

The TOASTMASTER[®]

OCTOBER 2003

A Recipe for Success

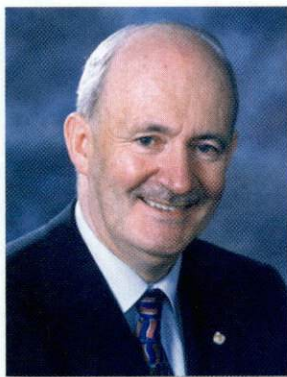
An interview with
TI's 2003 Golden
Gavel Recipient
Debbi Fields Rose,
founder of Mrs.
Fields Cookies.

**A Toastmasters
Reunion**
Highlights from the
International Convention
in Atlanta, Georgia.

**Have Faith in
Your Abilities:
Just Say Yes!**

**New York
Toastmasters
Speak at
the U.N.**





VIEWPOINT

What's Your Dream?

◆ AS I WROTE IN LAST MONTH'S VIEWPOINT, ALL SUCCESS STARTS WITH A DREAM. This applies to everyone, including myself. So what are my dreams as president of this great organization?

My first dream is that every one of us will be successful in whatever goals we set for ourselves for the coming year. In Toastmasters, those goals could include delivering our first speech or evaluation, being part of the team that charters a new club or achieves the Distinguished Club award, or being honored as a Distinguished Area, Division or District Governor.

Achieving "Distinguished" is our organization's way of measuring how well we serve our members, who pay their dues and in return expect to be comprehensively trained in the various aspects of communication skills.

Forty percent of our clubs – or nearly 4,000 clubs – achieved Distinguished status or better in last year's Distinguished Club Program. If you are a member of one of these clubs, congratulations! If you are a member of the almost 6,000 clubs that did not achieve Distinguished status, there is another opportunity to do so this year. For further information about this program, ask your club president or any member of the district team.

Whether your dream is one of personal or club achievement, reach for your dreams and they will reach for you!

My second dream is that our membership will exceed 200,000 for the first time. We are very close to reaching this goal right now, and with a little extra push by everyone, we can do it. Remember: We can if we think we can.

The average membership worldwide has risen to 21.5 per club, the highest ever. This means stronger clubs, better attendance and more enjoyable meetings. How many members does your club have? Is it a higher or lower figure than this worldwide average? What about organizing a membership drive? Toastmasters World Headquarters offers free materials to help you recruit new members for your club.

My final dream is that Toastmasters International reaches 10,000 clubs. Building new clubs and saving weak ones not only strengthens our organization, but more importantly, extends the benefits of Toastmasters to many many more people, thus enabling them to realize their potential and fulfill their dreams. This is the reason for the organization's very existence! If we build one new club per area this year, we can achieve this goal.

Will I achieve my presidential dreams? That depends on all of us working together, helping, motivating and inspiring each other. My promise to you is a quote by Naomi Rhode who spoke so eloquently at our convention in Atlanta in August:

*It's a privilege to serve you if I can,
To help, to heal, to learn, to understand,
The blessings of today from those along the way,
Who make the world a better place, so we all can say:
It's a privilege to serve you if I can.*

Ted Corcoran

Ted Corcoran, DTM
International President

The TOASTMASTER

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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.

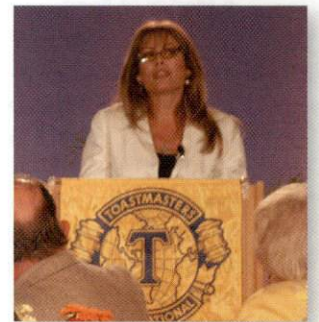
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LETTERS

Toastmasters as Teachers

While perusing Charles Howes' article in the August issue, "Taking Toastmasters to the Classroom," I reflected on my experience of lecturing to students in Brisbane. There was to be a local school speech contest and I volunteered my Toastmasters skills to instruct students in speech preparation, using Toastmasters' *Better Speaker Series*.

I lectured students of seven schools for one hour a day and was asked to be the emcee of the contest. What an experience! It was a very rewarding event to hear those children perform.

Alex Passaris, DTM • Forest Lake Club 4003-69 • Brisbane, QLD, Australia

A Matter of Trust

As a fairly new member and the new president of my Toastmasters club, it was with great enthusiasm that I began reading John C. Maxwell's article, "A Matter of Trust," in the August issue. I was completely on board with the article until I reached tip #2 for earning trust: "Stay away from politics. Let it be known that you can't be bought. Don't even think about going down that road."

First, that statement hit me as offensive. Perhaps it was quoted out of context, but to insinuate that politicians are "dirty" and available to the highest bidder is at the least insulting. Apparently it didn't occur to Mr. Maxwell that his audience might have some politicians in it. Politicians are in office to be the champions of their constituents, and that includes businesses. Professionals who don't stay informed and involved in the political arena do themselves and their businesses a great disservice.

Catherine Phillips • 9th Street Club 7062-15 • Boise, Idaho

Upfront Honesty

I am not a Toastmaster, but my father passes on his copy of your magazine to me. I normally enjoy the articles, but was horrified to see the advice offered in "On Your Own: Tips on Speaking Outside the Club," in the August issue. One tip suggests to "try and secure the names and addresses of the people who attended," and if you have a product, to raffle one off, getting people to sign up for the drawing, "thus gathering names and creating a personal database for future engagements." This may be acceptable in some countries, but in Australia it would be a breach of the Privacy Act, which is designed to prevent collection of personal data (names and addresses) without the owners of that data giving explicit permission and knowing for what purposes the data will be used. Thus while it would

be OK to ask people to give their names and addresses for your future use, to collect them surreptitiously by means of a raffle is highly unethical at best and downright illegal at worst. Be honest about your intentions and you will be better received, and likely invited back.

Brendan Whyte, Ph.D. • Melbourne, VIC, Australia

Widen Your CTM Horizons

At our club, we frequently get new members who are extremely keen and want to race through their speeches to get their CTMs as quickly as possible. While their enthusiasm is to be commended, there is more to being a good Toastmaster than just ticking off speeches. Evaluation is important, not only for the person being evaluated, but also for the evaluator to practice giving a constructive appraisal. Being the Toastmaster is excellent practice for handling a meeting. All meeting roles are a way of providing the mutual support from which all club members benefit. I think that the requirements for the CTM need to be changed so that, in addition to the 10 speeches, the member has to give five evaluations, serve as General Evaluator and be Toastmaster for a meeting at least once. This would benefit both the member and the club.

Simon Wallis, CL • Oxford Speakers Club 3297-71 • Oxford, United Kingdom

Choose Your Words Carefully

I refer to the article, aptly titled "Tongue Fu" by Sam Horn in the May issue. The article as a whole is useful and plausible. However, I must caution that certain words have different or contrary meanings or connotations in different cultures and over time. So the suggestion to use "next time" and "from now on" as "words to use" may be recommended in the U.S. or elsewhere, but it may not be appropriate in another culture. In Singapore, for instance, these words should be avoided. They connote a reprimand or a challenge and are therefore deemed rude and confrontational.

Dennis Tan Wu Chen • Toastmasters Club of Singapore 357-51 • Singapore

Motivation and Self-Improvement

Thank you for the outstanding articles in the magazine. I love the interesting ideas and stories. They give me the motivation to try something new in my own club. Joining Toastmasters was the best thing I ever did. Not only did I meet wonderful friends, I became a better speaker and person.

Yvonne De Vos, ATM-B • Florida Club 920-74 • Roodepoort, South Africa



Negative thoughts, not life's circumstances, are the cause of anxiety and depression.

Conquering Fear

◆ DID YOU KNOW THAT SOME PEOPLE SUFFER FROM AEROPHOBIA, the fear of swallowing air? Or what about chronophobia, the fear of time? There is also ichthyophobia (the fear of fish), nephophobia (fear of clouds) and trichophobia (fear of hair), among many other phobias listed in various encyclopedias. With so many potential things to be afraid of, I guess I'm pretty lucky to have only a handful of irrational fears. I admit I'm afraid to fly on an airplane, I don't like snakes and I used to get ill at the thought of speaking in public. But, at least I can comb my hair without feeling anxious.

The good news is that phobias can be cured. Fears that are learned or conditioned can be reconditioned. Very often, doing the thing we fear is an effective way to overcome the conditioned fear. I overcame my fear of public speaking by giving speeches. Others have overcome their fear of flying by getting on an airplane. Some fears, however, may require professional help to overcome.

If you decide to go to a therapist for help, you will probably be treated with cognitive therapy. Cognitive psychotherapy is widely used today to treat many ailments including anxiety, depression and addictions. Cognitive therapy focuses on thought patterns. The underlying assumption is that negative thoughts, not life's circumstances, are the cause of anxiety and depression. When people begin to recognize their distorted automatic thoughts, change in thought patterns and therefore behavior patterns can begin to take place. This may sound simple, but in reality it takes effort and practice. Since most of our thinking is automatic, it takes our constant attention to think about our thoughts and to analyze the logic of them. It has been shown, though, that the effort pays off. By changing our thought patterns, we can overcome phobias, depression and many other negative mental problems.

Research has shown that a technique known as Systematic Desensitization can be highly successful in treating phobias. Systematic desensitization involves exposure to the fearful situation. The first step in the process is to find

"Doing the thing we fear is an effective way to overcome the conditioned fear."

a relaxation method that you are comfortable with. The second step is to create an "anxiety hierarchy," which is a list of several situations that would scare you. (The list should start at a low-level anxiety and gradually progress to a high-level anxiety). Step three is to pair the relaxation with the situations from your anxiety hierarchy. In other words, you would confront (think about) the fearful situation while in a state of deep relaxation. Hopefully, after going through the process of systematic desensitization, you will be able cause yourself to relax and face your phobia in real life.

If you think you can conquer your fear on your own, the ideas used by therapists may be of help to you. Paying attention to your negative thoughts and learning an effective relaxation technique is good advice for anyone. These ideas are especially good for managing anger and lifting yourself out of a bad mood.

I use the above ideas every time I prepare to make a speech. Before I joined Toastmasters, the thought of giving a speech made my heart race, my palms sweat and my mind go blank. Now, many speeches later, I am able to make myself relax prior to speaking, and that alleviates most of the physical problems I had. I also try to catch any negative thoughts that come to my mind prior to a speech, such as "I'm going to look nervous up there" or "these people won't like me." Those types of thoughts serve no purpose and they certainly won't help me feel more confident. If a thought like that pops into my brain, I immediately dismiss it as "distorted."

Most important, I overcame this fear simply by exposing myself to it. I gave one speech and nothing terrible happened. That made the second speech a little bit easier, and so on. If you do the thing you fear and you don't die, then you can do it again. The first step is always the hardest, but once you take it you are on your way to conquering your fear. And what a great feeling that is! **T**

Janet Kontz, CTM, is a member of Earth City Tranemaster Club 1197-8 in Bridgeton, Missouri.

**The blushing issue.
What to do about it?**

Seeing Red

Mark Twain once said, "Man is the only animal that blushes, or needs to." Those of you who suffer from excessive blushing would probably opt to turn into an animal on the podium rather than suffer the embarrassment of a deep blush while trying to get through your presentation.

Why do we blush? Blushing, although mighty annoying, is a normal response when feeling embarrassed, angry, guilty or experiencing some other strong emotion. If you've ever talked to a physician about blushing, he or she probably advised you to just calm down and think about something else when it occurs. Only a small percentage of physicians know how to treat blushing. These doctors know that blushing episodes are commonly associated with debilitating sensations for the blusher that causes severe functional impairment.

How many times have you been giving a talk and all of a sudden felt a red-hot blush creeping up your neckline? It happens to just about everyone. There is no quick answer to this problem, but I'm sure you'd do anything to keep it from happening while you're delivering your next speech.

