How about:

"Oh yes, he knows the Civil War as if he were there."

Or, "Oh yes, he studies Civil War battles like an entomologist studies bugs."

(With the latter you even get extra points for knowing what entomologist means.)

Neither of these requires especially nimble thinking. I'm sure within 60 seconds you could come up with several examples of your own. So please, *do*, and then bask in the admiration you'll receive for being perceived as the most blindingly original speaker your audience has ever heard.

Cliché #2:

Voracious Reader

Puh-leeeeease! Voracious refers to the craving or consumption of large quantities of food, and I admit – the first person to pair this meaty adjective with readers instead of eaters showed true originality in his or her recognition of literature as metaphorical food for the mind. Well done! The *second* person to use the phrase deserves credit as well for recognizing the brilliance with which it communicates the human hunger for knowledge.

After that it's just a lot of me-too. When you call someone a voracious reader or a history buff you're buying your creativity off the rack, as it were. There it is, hanging in the one-size-fits-all section, on sale for anyone who wants to save the few seconds it would take to think of something original. Let us be

creative designers rather than quotidian bargain shoppers! Let us custom tailor our own linguistic fashions from the rich, raw material that the English language so amply provides!

Cliché #3:

Eminent Historian

Written, there are two words, but spoken it is invariably one: "Our guest speaker this evening is the eminent historian..." Apparently, historians cannot be anything else. Granted, the arduous task of rummaging through the chaos of the past to find some semblance of meaning is worthy of recognition. But if every historian is by

definition eminent then no historian is eminent, since eminent means distinguished, and in the Land of the Distinguished a distinguished person has no distinction whatsoever.



Eminent historian

Cliché #4:

Clinical Precision

Not only is this a cliché; it is an oxymoron. *Clinical* refers to things medical, with the assumption that procedures involving life and death possess a degree of precision considerably greater than, say, breaking up a sidewalk with a jackhammer. Yet my friends in the medical profession have been telling me for years to avoid the hospital unless I am dying, and then only if I want to hasten the process. In a setting where patients routinely get the wrong limb amputated or the wrong organ removed, and where a mysterious post-operative complication is found to be the surgeon's bow tie sutured up inside the patient, it is reasonable to assume that *clinical* is perhaps not the most precise way to describe precision. *Surgical precision* is no better, for obvious reasons.



Clinical precision

Cliché #5:

Meteoric Rise

Let's examine our terms here. A meteor begins as a meteoroid, which is a remnant of a comet traveling through space. Upon entering the earth's atmosphere, it is heated to luminosity at which time it becomes a meteor. At no time does the concept of rising become operative, since meteors exist in space where there is no up or down or sideways or backward or



Meteoric rise

forward or reverse (thank you, Dr. Einstein). To say someone has experienced a meteoric rise is to say, quite literally, that they have achieved a momentary brilliance followed by fiery burnout and subsequent implosion into a charred cinder floating through fathomless darkness. Not a very positive image. If we wish to describe someone's quick rise to fame and fortune we might better say, "He went up and down like a five-cent rocket" and be done with it.

Cliché #6:

Precipitous Drop

Ah yes, the precipice, the cliff's edge, the steep drop with nothing to impede one's downward velocity. Precipitous is one of those words that retains its polish despite repeated use. It never *sounds* like

a cliché, and for just that reason it is even more insidious, because it confers upon the user a reputation for original expression that he or she has done nothing to earn. This is linguistic freeloading of the first order! If we're speaking metaphorically and wish to use *precipitous*, then let it at least modify something besides *drop*: a precipitous fall, perhaps. Or a precipitous decline. Or better yet, take the adverbial route, as in, "Roger's ill-fated investment in Enron caused his portfolio to tank precipitously." If we're speaking literally, on the other hand,

let's not mince words. Warning a hiking companion of a precipitous drop just ahead is only effective if he or she knows what precipitous means. Mundane as it may sound, "Watch your step" might be the better choice for all concerned.

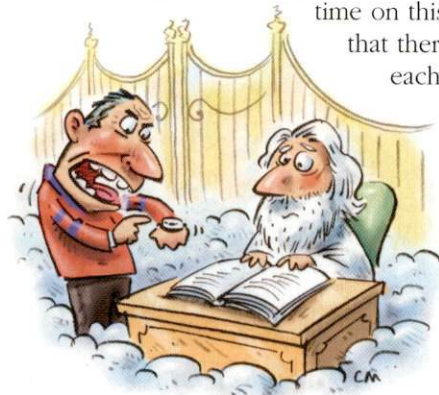


Precipitous drop

Cliché #7:

Untimely Demise

Hah! Would that it were so! This warhorse reflects the universal human hope that somehow one has more time on this earth than one actually has, that there is an appointed hour for each of us to shuffle off this mortal coil, and that if we



Untimely demise

should die before that hour our death would be "untimely." In fact, however, "untimely demise" is a contradiction in terms since everyone who dies agrees that their "time is up," meaning they croaked at the precise moment they should have.

Cliché #8:

Emotional Roller Coaster

This is the stock phrase used to describe how human feelings can run the gamut within a short period of time, from "up" feelings of happiness and joy to "down" feelings of gloom and despair – the same feelings people experience on an actual roller coaster depending on how much they want to be there. It is an apt phrase, a felicitous conjoining of words, no doubt. And again – kudos to the first person who coined it. But the coin is tarnished. We can barely make out the image any more. How



Emotional Roller Coaster

about an emotional kaleidoscope, or a cornucopia, or an alphabet soup. Not as good as roller coaster, you say? Good! Think of one that is.

Cliché #9:

Avid Golfer

This one takes the cake. Avid is generally used to mean ardent or enthusiastic, yet simple observation will tell you that the only time a golfer is ever avid is before he or she actually starts to play the game.

