

THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | SEPTEMBER 2018

# TOASTMASTER®

Meet

*Lark  
Doley,*  
DTM

2018-2019  
International  
President

**Find Success  
Through Happiness**

**Corporate Clubs:  
Building Strong  
Leaders and Teams**

# The Gold of Toastmasters

Believe that Toastmasters is golden! Do you? How have you personally and professionally benefited from Toastmasters?

At Coolum Communicators in Queensland, Australia, the 2017–18 Club President Mat Bridges, ACB, ALB, began club meetings in a new way. He welcomed members and guests by asking, “Fellow Toastmasters, since our last meeting who here has achieved something outside of the club due to a skill you have developed in Toastmasters?”

Do you think this encourages guests to join? Do you think this encourages members to remain members? Guests and members want to join and remain in an organization that provides golden benefits to them personally and professionally without paying the price of gold for these benefits!

Mat invented a great way to open a Toastmasters meeting. But when does the golden experience really begin at our club meetings? It begins with our meeting location, the room setup and how we prepare for our guests. These responsibilities fall to the club’s sergeant at arms (or, as 2017–18 District 30 Division N Director Jerry Phillips, ACG, ALS, titles this role, “The Vice President of First Impressions”). Does your meeting location and room setup set the gold standard for impressing your guests?

**“Make our club meetings a golden experience for all our members and guests.”**

Bill Russell, DTM, who served as 2017–18 Lightly Toasted club president, set the gold standard from beginning to end at that club’s meetings in Chicago. Meetings are well-organized, all meeting roles are filled in advance, members are achieving their goals, and meetings are fun! Guests are given pre-printed badges and guest packets. At the end of each meeting, guests are invited to join with an application that already has all the club-related fields completed. The conversion rate from guest to member is consistently close to 100 percent.

My message to you as I begin my year as your International President is to strive for **GOLD** in every aspect of our organization. This requires that we set **Goals**—as a member, club officer or area, division, district, region or international leader. Then we must **Organize** ourselves with a plan of action. By executing our plan, we will learn. **Learning** is a continuous process in our organization. With **Dedication** to our goals, an organized plan and learning, we will deliver results for ourselves, our clubs, our districts and our global organization.

Strive for **GOLD** this year and every year in our organization! Make our club meetings a golden experience for all our members and guests. Empower every member with golden communication and leadership skills. **Go for GOLD!**

**Lark Doley, DTM**

International President



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Since 1924, Toastmasters International has been recognized as the leading organization dedicated to communication and leadership skill development. Through its worldwide network of clubs, each week Toastmasters helps more than a quarter-million men and women of every ethnicity, education level and profession build their competence in communication so they can gain the confidence to lead others.

#### Toastmasters International Mission:

We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



**WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE**  
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“Thank you for writing Peter’s story. I know it will mean a lot to many more like myself who suffered in silence for so many years with this little-understood but deeply troubling affliction.”

—John Cadley  
Fayetteville, New York

### Topics for Everyone

I received my first issue of the *Toastmaster* magazine [May 2018] and was privileged to read and comprehend the true benefits of Toastmasters. The quotes defining “leadership” on page 28 have real relevance to my environment, both personally and professionally.

This issue features topics across the various spectrums of one’s life—starting with the International President’s Viewpoint on reigniting our passion with clarity on our “purpose, talents and needs,” to a Nepalese woman’s [Shailee Basnet’s] quest to climb Mount Everest and later become a motivational speaker and comedian. Not to mention the nuances explained while dealing with challenging personalities, ways of making workplace presentations and the answer to the question now in my mind: Should I join a second club?

I look forward to reading future issues to embrace ideas for my personal and professional development.

**Suresh Ramakrishnan Kartha**  
Orbit Toastmasters club  
Muscat, Oman

### No Longer Silent

My name is John Cadley. I write the monthly humor column for the *Toastmaster* magazine called “Funny You Should Say That.”

I read your article on Peter Dhu [June 2018] with great interest and empathy. I was a stutterer for a good part of my life and can relate so well to Peter’s embarrassment and humiliation. Like Peter, I was so afraid of speaking in school that I decided to be “stupid” and just not know the answer. My teachers knew my IQ and couldn’t understand why I was so “dumb.” Like Peter, I avoided any prospect of speaking. The condition was so defining for me that it actually determined my life choices: becoming a writer and a musician, neither of which require you to speak—just write and play. Stuttering caused me great suffering, especially in my adolescent years when the thought of speaking to a girl nearly gave me a heart attack. It also gave me a terrible self-image. I hated myself for being utterly incapable of doing what everybody else could do without even thinking. It was a feeling of great isolation and, yes, even despair.

I’m not trying to make this “True Confessions,” nor for you to feel sorry for me. Today I don’t stutter at all. It’s completely gone. And I’ve had a “successful” life in spite of it, whatever successful means.

I just want to share how deeply I understand his struggle and how greatly I admire his courage. I could never have done what he is doing.

Thank you for writing Peter’s story. I know it will mean a lot to many more like myself who suffered in silence for so many years with this little-understood but deeply troubling affliction.

**John Cadley**  
Fayetteville, New York

### An Intriguing Read

Bravo! What an interesting and informative article [“The Cultural Nuances of Communication,” May 2018]! I would love to hear more from the author, Ms. Nertinger. Having recently completed a Speechcraft with fellow club members for a dozen new Canadians, it is intriguing to learn more about other cultures. Our club of Russians, Spaniards, Sri Lankans, Egyptians and others speak using sounds that are unfamiliar, if not unknown, to us.

**Jock Mackenzie, CC**  
Sunrise Toastmasters club  
Alberta, Canada

### Anything Is Possible

As I read our International President’s message in May’s magazine, I couldn’t agree more. Passion is what “motivates us and keeps us focused,” Balraj Arunasalam wrote.

It is often meaningful to reflect on what made us join Toastmasters. And also ask ourselves, *Have we achieved what we wanted to achieve?* Only then will we realize how our experience has shaped us into who we are today.

I have benefited in more ways than one as a Toastmaster. Toastmasters has also helped me metamorphize from a shy speaker into a leader. Taking on roles as club president, area director, division director and annual conference chair has made me realize that anything is possible as long as we commit ourselves to it.

I thank Toastmasters for the opportunity to learn, grow and become. I will definitely pay it forward by helping others realize their potential through Toastmasters’ journey of self-discovery.

**Nora Bamadhaj, ACS, ALB**  
Great Eastern Life Toastmasters  
Changi, Singapore

### DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

Write it in 200 words or fewer. State your name, member number and home club, and send it to [letters@toastmasters.org](mailto:letters@toastmasters.org). Please note: Letters are subject to editing for length and clarity, and may be published in both the print and electronic editions.