So what can you do to avoid or minimize blushing? First, look for a pattern. What situations are causing it? Make a list of when it occurs. It may be associated with the fact that you're not comfortable giving a speech and are embarrassed. Some have suggested acting classes to get over embarrassment. Doctors have prescribed more



exercise, more water and if you're suffering from menopause-induced hot-flash blushing, to add a cup of soy milk to your daily diet. Deep breathing, hypnotherapy and bio-feedback are all suggestions for the blusher. Some vitamins with niacin will cause a "niacin blush" throughout the day. Cutting down on this vitamin, or taking a niacin-free vitamin could be just the ticket.

Others have suggested simple approaches, such as a healthful diet. Cut out caffeine, drink lots of water (but then you'll have other problems if you have to give a speech of any length), and eat lots of fruit and vegetables. Stretching also seems to help. Staying away from alcohol, keeping yourself from becoming anxiety-ridden and not eating spicy foods all seem to be common suggestions for keeping the blush at bay.

If changing your diet, your outlook and your breathing patterns won't solve the problem, listen to Roseann Sullivan, president of Sullivan Communications in San



"If you're wearing white and you blush, everyone is going to know; if you wear red it's not nearly as noticeable."

Francisco, California. She helps her clients deal with blushing in a number of ways.

"A blush starts from below the neck and works its way up," she says. If the blusher is wearing a low neckline, you can just watch it work its way up. Taking some measures to make it less apparent is the best thing to do. First of all, plan your wardrobe for a blush. Wear a bright color because the difference in contrast will make the blush less noticeable. If you're wearing white and you blush, everyone is going to know; if you wear red it's not nearly as noticeable. And wear a high neckline. A scarf or turtleneck will do well to hide a blush. The progression part is what you want to eliminate. "A little makeup also goes a long way to hide a blush," advises Sullivan, but she also warns about using too much makeup. "Makeup is meant to enhance subtly, so remember to not over-do it." Tanning products will help even out color, but be sure to use good ones that create an even, natural color.


The next layer of preventions are rather drastic – surgery and medications. Blushing commonly originates at the upper chest or base of the neck and extends up to the forehead and

ears, but can even spread to your lower torso. Medications commonly used to prevent or control blushing include beta blockers (Inderal) and anxiolytics (sedatives). These medications are usually of limited benefit in reducing blushing intensity and frequency of episodes, but a good doctor who realizes that the patient's wellbeing is at stake might prescribe the drugs to alleviate emotional discomfort. Always ask about any side effects that may occur after taking one of these drugs.

Moderate to severe facial blushing is often described in the medical world as Rosacea – and there is a permanent cure. Doctors have found that by severing the sympathetic nerve chain, their patients will actually never blush again.

Whether you opt for holistic treatment, medication or surgery, blushers don't have to see red any longer. There are options to take, and only you know which approach is best for you. A thorough Google search with the key words "stop blushing" will get you stacks of information for your research. Finding a medical specialist who knows about blushing will also keep you from being frustrated on your next trip to the doctor's office. **T**

Sally Richards is an author and freelance journalist who writes and shoots photographs for publications worldwide. Visit her Web site at www.sallyrichards.com.



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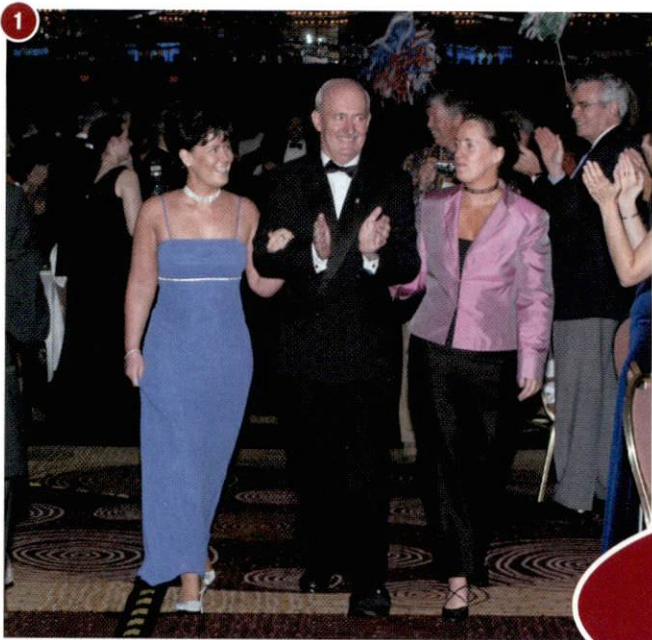
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**Highlights from the 72nd
Annual International Convention, in
Atlanta, Georgia, August 20-23, 2003.**

An Toastmasters Reunion

Once again, nearly 1,400
Toastmasters from near
and far met for their

annual reunion – this time at the Marriot Marquis in Atlanta, Georgia.

Some came as seminar presenters, some came to campaign for a seat on

the Toastmasters' board of directors, some came just to

see what all the fuss was about. But most people came

to the convention knowing what to expect: a reunion

with friends and fellow Toastmasters who share

a common interest in becoming better speakers

and leaders. The photos on these pages show

some of the drama, suspense, pageantry and

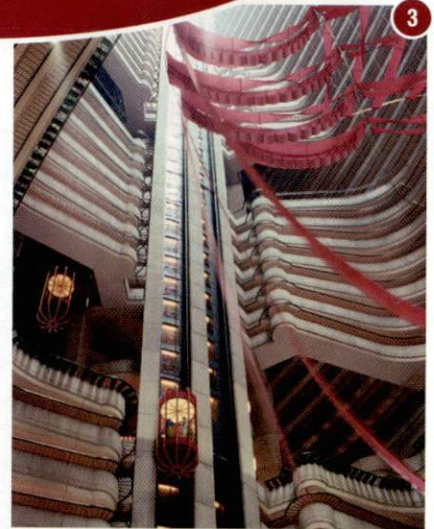
entertainment of the convention. But to truly

understand what a Toastmasters International

Convention is all about, you had to be there! We hope

you will be there, at next year's convention in Reno, Nevada,

August 19-22, 2004. Once you come, you'll be hooked!

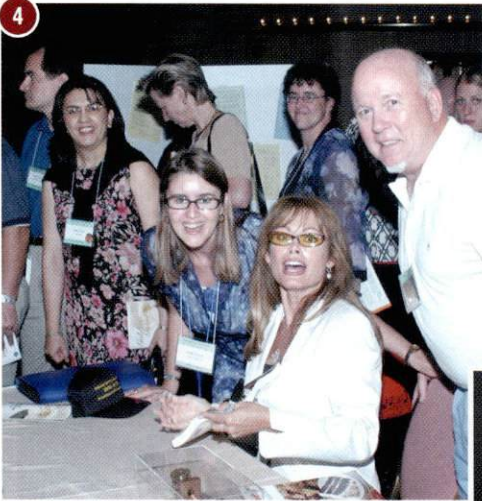


CAPTIONS

1. Newly elected International President Ted Corcoran with daughters Sinead and Claire at the President's Dinner Dance.
2. Delegates proudly rehearse for the Opening Ceremonies' Parade of Flags.
3. High-speed glass elevators at the Marriott Marquis.
4. Golden Gavel recipient Debbi Fields autographs her cookbook for Michael and Tania Bayne.
5. "Toastmaster-in-Training" Will Bliss enjoys a visit with 97-year-old District 31 Governor Charlie Keane.
6. Keynote speaker Naomi Rhode starts off the convention with a motivational message.
7. Sinead Corcoran and her friend Olive Harten from Ireland came to celebrate Ted Corcoran's installation as TI's president.
8. 2002-2003 International President Gavin Blakey charms a crowd.



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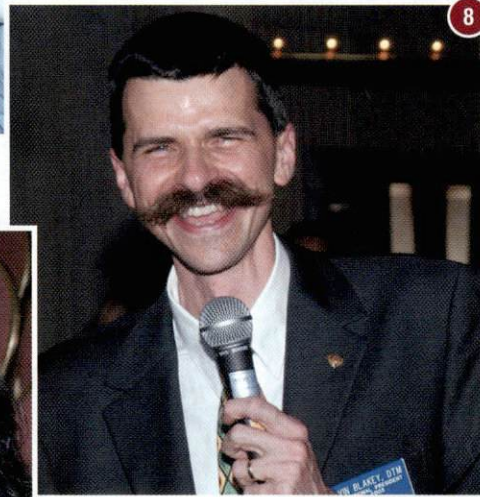
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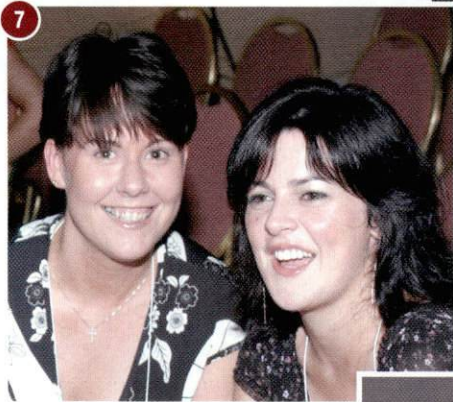
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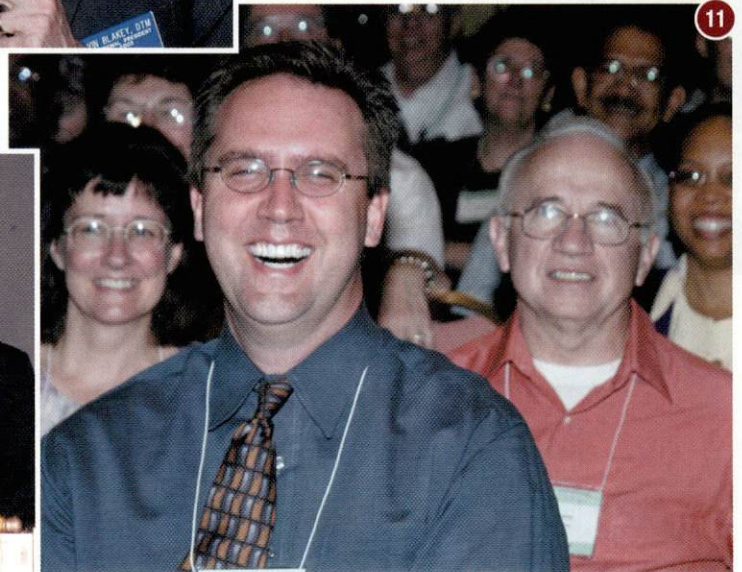
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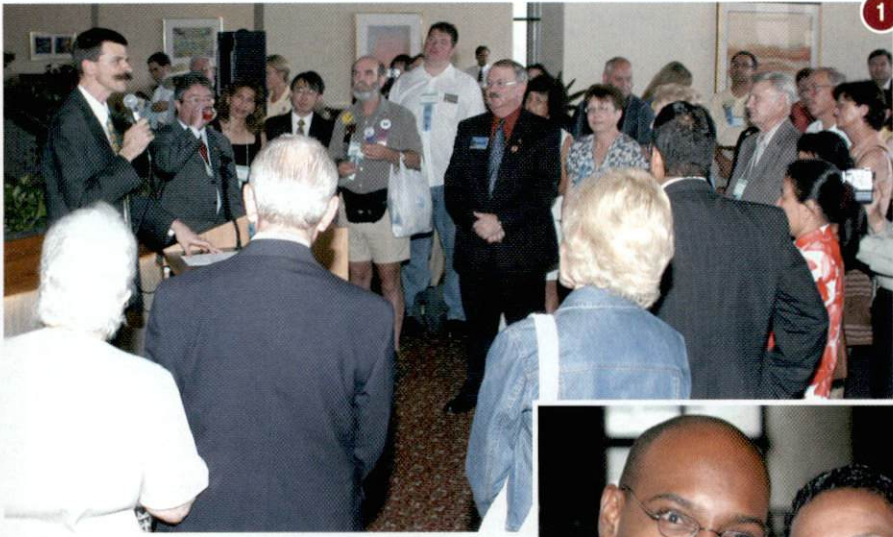
9. Jim Key of Rowlett, Texas, and his family celebrate his victory as the 2003 World Champion of Public Speaking after having placed second for the past two years.
10. Host District 14 Chairman David Caraway thanks his team of volunteers.
11. Bespectacled delegates enjoy the program.