Once the first drive is hooked into the woods we have a frustrated golfer, an angry golfer, a disappointed golfer, a stressed-out golfer, a worried golfer, a suicidal golfer – and so on. The only thing left to be avid about is the 19th hole, where enough alcohol can be consumed to numb the feeling of complete failure and humiliation.

No, golfers are never avid. From the first hole to the last they're on an emotional roller coaster, hoping that every drive will have a meteoric rise but fearing instead it will drop precipitously, hit a rock, and ricochet sharply through the window of a house next to the golf course, hitting a voracious reader of eminent historians on the top of the head with clinical precision and thus causing the untimely demise of an avid history buff.

Wait, let me rephrase that... **T**



Avid golfer

John Cadley is a New York advertising copywriter and regular contributor to this magazine. Contact him at jcadley@twcny.rr.com.

Simple language is
not always better.

The Armory of the Mind

At a recent seminar for the local lawyers' association, the topic of the keynote address was "Keeping It Simple." The learned judge cautioned the lawyers to avoid legalese in documents and presentations, and also to use one word instead of five wherever possible. "Above all else," he said, "keep it simple."

It's true; lawyers have a reputation for convoluted language. But every business has its jargon, and I've heard the "keep it simple" mantra uttered in seminars for other professions too. I am concerned that such statements, left unchallenged, will lead to the ruination of our language.

To prove my point, let's consider the language used to describe what lawyers call a "slip and fall" in a supermarket. There is nothing out of the ordinary in such an event. It happens all the time, but it's nevertheless traumatic to the victim. How should his plight be described to take it out of the commonplace and make it something a reader can identify with?

Clearly, no judge (or anyone else for that matter) wants to read statements such as these:

"Whereas the Plaintiff did, on the 25th day of February, attend at the A&P, a corporation incorporated pursuant to the laws of the aforesaid jurisdiction, and, falling on detritus on the imperfectly cleaned floor of the premises, did sustain an injury to his cranium which has caused severe and permanent disability, caused entirely by the negligence of the Defendant Corporation."

The eyes glaze over at the mere whiff of a 'whereas.' Yet if we earnestly follow the directions to "keep it simple," we end up with this instead:

"A man went to a store. He fell and hurt his head. Now he wants money."

This is not compelling reading either. There must be something more to a great presentation than avoiding jargon and using words of one syllable. Let's test this hypothesis by seeing how great writers of the past might present the case:

Shakespeare:

*Oh how weary, stale, flat and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this bread
After Mr. Smith fell upon it,
when he broke his head*

James Joyce:

*Well I was in the A&P thinking
about the*

*hockey game and the great hot dog I had yes
and how sundin scored a goal yes
and that id like to see the wife
naked at home yes
and then I fell on something in
the aisle nooooooooooooo.*

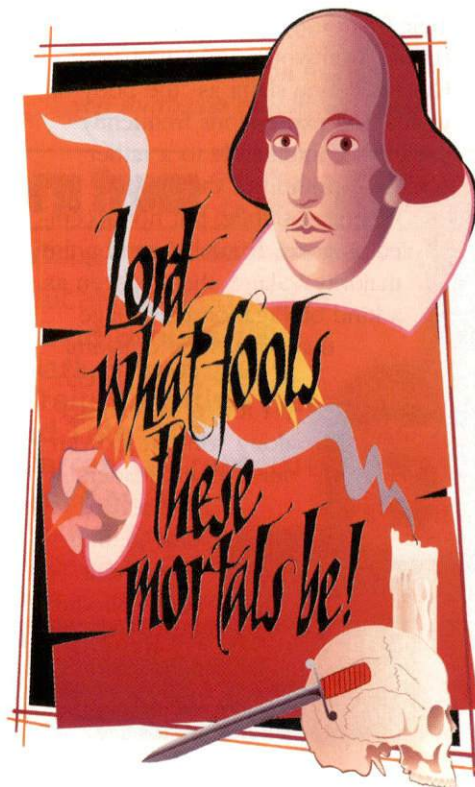
Dylan Thomas:

*It is Thursday, moonlit night in a
small town, the TVs in the
sleepy houses winking. Listen. These
are the footsteps of Mr.
Smith, fifty-seven, whisky-breath'd,
stubbled like a corn-field
in January. In the cabbage-rowed,
winter-tomato'd, fluorescent-
lighted store, he walks with good
husband purpose to buy the loaf
of bread and falls, heavily, clumsily.
Listen. It is the sound of the
ambulance.*

My point is that simple is not always better, fewer words not always more clear. If you are making a presentation, either spoken or written, take a page from the great masters of literature and don't strive for simplicity as your ideal. Rather, strive to be eloquent. The primary goal of a successful presentation is to tell the story in the most compelling manner to achieve the greatest support for your position. I end with these words from Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who said it far better than I could:

"Language is the armory of the human mind, and at once contains the trophies of its past and the weapons of its future conquests." **T**

Valerie Mutton is a freelance writer living in Bowmanville, ON, Canada.



Slang as It is Slung

By Richard Lederer

If variety is the spice of life, slang is the spice of language.

Slang is *hot* and slang is *cool*. Slang is *nifty* and slang is *wicked*. Slang is the *bee's knees*, the *cat's whiskers* and the *cat's pajamas*. Slang is *far out*, *groovy* and *outa sight*. Slang is *fresh*, *fly* and *phat*. Slang is *bodacious*, *ducky* and *fantabulous*. Slang is *ace*, *awesome*, *bad*, *sweet*, *smooth*, *copacetic*, *the most*, *the max* and *totally tubular*.

Those are 25 ways of saying that, if variety is the spice of life, slang is the spice of language. Slang adds gusto to the feast of words, as long as speakers and writers remember that too much spice can kill the feast of any dish.