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- **William Hung Hits the Right Notes**—Watch an interview with William Hung and 2016 World Champion Darren Tay as they discuss their respective journeys in professional speaking. ▶
- **Meet Lark Doley, DTM**—Learn more about International President Lark Doley in an exclusive video featuring her unique home. ▶
- **Common Challenges of Corporate Clubs**—Discover the benefits of corporate clubs through the eyes of 2014 World Champion Dananjaya Hettiarachchi in a Toastmasters video. ▶



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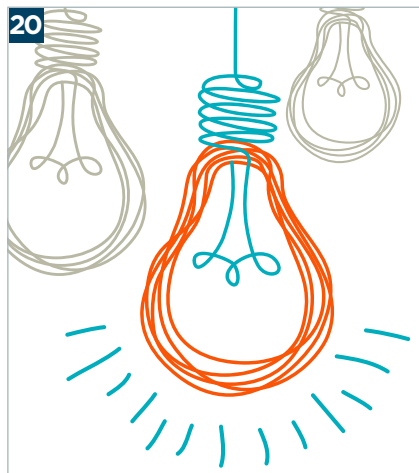
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## ▶ MEMBER MOMENT



## Healing Through Storytelling

From leaving her home city of Tokyo, Japan, to earning a master's degree in the United States, to starting her own business and raising a daughter, Natsuyo Nobumoto Lipschutz is used to taking on a lot. But last year she faced a seemingly insurmountable obstacle.

In February 2017, Lipschutz was diagnosed with breast cancer. This longtime District 46 Toastmaster didn't give up on her dreams of public speaking. With help from Toastmasters, she channeled her many emotions into fuel for speeches and won the 2017 District 46 speech contest. Lipschutz, ACS, CL, hopes to one day take her stories and skills to the World Championship of Public Speaking. Below, she discusses overcoming her illness, emphasizing the positive power of communication.

### What drew you to Toastmasters?

As a strategy consultant, keynote speaker and cross-cultural trainer, I've had many opportunities to speak in front of live audiences. English is my second language, so I wanted to improve my public speaking in English, and I found a Japanese-English bilingual club, Nichibei Toastmasters, in New York City.

### Tell us about your storytelling process.

As a public speaker, I've learned to look at my life experience as a source of valuable stories. To develop a story, you really need to look deep into yourself—sometimes so deep that you want to avoid those areas. I call those areas the “Four Fs” (Flaws, Failures, Frustrations and Firsts). No one wants to face their Four Fs.

### Talk about your diagnosis.

It was February 6, 2017. It was snowing heavily, and my daughter's school was closed, so we decided to go sledding. We were putting on our snow boots when my cellphone rang. It was my radiologist. She said warmly yet directly, “We found cancer.” As a parent of a young child, the first thing that came to my mind was: I have to be strong. I have to be brave. I have to be fearless so my precious little 6-year-old feels safe. As I hung up after getting this news from the doctor, I disconnected from myself and all the vulnerable feelings. But it didn't last long. Later that night, my mind started to wander into darkness, and I broke down right in front of my daughter. She quietly wiped my tears, hugged me and comforted me. She even tried to make me laugh. I learned that accepting your vulnerability actually makes you stronger, braver and more fearless.



Natsuyo Nobumoto Lipschutz

### Did competing help you?

The next day was my club contest. The speech contest kept me going, because I had an urge to tell stories more than ever to share my pain. I won the club contest. Two days before my mastectomy was my area contest, and I won again. A few weeks after the area contest was the division contest—I won. A month after the district contest, I had a reconstruction surgery.

### What is your advice for dealing with a challenging situation?

I believe everything happens for a reason. Why choose to feel terrible or look back when you can choose to accept it and look forward? There is always something to learn from unfavorable situations, so look at them as opportunities, not deficiencies.

### What do you plan to accomplish next?

My dream goal is to get to the International Speech Contest and share my stories on the world stage. It's not the competition part of the speech contest I'm attracted to; I love the process of developing stories, sharing them with as many people as possible, receiving responses and feedback from the audience, and polishing my stories even more.

### Tell us the greatest benefit of public speaking.

For me, it is about self-discovery. Sure, it is a necessary skill in any field, but the way I look at it is different. Crafting stories forces you to explore yourself as a human being. Those who learn deeply about themselves are truly strong, authentic and humble.

Ian Gassman is editorial assistant of the *Toastmaster* magazine.



## Winning Club, Olympic City

Members of Jamsil Korean Toastmasters visit the city of Gangneung in South Korea, home to the Olympic Park of the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Games.

## ▶ PRESENTATION SKILLS

### Accepting Awards

Whether you're accepting an Oscar or community recognition, Toastmasters International offers these proven tips for delivering a powerful acceptance speech for any type of award:

- ▶ **Show your personality.** Your acceptance speech should come from the heart.
- ▶ **Be gracious.** Acknowledge the good work done by your fellow nominees and thank the organization that selected you for the award.
- ▶ **Show excitement.** You don't have to climb over chairs or even cry, but the audience should recognize that you're happy to have won the award.
- ▶ **Be modest.** Your acceptance speech should be heartfelt but not self-congratulatory.
- ▶ **Practice, practice, practice.** Rehearse with a timer, memorize key people to thank and allow time for the unexpected.



Learn more about acceptance speeches by exploring the Toastmasters International *Special Occasion Speeches* handbook. Find the handbook at [www.toastmasters.org/Shop](http://www.toastmasters.org/Shop) under the "Education" tab.

▶ MEET MY MENTOR



## Fabian Ringwald

Fabian Ringwald, CC, ALB, is a member of the Rhetorik Club Bern in Bern, Switzerland, who met his mentee, Manu Alexander, CC, ALB, while they both worked for the same information technology company. Fabian now works as head of IT products and operations for a Swiss railway cargo company called SBB Cargo. Manu works in information technology at BKW AG, an international energy and infrastructure company.

Manu wants to recognize his former colleague and mentor because “he never tried to change my style of speaking, even though we speak very differently—he insisted I stay true to myself.” Since Manu first joined the Rhetorik Club Bern, he has won several speech contests and served as an area director for District 59.

### How did Fabian come to be your mentor?

Not long after joining Toastmasters, my excitement to improve as a speaker faded as I felt I wasn’t progressing. I considered quitting, but our vice president membership convinced me to stay and paired me with a mentor. Fabian, who was also my superior at a large company, took me fully under his wing. He even hired me as an intern and helped me develop new IT skills. After three months of Fabian’s mentoring, I was improving and decided to participate in my first club contest. I won first place at the club, area and division contests. Not only that, in one Toastmasters year I attained my CC, CL and ALB.

### What skills does your mentor possess that you admire?

Listening carefully is one skill that my mentor practices in his personal life and in Toastmasters. It is a skill many leaders lack, but he has mastered it. He also supports his employees’ growth by allowing them to order educational books and encouraging them to take educational courses and earn certifications. He appreciates



Manu Alexander, left, and Fabian Ringwald

his employees and his fellow club members and makes everyone feel important.