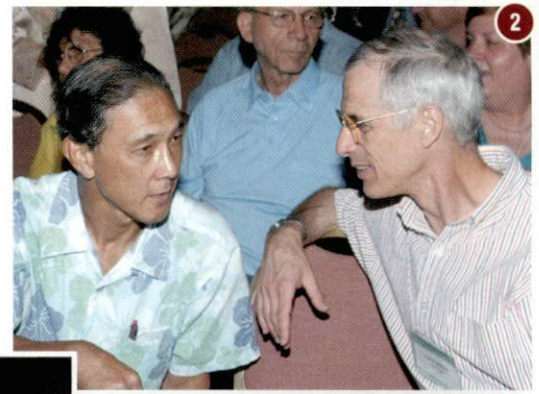
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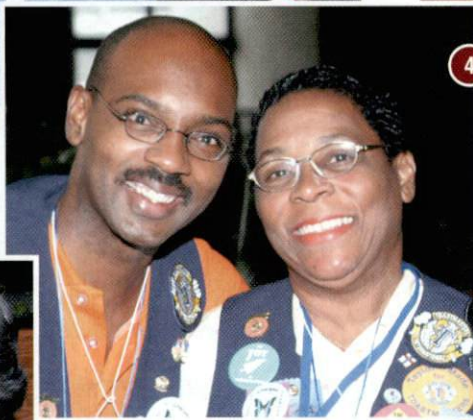
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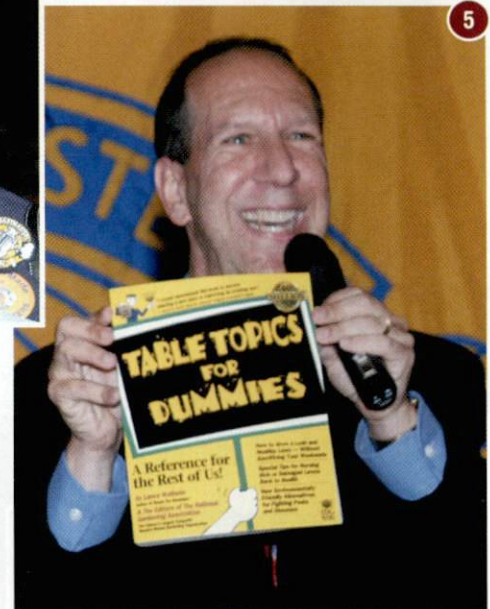
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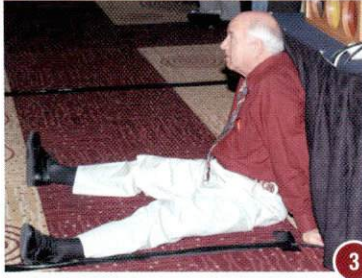
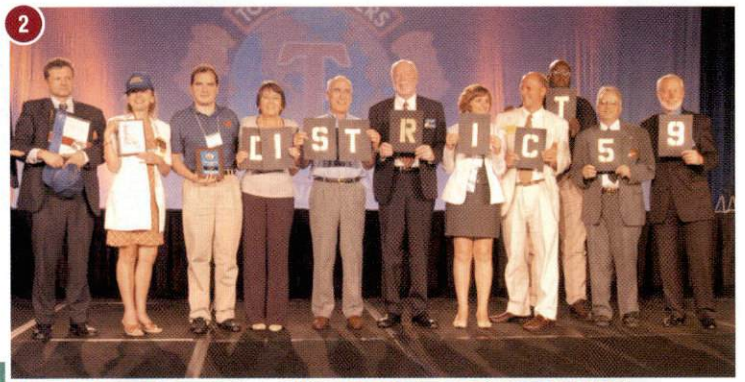
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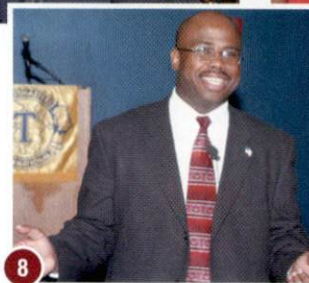
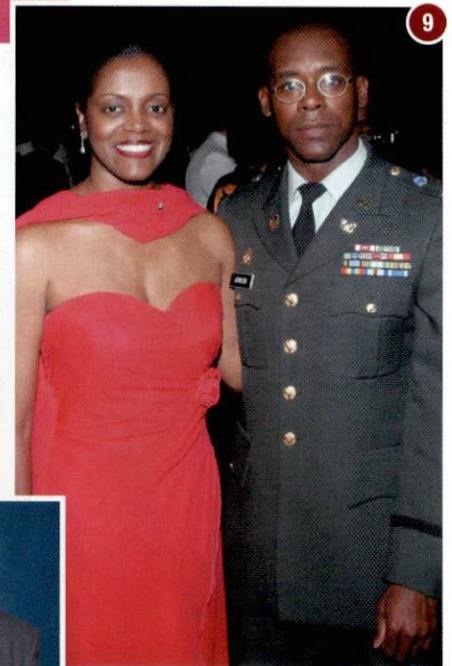
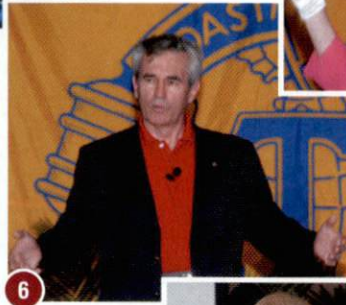
CAPTIONS

- 1. President Gavin Blakey shares convention highlights at a reception for first-time convention attendees.
- 2-4. Toastmasters meet and greet.
- 5. Humorist David Glickman knows how to get laughs.
- 6 & 9. First-time convention attendees check out the action.
- 7. District 14 Governor John Lewallen welcomes everyone to Atlanta, Georgia.
- 8. International Director Nila Miller shops for shirts in the TI convention store.



CAPTIONS

1. Toastmasters from Britain and Ireland celebrate Ted Corcoran's election as International President.
2. District 59 Toastmasters (Europe) are honored at the Hall of Fame ceremony for achieving President's Distinguished District.
3. Oops, no more chairs!
4. International President Gavin Blakey and his wife, Bea, are proud to be Australians.
5. Newly elected Third Vice President Johnny Uy and his wife, Irene.
6. International Director Kathryn Miles successfully campaigns for office.
7. Ventriloquist Jay Johnson and his sidekick, Bob, entertain at the Toga Party.
8. Distinguished District 49 Governor Elaine Glover and her husband, Don.
9. Keynote speaker Naomi Rhode happily autographs books.
10. Newly elected International Director Maimunah Natasha reacts to the vote tally at the Annual Business Meeting.



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CAPTIONS

1. Georgia Toastmasters pose proudly with their President's Distinguished District plaques.
2. Texas Toastmasters are all dressed up for the toga party.
3. 2001 International Speech Contest winner Darren LaCroix hams it up with friend Carolyn Kaldy.
4. Senior Vice President Jon Greiner, his wife, Belinda (left) and friend Patricia Burns.
- 5-8. Session speakers Anne Barab, Michael Landrum, Judith Tingley and Ty Howard educate, entertain and inspire.
9. 2001-2003 International Director Jennifer Johnson and her brother, Randy Johnson, a Chief Warrant Officer III in the U.S. Army.
10. International Speech Contest winners: Dave Sanfacon (second place), Jim Key (first place) and Kyle Hall (third place).
11. Standing room only. Say "cheese"!



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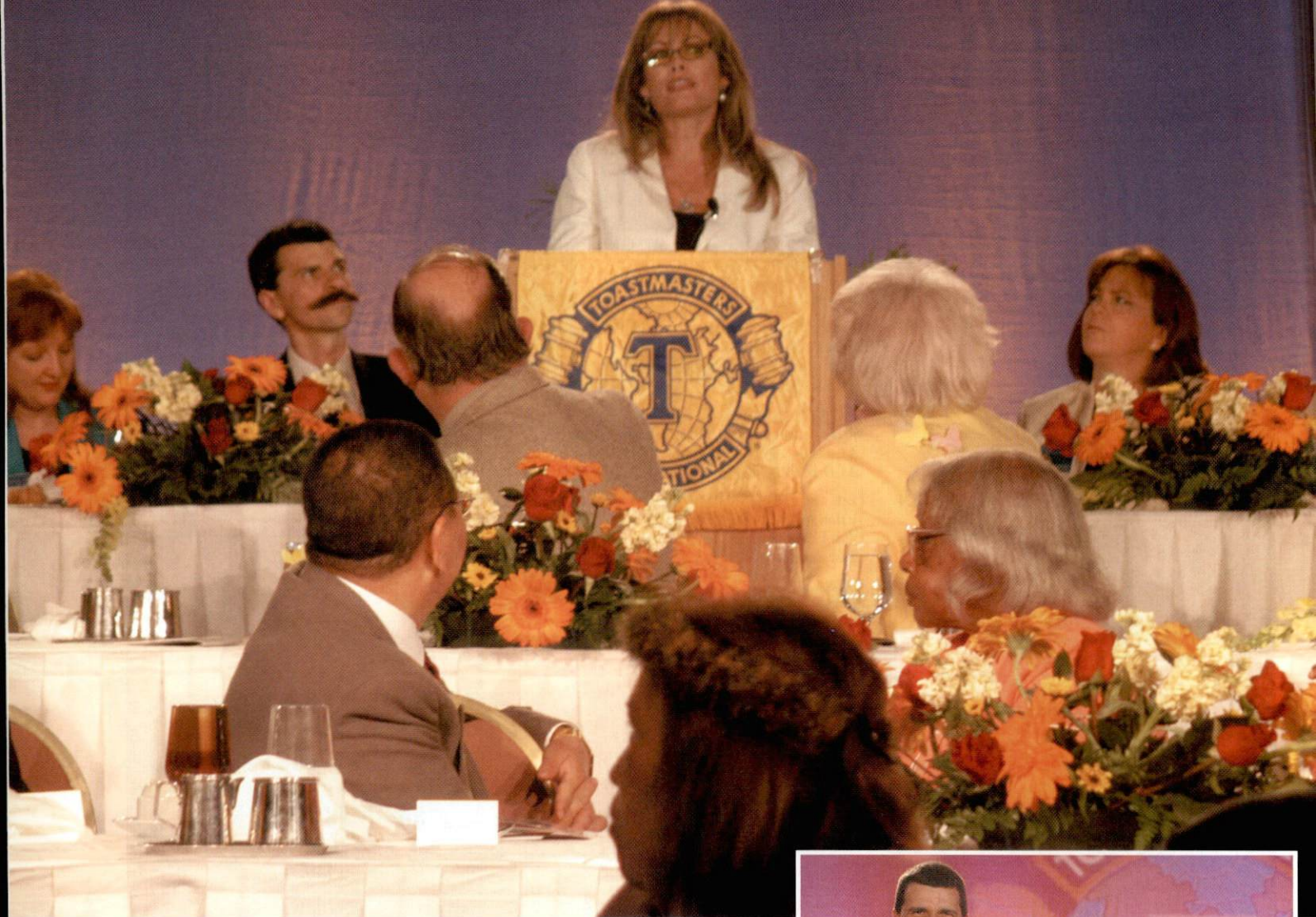
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Toastmasters' 2003 Golden Gavel Recipient
Debbi Fields Rose:

A Recipe for Success



An interview with the famous
founder of Mrs. Fields Cookies.

BY CINDY PODURGAL CHAMBERS, DTM ■ PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOWDY PHOTOGRAPHY



Once upon a time, there was a girl who dreamed of making people happy. For Debbi Fields Rose, founder of Mrs. Fields Cookies, that dream came true when she took three key ingredients and blended them to perfection, creating what she calls her "recipe for success."