What is slang? In the preface to their *Dictionary of American Slang*, Harold Wentworth and Stuart Berg Flexner define slang as "the body of words and expressions frequently used by or intelligible to a rather large portion of the general American public, but not accepted as good, formal usage by the majority." Slang, then, is seen as a kind of vagabond language

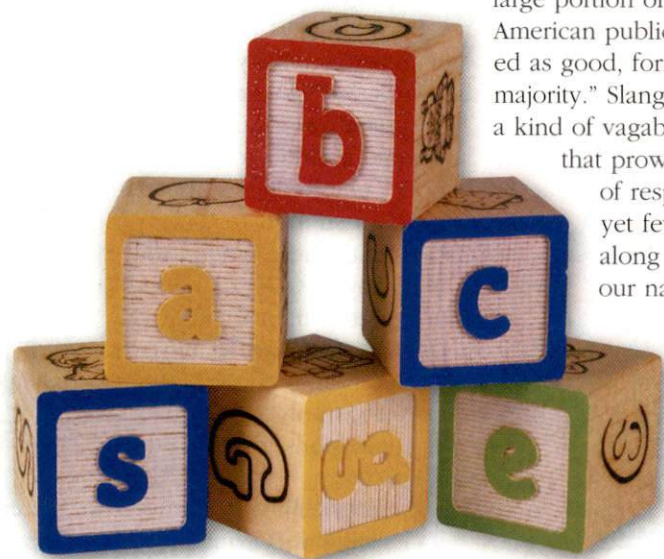
that prowls the outskirts of respectable speech, yet few of us can get along without it. Even our national leaders have a hard time getting by without such colloquial or slang expressions as "hit the nail on the head,"

"team effort," "pass the buck" and "talk turkey."

Nobody is quite sure where the word *slang* comes from. According to H. L. Mencken, *slang* developed in the 18th century (it was first recorded in 1756) either from an erroneous past tense of *sling* (*sling-slang-slung*) or from *language* itself, as in (thieve)s'*lang*(uage) and (beggar)s'*lang*(uage). The second theory makes the point that jargon and slang originate and are used by a particular trade or class group, but slang words come to be slung around to some extent by a whole population.

The use of slang is far more ancient than the word *slang*. In fact, slang is nearly as old as language itself, and in all languages at all times some slang expressions have entered the mainstream of the vocabulary to pollute or enrich, depending on one's view of the matter. We find traces of slang in the Sanskrit of ancient India, where writers amused themselves now and then by calling a head a "dish." In Latin literary records we discover, alongside *caput*, the standard term for "head," the word *testa*, which meant "pot" or "jug." Both the Sanskrit "dish" and the Latin "pot" share the flavor of our modern *crackpot*, *jughead* and *mug*.

The 14th-century poet Geoffrey Chaucer used *gab* for "talk" and *bones* for "dice," exactly as we employ them today. William Shakespeare, the literary lord of stage and classroom, coined *costard* (a large apple) to



mean “head” and *clay-brained* and *knotty pated* to mean “slow of wit.” We discover “laugh yourself into stitches” in *Twelfth Night*, “not so hot” in *The Winter’s Tale*, and “right on” in *Julius Caesar*.

There are some very human reasons why the river of slang courses through every language. One of them is that people like novelty and variety in their lives and in their language. To satisfy this urge, they continually coin new slang words and expressions. This article began

A third motive is sheer playfulness. Slang such as *rubbernecker* for a sightseer, *motor-mouth* for someone who gabs on and on, and reductions such as *beebie-jeebies* and *okeydokey* tickle our sense of humor.

Finally, as G.K. Chesterton proclaimed, “All slang is metaphor, and all metaphor is poetry.” American slang abounds in fresh figures of speech that evoke arresting word pictures in the mind’s eye. We intellectually understand “an angry, persecuted husband,” but the slanguage

these syllables you ditty boppers. Drape yourself in shape ‘cause here’s a hot flash of ecstatic static, a king-size dose of spectacular vernacular and extraordinary vocabulary, some real gone give guaranteed to sharpen your game! Let me lay it on you! Let these words wake you! I mean it and how – Boot it, shoot it bang with this slang and reap these righteous words. Don’t vegetate, percolate! Here it be!!!! Let it roll, let it all roll!!!!”

“Slang is ‘language that rolls up its sleeves, spits on its hands, and gets to work.’”

with 25 breezy ways of saying “wonderful,” but that feat pales next to the 2,231 synonyms for “drunk” (and 50 pages worth) that Paul Dickson trots out in his book *Words* – from the euphemistic *tired* to the comical *plastered*, from the terminal *stiff* to the uncategorizable *zoozled*.

Second, slang allows us to break the ice and shift into a more casual and friendly gear. “What’s cooking?” or “How’s it going?” sound more easy-going and familiar than “How do you do?” “Slang,” said Carl Sandburg, is “language that rolls up its sleeves, spits on its hands, and gets to work.”

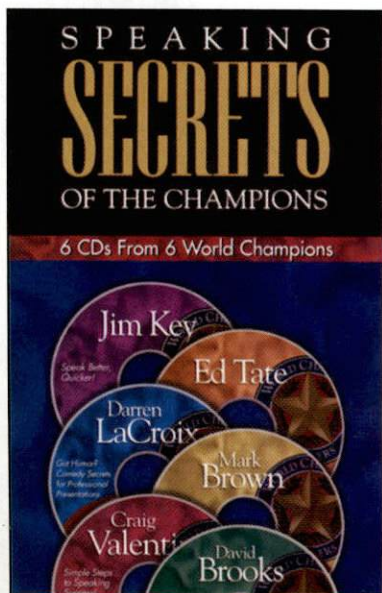
version of “a henpecked husband stewing in his own juice” takes a vivid shortcut to our imagination.