### Describe a memorable conversation with your mentor.

The best thing my mentor ever said to me was this: “You might surpass me one day. I hope we can still be friends.” This is what a mentor should do. He was giving me his best and teaching me everything he knew. I have adopted this way of thinking into my life. Now I am a mentor as well. One of the first things I tell my mentees is to surpass me; that’s what I want. Because one day, I want to meet them at a contest and lose to them. It wouldn’t be losing at all; it would just mean I need to keep improving.

Tess landiorio is associate editor of the Toastmaster magazine.

### WANT TO NOMINATE AN EXCEPTIONAL MENTOR?

Send a 200-word description and photo (1 MB or larger) of you and your mentor to [MentorMoment@toastmasters.org](mailto:MentorMoment@toastmasters.org).

▶ NEWS FROM TI

## Dues Renewal Deadline is October 1

Keep your club in good standing and receive credit for the Distinguished Club Program by logging in to Club Central and processing member dues on or before October 1. Per Policy 2.0: Club and Membership Eligibility: the minimum renewal requirement is eight paid members—at least three of whom were members of the club during the previous renewal period.

Members pay international dues of \$45 USD every six months. (Some clubs may charge additional fees.) For new members, there is an additional new member fee of \$20 USD.

For questions, please contact Club and Member Support by email at [renewals@toastmasters.org](mailto:renewals@toastmasters.org) or call +1 720-439-5050 between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. Mountain Time, Monday through Friday.





## Tips for Logging in to Pathways Base Camp

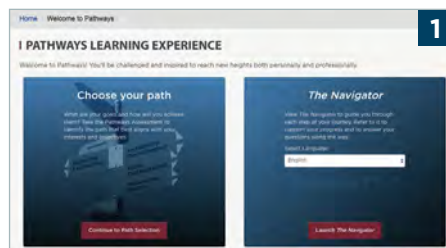
Whether you're new to Toastmasters or just new to Pathways, your smooth entry into the online learning experience is easy! The first step is logging in to the Pathways hub via Base Camp.

To begin, go to the Toastmasters International website at [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org). From the Pathways drop-down menu, select "Access my path through Base Camp." This will lead you to a login page—your gateway to accessing Base Camp and selecting your path.

If you are selecting your first path, two tiles will appear after you log in (Figure 1); click the "Continue to Path Selection" button in the first tile.

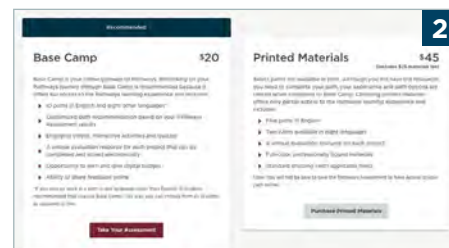
The next page will have two options for accessing learning materials (Figure 2). The left is for the full digital experience through Base Camp, which is the recommended option for Pathways.

Click the "Take Your Assessment" button under the Base Camp option, and a new window will appear. Select your language of preference and complete your personal Pathways Assessment.



After you complete the assessment, your top three path recommendations will be presented. Although they have been custom-selected based on your responses, you are not required to select one of the three recommended paths and are welcome to select any of the seven paths listed below them as "Additional Paths."

Ensure the language option shown in the drop-down menu on the left-hand side of the screen is the language you prefer your education materials to appear in prior to choosing a path. Click the "Choose this Path" button, then click "Continue." Please note the system can take up to 30 minutes to process your order.



After you have successfully enrolled in a path, you have access to a shortcut to your education material. This is found in your profile on the [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org) site. Simply log in to the website and select the gold "Welcome" banner at the top of the page. The page that loads is your profile, and below your contact information is another banner that says Pathways Enrolled in # of Paths. Click the button below on the right-hand side titled "Go to Transcripts." This will lead you directly to your curriculum.

If you have questions on logging in to Base Camp, please contact [membership@toastmasters.org](mailto:membership@toastmasters.org) or call +1 720-439-5050 between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. Mountain Time, Monday through Friday.

## ► MEMBER CONNECTIONS



### Celebrate!

Members of Almaty Toastmasters club in Almaty, Kazakhstan, have fun at a Gala Dinner celebrating the club's fifth birthday.





**1 | HARSHAL BORSE**, left, and **YOGESHWAR KUMBHAR** of Dubai, United Arab Emirates, enjoy a friendly game of chess at Dubai's Tital Liwa Desert Hotel.

**2 | MICHAL WEYNA, CC, ALB**, of Doha, Qatar, takes a break from sightseeing at a shrine in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

**3 | JOHN MCFADZEAN, CL**, of Southport, Merseyside, England, balances on a paddleboard at Southport Marine Lake in Southport, England.

**4 | WEN-PEI LIN** of Taipei, Taiwan, visits the village of Abhaneri in Rajasthan, India.



 **View additional photos** in this month's *Traveling Toastmaster* photo gallery at [www.toastmasters.org/Magazine](http://www.toastmasters.org/Magazine).

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

# The Courage to Speak

How I broke my silence to stand up against bullying.

BY TINA REINE

I grew up ashamed to speak. Some speech sounds I could not physically produce—even after many hours of speech therapy. Born with a cleft lip and palate, I couldn't stop the airflow as I spoke, which meant all my sounds had a nasal quality. For practice, I was instructed to hold a mirror under my nose and not fog it up. This was difficult considering I didn't have a palate to close off the airflow. The worst part was, when I spoke the kids would mock my speech and make it sound as though they were talking through their noses. It happened so often that I avoided speaking in public. My family and stuffed animals never made fun of me.

As an adult, speaking didn't get any easier. I spent my career ducking out of meetings that would potentially require me to speak. My first job after getting my MBA was at an investment bank. I still remember the day I got called on to answer a question in front of my peers. Instead of answering using my voice, I wrote the answer on a piece of paper, pretending to have laryngitis.

Not speaking up for yourself can have devastating results. Five years ago, my life took an unexpected turn. I was the victim of severe online harassment from an ex-boyfriend-turned-stalker. It was so extreme that it shut down my career and my social life.

I became passionate about raising awareness around cyber harassment, its debilitating effects and how it leaves victims feeling powerless. After all the years of bullying and, later, cyberbullying, I finally decided to stand up for myself. I remembered my grandfather was a Toastmaster. He was a smart man, and if he found value in it, I would too. Plus, I figured my only hope to be able to speak up was either hypnosis or Toastmasters. Toastmasters sounded like a lot more fun.



FROM LEFT: Tina Reine with *Netizens* costar Anita Sarkeesian, director Cynthia Lowen and costar Carrie Goldberg at the Tribeca Film Festival

In the midst of the cyber harassment and trying to solve it, I found a club with warm, friendly, fun members, but I was distracted with survival and didn't go back. A year later, I felt stronger and returned to that same club. They remembered me and made me feel welcome, just as they had the first time. This time I stayed, and now they can never get rid of me.

The first role I took was that of timer. I remember when it was my turn to explain my role I stood up and could barely stop my knees from knocking together. Speech by speech, with the support of my club, I became more and more able to speak without feeling like I was going to faint.