On August 22, 2003, Toastmasters got a taste of that recipe – as well as a taste of her famous cookies – when she traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, to accept the Golden Gavel award, Toastmasters' highest honor, at the 72nd International Convention.

The First Ingredient: Passion

The little girl who grew up to command a multimillion-dollar cookie empire created her success from scratch. Growing up in East Oakland, California, the youngest of five sisters, her family was short on money but long on dreams. Her mother, Mary, was a housewife who learned to make every dollar stretch. Father Ed "Buddy" Sivyer

was a welder who preferred fishing to high finance.

"Dad was a big dreamer," Debbi recalls. Deep in the basement of their two-bedroom, one-bath home was a green outboard motor, covered in dust. "When I asked him what he was going to do with it, he told me, 'One day I'm going to get an aluminum boat.' It was always 'one day.' And he passed away with all his 'one days,' and all these

dreams, and he never got a chance to see them come true," she says.

While the motor never propelled a boat, Debbi's father would be proud to know that it helped launch Debbi in the direction of her dreams. "It led to my personal drive and passion," she says today. "It taught me that if you've got a dream, you've got to check it off. You've got to go for it; you've got to make it happen."

Debbi's dream of making people happy came true against overwhelming odds. She never excelled in school; her sisters nicknamed her "Stupid." But by age 13, she discovered she could bake great cookies – cookies that satisfied more than just her sweet tooth. "They brought me attention," she says with a smile.

Her common sense and work ethic did, too. "I had the willingness to not only work hard, but to do a job so well it became obvious," she says. By her sophomore year of high school she was employed part-time at Mervyns, a

department store in Alameda, California. It was a job she took very seriously.

"I felt ownership in it ... like it was my department, my customers, my store. And I kept finding more and more opportunities to improve things, to find work. I was so driven, so passionate about my job, that my supervisors noticed." By the age of 15, Debbi was named assistant manager.

Despite her blonde beauty and sparkling smile, Debbi never really fit in with the popular crowd in high school. She was named homecoming queen her senior year, yet didn't have a date for the football game.

But at 19 she had captured the attention of Randy Fields, a Phi Beta Kappa honors graduate of Stanford who was well on his way to becoming a successful economist. Their marriage, in 1975, propelled the new Mrs. Fields into the lofty world of cocktail parties and intellectuals, a place the junior-college student found both foreign and frightening.

She recalls how humiliated she felt when one of her husband's powerful clients asked what she was planning to do with her life. Hoping to impress him, she groped for just the right word. "I'm trying to get orientated," she said.

"The word is 'oriented,'" he snapped. "Learn to use the English language!" The correction did more than just embarrass her to tears. It made her determined to stop trying to please others and succeed for herself.

But passion and a cookie recipe were all she had. "I got really frustrated. No one thought I had potential, no one thought I was ever going to do anything with my life," she says. "And that's probably the best thing that ever happened to me."

With no financial background, no money, no degree and no experience, Debbi didn't set out to show others they were wrong. "I wanted," she says, "to prove to myself that I was right."

The Second Ingredient: Persistence

Even husband Randy, who admitted she made a great product, thought she was crazy to even think about opening a cookie store. She brought her cookies to banks, but was turned down by loan officer after loan officer – even as they licked every last bit of chocolate from their fingertips.

"It didn't help that I was 20 years old and had no business plan. I knew it was going to be hard for people to

"First, the Recipe for Success requires passion – you've got to love what you do. Second, you've got to persevere. There are so many challenges, and it's a scary road out there – but you have to see it through. Finally, focus on perfection. To have a product or service that will last, you've got to be the best, not 'me too.'"

– DEBBI FIELDS ROSE, TOASTMASTERS' 2003 GOLDEN GAVEL RECIPIENT

◀ **Debbi Fields speaks to convention delegates from the headtable at the sold-out Golden Gavel luncheon on August 21, 2003.**

◀ **Accepting the Golden Gavel from International President Gavin Blakey and his wife, Bea.**

take me seriously," she says. But rather than seeing it as a barrier, Debbi decided that it was her job to keep asking. "I told myself that if I stop, if I falter, this dream will never get launched." She finally found a banker willing to offer her a loan – at 21 percent interest. "I took what I had to take," she says, smiling wryly at the recollection.

She also took her married name into the business, believing it sounded more motherly, more trustworthy. On August 16, 1977, Mrs. Fields Chocolate Chippery opened to the public in Palo Alto, California.

Her husband bet her she couldn't sell \$50 worth of cookies that day, and at first, it seemed certain he would win. By noon she had not made a single sale.

"And fear set in," she recalls. "I was so keenly aware that everybody was right. I was failing. But it forced me

to get out of my comfort zone and leave the store and start marching up and down the street, literally begging people to take a cookie." When strollers sampled the soft, saucer-sized cookies, they were sold – and they bought. By the end of that first business day, she had netted \$75 and won her bet.

Her "try, then buy" methodology paid off. Soon Debbi's cookies were selling beyond her wildest dreams.

Yet even as the business grew, Debbi remained focused not just on her cookies, but on her customers. "Regulars" would have their favorite cookies and coffee waiting for them when they arrived. She knew she had created something truly special when her customers started calling to let her know when they were sick and couldn't make their regular visit.



Public Speaking

- **"Have a pre-speech ritual.** My family knows I have to be well-rested before a speech. I think it helps to go over what you want to present before you go to sleep, then sleep on it. I always wake up very early and practice again."
- **"Speak from the heart.** Talk about what you know. It allows you to be better prepared, and gives you comfort and confidence."
- **"Value the audience's time.** I always keep in mind that the most precious thing people have is time. It's important to know how much time you have to speak, and to use it wisely."
- **"Get close to your audience.** Don't stand behind a podium. And if you can, don't use notes, so you can make eye contact. Both help you get closer to the audience – and that's what it's all about."
- **"Leave something with your listeners.** I take my responsibility to entertain and inform very seriously. I want

to leave something with my audience. So I emphasize key points to make them easier to remember."

- **"Be forgiving.** If you make a mistake, remember: It's not the end of the world. The audience will forgive you – and you should forgive yourself."
- **"Have fun.** Before I speak, I always have butterflies. Then there's this adrenaline rush, and the fear turns to fun. Afterward, I want to reach for the sky and yell, 'Yes! I did it!'"

Debbi Fields

Business

- **"No' is not an acceptable answer.** When I first got started in business, I literally got turned down so much that I said, 'It's my job to make them hear me. It's my job to keep asking.' So the word 'no' became unacceptable to me."
- **"Be who you are.** My family used to say, 'You've got to stick to your knitting.' That is, be yourself. When everyone else was wearing navy blue wool suits, I thought, 'That's not who I am.' I wasn't going to wear something drab. I wanted to wear something I felt terrific in. So traditional 'dressing for success' isn't for everyone."
- **"Have a great product.** How my cookies tasted was much more important than how they were marketed. If your product isn't exceptional, it doesn't matter what you say or how you try to sell it."
- **"Monitor your progress immediately.** In school, I always hated the fact that I would get my report card two weeks after the grading period. By then it was too late to cor-

Soon, employees started encouraging her to open additional stores. Slowly but surely, she opened one, then another, then another. At the same time, she began a family that would grow to include five daughters. It was a decision that would astound many. A demanding career and a family? Impossible.

But Debbi was unwavering. "I came from a family of five girls, and that was what I planned," she says simply. Family became her number-one priority. With typical determination, Debbi decided that if she put family first, she could take better care of business.

And that's exactly what she did. Nineteen years after opening her first store, Mrs. Fields Cookies had grown to include more than 600 company-owned and franchised stores in nearly a dozen countries.

rect my mistakes. So in business, I learned to monitor the pulse-points and self-correct immediately. Then we could make changes before it was too late."

■ **"Hire Happy Birthday people.** When I conducted job interviews, I always asked people to sing me Happy Birthday. I was looking for 'I can' people – people willing to stand up and belt it out! 'Happy Birthday people' are willing to take risks, to laugh at themselves, to make people smile. That's the perfect attitude for starting a dream and getting it launched."

Rose on . . .

Goals

■ **"Don't dream, do.** If you have a dream, you've got to reach for it. A dream won't come true by itself – you've got to make it happen."

■ **"Make resolutions.** Making New Year's resolutions is important to me. Each year I ask myself, 'What do I want to do with my life? How can I expand myself? How can I improve physically, emotionally, as a family? What am I afraid to do?' I go back over those resolutions to see that I am making them real."

■ **"Go with the flow.** Life can be unpredictable, much more shaped by attitude than circumstances. So although it's good to be a plotter and planner, and to shape your world with your vision, that doesn't always happen. I like to allow myself flex time, to have alternate plans in case something doesn't work out."

■ **"Acknowledge your success.** I celebrate when I reach my goals, and when I do right. I'm not perfect, so when I work

The Third Ingredient: Perfection

Despite her growing business, Debbi managed to keep her hands in the dough, often literally. She insisted on using only the finest ingredients – specially blended chocolate with a high cocoa-butter content, fragrant Madagascar vanilla and top double-Grade-A butter. She took part in all the product testing and tasting.

Her drive for perfection paid off, and Mrs. Field's cookies quickly became the standard by which all cookies were measured. Imitators sprung up seemingly overnight in malls across the country and around the world.

Yet Debbi never stopped looking for ways to improve the process or the product. The company's philosophy, "Good enough never is," said it all. Her name went on every bag, along with her money-back guarantee.

at things that are not necessarily easy for me, I recognize my successes."

■ **"Schedule it** – I really believe if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. You can dream anything you want in this world, but if you've got it on your schedule, you're going to show up and make it happen."

■ **"Stay busy.** I am so excited to be alive. I want to try new things, do new things, see new things. I put a lot of things on our plate, and I'm always getting ready for the next activity."

Family

■ **"Mix business and family.** I was amazed that when I first started the business, people would say, 'You're not going to have a family, are you?' In fact, I planned to have five daughters. I was committed to making business and family work together. They were going to be totally intertwined. It was essential."

■ **"Take time to celebrate.** I'm always planning special events and trips where I know my family will be involved. I'm meeting my sisters, my daughter and my mother in Puerto Vallarta soon, to celebrate my mom. I've got Niagara Falls on my list, and we'll go and check it off. You can always count on me to have fun!"

■ **"Be your child's role model.** How your children feel about you is more important than anything else. I try hard to be a good role model. When I told my kids I was being honored with the Golden Gavel award, they looked over the list of past recipients and the criteria for selection. And they said, 'Mom, we're really proud of you.' Those are the best words you can ever hear." **T**

"I wanted buyers to know I stood behind every cookie I sold," she says.

Mrs. Fields, Inc., became the first company to use computer technology to streamline management operations, revolutionizing the way the world did business. While still in her twenties, Harvard Business School was using her method as an example of the successful application of technology in business management. Typical for Debbi, her system had people, not just progress, at its core.

"I was just looking for ways to make it easier for my team and me to stay on track of priorities," she explains.

"I tried to get everything on a computer, anything that could make a manager's job easier, so that they could spend their time dealing with people, both inside the company and with customers. To me the greatest gift people possess is their ability to interact with people, not with paper."

Her quest for perfection also led her to institute a "two-hour holding

time" for her cookies. "I decided that if our cookies weren't sold in two hours, we'd find a home for them," she says. Local civic groups and Red Cross blood donors were the pleased recipients of her generosity. "It not only made a statement about quality," she says, "it allowed us to help the community."

Having overseen the expansion of her company and carefully supervised all aspects of the operation, from public relations to product development, Debbi sold her company to private investors in 1993.

"I decided it was time to leave when the move came to sell packaged cookies. I felt it was a compromise. I basically said I could never sell anything I didn't believe in," she explains. The decision was a difficult one. "When you're really used to running the show, it's hard to let go. But I found that it gave me so much time to be with my family and children, it actually turned out to be a blessing in disguise."