All of the qualities that make slang such a key player on the stage of language we can see in Tom Dalzell’s statement at the end of his introduction to *Flappers 2 Rappers* (Merriam-Webster, 1996):

“Are you ready for this yon teens – yon hipsters, yon flipsters, yon finger-popping daddies, all you uptown downtown all around the town showcasing groovers. Pick up on this riff, you sharp cats and kitties. Heed

Slang is a powerful stimulant that keeps the American language alive and growing. Slang is a prominent part of the American wordscape. In fact, *The Dictionary of American Slang* estimates that slang makes up perhaps a fifth of the words we use. Many of our most valuable and pungent words have begun their lives keeping company with thieves, vagrants and hipsters. As Mr. Dooley, a fictional Irish saloon keeper, once observed, “When we Americans get through with the English language, it will look as if it has been run over by a musical comedy.” **T**

Richard Lederer, Ph.D., of San Diego, California, is the author of the best-selling *Anguished English* and many other books on language. Visit his Web site www.verbivore.com.



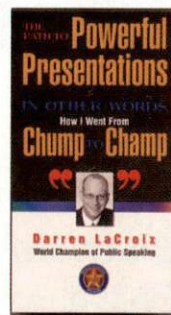
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Keeping E-Mail in Top Form

Despite the fact that e-mail has been firmly entrenched in offices and homes for some time, debate still rages online about e-mail usage and style.

How should you begin and end an e-mail message? If replying to a message, should you quote that message before or after your message? What tone should you take with business e-mail?

To gauge opinion, I talked with some heavy e-mail users who keep their eyes peeled to the latest online trends. Each is a writer who writes about the Internet or advises others how to write for it.

Scott M. Fulton III, co-founder of Ingenus, an editorial services firm in Indianapolis, disapproves of the creeping informality of business e-mail. "The abundance of informal e-mail is eroding some peoples' ability to be formal when needed," he says. To his dismay, he receives many e-mails from people he's never met that begin with salutations such as "Hi there, Scott."

Avoiding formalities can save time by letting you get right to the point. But Fulton thinks informality causes some people to correspond in a way that's less structured and efficient than if they considered their words more carefully.

On the other hand, the quaint letter-writing practice of beginning an e-mail salutation with "Dear" can sometimes stick out like a faulty RAM chip. Karen Heyman, chair of the ethics committee of the Internet Press Guild, doesn't mind business e-mail that substitutes "Hi" for "Dear."

Some people, however, may regard this as presumptuous, particularly if it's followed by the person's first name. "Hello," by itself or followed by Mr. or similar title and the

person's last name, can be a good way to break the ice.

A key difference between e-mail and postal mail is speed. People receiving e-mail are operating in Internet time. You need to be succinct and place your most important information first, or it might not get read.

Steven Cherry, who covers the Internet for *IEEE Spectrum*, the publication of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, typically begins the body of his e-mail messages by summarizing the subject matter and reminding his correspondent of any previous discussion.

One common technique, unique to online writing, is automatically quoting all or part of a message if you're responding to one. When they have nothing better to do, people in various online discussion groups debate whether it makes more sense to place this quote before or after your response.

According to the most persuasive arguments, it's best to quote a relevant snippet of a message and place it in front of your response to provide context, quote multiple snippets and respond directly under each if you're responding to multiple points, and avoid quoting the entirety of a long message at the beginning of yours.

If the convention in your organization, however, is to quote the entire message after your response, do that.

As with most writing, the purpose of e-mail is to communicate. Some consider it hip to forgo capitalization, correct spelling and grammar. This may be faster for you, but it slows down your readers as they decipher what you mean.

Similarly, e-mailers often use acronyms such as IMHO, which is short for "in my humble opinion,"

and "emoticons" such as <g>, which is short for "grin" and signals you're trying to be friendly or tell a joke. Such conventions work so long as you know you'll be understood.

Don't forget to proofread. E-mail spell checkers aren't foolproof, and they won't prevent a flirty message you intended for a single recipient a couple of cubicles down from going to a distribution list comprising your entire department.

E-mail closings are also generally less formal than letter closings. Lisa Napell Dicksteen, who runs LMN Editorial, an editorial services practice in Port Jefferson, New York, says she has seen more messages lately ending with "Best," and that's what she does. The exceptions are e-mails in which she's filing a complaint or asking for a refund, in which she uses "Thank you."

Alan Zeichick, editor-in-chief of *SD Times*, a magazine for software developers, signs off with "Cheers!" with people he knows and "Thanks" or "Regards" with those he doesn't. "Sincerely" also works well with e-mail.

Even though the "From" line in an e-mail message usually contains your name, it's considered personable to sign off with it as well. Some people skip the "Sincerely" and simply type their first name or initials or, more formally, include an automatically generated signature consisting of their full name, title and other information they want to close with. **T**

Reid Goldsborough is a syndicated columnist and author of the book *Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway*. He can be reached at reidgold@netaxs.com or www.netaxs.com/~reidgold/columnn.