When the cyber harassment started I reached out to a support organization, Cyber Civil Rights Initiative, and developed a relationship with them. A year later a documentary filmmaker, Cynthia Lowen, approached me about becoming part of a project on cyber harassment. It meant being interviewed on camera, eventually appearing on the big screen and speaking on interactive panels with live audiences of more than 500 people. Luckily, by this time

I had been in Toastmasters for a year and had developed the courage to be one of the key subjects of this film. The documentary, *Netizens*, premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in April 2018, and I was part of a Q&A panel after the airing. If it had not been for Toastmasters, I would have sidestepped this opportunity.

In addition to finding the courage to participate in the film, Toastmasters gave me the confidence to give a TEDx Talk about finding my passion (in my case, dancing) to get through the tough moments in life. I'm so grateful to Toastmasters for empowering me to find—and use—my voice to raise awareness of important issues that support others. **T**

**TINA REINE, ACS**, is a member of *Freddy's Forum* and *Ed Cid Toastmasters* clubs in West Palm Beach, Florida. She has worked as an Environmental Commodities Trader for Cantor Fitzgerald in London, for JP Morgan in New York City and for NextEra Energy in Juno Beach, Florida. For fun, she performs as an aerial acrobat, something she tried for the first time in her 40s.

# William Hung Hits the Right Notes

Skewered for his singing, *American Idol* celebrity finds success in the end.

BY PAUL STERMAN

Let's revisit the scene—the one that launched the strange saga of William Hung, pop-culture celebrity. It's September 2003 in San Francisco, California. Hung, a 20-year-old civil engineering student at the University of California, Berkeley, is one of 3,000 people auditioning for *American Idol*, the TV talent show where would-be popular musicians try their luck at stardom.

Hung stands in front of the three celebrity judges, including the notoriously cantankerous Briton, Simon Cowell. The smiling young man belts out an enthusiastic version of the Ricky Martin hit song "She Bangs." He bombs. His singing is, um ... off-key. His wild dance moves show spirit, but not style. Cowell cuts the number short and doesn't mince words: "You can't sing, you can't dance, so what do you want me to say?"

(Cowell clearly never heard of the Toastmasters evaluation method of sandwiching positive feedback around constructive criticism.)

When the audition airs on TV in January 2004, Hung's singing and dancing become the object of public ridicule. Video of the audition goes viral, and his performance becomes a cultural punch line.

But Hung, ACG, ALB, has the last laugh. The Southern California resident, a Toastmaster for the past six years, capitalized on the onslaught of attention, negative or not. He embraced the surge of media coverage, and his good-natured attitude about the *Idol* audition endeared him to many. Hung even earned a recording contract out of the whole experience.

"I felt I had a choice in my life," he says of his sudden notoriety. "I could live my life with courage, or live my life in fear and hope people would forget about me. ... Hiding in fear? What a terrible way to live!"

## Food for Thought

On a recent evening, Hung sat in a small Chinese restaurant in a Southern California strip mall and discussed his unusual journey. The affable 35-year-old is now an administrative assistant for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. He says he wants to be a motivational speaker, using his own story to inspire others about risk-taking and overcoming obstacles in life.

**"I could live my life with courage, or live my life in fear and hope people would forget about me."**

—WILLIAM HUNG

"We can choose to take the high road—we can be positive despite negative things happening around us," says Hung, who spoke at a TEDx event in Watts, California, in June 2018.

He is a member of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) Speak Easy Toastmasters. Mayra Puchalski, the club's 2017–2018 president, says Hung is a bright presence in the group. "He's made a lot of improvements in his public



William Hung performs at the *American Idol* series finale at the Dolby Theater in Hollywood, California, on April 7, 2016.

Photo by Matt Sayles/Invision/AP

speaking," she notes. "He shares a lot of really good tips too. He's always interested in helping others. William brings a lot of energy to the club."

Daniel Midson-Short, a Southern California Toastmaster and three-time competitor in the International Speech Contest Semifinals, met Hung six years ago and has connected with him at various Toastmasters events. He says he admires Hung's perseverance and positive attitude. "It's so awesome to see someone so resilient in the face of setbacks, and willing to put [himself] out there," says Midson-Short.

## Taking a Chance

Hung was born in Hong Kong and immigrated to California with his family at age 10. He says he decided to try out for *American Idol* after winning a college talent show singing—yep—Ricky Martin's "She Bangs." Martin, a Puerto Rican singer, had a big hit in 2000 with the up-tempo, salsa-inspired tune.

The failed audition itself didn't really faze him, Hung says. But his life was turned upside down four months later, when the audition aired on TV. That very

night, he recalls, one newscaster said, “William Hung is the worst singer ever.” Then came the flood of derisive comments on the internet.

The criticism stung at first, admits Hung. But he was also getting requests to appear on TV, and his friends urged him to take advantage of the exposure. “One of those friends told me, ‘You’re only going to get this opportunity once in your lifetime, so why not go for it? Why not make the most of it?’ And I agreed with him.”

Hung appeared on a number of TV programs, including *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* (on which he sang another Ricky Martin tune, “Shake Your Bon-Bon”). Riding the wave of publicity, an independent label offered him a recording deal. “Can you believe it?” he says with a laugh.

Things got even stranger. Hung made three albums for Koch Records—the first of which sold more than 200,000 copies. A fan started a William Hung website. Hung quit school and performed around the world.

Hung’s 15 minutes of fame had stretched into several years. But eventually it waned, and he went back to school, studied math and became a statistical analyst for the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department.

Joining Toastmasters provided a professional boost, he says, pointing to one experience in particular. Hung had to give a technical presentation at work about software programs, and he was dreading it. He practiced the speech for his club and received great suggestions on how to make it engaging.

When he finally gave the speech to his work colleagues, they loved it, says Hung. “My supervisor gave me a written recommendation based on my presentation. I still have it. That was a big accomplishment.”

### A Difficult Subject

One aspect of the William Hung story has a more complicated side to it. As Hung emerged on the public stage, some



FROM LEFT: William Hung, Puerto Rican singer Ricky Martin and Toastmaster Emi Fukuoka pose backstage at the Monte Carlo Theater in Las Vegas, Nevada, on June 2, 2018.

Asian-Americans felt pained by his celebrity. They said his humorous image and notoriety evoked negative stereotypes of Asian people.

“You can’t sing, you can’t dance, so what do you want me to say?”

—SIMON COWELL


One person who had a problem with it was fellow Toastmaster—and now good friend—Emi Fukuoka. They met as members of the National Association of Asian American Professionals club (NAAAP) of Orange County (California). When Hung’s “She Bangs” routine provoked laughter, “that was tough to see,” she recalls. She says she was frustrated when he built a career off it.

“I actually had an honest discussion with him the very first time I met him,” says Fukuoka. “I told him, ‘I didn’t like you, because you were perpetuating Asian stereotypes.’” They eventually talked through the issue, with both coming to respect the other’s perspective. Hung says

he never meant any harm; he was just being himself. But he also says he now understands the concerns expressed by fellow Asian-Americans.