She and Randy Fields – also her longtime business partner – divorced in 1997. Today Debbi makes her home in Memphis, Tennessee, with husband Michael Rose, retired chairman of Memphis-based Promus Hotel Corporation and Harrah's Entertainment. Together the couple have 10 children, including Debbi's five daughters, McKenzie, 12; Ashley, 15; Jennifer, 19; Jenessa, 21, and Jessica, 24; and Rose's five children, who range in age from 11 to 29.

She loves planning activities that involve all 10 kids. "When we get together, the kids call it 'Camp Debbi,'" she

says with a laugh. "We go through the list of things they want to do, and we check them off, one by one."

They also bake cookies together. "The kids love to bake because it's something they can do well, and their friends want them to do it," she says. "Most importantly, it's a great way to bring the family together." Although she still enjoys making her original recipe, she admits to "always adding, always perfecting. I love to play around when I have time to play." She recently created a cookie recipe that included white chocolate and dried cherries. "It took me about 11 or 12 tries before everything was right," she says. "But I knew when it was finally perfect."

For Debbi, the quest for personal and professional perfection will never end. "A few years ago, when I stepped out of the day-to-day operations of the company," she told *Memphis Magazine*, "I thought of all the things I wanted to do as a mom and as a businessperson. One of those was to address things that I'm afraid of, like public speaking. I had done it for years, but I was determined to push the envelope and try to get past my fear." So what did she do? She joined Toastmasters.

"I've never thought of myself as a great communicator, and that's one of the reasons why I got involved," she explains. "The idea of getting in front of a group, not as Mrs. Fields but really as Debbi, made my knees shake, and I'd get all dry-mouthed."

"But the Toastmasters group understood," she continues. "Here's a place where you can learn, grow, develop – and where other people are doing the same thing." The Salt Lake City, Utah, club that met in her corporate headquarters, became "like a family, a unit. We were all trying to improve ourselves and achieve our goals. It brings back wonderful memories."

Good communication skills and business success go hand-in-hand, she says. "There are so many brilliant people out there, but you have to be able to get your point across quickly. When I ask entrepreneurs about their business or products, I want them to tell me in a minute or less. Our attention span is so short, you can't draw it out. Getting your point across quickly and succinctly is essential."

But the greatest benefit of her Toastmasters experience? "It gave me the opportunity to become a Golden Gavel recipient!" she says with a dazzling smile.

The Final Product: Pride

"I'm especially proud to be selected for the Golden Gavel award," she says, "because it recognizes both communication and leadership. When I look at the people who won before me – really amazing people – I think, 'Wow! What an honor!'"

It's one of many honors Debbi has garnered in her lifetime. She was spotlighted by *Esquire* magazine as one of 1984's Men and Women Under 40 Who Are Changing America, was named Woman of the Year in 1986 by both Outstanding Young Women of America and the Young

"I'm especially proud to be selected for the Golden Gavel award, because it recognizes both communication and leadership. When I look at the people who won before me – really amazing people – I think, 'Wow! What an honor!'"

Women's Christian Association, and was declared one of the Top 60 Women-Run Business Owners in America in 1985, '86 and '87 by *Savvy* magazine.

Her book, *Mrs. Fields Cookie Book: 100 Recipes from the Kitchen of Debbi Fields*, was the first cookbook to top *The New York Times* bestseller list. She has also authored *Mrs. Fields' I Love Chocolate Cookbook*; *Mrs. Fields' Cookie Secrets*; *Mrs. Fields' Best Cookie Book Ever*; *Debbi Fields' Great American Desserts*; and her autobiography, *One Smart Cookie: How a Housewife's Chocolate Chip Recipe Turned into a Multimillion-Dollar Business: The Story of Mrs. Fields Cookies*.

Most people would be satisfied knowing that the business they cooked up boasts around \$400 million in annual sales, but Debbi has not quit achieving. She serves on the board of directors of Outback Steakhouse, WKNO (a public radio and TV station), and the Orpheum Theatre in Memphis. She has also served on the advisory boards of Primary Children's Medical Foundation in Utah and the America 3 Women's Sailing team. In 1986, Debbi founded Mrs. Fields Children's Health Foundation, which distributed grants to medical organizations.

While her main role now is motherhood, she still spends several days a month handling book signings and giving speeches. As a member of the Washington Speakers Bureau, she often addresses huge audiences throughout the United States. But she also gives motivational speeches to small groups in Memphis schools and clubs in order to remain involved in her community.

She especially enjoys speaking to high school students. "I want to get them to believe in their dreams," she says, "especially the American Dream." As the epitome of that dream, Debbi's message really hits home.

"People talk about success, dream about success, want to be successful. But to move to the next rung on the lad-

der, you've got to take risks. You've got to move out of your comfort zone." Success, she insists, isn't about having money or holding money. "It's about feeling really proud that you were part of something... feeling like you are never willing to settle. There's so much out there to learn and to do. And the only way to gain confidence is to try something new, to master something. When I take risks, I'm often scared to death. But I'd rather go forward and try something than to sit back and think of what could have been."

She continues to set goals for herself, and never fails to reward herself for her accomplishments. The goals and challenges, she says, "stretch you, and help you to put your personal mark on that day. When you give life 100 percent, it pays you back in unbelievable pride."

And has she achieved her goal of making people happy?

"Absolutely," she says. "I've been in the business of making people smile.

The cookie is truly an extension of universal friendship that crosses all boundaries. You can't help but smile when you have one!"

"It's so funny," she adds. "I never really knew what I wanted to be or accomplish. But there was this voice that said the reason you're here is to make people happy. I live it every day of my life – and it feels great." **T**

"To me the greatest gift people possess is their ability to interact with people, not with paper."

Cindy Podurgal Chambers, DTM, hosts her own cable TV show in Clarksville, Tennessee, is co-founder of a television production company, and is a frequent contributor to this and other publications.

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New York Toastmasters teach public speaking to 120 leaders at the United Nations.

Around the World in Eight Hours

This story is about how leaders of one global organization (Toastmasters) trained leaders at another global organization (the United Nations). The venue was United Nations' headquarters in New York City, where eight Toastmasters from District 46 taught nearly 120 leaders of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) associated with the U.N. how to more effectively advocate social change. As one of those trainers, I'd like to illustrate how Toastmasters can make the world a better place by simply sharing our skills with leaders of other organizations.

Participants at the day-long U.N.-sponsored event on February 27, 2003, honed their communication skills through direct participation in the Toastmasters program. In the morning, our training team demonstrated the three key elements of a club meeting: Table Topics, manual speeches and evaluations. During the rest of the day, attendees got to answer Table Topics, deliver mini Ice Breakers and evaluate presentations. Experienced Toastmaster Michiko Kuroda sparked the NGO leaders' enthusiasm in the morning with a demonstration of an Ice Breaker speech in which she described her journey from childhood idealism in Japan to her current service with the U.N.'s peace-keeping forces.


Michiko's speech and the Toastmasters training team inspired many NGO representatives to participate as speakers or evaluators. By the end of the day, these leaders left with confidence and competence in their speaking ability. They also learned about one another.

Our journey to the U.N. began the same way most people hear of Toastmasters: by word of mouth. One of the leaders of the NGO executive committee is Patricia Day, a Toastmaster in Connecticut who represents the U.S. League



of Women Voters at the United Nations. Patricia persuaded U.N. and NGO officials to invite Toastmasters to provide training at the New York U.N. headquarters.

The event was planned with customary Toastmasters teamwork. District 46 Governor Nick LoBue coordinated the support and materials from World Headquarters. He then put together a diverse team of experienced trainers, half of whom were born outside the United States. Other than Nick and I, team members from District 46 included Lt. Governor Education and Training Brad Shilling, DTM; Lt. Governor Marketing Himendu Chaudhuri, DTM; Past International Director Mark LaVergne, DTM; Past District Governor Fran Okeson, DTM; Past Division Governor Michiko Kuroda, ATM-S; and Area 43 Governor Brian Hill, ATM-B. A round of meetings and a flurry of e-mails produced a full one-day program that included brief "how-to" lectures on listening skills, speech organization, vocal variety, gestures, body language, use of props and speech evaluations.



We were told that too many of the presentations at the U.N. involved audiences listening passively to speakers, with no interaction from the floor. Our U.N. hosts encouraged us to try something new, and we were happy to oblige. But we had only a few hours of program time to get a large number of attendees on their feet. What to do?

The solution came right out of the pages of *The Toastmaster* magazine. In the August 1998 issue, California-based Toastmaster Patricia Fry, CTM, described a technique for selling yourself or your cause in less than a minute, in an article titled "Your 30-Second Commercial." Her ideas were perfect for us. Teaching our attendees how to deliver a "30-second commercial," or an "elevator speech" as Craig Harrison, DTM, describes it, would meet their needs. Every one of the participants at our U.N. program represented a non-profit organization with a worthy social or humanitarian cause. They all needed to reach the ears of power-brokers to enlist support for their causes. What if, for example, they were in an elevator with United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and had 30 seconds alone with this leader? How would they use the time to benefit their organization? A "30-second commercial" of their own creation, rehearsed to perfection, would be the answer.

We advised attendees to observe the following rules in devising their "30-second commercials:"

- Keep it short and memorable.
- Deliver a 25-word statement that describes the benefits of the program or cause provided by your organization.
- Avoid technical and professional jargon.

For example, we told attendees, if you're a nutritionist, you can introduce yourself by saying, "I teach you how to behave in front of food." A teacher can begin with the line, "I'm empowering the next generation." An employee with a tax collection agency, such as the Internal Revenue Service in the United States, could always begin by claiming (correctly) that "I'm a government fundraiser."

As the day progressed, all NGO leaders presented their 30-second commercials. All were effective; some were downright moving. Past District 46 Governor Fran Okeson, DTM, was struck by "the impassioned pleas for assistance from a nun asking for enough financial aid so she wouldn't have to see children going to bed hungry." Okeson said, "These men and women meet regularly to try to make a difference in the lives of the impoverished and downtrodden of the world. I felt humbled to have been invited to share our Toastmasters training with them."

It's often said that the world changed after Sept. 11. The United Nations is not immune to this change. In the mid-

dle of the afternoon, an evacuation drill was conducted at the U.N.'s New York headquarters. Everyone in the complex was asked to hastily exit into the streets. The drill occurred in the middle of Brad Shilling's presentation, but he handled the interruption with aplomb. "Even though we lost some of our audience," Brad said, "most of them returned for the conclusion of our program. It shows how interested they were in Toastmasters."

Cultural sensitivity is invaluable in global communications. For example, take the phrase Table Topics. Toastmasters from Auckland to Amsterdam know the meaning intimately. Outside of Toastmasters, however, the phrase is idiomatic and likely to draw blank stares. Our U.N. hosts advised us to employ a different term, so we replaced it with "impromptu speeches." We also found in planning our program that the term Ice Breaker also was confusing. We replaced it with "self-presentation speech." As author David Zielinski advised in the January 2003 issue of *The Toastmaster* magazine, "Screen out jargon, idiomatic expressions and acronyms peculiar to your own country when working with international audiences." We followed his advice.

Our experience that day demonstrates that training leaders of other organizations is a wonderful way to be of service and promote our own organization. You can use the Speechcraft materials available for purchase from World Headquarters or do as we did, tailor a program to fit the specific needs of your host organization. As NGO executive committee member and Toastmaster Patricia Day told us afterward, "The elevator speech activity was perfect for us. It made people realize how they can make a minute count if they are prepared. You never know who you'll bump into at the U.N."

The second lesson is that all the materials and ideas you'll need to design a program are found in Toastmasters. Advanced manuals, scripts from the *Better Speaker Series* and modules in the *Success/Communication Series* are all helpful sources. And don't forget to scour through back issues of *The Toastmaster* magazine for great ideas!

In the months following our U.N. presentation, we received numerous inquiries about Toastmasters membership from our new set of U.N. friends.