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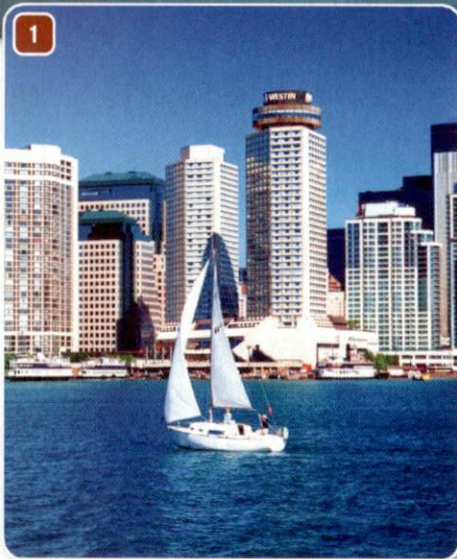
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Come to the 74th Annual International Convention,
August 24-27, at The Westin Harbour Castle
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Toronto: A World Within a City



REGISTER EARLY! Toastmasters International offers registration options so you can save money. Registering for the convention is easy. Simply complete the convention registration forms on pages 29-31, or register online by visiting the Toastmasters International Web site at www.toastmasters.org.

Convention Schedule

The convention begins Wednesday, August 24, and ends Saturday evening, August 27. Let great speakers inspire you and fun events entertain you. Join friends for four days filled with learning, achievement and fun!

Spouses and guests are offered a special registration package that includes tours of Casa Loma on Thursday and a city/CN Tower tour on Friday, plus tickets to four major convention events.

Interdistrict Speech Contest - 6:30 p.m.

On Tuesday, August 23 at 6:30 p.m., be sure to attend the Interdistrict Speech Contest and watch speakers from districts outside North America compete for a final spot in Saturday's 2005 World Championship of Public Speaking. This year, because additional districts are participating, this event will be featured in two concurrent contests. Be sure your registration form reflects which of those two contests you wish to attend.

CAPTIONS

- 1 & 2. Towering views of Toronto's harbor.
3. Toronto's Skydome and CN Tower.
4. Historic Casa Loma





International President Jon Greiner, DTM



Keynote presenters The Afterburners



— Wednesday, August 24 —

If you're preregistered, you may pick up your ticket packet beginning at 10 a.m. World Headquarters staff will automatically pre-select your seats for the Golden Gavel Luncheon, the "Batter Up!" Baseball Fun Night, the World Championship of Public Speaking and the President's Dinner Dance. You can purchase remaining event tickets but remember, these are subject to availability. So pre-register and buy your tickets early.

Visit the District 60 Information Desk

Our hosts will introduce you to Toronto's popular attractions. The Candidates Corner and Credentials Desk open Wednesday afternoon.

TI Bookstore

The TI Bookstore opens at 1 p.m. It's stocked with great items for you to take back to your club. Browsers are welcome!

Board of Directors Briefing – 1 p.m.

Your Board of Directors briefs you on recent actions taken to help achieve the mission of Toastmasters International.



First-Timers Reception – 4 p.m.

International President *Jon Greiner, DTM*, personally welcomes you to your first International Convention. Meet other first-timers and make new friends at this informal reception.

Opening Ceremonies – 7 p.m.

Featuring The Afterburners

The traditional Parade of Flags kicks off this popular event at 7 p.m. Hear the report of International President *Jon Greiner, DTM*. The keynote presentation will be by a renowned team of fighter pilots called the *Afterburners*. They are sure to perform with flawless execution and inspire you to reach new heights.



Candidates Reception

Meet this year's international officer and director candidates at an informal reception immediately following the Opening Ceremonies.



Marcus Buckingham



Dr. Harry Wong



Gene Perret



Dirk Seis, ATM-S



Kimberly Matheson



Richard Hockett, DTM



Bo Bennett, ATM-G



William "Clark" Kent, DTM

Thursday, August 25

Casa Loma Tour – Three Hours

Begin the day with a continental breakfast followed by a tour of Toronto's fairy tale castle – Casa Loma. See how self-made millionaire Sir Henry Mill Pellatt's dream came true in this medieval castle. Spouses and guests are returned to the hotel just in time for the Golden Gavel Luncheon. ***This tour is included in the spouses/guests registration package.***

Education in the Morning – 8:30 a.m.

Begin your day with a lineup of outstanding speakers. Choose from four tracks: Communication (Track #1), Skill Building (Track #2), Leadership (Track #3), and Club and District Success (Track #4).

✦ "Putting You In Humor" (Track #1)

Gene Perret

Bob Hope's main comedy writer and three-time Emmy-award winner Gene Perret shows you how to find humorous anecdotes, quotes or jokes that are appropriate for your topic.

✦ "101 Uses for Marshmallows: the Power of High-Energy Innovation" (Track #2)

Dirk Seis, ATM-S and Kimberly Matheson

Learn more about problem solving and generating new ideas in this interactive session. Strengthen your ability to come up with creative solutions that may help you at work, at home or in your club.

✦ "Fuel Your Inner Excellence: Awaken Your Leadership Skills" (Track #3)

Richard Hockett, DTM

This informative session is designed to help you overcome uncertainty and failures. It will awaken your leader-

ship skills with a proven formula for personal and professional growth.

✦ "FreeToastHost.org: Promote Your Club Through the Internet" (Track #4)

Bo Bennett, ATM-G

Bo will lead this non-technical session on how to use the club Web site and software provided by **FreeToastHost.org**. He'll explain how to attract new members and how to keep current members interested and involved by participating in online discussions.

Education continues in the morning – 10 a.m.

✦ "Creating Your Speech: The ABCs of Effective Speechwriting" (Track #1)

William "Clark" Kent, DTM

Learn the importance of creating a victory statement. Minimize speechwriting anxiety and understand the essential elements of connecting with your audience.

✦ "Speaking in 3-D" (Track #1)

Randy Harvey, ATM-S

2004 World Champion Randy Harvey discusses the importance of speech choreography. Go beyond the basic mechanics when you deliver your next presentation. Learn how body language can reinforce your message.

✦ "Don't Outline It. Map It! How to Organize Your Speech Brilliantly" (Track #2)

George Nigro, DTM, Accredited Speaker

George shows you how to organize your speech using a mapping method. Discover how mapping differs from outlining. Bring some speech materials with you to this hands-on session.