Fukuoka, the club’s 2017–2018 president, says she has come to know Hung well and to see his genuine personality. “William is just having fun. That, I think, is why people embrace him. He’s just different and unique—there’s nobody else like him.”

Fukuoka was with Hung recently when his *American Idol* journey came full circle. On June 2 of this year, he was invited to perform onstage with Ricky Martin in Las Vegas. For the first time, the two men sang “She Bangs” together.

The experience, says Hung, “felt like a dream come true!” 

Paul Sterman is a former senior editor of the *Toastmaster* magazine.



**ONLINE EXTRAS:** Watch an interview with William Hung and 2016 World Champion Darren Tay as they discuss their respective journeys in professional speaking.

# Member Achievements

Four Toastmasters step into the spotlight.

## Nancy Lesser, DTM



Northwest Perimeter Toastmasters •  
Sandy Springs, Georgia

### Something to Say

In my 10 years as a Toastmaster I'd never entered the International Speech Contest; I was afraid. But this year, I had something to say. Although my son had been diagnosed with autism years ago, I was finally ready to talk about it. My speaking journey began in February at the club contest with a speech about how to connect with a special needs family.

After the contest, I invited my audience to provide panel feedback on the speech and learned that many parents could identify with my challenges. I also learned that in other cultures, it is considered rude to acknowledge a misbehaving child.

With a new focus, I refined my speech for the area contest. When it was over, several mothers of special needs children came up to speak to me, but soft alarm bells went off in my head: To be effective, I needed to appeal to a broader audience than just other moms in my situation. I was thrilled to go on to win the second-place trophy at the division contest. Yet I was sad that my journey had ended; I felt like I hadn't quite delivered the message I wanted to send.

Then, three weeks before the district contest, I found out the division winner had dropped out—I adjusted my speech and was back in the running. With the help of a friend, I reworked the speech's focus to "What a special needs family can do for YOU."

My delivery wasn't perfect at the district contest, but I felt like I belonged up there with those seven incredibly talented contestants. To meet the time limit, I had to drop everything but my section introductions and stories. But my message was clear, and this time the whole audience responded.

I faced my fear and learned more than I could have imagined through this journey. Now I'm wondering what the next step will be.



Nancy Lesser, left, and Dan Houck at the District 44 Division F contest



Jay Jani

## Jay Jani, CL

Amdavad Toastmasters club • Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India



### Standing Up for Safety

In 2015, I joined an oil rig in the oilfields of India as a safety officer. My boss and I were new to our respective roles. Because of an accident on the rig a few months prior, our work was under scrutiny; it was imperative that we ensured a safe working environment.

I quickly analyzed the policies, but found the implementation was where the work unit suffered. Initially, I followed a strict and stern approach. I vigorously ramped up safety meetings and mock drill sessions. While they turned out great, the popularity waned after a few months. This is quite common, as any new guy in the system brings fresh energy, but the remote locations and harsh weather conditions don't sustain that energy. I found crewmembers' attention and enthusiasm suffered during meetings and drills.

After participating in Toastmasters, I had an idea to inculcate humor and stories into our meetings, just as we do with our role-player introductions. Guess what? It worked like strong coffee and improved the audience's alertness. As a result, people remembered and retained thoughts for a longer duration. Moreover, I learned that stories generated significant interest in a boring pool of data. Hence, we started a "Safety Story a Week" campaign.

Taking on several leadership roles in Toastmasters helped me learn the art of delegation, and these measures have helped us achieve more than 1,200 days of accident-free operations and win an award for excellence in safety.



Lorna Boyle

## Lorna Boyle, CC

Deltones Club • Delta, British Columbia, Canada



### No Longer in the Shadows

I have always loved singing. I distinctly recall an evening in the late '60s walking home after seeing the movie *Funny Girl* and singing all the songs. I thought I was Barbra Streisand!

But there was one small problem: I would never be a star—I was too scared! I was in a choir at school, but completely petrified to move to the front for a solo. I stayed in the shadows, away from the limelight, for most of my life.

Fast-forward 40 years to 2008. My mother had died, and my brothers had persuaded me to give a eulogy at her celebration of life. Fear seized me, but I did it. My voice trembled; I shook like a leaf and rushed through it far too quickly. I was so cross with myself! Then I watched in utter awe as my brothers gave their speeches. I don't think I'd ever been so envious of their natural ability to speak from the heart with such ease, telling their stories that left everyone in laughter and tears.

I remember thinking ... "I want to do that!" I *need* to do that.

My husband had been sick for many years, and I knew I would need to take over our company one day, so someone suggested Toastmasters. I have never looked back; Toastmasters changed my life! In September 2012, I took another huge step and auditioned for a women's choir called The Richmond Singers, and have Toastmasters to thank for giving me the courage. The past six years have been an absolute joy!

My Toastmasters journey helped me tremendously. I no longer stay in the shadows and have moved to center stage in my life. It's never too late to stretch your wings and take flight. So, Ms. Streisand, you better watch out ... because I'm coming!

## Avital Miller, ACB

Yaquina Toastmasters • Newport, Oregon



### Stepping Out of My Shell

About a year ago, I moved to a home just outside Newport, Oregon, to work on my book, *Healing Happens: Stories of Healing Against All Odds*, and prepare for my book tour launch. At first, the only time I went to town was to buy groceries or attend a Yaquina Toastmasters club meeting at the Pig 'N Pancake restaurant. To my surprise, Toastmasters provided all I needed: connection to community, refined preparation for my speaking tour and an excellent breakfast!

I have had opportunities all over this region to tell my healing stories and success strategies, and regularly run into familiar faces in town, making me feel like a welcome member of this community. Club members have encouraged me to take on bigger roles within Toastmasters to step out of my shell, which helped me as a public speaker, leader and in communicating during everyday conversations.

At a recent training with performance coach Brendon Burchard, he shared his theory that your product or service can't be perfected until it has been launched; only then can you see how it will be perceived. Yet, at Toastmasters, we can practice launching our work repeatedly, until our messages are honed. The members are articulate with their feedback, so I always feel great about my accomplishments and inspired to grow. Now I feel ready to step out into the world and share the inspiration. **T**



Avital Miller

Do you have a Toastmasters success story you'd like to share about yourself or another member? Write it in fewer than 300 words and send with a high-resolution photo to [submissions@toastmasters.org](mailto:submissions@toastmasters.org).



Meet *Lark Doley*, DTM

2018–2019 International President brings focus on club excellence and global awareness to her year in office.

People who meet Lark Doley are drawn to her friendly smile, approachable demeanor and willingness to talk about anything. With an air of Southern hospitality, she greets strangers as if they are old friends. Lark admits an affinity for cowboy boots (common attire where she lives in the U.S. state of Texas) and glittery, gold ensembles, which she wears to represent the “golden benefits” of Toastmasters.