"Toastmasters training is a means, not an end," wrote our founder, Dr. Ralph Smedley, a half century ago. "In learning to communicate better, we promote better understanding and help in the cause of human progress." That was our aim that day at the United Nations. Make it your aim too. Use your Toastmasters experience and all available resources to bring the Toastmasters program to new groups. By sharing the wealth of our program with others, you will not only be spreading the word of Toastmasters, you will also do your part in building a better world. **T**

Amelia Abad, DTM, served as the 1999-2000 District 46 Governor and led District 46 to #4 in the world. Amelia is happy to help Toastmasters reach out to organizations and can be contacted at AmeliaAbad@aol.com

Filler words are more than just unnecessary clutter in your speech. They are a distraction.

Filler-Word Therapy

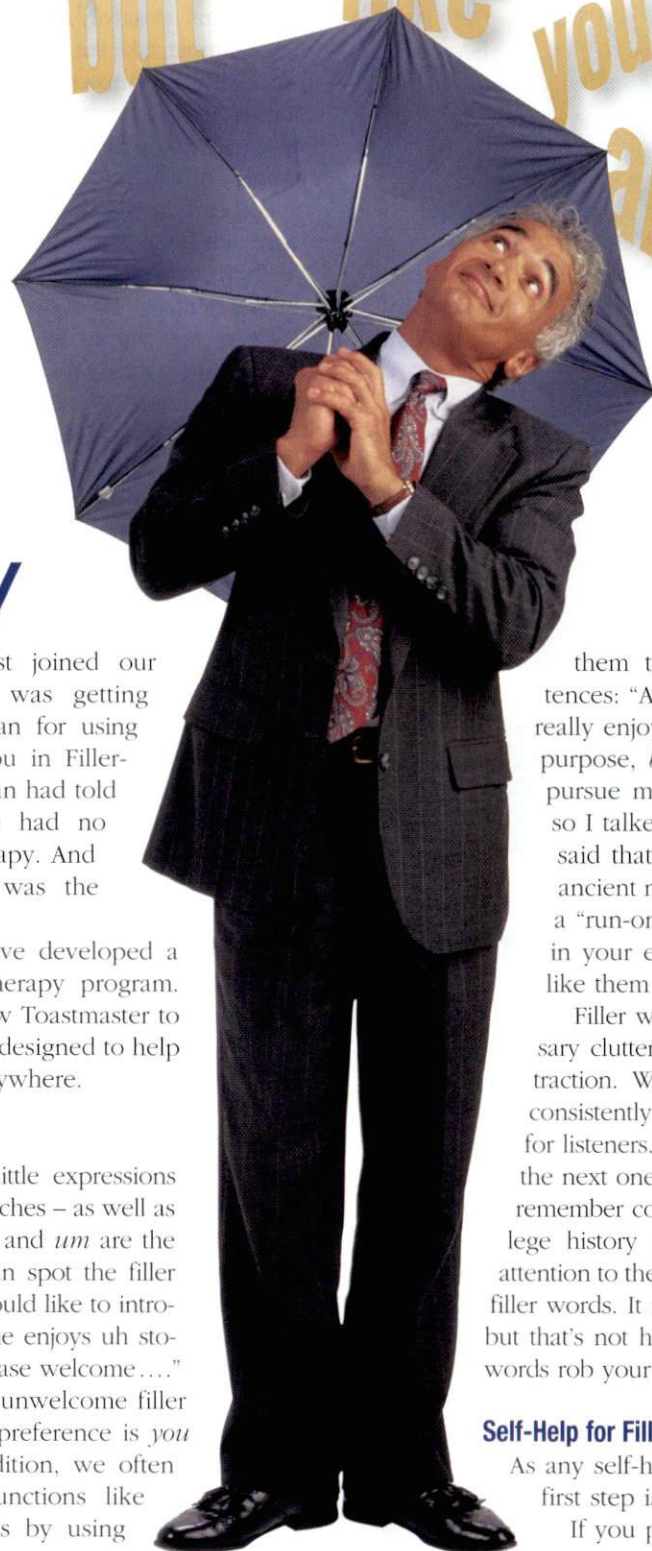
Poor guy. Larry had just joined our Toastmasters club and was getting nailed by the Grammarian for using filler words. "We're putting you in Filler-Word Therapy," the Grammarian had told him. Unfortunately, our club had no such thing as Filler-Word Therapy. And even more unfortunately, I was the Grammarian that day.

As a service to Larry, I have developed a comprehensive Filler-Word Therapy program. But you don't have to be a new Toastmaster to benefit from this program. It is designed to help innocent filler-word users everywhere.

Um, What's a Filler Word?

Filler words are those pesky little expressions that find their way into our speeches – as well as into our daily conversation. *Uh* and *um* are the classic offenders. See if you can spot the filler words in this sentence: "I uh would like to introduce our um speaker today. She enjoys uh storytelling and um ham radio. Please welcome...."

Uh and *um* aren't the only unwelcome filler words. For many people, the preference is *you know*, *like* or *actually*. In addition, we often turn perfectly innocent conjunctions like *and* and *but* into filler words by using



them to string together multiple sentences: "And then I studied biology, *and* I really enjoyed it *and* I felt I had found my purpose, *but* I wasn't sure if I wanted to pursue medical school or animal studies, so I talked to my mentor about it *and* he said that I should...." This is what your ancient ninth-grade English teacher called a "run-on sentence." She didn't like them in your essays, and your audience won't like them in your speeches.

Filler words are more than just unnecessary clutter in your speech. They are a distraction. When a person uses *uh* and *um* consistently, the habit becomes a focal point for listeners. They find themselves waiting for the next one and cringing when that hear it. I remember counting the filler words in my college history professor's lectures. I paid little attention to the content sandwiched between the filler words. It might have been interesting stuff, but that's not how I remember it. Don't let filler words rob your speech of its potential impact.

Self-Help for Filler-Word Users

As any self-help community will tell you, the first step is admitting you have a problem.

If you participate regularly in Toastmas-

ters meetings, your fellow Toastmasters have probably told you if you have a filler-word problem through the constructive feedback of the Grammarian or a speech evaluator. If you know you have a problem and you are ready to overcome it, follow the four steps outlined below.

1 Develop the ability to hear or “catch” filler words.

This skill is critical because you can't deal with the filler words if you can't hear them. So practice listening with this specific purpose in mind. Start by listening for other speakers' filler words. Try it with radio personalities, or with the speaker at your next company meeting. Then begin listening for your own filler words. If you have difficulty, ask your friends and family to help you by alerting you to the filler words you use during conversations.

2 Once you have learned to listen for your own filler words, identify the reasons or occasions that you use them.

For many people, using filler words is just an unconscious nervous habit, little different from repeatedly pushing your glasses up on your nose. You would never even notice this habit unless someone pointed it out to you.

For other people, using filler words is not a sign of nervousness; it's simply a bad habit. We put in *uh* and *um* to help us stall for time during Table Topics, to fill an awkward pause, or to bridge the gap between two thoughts.

Some people automatically begin each sentence with *um*, perhaps in an effort to sound informal or relaxed.

When you catch yourself using filler words, try to identify the reason you're doing it. Ask an objective listener or evaluator to help you with this step by making note of recurring patterns in your speech.

3 Once you have identified the reasons you use filler words, conquer those reasons.

If your filler words are borne out of nervousness or fear of public speaking, tackle that problem. Toastmasters International has published numerous techniques for dealing with nervousness.

If you use filler words routinely to stall for time during Table Topics, develop other techniques for accomplishing the same thing. For example, repeat the question, and have some stock responses ready to buy you some time while you think.

If you use filler words to fill awkward pauses, practice inserting deliberate pauses in your speech so that you become comfortable with them. Don't feel that you have to be speaking every second. Not all pauses are awkward – some are quite welcome. They give both you and the audience a nice break.

If you often use filler words in your prepared speeches, spend more time practicing the delivery. If you are extremely confident with your material and use deliberate transition phrases such as *in addition*, *on the other hand* and *in other words*, your thoughts will flow easily and you won't be as likely to use filler words.

If you use filler words in an attempt to sound casual or relaxed, realize that filler words only make you sound unsure and unpolished. Instead, alter your vocabulary level, sentence complexity and vocal tone to achieve the appropriate level of formality.

4 Using all that you have learned through the previous steps, practice speaking very deliberately.

Take this time to concentrate on leaving out the filler words. First try just a few sentences, then gradually expand. Do this with every speech you prepare, giving yourself plenty of time to practice. If it helps, visualize the sentences in your mind before you say them, and keep the sentences short and simple so that your brain can generate them easily.

Filler-Word Therapy can work for you, especially when you have the support and feedback of your Toastmasters club. Eventually, your need to use filler words will disappear. You will sound much more polished, you will feel much more confident, and your speeches will be much more powerful. But be warned: Once you have conquered filler words, they will become your biggest pet peeve! **T**

Holly Webber, CTM, is a member of Capital City club 2048-55 in Austin, Texas.

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This stand-up comic broke the *Guinness Book of World Records* by doing just that.

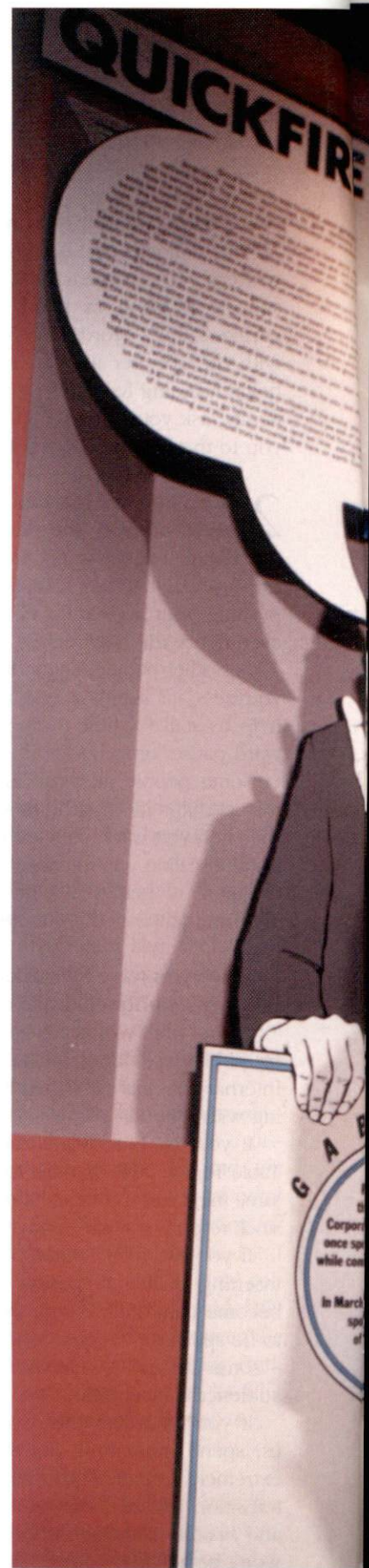
*T*oo often we wait for everything to be perfect before we leap ahead. That would be a great philosophy in the ideal world, but in the real world, waiting can cause a lost opportunity.

A friend of mine has been writing the same book for 20 years. She hasn't submitted it to a publisher yet – because it's not perfect. If everybody waited for perfection, no one would ever get married, buy clothes ('cause we are waiting for that perfect body), or do anything. So this advice goes out to all of you speakers who have been practicing for a while and know you're good in front of an audience, but are afraid to take the big gig because you're just not ready yet.

I'm not saying you should lunge in if you can't form a sentence. I am saying, practice your craft, have faith in your abilities, and then push yourself beyond your fear and slightly into that uncomfortable zone. I know what I'm talking about because that's exactly what I did to break the *Guinness Book of World Records* for fast-talking.

Because I'm a stand-up comic by profession, I'm used to putting myself on the front lines. Several years ago, I was working at the radio station WBLS-FM in New York, writing comedy lines and skits for the morning host, Sergio Dean. One day, I told him that I could do a really cool Mae West impression, but that I called my character June East, (Mae's long-lost sister.) He smiled and the next minute threw some weather and traffic copy at me. The red tally light (which means you are on the air) came on, and I had no choice but to start talking in a sultry voice.