✦ "Extra! Extra! Read All About It" (Track #4)

Cindy Pavella, DTM

Learn how to use media resources to promote your club or build new clubs. Cindy shows you how to use the media effectively to market the Toastmasters program.

Golden Gavel Luncheon – Noon

Toastmasters International proudly presents **Marcus Buckingham** with **The Golden Gavel**, Toastmasters' highest honor for communication excellence. Buckingham



George Nigro, DTM



Randy Harvey, ATM-S



Cindy Pavella, DTM

is an expert on employee productivity and is a sought-after consultant and speaker on the topics of leadership and management. A 1987 graduate of Cambridge University, Buckingham worked for The Gallup Organization for 17 years and helped lead research into the world's best leaders, managers and workplaces. He drew on this research to write two bestselling books: *First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Best Managers Do Differently* and *Now, Discover Your Strengths*. His most recent book, *The One Thing You Need to Know*, was just released in March.

Afternoon Sessions – 2:45 p.m.

🌟 “Tell Your Success Story” (Track #1)

George Torok

Discover your own success story and learn how to create and share it.

🌟 “How to Make At Least \$100,000 a Year as a Professional Speaker” (Track #2)

Steve Siebold, CSP and Bob Proctor

Steve and Bob teach you vital components for success as a professional speaker. Learn new marketing strategies, how to develop passive income, and how to market your skills to speaker bureaus. Learn exactly what it takes to go from free to fee.

🌟 “To Lead, or NOT to Lead” (Track #3)

Mark Brown, ATM

In this interactive session, 1995 World Champion Mark Brown will examine some of the questions surrounding leadership in Toastmasters and the world at large. He will dispel some common misconceptions, debunk some oft-used excuses, and explore the nature of leadership in the 21st century.

🌟 “Find Your Voice – Serve Your World: Achieving Distinguished District, Division and Area Goals” (Track #4)

Gavin Blakey, DTM, Moderator

Allan Edinger, DTM • Denise Magyar, DTM

Jean McAllister, DTM • Audrey Samora, DTM

Join Past International President Gavin Blakey, DTM, as he moderates a distinguished panel of experts who have served as governors of President's, Select and Distinguished districts. Learn from these Toastmasters as they share what it takes to achieve area, division and district success.



Gavin Blakey, DTM



Allan Edinger, DTM



Denise Magyar, DTM



George Torok



Steve Siebold



Mark Brown, ATM



Jean McAllister, DTM



Audrey Samora, DTM



Cindy Ventrice

Accredited Speaker Program – 2:45 p.m.

You are invited to see three Toastmasters give their second-level presentations for the 2005 Accredited Speaker Program: Steve Schroeder, DTM; Mike Dooley, ATM-S; and Terry Mayfield, ATM-B.

Candidate Showcases – 5 p.m.

Meet your international officer and director candidates as they address convention delegates.

Open Evening

Experience the nightlife with an evening on the town. Stop by the Host District Information Desk for some great dining and entertainment ideas.

Friday, August 26

City Tour/CN Tower – Five Hours

Enjoy a continental breakfast followed by a city tour of downtown Toronto. A hosted lunch and a tour of Toronto's famous landmark – CN Tower, the world's tallest self-supporting structure complete this tour. **This tour is included in the spouses/guests registration package.**

Annual Business Meeting – 8 a.m.

Jon Greiner, DTM, Chairman

Herb Nowlin, DTM, Parliamentarian

Delegates gather to elect international officers and directors.

Club Leadership Luncheon - 11:30 a.m.

Don't miss Cindy Ventrice's keynote address, "Motivating Volunteers," at this special luncheon for DTMs and immediate past and current club officers. Join fellow Toastmasters leaders and celebrate the success of Toastmasters International's 2004-2005 Distinguished Clubs.



Mimi Donaldson



Randy Park



Denise Marek, ATM-G



Bob Proctor



Sheryl Roush, DTM



John Noonan, DTM

Toastmasters and Guests Luncheon - 11:30 a.m.

This popular event is open to everyone, so be sure to buy your tickets in advance. Join popular seminar leader Mimi Donaldson as she delivers "Men and Women: Can We Talk?" Mimi bridges the gender gap and debunks myths and stereotypes associated with "the battle of the sexes."

Hall of Fame – 1:30 p.m.

Toastmasters International's top performers are recognized for outstanding accomplishments for 2004-2005.

"Batter Up!" Baseball Fun Night – 7 p.m.

Join your fellow Toastmaster All-Stars for an evening at the ballpark! Admission to this event includes two beverage vouchers and complimentary hors d'oeuvres at a pre-game cocktail reception hosted at the Westin Harbour Castle, transportation to and from the Skydome, and admittance to the game: the Cleveland Indians visit the Toronto Blue Jays. Hear the excitement of the crowd when International President **Jon Greiner** approaches the pitcher's mound to throw the first pitch – *strrrr-ike!* Seating area at the Skydome will be designated especially for Toastmasters and their guests. Batter up!

Saturday, August 27

Witness the best in public speaking as 10 finalists compete for the title "World Champion of Public Speaking." Experience the thrill and suspense when you hear the words, "And the winner is..." This is a popular event, so order tickets now! Members interested in attending only the International Speech Contest may purchase an individual ticket at a special price. See the convention registration form for more information.

General Education Session – 1:30 p.m.

🌟 "Organization, Positive Expectations, Producing Results!" *Dr. Harry K. Wong*

Author, speaker and educator Dr. Harry Wong will give a fun and light-hearted presentation focusing on how to structure a learning environment for maximum impact. Learn to properly set the stage in the boardroom, classroom or in your club, and discover new ways to encourage adult learning.

Education continues in the afternoon – 3 p.m.