Lark brings a wealth of leadership experience to her new role as 2018–19 International President. For 12 years, she was chief executive officer of Second Wave Inc., a company she co-founded with her late husband, Roger Storer, DTM, that manufactured hardware devices for Apple Macintosh products. She developed global sales and marketing strategies, licensed new technologies and managed staff. Prior to Second Wave, she worked as the executive director of Texas Instruments’ computer users group, where she managed the association’s staff, monthly magazine, annual convention and regional events. She now works as a training team lead for MAXIMUS, leading their professional development strategy and drawing on her Toastmasters skills daily.

Born in Fort Worth, Texas, Lark spent her childhood moving to different towns across the U.S. states of Texas and Oklahoma. Her father worked for Phillips Petroleum as a

BY TOASTMASTER MAGAZINE STAFF





mechanical engineer, which required them to relocate every three to four years. Since 2003, home is a small community near Austin, Texas, where she lives in a lighthouse overlooking Lake Travis.

Lark graduated with a bachelor's degree in mathematics and German from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas.

A Toastmaster for 28 years, Lark is a member of three clubs: Today Toastmasters, MAXIMUS Austin Toastmasters and the Arthur Storer Club, which was chartered in honor of her late father-in-law.

**You are only the sixth female International President. What does that mean to you?**

More than half of our members are women, so I'm honored to represent women around the world and to encourage them to pursue their leadership journeys. It's interesting that at every level of our organization we have women in leadership, except at the executive officer level where we have seen very few. If I can inspire women to advance to international director and officer levels in our organization, then I will be extremely proud.

**Tell us about your family.**

Roger and I were married for 20 years; he died of cancer in 2014. Roger was a brilliant speechwriter and speaker. He won the district humorous speech and international speech contests multiple times, first in District 56 and then in District 55 after our districts split. He competed at the regional semifinals three times and placed second twice. I, on the other hand, was drawn



1. Lark is greeted by Toastmasters during her visit to District 85 at their conference in Wuxi, China, in May. District 85 achieved President's Distinguished District again this year!
2. Lark's lighthouse home was built by her late husband, Roger Storer, in honor of his father. This unique home has been showcased on televised home-design shows and offers a view of a lake.
3. Lark and Roger at their "re-wedding" ceremony in 2013.

to the leadership track; I did not want to compete against my formidable husband. In the leadership track I was able to leverage my strengths of organization and professional development. We made for a perfect Toastmasters couple, with him pursuing the communication track and me pursuing the leadership track.

We did not have any children of our own, but I have two incredible stepsons and daughters-in-law and four beautiful grandchildren. In the Doley family I have a supportive brother and sister-in-law, two amazing nephews and their wives and three energetic great-nephews.

**What's the story behind your unique home?**

I live in a lighthouse-style home built by Roger in honor of his father, Arthur. My husband and his family were from England, and during World War II, Arthur served as an underwater mine



1. Lark Doley speaks during the Board Briefing at the 2017 International Convention in Vancouver, Canada.
2. Wearing her trademark golden sneakers, Lark Doley crosses the finish line in style after completing the Smedley Run 5K run/walk at the 2017 International Convention in Vancouver.

demolition expert in the Royal Navy. Arthur loved any body of water: lakes, rivers, seas, oceans. After Arthur immigrated to the United States to live with us, we collected lighthouse memorabilia for him whenever we traveled. In 1997, Arthur died after undergoing heart surgery. During the summer after his death, Roger and I visited Portland Head Light in Cape Elizabeth, Maine. This breathtaking lighthouse inspired us to build a Texas lighthouse in honor of Arthur. It now stands in honor of both Arthur and Roger, a father who loved the sea and a son who loved his father.

**Describe your first club meeting.**

In the 1980s, I was invited to a meeting at Texas Instruments, where I worked at the time. I was called on as a guest to answer a Table Topic about a specific person I didn't even know. I sat down feeling like a failure. No one invited me back, so I thought, "Wow, I really was a failure." Many years later, a member from the Get Up and Go club invited me and I declined, telling him about my experience on my first visit. He said, "If you come to my meeting, I promise no one will call on you to speak. And if anyone does call on you, I'll throw myself onto the floor in front of you and not allow you to pass." That was so funny that I had to go!

**What inspired you to finally join?**

I actually attended the Toastmasters International Convention before I ever joined Toastmasters. The Get Up and Go club invited me to ride in a bus chartered by local clubs to attend the 1990 International Convention in Dallas and cheer on our local contestant, David Brooks, in the World Championship of Public Speaking. I had a great time on the bus with all these encouraging and supportive Toastmasters. And David Brooks won! I was so

inspired by his speech that I said, "I'm joining this organization." I joined the Today Toastmasters club the following week and gave a speech about attending the convention. So, my first speech in Toastmasters was not my Ice Breaker speech!

**What do you hope to accomplish in your year as Toastmasters International President?**

I want more and more people around the world to experience Toastmasters, to gain the golden benefits of personal and professional development through our organization. To do this, we need to provide a golden quality club meeting experience at every meeting for our members and guests. We need to publicize our organization through the work done by club vice presidents public relations, our district public relations managers and through PR at the international level. Set a gold standard for your clubs and share the gold of Toastmasters in 2018–19!

**Why did you decide to run for the role of International President?**

During my second year as a region advisor, my husband was diagnosed with cancer. He would say to me, "Lark, you know you have more to give. You know you want to serve as an international officer of Toastmasters." He believed in me, but when he died, I was devastated. Past District 55 Governor Gloria Williams, DTM, invited me to go with her to our Toastmasters International Convention in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. While attending this convention, several leaders asked me what I was planning to do next. I thought, "Next?" Their support gave me the courage to come back to the U.S. and form a campaign team to run for Second Vice President. Leaders and members

## QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS SUBMITTED ONLINE

### “What advice would you give to young Toastmasters aspiring to take on leadership roles?”

**Matthew Mak, DTM**  
Life Bridge Bilingual Club  
Taipei, Taiwan

Think about the skills you already have and where those skills fit into leadership roles at the club level. And then decide which leadership skills you want to develop. Which club leadership roles would allow you to use your current skills while helping you develop new skills? Find a mentor who will support you in that role to reach your full potential. Approach every leadership opportunity in Toastmasters the same way: What skills do you have, and what skills do you want to develop to support your personal and professional goals? And remember, every single level of leadership is open to you as a Toastmaster.

### “Lark, when you look back a year from now, how will you measure success?”

**Ryan O’Connor, DTM**  
Dynamic Public Speakers  
Austin, Texas

The three goals of the Toastmasters Board of Directors’ 2015 Strategic Plan are Club Excellence; Member Achievement; and Awareness, Engagement and Participation. I believe we have made significant progress in our Member Achievement goal with the completion and launch of Pathways this past year; therefore, I will focus more on the other two goals of our strategic plan this year.

I want every club to be a quality club, serving our members’ needs. I want every member and guest who enters a Toastmasters club meeting to have a golden experience. I also want to see a higher level of member retention. If club meetings are top quality and members achieve their goals, we should retain more members.