Well, in that 30 seconds it just so happened that Dinah Prince, a reporter from *The Daily News*, was listening. She called the station and said she was doing an article on weather and traffic people and wanted to know how long I had been





◀ Fran Capo demonstrates her fast-talking powers at the Guinness Museum in Canada's Niagara Falls in 1988 by reading *Three Little Pigs* with son Spencer in tow.

doing it. What was I going to tell her – 30 seconds? So I said, “Oh, a while.” After all, it felt like a while to me, since I was just tossed into the arena. She replied, “Great! I want to include you in my article.” I was excited and stunned. We did the interview on the spot. When she had finished interviewing me, she said, “I have one last question. What do you plan to do next?”

Next? Well, at the time there was nothing I was planning to do next, so I asked her what she meant, stalling for time. She said she really wanted to follow my career and wanted to know if I had any other crazy stunts up my sleeve. Here was a woman from *The Daily News* telling me she was interested in me! So I thought I'd better tell her

*“I live my life by this simple philosophy:
I always say ‘yes,’ and then I ask
myself, ‘Now, what do I have to
do to accomplish that?’”*

something, and quickly! What came out was, “I’m thinking about breaking the *Guinness Book of World Records*.” She asked, “For what?” But I didn’t have a “for what,” so instead I told her that I couldn’t tell her because I was afraid I’d jinx it. Dinah said, “OK, look, my article has to go in by six tonight. If you decide you want to tell me, call me before then.”

I immediately ran out and bought a *Guinness Book* and flipped through the pages. Let’s see. Pogo sticking? No. The most tattoos? No. Then I spotted it – the record for fast-talking.

It was now 5:50 p.m. I called Dinah from a phone booth and announced, “OK, I’ll tell you, I’m thinking of breaking the *Guinness Book of World Records* for fast-talking.” She was thrilled, “What’s the current record?” I looked down at the book in my hand: 552 words per minute.

“Really! And what are you at?” I thought quickly, “550 words. I’m working really hard on those last two words.” She thanked me for the information and hung up. The next day, the newspaper article came out, with my remark about attempting to set the world record. There it was in black and white. I decided to call Guinness and find out what I’d have to do to break the record, just in case the subject ever came up. They told me I’d have to do something from Shakespeare or the Bible. I tucked that information away in my brain in case I ever needed it, thanked them and hung up.

That information couldn’t even gather any dust because around five that afternoon, I got a call from a

producer at CNN asking me to go on the *Larry King Live* show that night. They wanted me to try to break the record. They told me they would send a limo to pick me up at 8 p.m. That was only three hours away! They insisted I do it that night before I attempted it on any other show. Talk about pressure!

Now, as crazy as this sounds, I had never heard of *Larry King Live*. All I knew was that when I heard the woman say she was from a Manhattan cable channel, I asked, "Ummm, that's a porn channel, right?" She patiently assured me that it was a respectable national television show and that this was a one-time offer and opportunity – it was now or never.

I stared at the phone. I had a gig that night in New Jersey, but it didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out which of the two engagements I should do. I told her I had to find a replacement for my 7 o'clock show. I started calling every comic I knew. By the grace of God, I finally found one who would fill in for me. Five minutes before the deadline, I told the producer of *Larry King Live* I could make it.

Then I sat down to figure out what on earth I was going to do on the show. Knowing that Shakespeare and I never really got along, I figured I would do something from the Bible.

All of a sudden I started saying the 91st Psalm, a prayer for protection that my mom had taught me. The words I had said so many times rolled off my tongue. It was like a lightning litany. I began practicing and practicing, over and over again, timing myself with a stopwatch to see how fast I could do it. I was nervous and excited at the same time.

At 8 p.m., the limousine picked me up. I practiced the psalm all the way there, and by the time I reached the New York studio, I felt as if my tongue was going to fall off. I asked the producer, "What if I don't break the record?" She replied, "Larry doesn't care if you break it or not. He just

cares that you try it on his show first." So I asked myself, "What's the worst thing that can happen?" I'll look like a fool on national television. I figured I could live through that. Then I asked myself, "What's the best thing that could happen?" I'd break a world record. Now that would definitely be something I'd want to live with. So I decided to give it my best shot.

That protection prayer must have worked against public embarrassment because I broke the record. That night, I became the *Guinness Book of World Records*' Fastest-Talking Female, speaking at a rate of 585 words in one minute in front of a national television audience. My career took off. I rebroke the record again two years later at the Guinness Museum in Las Vegas in front of an Olympic timer and speech analysts, speaking 603 words per minute – or 10 words a second.

People often ask me how I had the courage to do that. Or how I've managed to do many of the things I've done, such as lecturing for the first time, going on stage, bungee-jumping or swimming with sharks. I tell them I live my life by this simple philosophy: I always say "yes," and then I ask myself, "Now, what do I have to do to accomplish that?"

Next I ask myself honestly, "What is the worst thing that can happen if I don't succeed?" The answer is simply, I don't succeed! And what's the best thing that can happen? I succeed.

What more can life ask of you? Be yourself, and have a good time! **T**

Fran Capo is a freelance writer, stand-up comic and author of five books. She has appeared on more than 250 television shows and is still the *Guinness Book of World Records* Fastest-Talking female. Her first novel, *Almost a Wise Guy*, was released in July 2002. To read the first chapter, go to www.francapo.com.

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"Tell me a fact and I'll learn. Tell me a truth
and I'll believe. But tell me a story and it
will live in my heart forever."

— INDIAN PROVERB

The Book Review:

The Right Words at the Right Time by Marlo Thomas

◆ EVERY GOOD SPEECH, WHETHER IT'S DELIVERED IN SINGAPORE, Montreal or Paris, contains one or more stories to entertain, educate or inform. These recollections make us laugh, cry and think, and remind us of what interesting lives we lead. Most of all, they help us remember the speaker's theme and main points.

The Right Words at the Right Time is a book that contains a cornucopia of heartfelt narratives illustrating key morals just right for recounting. Published by Atria Books, it was edited by Marlo Thomas, and written by her friends who reminisce about words that changed their lives. If you're like me, you buy books recommended through word-of-mouth, newspapers and other media. This book came to me as a result of browsing the shelves at a bookstore in Singapore. When I saw the title, it practically jumped off the shelf. I love words, and this book is filled with good ones. Not many things I read stretch my emotions like a rubber band, but *The Right Words at the Right Time* did just that. I found myself laughing and at turns teary-eyed at the recollections of prominent people changed by sentiments thoughtfully expressed when they most needed a boost.

Thomas enlisted the aid of more than 100 celebrities who each shared a brief story of inspiration that described how someone speaking the right words at a crucial juncture changed their lives. There are sports figures such as boxer Muhammad Ali and international tennis champion Venus Williams, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, Taiwanese born Dr. David Ho, and actors Paul Newman and Jack Nicholson. I liked the advice presented by former American first lady Barbara Bush who wrote, "Daddy gave me some advice that he thought I might need in the future. 'There are only three things you can give your children,' he said, 'One, the best education available. Two, set a good example. And three, give them all the love in the world.'"

In the book, Britain's perennial rocker Paul McCartney touchingly explained that in 1968 as the Beatles were slowly breaking up, he was expressing his anxiety by overindulging in late hours, drugs, alcohol and clubbing. Then one night, he had a vivid dream in which his mother's image appeared

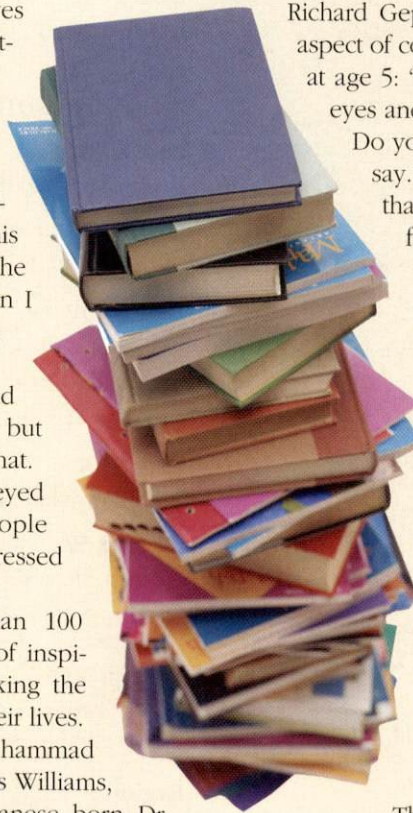
and she said gently, very reassuringly, "Let it be." The incident inspired him to write the famous song, *Let it be*. Not only did the song become a personal anthem for McCartney, it became a reassuring, healing statement for many others around the world.

In every country that politicians apply their profession, they are known as talkers. American Congressman Richard Gephardt was encouraged to look at another aspect of communication by advice his mother gave him at age 5: "When people talk to you, look them in the eyes and focus on what they're saying. Really listen. Do your best to understand what they're trying to say." It doesn't take much imagination to realize that Gephardt's mother has suggested a mantra for everyone, regardless of nationality.

Russian journalist Vladimir Pozner gave his account of being inspired by Jack Nicholson in the movie, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Pozner had been living a life filled with discouragement. He wasn't happy; he felt trapped and had given up on the Soviet system. Seeing the movie in Budapest, Hungary, one scene changed his outlook. McMurphy, a mental patient played by Nicholson, attempts to pick up a massive stone sink bolted to the bathroom floor. After giving it his all, he fails. With a haunted expression, McMurphy mutters, "At least I tried." Pozner says he wept. More importantly, Nicholson's portrayal restored his faith in his own need to keep trying.

I saved the best part of this book for last. The book is dedicated to the children of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, and their parents. If you're looking for personal growth from the wisdom of others, read *The Right Words at the Right Time*. It is less than \$25 in hardback, has nearly 400 pages and is available through mass-market bookstores and Internet booksellers. **T**

Larry Welch, DTM, is a member of Toastmasters clubs in Washington, D.C., and Singapore. He is author of *Mary Virginia, a Father's Story*, writes the motivational e-newsletter *On the Run* from his home in Singapore, and can be reached at lnwelch@aol.com.