🌟 "Why Don't They Get It? How to Influence Others" (Track #1) *Randy Park*

Randy explains how best to influence others toward your point of view. Learn when to demonstrate your expertise and when to tone it down. Discover how to find common ground with strangers and handle different points of view without generating conflict.

🌟 "From Worrier to Warrior" (Track #2)

Denise Marek, ATM-G, Accredited Speaker

Worry-management specialist Denise Marek will show you how to transform fears into actions. Learn to stop worry in its tracks. Identify the difference between false fear and real fear.

🌟 "Sparkle-Tude™ For Leaders: Creating a Positive Environment at Your Work, Home and Club" (Track #3)

Sheryl Roush, DTM, Accredited Speaker

Discover tips for dealing with difficult people and challenging situations – and still keep your sanity. This fun and fast-paced program will show you how to boost your attitude, increase cooperation, reduce stress and energize your next meeting.

🌟 "The Meeting Will Come To Order" (Track #4)

John Noonan, DTM, Accredited Speaker

Toastmasters Past International President John Noonan will show you the steps for organizing, participating and leading a meeting. Learn how to approach with confidence your next assignment as a presiding officer!

President's Dinner Dance – 7:30 p.m.

Dine and dance in elegance at this extravagant closing event. Past International President Ted Corcoran, DTM, is the Toastmaster for the evening, presiding over the installation of newly elected officers and directors.

Take the hassle out of registering for the convention. Register online at www.toastmasters.org. Receive a confirmation of your convention registration **instantly!**

For airline and travel information, tax deductibility and automatic seat selection, visit the toastmasters Web site at www.toastmasters.org.



(Please Print) Member No. _____ Club No. _____ District _____

Name: _____ First Name or Nickname (as you wish it to appear on your badge): _____

Addr. Registrants' Name: _____ First Name or Nickname (as you wish it to appear on your badge): _____

Address _____ Check if this is a new address

City _____ State / Province _____ Country _____ Zip Code _____

Daytime Telephone () _____ Email Address _____

NOTE: Convention registrants may purchase tickets to Tuesday's Interdistrict Speech Contest separately.

1 "FULL" CONVENTION REGISTRATION... ONLY \$520.00

A Full Convention Registration Package includes the following:

- One Convention Registration (access to all educational sessions)
- One Golden Gavel Luncheon ticket (*Thursday*)
- One "Batter Up!" Baseball Fun Night ticket (*Friday*)
- One International Speech Contest ticket (*Saturday*)
- One President's Dinner Dance ticket (*Saturday*)
- One of the following (Please check):

___ Club Leadership Luncheon ticket (*Friday*) **OR**

___ Toastmasters & Guests Luncheon (*Friday*)

___ Member(s) @ \$520.00 = \$ _____

SECTION 1 TOTAL = \$ _____

2 SPOUSE/GUEST REGISTRATION... ONLY \$330.00

Spouse/Guest must be non-member. This registration includes the following:

- Casa Loma Tour (Continental breakfast provided) (*Thursday*)
- Golden Gavel Luncheon (*Thursday*)
- CN Tower Tour (Continental breakfast/lunch provided) (*Friday*)
- "Batter Up!" Baseball Fun Night (*Friday*)
- International Speech Contest (*Saturday*)
- President's Dinner Dance (*Saturday*)

No access to any educational sessions!

___ Spouse/Guest(s) @ \$330.00 = \$ _____

SECTION 2 TOTAL = \$ _____

3 "A LA CARTE" CONVENTION REGISTRATION

"A La Carte" registration allows you to attend all educational sessions during the convention. Event tickets are not included and must be purchased separately.

___ One Person @ \$255.00 = \$ _____

SECTION 3 TOTAL = \$ _____

4 EVENT TICKETS (SOLD SEPARATELY)

You and/or your spouse/guest must be registered to purchase any additional event tickets.

___ Interdistrict Speech Contest A (*Tuesday*) @ \$35.00 = \$ _____
 (Districts: 51, 59, 69, 72, 74, 75 and 80)

___ Interdistrict Speech Contest B (*Tuesday*) @ \$35.00 = \$ _____
 (Districts: 67, 70, 71, 73, 76 and 79)

___ Golden Gavel Luncheon (*Thursday*) @ \$75.00 = \$ _____

___ Toastmasters & Guests Luncheon (*Friday*) @ \$55.00 = \$ _____

___ Club Leadership Luncheon (*Friday*) @ \$55.00 = \$ _____

___ "Batter Up!" Baseball Fun Night (*Friday*) @ \$65.00 = \$ _____

___ International Speech Contest (*Saturday*) @ \$60.00 = \$ _____

___ President's Dinner Dance (*Saturday*) @ \$75.00 = \$ _____

SECTION 4 TOTAL = \$ _____

Mail or fax this form to: Toastmasters International, P.O. Box 9052, Mission Viejo, California 92690 U.S.A. Fax 949/858-1207 **Register Online at:** www.toastmasters.org

5 SATURDAY REGISTRATION - ONE DAY ONLY

This option allows you to attend all general and education sessions on Saturday, August 27. This registration includes a ticket to the:

• International Speech Contest _____ Member(s) @ \$110.00 = \$ _____
SECTION 5 TOTAL = \$ _____

6 REGISTRATION TOTALS

SECTION 1 TOTAL = \$ _____
 SECTION 2 TOTAL = \$ _____
 SECTION 3 TOTAL = \$ _____
 SECTION 4 TOTAL = \$ _____
 SECTION 5 TOTAL = \$ _____
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE = \$ _____

7 METHOD OF PAYMENT (U.S. DOLLARS)

Check enclosed for \$ _____ (U.S. dollars) payable to Toastmasters International.