I ask the vice presidents public relations of each club around the world and the public relations managers of every district to strengthen their marketing and PR efforts this year, so more people worldwide can benefit from Toastmasters. I will monitor our progress in Distinguished Clubs, membership and club growth throughout the year to measure our success.

### “I recently completed my first Ice Breaker. Despite an ‘um’-filled start, I managed to sway my nerves and finish well. Tell us about your first speech.”

**Joanne Spencer**  
San Sebastian Toastmasters  
St. Augustine, Florida

My first Ice Breaker was called “Masks,” and it was all about the fact that I grew up fulfilling everyone else’s image of me. I wanted to be my father’s daughter and my husband’s wife. I wanted to be successful in my career and fulfill my manager’s expectations of me. For so much of my life, I focused on what everyone else wanted Lark to be. During this Ice Breaker speech, I said it was time for Lark to find out who she wanted to be. And through Toastmasters, Lark has absolutely found out who she is.


from around the world supported me every step of the way. Due to the encouragement of others, I am serving in this role today. This is a lesson for all us. As World Champion Dananjaya Hettiarachchi told us, “I see something in you ... ” When you see leadership potential in others, tell them!

### Why are you excited about Pathways and what it offers?

Pathways has something to offer to all our members—both new and tenured. Pathways is an education experience that is competency based, with more than 300 competencies to learn—each with a clear focus. In the Presentation Mastery path, you will gain presentation skills; in the Innovative Planning path, you will learn planning skills. I took the Pathways assessment, and when it gave me my three different paths, a light bulb came on. I said, “Yes, absolutely! This is what I want for myself.” And this is what I want for the next step for this organization. I click my cowboy

heels and tip my cowboy hat to the Education Team at World Headquarters for the incredible job they’ve done!

### What is one thing you want members to know?

Toastmasters is a lifelong experience, like eating healthy food and exercising. If we stop eating healthy food and exercising, our bodies are going to know it. I love my sugar, but my body knows when I eat it! If we don’t maintain our communication and leadership skills, then those skills will fade. People who leave Toastmasters often come back because they reach a plateau where they feel they’re missing an edge or losing some effectiveness. So, they come back to hone those skills again. I want members to realize the golden benefits of staying in Toastmasters to reach their full potential, both personally and professionally. 



**ONLINE EXTRAS:** Learn more about Lark Doley in an exclusive video featuring her unique home.

# Cue in to the Value of Originality

How creative content and delivery help you stand out.

BY STUART PINK

One of the joys of being a Toastmaster is listening to fellow members' personal stories in club meetings. Each new Toastmaster giving an Ice Breaker speech has an instinct to be interesting and original. At the other end of the spectrum, Toastmasters attending the International Convention can hear up to 32 Semifinal speeches in one day! Those speakers have a big challenge: How to stand out?

Creativity can be defined as *an original idea that has value*. As speakers, we want our speeches to be of value to our audiences. If you are an expert or a thought leader in your field, that value could be in conveying an original message for the purpose of informing, persuading or entertaining. Even if your point is not completely original, you can add value by surrounding it with creative content and delivery.

## Creative Speech Content

The topic you choose to address is undoubtedly a major opportunity to distinguish yourself from other speakers, whether at a contest, conference or meeting. Even if you cannot control the underlying material you are speaking about, take advantage of techniques to liven it up.

First, you need your message to be clear. If your presentation includes complicated ideas or jargon, try to simplify it. If an audience cannot follow you, they will lose interest. Don't include too many facts or statistics. Can you present a fact in a novel way that the audience can understand or relate to? For example, instead of saying that the world's population increases by 83 million people every year, you

could say it is like adding the population of Germany annually or of New York City about every five weeks!

If you are free to choose your own speech topic, then a good starting place for original content is your unique experiences or stories.

"Originality has no magic formula," says Olivia Schofield, a 2011 World Championship of Public Speaking finalist, who is from England but now lives in Berlin. "It's in your personal story. We've all had similar things happen to us, but originality is found in what exactly happened to you and how it affected you." She used her finalist speech to tell her tale of overcoming a speech impediment with the help of a teddy bear named Wodwik (i.e., Roderick).

**"If you do something dramatic in your speech that has nothing (or little) to do with the speech, then it is just a gimmick."**

International speech contestants sometimes worry that others have already said everything that can be said. But by reflecting in-depth on both your passions and the specific details of your experiences, you can create something unique. As Schofield notes, "Originality is about looking at something from a different angle and seeing the value in it that other people may not see." This helped Mohammed

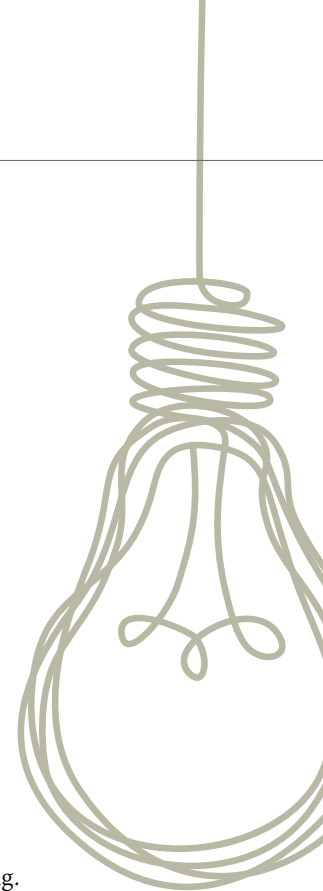
Qahtani from Saudi Arabia earn the title of 2015 World Champion of Public Speaking. His highly original opening dialogue about smoking and made-up diabetes facts came from an actual conversation with friends.