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Region III
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Club 8569-50

Region IV
Lisa Albers
Club 6049-41

Region V
Jason Malham
Club 432-63

Region VI
Jeannine Scott
Club 606-61

Region VII
David Sanfacon
Club 5574-31

Region VIII
Brian Woolf
Club 4035-58

Overseas
Cliff Boer
Club 5769-73

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Club 1249-40

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Bahrain

2nd Place
Ronald Olivera, 1836-U
Bahrain

3rd Place
Krishna Kumar Srinivasan,
8258-U, Saudi Arabia

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Toast It Notes
Club 997-7
Editors:
Margaret Schachtsick, CL
Julie Arnold, ATM-B

The Loudspeaker

Club 5654-19

Editors:

Kristie VanGorkom

Jennifer Williams, ATM-S

Blue News

Club 6757-24

Editor: Todd Neuhalfen, ATM

The Owner's Manual

Club 5922-25

Editor: Vikki Guyton, CL

Crumbs

Club 8358-26

Editor: Mary Todd, CTM

The Chatter Box

Club 2344-42

Editor: Teresa Jackson, CTM

Premier Link

Club 7702-51

Editors:

C. Raja Kumar, ATM-S

Poh Kim Siong, DTM

Speakers' Corner

Club 5813-59

Editor:

Ileana Christodorescu, CTM

Voice of the Valley

Club 8277-60

Editor: Rosemary Brkopac

Connected

Club 6459-71

Editor: Jeff Short, ATM-B

**Top Ten
District Newsletters****Toast of the Coast**

District 1

Editor: Eva Marie Vargo, ATM-B

The Roadrunner

District 3

Editor: Brian Cavanaugh, ATM-G

District 6 Digest

District 6

Editor: Mark E. Haugh, DTM

The Spokesman

District 11

Editor: Cheryl Smith, CTM

The Georgia Gavel

District 14

Editors:

Keith Resseau

Felicia Artis, DTM

The Plain Speaker

District 22

Editor: Ruth Smerchek, ATM-B

The Cornerstone

District 28

Editors:

Todd Brockdorf, ATM-S

Shiela Hanlon, CTM

Can-Am Link

District 45

Editor: Audrey Schneider, DTM

Excel 51

District 51

Editor: Cho-Huat Tan, ATM-S

Focus 74

District 74

Editor:

Madelaine Op't Hof, ATM-B

**President's
20+ Awards****District 60**

William Bienia, DTM,

*Governor***District 67P**David Wang, CL, *Governor***District 71**

Angus Galbraith, ATM-B,

*Governor***President's
Extension Awards****District 14**George Kan, DTM, *Governor***District 51**John Lau, DTM, *Governor***District 60**

William Bienia, DTM,

*Governor***2003 Presidential
Citations**

Leo Baxendale, DTM

New Plymouth, New Zealand

Michael J. Bayne, DTM

Ocean Springs, Mississippi

Roger H. Brown, DTM

Windsor Locks, Connecticut

Paul F. Clark, DTM

Palm Desert, California

Karen M. Cottrell, DTM

Renton, Washington

Michael Hayworth, DTM

Morrow, Georgia

John M. Hutchins, DTM

West Salem, Wisconsin

Edwin A. Keeney, DTM

West Richland, Washington

Pam Keyzer, DTM

Bronx, New York

Herbert F. Long, DTM

Roseville, California

William (Bill) Moylan, DTM

Farmington Hills, Michigan

Janaki Prasad Pattanaik, DTM

Chairman, Saudi Arabia

Dianne M. Riddell, DTM

Nambour, Australia

Charles H. Rust, DTM

Bozeman, Montana

Josie Skibstad, DTM

Billings, Montana

Donna M. Sokolowski, DTM

Liverpool, New York

Bill Stull, DTM

Simi Valley, California

Paula Tunison, DTM

Austin, Texas

Beverly F. Wall, DTM

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Dr. Steve Watkins, DTM

Rolla, Missouri

Elizabeth Wilson, DTM

Oatlands, Australia

Eileen Wolfe, DTM

Kingston, Jamaica

**Outstanding Toastmasters
of the Year**

Brent Hill • D-F

Rodger Cota • D-1

Jerry Weltner, DTM • D-2

Art Nieto, DTM • D-3

Louise Wolfe, ATM-G • D-4

Arlando (Leo) Ledbetter • D-5

David Goldsworthy • D-6

Julie Redden • D-7

Terry Rolan • D-8

Dale Mason Wargo • D-9

Brenda Giguere, DTM • D-10

Cheryl Smith, CTM • D-11

Marco Rodriguez, ATM-B

• D-12

Joy Lewis, DTM • D-14

William L. Kennedy, DTM

• D-15

James Worth Lambert, CTM

• D-16

Linda Wolff, DTM • D-17

Len Roberts, DTM • D-18

Randy Schmadeke • D-19

Mike Robinson, DTM • D-21

Gregory Lay, ATM-G • D-23

Jay Rhoman • D-24

Peggy Holloway • D-25

Bessie Johnson • D-27

Pamela McKerregan, ATM-S

• D-28

Erma T. Lamousin, DTM

• D-29

Ralph Dellar • D-30

George Manoogian • D-31

Bill Mansfield • D-32

Mark Alciati, DTM • D-33

Melanie Alciati, DTM • D-33

Kathy Shine, ATM-B • D-35
 Kristin Nicholson, DTM
 • D-36
 Ron Bower, DTM • D-37
 Veronica Laino • D-38
 Herbert F. Long • D-39
 Mark Crisanti • D-40
 Lloyd Gwilliam, ATM-S
 • D-42
 Wendy Harding, DTM • D-45
 Joan Buzick • D-46
 Amelia Abad • D-46
 Roxie Steadman • D-47
 Gwen S. May, DTM • D-48
 Ron Mobley, DTM • D-49
 Jack Sun • D-50
 Poh Kim Siong, DTM • D-51
 Edwin Bernard • D-52
 Joe Purcell, DTM • D-53
 Clark Lyman, DTM • D-55
 Jill Rowlands, DTM • D-56
 Tom Humphries • D-58
 Barry Moore • D-60
 Danyele Lalumiere, DTM
 • D-61
 Yvonne LeFave • D-62
 Lauren Ann Morales • D-63
 Les Staats, DTM • D-64
 Gale Kidd, DTM • D-66
 Sterline Hsiao • D-67P
 Rita G. Dollar, DTM • D-68
 Bill Allan • D-69
 Russell Fortescue • D-69
 Narelle Langfield, ATM
 • D-70
 Mary Murtagh, DTM • D-71
 John Reimers, DTM • D-72
 Andris Bilkens • D-73
 Zosia Greaves • D-74
 Victor C. Secuya, CTM • D-75
 Rio Imamura • D-76P

Division Governors of the Year

Judy Guthier • D-F
 Donna Oja, ATM-B • D-1
 Ray Roman, ATM-B • D-2
 Brenda Bird, ATM-S • D-3
 Jovan Farsight, DTM • D-4
 Eileen Hope, DTM • D-5
 John Flipse • D-6
 Alexis Mason • D-7
 Michael Lewis, DTM • D-8
 Ken Averill • D-9

Shirley Doyle, ATM-G • D-10
 Pat Moore, DTM • D-11
 Melodie DeFrates, ATM-S
 • D-12
 Dave Sandborg • D-13
 Jim Miranda, DTM • D-14
 Bruce Chenoweth, ATM-G
 • D-15
 Sue Koehler, DTM • D-16
 Fran Princehouse, ATM-S
 • D-18
 Marvin Johnson • D-19
 Fran Thiessen, ATM-S
 • D-21
 Cyndra Melville, DTM
 • D-22
 Clarita Maestas, ATM-B
 • D-23
 Melinda Haag • D-24
 Lorianett Anderson • D-25
 John Barnes • D-26
 Avel Dajani • D-27
 Michael Sabatowski, ATM-S
 • D-28
 Marjorie Kennedy, DTM
 • D-29
 Carole Schwartz • D-30
 Tom Weber • D-31
 George Monat • D-31
 Linda Ryan • D-32
 Kathy Borin, ATM-B • D-33
 Daris McLaughlin, ATM-B
 • D-35
 Nancy Pirt, ATM-S • D-36
 Minnie Mitchell • D-37
 Carol Graves • D-38
 Carol Kormelink • D-40
 Irene May, DTM • D-42
 Janice Jude • D-46
 Julian Hernandez • D-46
 Lori Vinikoor • D-47
 George Senicz, DTM • D-48
 Larry Lands, DTM • D-49
 Jim Oppedal, DTM • D-50
 Kiang Faang Pyng, DTM
 • D-51
 James Lamog, DTM • D-52
 John Sheehy, CTM • D-53
 Elizabeth Sprecher, DTM
 • D-55
 Cynthia St. Dennis, ATM-G
 • D-56
 Catherine "Cat" Angus
 • D-58
 Louise Hart • D-60
 Odette Bisailon, DTM • D-61

Jesse T. Raven, ATM-G
 • D-62
 Frank Weikel • D-62
 Allen H. Thompson • D-63
 Janice Shott, ATM-S • D-64
 Will Snader, DTM • D-66
 Vivian Chen • D-67P
 Nikole E. Walston, ATM-B
 • D-68
 Penne Bowles • D-69
 John Inglis, ATM-G • D-70
 Nick Benning, ATM-B • D-71
 Denis McCord, DTM • D-72
 Murray Jorgensen • D-73
 Haroun Pochee • D-74
 Conchita Jamora, ATM • D-75
 Hiroshi Oishi • D-76P

Area Governors of the Year

Zeny Burian • D-F
 Nipa Dunn, DTM • D-1
 Jean Tracy, ATM-G • D-2
 Aliya Nylander, ATM-S • D-2
 Laurie Doeing, ATM-B • D-3
 Rose Renwick, ATM-B • D-4
 Linda Parker • D-5
 Peggy Scholberg • D-6
 Marsha Ware • D-7
 Janet Harmon • D-8
 Chip Larson • D-9
 John Byrne, CTM • D-10
 Helen Brickert, ATM-S • D-11
 Randy Amelino, ATM-B
 • D-12
 Alhaji M. Bohari • D-13
 Melanie Sills, ATM-B • D-14
 Virginius (Jinks) Dabney,
 ATM-G • D-15
 LaDonna Wilson, ATM-B
 • D-16
 Luanne Metcalf, ATM-B
 • D-17
 Mary Ann McCloskey, ATM-S
 • D-18
 Ike Rayford • D-19
 Chris Kozakowski, ATM-B
 • D-21
 Diana Kovac, ATM-S • D-22
 Lois Bursack, ATM-B • D-23
 Chris Czerwinski • D-24
 Carla Gibbs • D-25
 Mary England • D-26

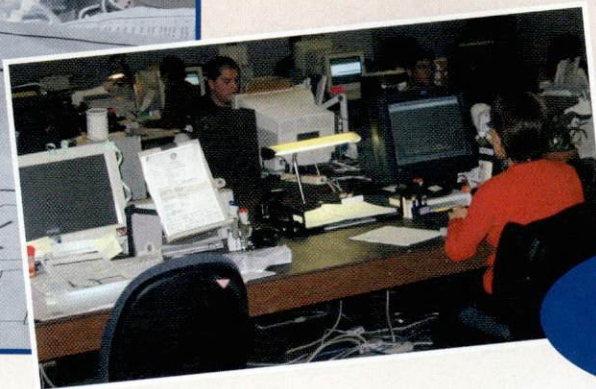
Johnsie Cogman • D-27
 Sharon Bingley, CTM • D-28
 Connie Walker, CL • D-29
 Michael V. Raffety • D-30
 Gary Budianski • D-31
 Tina Piety • D-32
 Julie Ann Mock, ATM-S
 • D-33
 Becky Eberhardy, CTM
 • D-35
 Melissa Riley, ATM-G • D-36
 Jim Scruggs • D-37
 Barbara McLemore • D-38
 Steven Choby • D-40
 Darlene Davies, ATM-G
 • D-42
 Gordon Spurrell, ATM-G
 • D-45
 Brian C. Hill • D-46
 Zechariah Agyeno • D-46
 Cyprian Gibbon • D-47
 Mary Lynn Morris • D-48
 Nelson Nakagawa, ATM-B •
 D-49
 Susan DeKruger • D-50
 Ting Men Choon • D-51
 Cora Soriano • D-52
 Ute Brinkmann, DTM • D-53
 Dipak Bhakta • D-55
 Bruce A. Atkins, ATM-G
 • D-56
 Joanne Alderman • D-58
 Dave Eslinger • D-58
 Jane Eves • D-60
 Camille Bentkowski, ATM-S
 • D-61
 Ronald J. Musich • D-62
 Tom J. Shannon • D-62
 Diane Craver • D-63
 Donald Walker, ATM-S
 • D-64
 Murray Smith, DTM • D-64
 Sal Asad, ATM-B • D-66
 Kevin Chang • D-67P
 John David Corley, DTM
 • D-68
 Charlie Moir • D-69
 Denise Tomlinson, CL • D-70
 Andrew Brammer, ATM-G
 • D-71
 Ivan Pivac, ATM-S • D-72
 Gigi Boudville • D-73
 Yvonne Anderson • D-74
 Adeline C. Solomon, ATM-S
 • D-75
 Akiko Matsugami • D-76P

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Toastmasters International's World Headquarters recently switched to a new computer system. We've also renovated the building, restructured our work processes and created a large, centralized customer service department. This was done to better serve your needs and improve speed and efficiency of all transactions. However, during this time of transition you may have noticed a slow-down in the processing and shipping of:

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- ▶ Supply orders
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