MasterCard VISA AMEX Discover

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

I need special services due to a disability. Please contact me before the convention.

This is my first TI convention.

DEADLINE: Advance registration must reach World Headquarters by July 16. On-site registration fees will be higher. Cancellations and refund requests will not be accepted after July 16. Cancellations will not be accepted on-site – *no exceptions!*

WHQ USE ONLY	
Registrant # _____	T- _____ GG
	S/R- _____ SC
	T- _____ FN
Registrant # _____	T- _____ DD
	TM-4

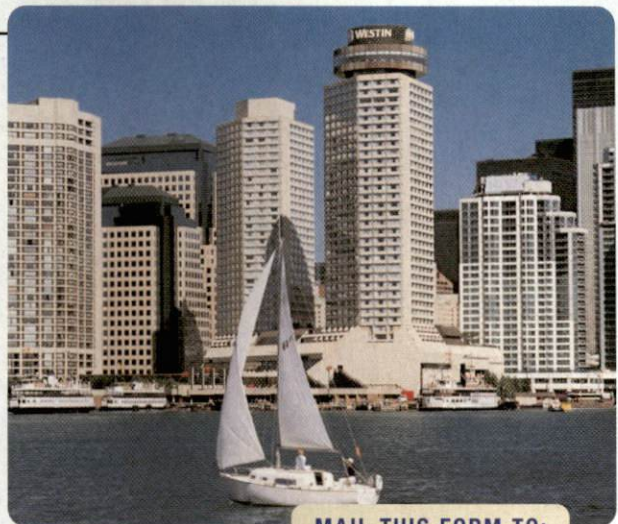
SEATING PROCEDURE: World Headquarters will select your seats for the Golden Gavel Luncheon, "Batter Up!" Baseball Fun Night, International Speech Contest and President's Dinner Dance. *Toastmasters who wish to sit in a group must mail their registration forms together in the same envelope or register online together.*

Mail or fax this form to: Toastmasters International, P.O. Box 9052, Mission Viejo, California 92690 U.S.A. Fax: 949/858-1207 Phone: 949/858-8255
Register Online at: www.toastmasters.org

The Westin Harbour Castle

Welcomes...

Toastmasters International's
2005 Convention
 August 24-27, 2005



MAIL THIS FORM TO:

The Westin Harbour Castle
 One Harbour Square
 Toronto, Ontario
 Canada M5J 1A6
 Hotel: (416) 869-1600
 Toll Free in Canada and
 U.S. 1 (888) 627-8559
 Fax: (416) 361-7448

Hotel Registration Form

Arrival Date: _____ Departure Date: _____

Number of nights you will stay: _____

Number of people in room: _____

Approx. arrival time: _____
(CHECK-IN 3:00 P.M. - CHECK-OUT 12 NOON)

Method of transportation: Car Air Other

Late departures will be charged a full night's rate plus taxes.

Early Departure Fee - \$50

SPECIAL CONFERENCE RATES

STANDARD GUEST ROOM	SUITE
\$191.00 Single/Double \$30 for third person per night RATES ARE QUOTED IN CANADIAN DOLLARS	Phone hotel directly if suite is desired. Cost and availability vary.

Please Note: Special conference rates are based on reservations received by July 21, 2005, and room block availability.

After July 21, all subsequent reservations will be subject to availability at the current hotel rack rates.

Please Reserve Accommodations For: *(please print or type)*

Name (Last) _____ (First) _____ (Initial) _____ Company _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____ Fax () _____ Sharing Room With _____ E-mail _____

Special Requests: King 2 Double Beds Non Smoking Smoking Other (specify) _____

(Note: Every attempt will be made to honor your request, however we cannot guarantee a special request.)

To guarantee your reservation we require first night's deposit or credit card guarantee. All rates are subject to applicable taxes which include a 5% Provincial Sales Tax, 7% Goods & Services Tax and a 3% Destination Marketing Fee. **DO NOT SEND CASH.**

Make check or money order payable to the **The Westin Harbour Castle.**

Credit Card type _____

Credit Card # _____

Check # _____ Amount _____

Don't Be a No-Show

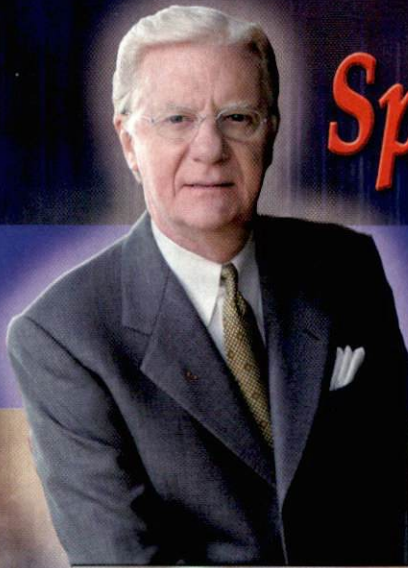
To cancel your reservation call (888) 627-8559 or (416) 869-1600. If you fail to arrive by midnight the day of your scheduled arrival, your room will be released and may not be available. **You must cancel your reservation 48 hours prior to arrival to avoid being charged one night's room and tax.** Fax: (416) 869-0573.

A room confirmation will be mailed to you as soon as possible.

DO NOT MAIL THIS FORM TO TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

SIGNATURE

DATE



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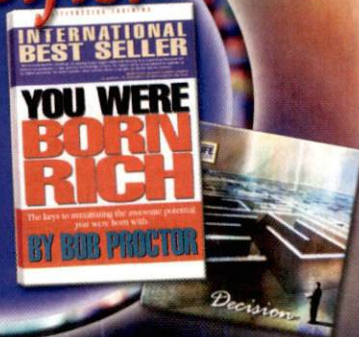
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