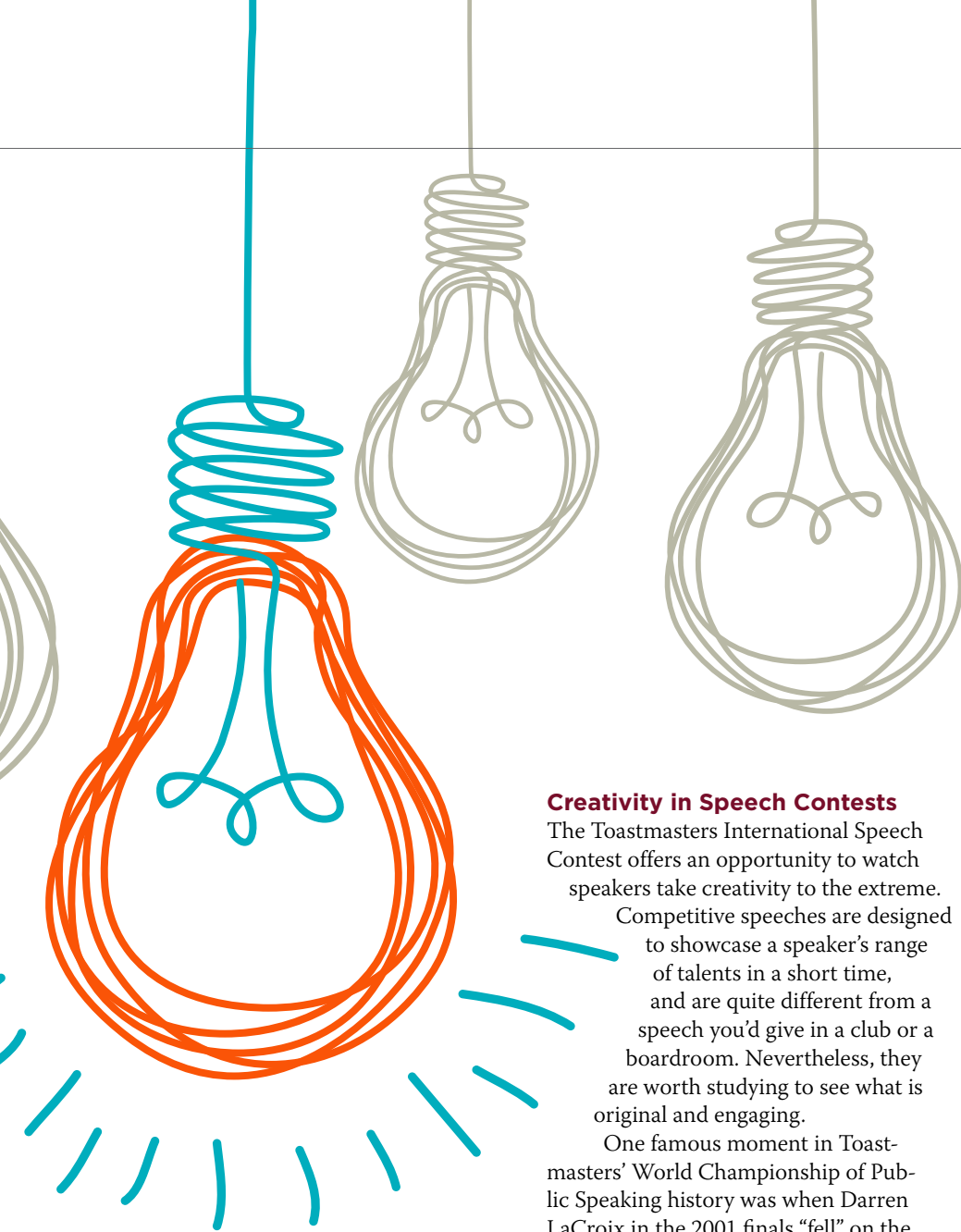
At a recent Toastmasters meeting, I witnessed a guest introduce herself by telling a short story about her hobby of mushroom picking in the summer. She created a vivid picture that fascinated and entertained her audience as well as made us want to learn more about mushrooms. You never know what might make good speech content!

## Creative Speech Delivery

After speech content, your next task is to decide how to deliver what you've written. One decision is whether to use a slideshow or props. Although they may be the norm in business environments, PowerPoint presentations can distract audiences from the speaker. Slideshows and props should be used only if they help speakers get their messages across. A recent example I saw of an excellent slideshow presentation was about the different personalities of greyhound dogs. The speaker used slides to show different expressions on the dogs' faces that could not have been conveyed through words alone.

A member in my club recently spoke about making the perfect chocolate chip cookie. A golden rule in speaking is to leave the audience with no questions unanswered. In anticipation of this, the





### Creativity in Speech Contests

The Toastmasters International Speech Contest offers an opportunity to watch speakers take creativity to the extreme.

Competitive speeches are designed to showcase a speaker's range of talents in a short time, and are quite different from a speech you'd give in a club or a boardroom. Nevertheless, they are worth studying to see what is original and engaging.

One famous moment in Toastmasters' World Championship of Public Speaking history was when Darren LaCroix in the 2001 finals "fell" on the stage seconds into his speech and proceeded to address the contest chair and audience from there.

**“Competitive speeches are designed to showcase a speaker's range of talents in a short time, and are quite different from a speech you'd give in a club or a boardroom.”**

A common misconception about creativity and originality is that all ideas must be totally new. In fact, most ideas and inventions build upon those that have

come before. This is the case in music, art, science—you name it. For example, Thomas Edison was not the first to invent the light bulb. He improved on previous designs for the glass bulb and the glowing filament inside until he had an invention that was commercially viable. When speaking, the important point is that any creative device you use in your speech delivery must be adapted to the message of your speech. If you do something dramatic in your speech that has nothing (or little) to do with the speech, then it is just a gimmick. LaCroix's falling down was central to his theme because he noted that when you get up, you've made progress.

Another example is Aaron Beverly's 57-word title for the speech that earned him second place at the 2016 World Championship. It wasn't the first time a speaker had written an extremely long title, but Beverly's worked because it illustrated the importance of brevity. While you don't want to copy someone else's idea, you can creatively adapt it to help convey your message. In the business world, it is worth studying the presentations of Steve Jobs of Apple to see how to deliver creative presentations. When he introduced the new iPhone, he built excitement and suspense, teasing his audience with humor and making them wait before he finally revealed the product.

Whether you are speaking at work, in a club meeting or in a contest, think about how you would react to your speech if you heard it. Would you be excited? If not, think about ways to make the content, delivery or both more creative. A speech that is creative will be memorable and interesting to the audience, as well as enjoyable for the speaker to deliver. **T**

**Stuart Pink, CC, CL**, is a coach and keynote speaker on creativity. He earned third place in the 2012 Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking. He is the author of *Brainarium: Exercise Your Creativity*. Visit his website at [www.brainarium.com](http://www.brainarium.com).

speaker brought the actual cookies to taste and the recipe for anyone who wanted to make them!

Another important way to be creative is to interact with your audience. You could ask them questions or use humor, which is appropriate in just about any speech. The secret to humor is not to tell jokes but to uncover wit in the stories you tell by seeing the funny side of things. As a rule, if you can make your friends or family laugh with a story, then you can make an audience laugh. Sometimes situations become funny when retold. Dananjaya Hettiarachchi, the 2014 World Champion of Public Speaking from Sri Lanka, turned the line “I see something in you ... but I don't know what it is” into an increasingly hilarious piece of advice as he interacted with the audience during his winning speech.

*Want*  
**Success?**

*Try*  
**Happiness**



BY LAUREN PARSONS

Scientific research suggests that success does not lead to happiness but that the opposite is true. Happiness has a profound effect on brain function and significantly increases individual performance, leading to greater success. If you focus on boosting your personal well-being, you will be a better leader and communicator to the benefit of your company, your Toastmasters club and your family and friends.

“Ninety percent of your long-term happiness is predicted not by the external world but by the way your brain processes the world.”

—SHAWN ACHOR

Martin Seligman, director of the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania, was the first to promote positive psychology as a field of scientific study while serving as president of the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1998.

This approach to psychology challenged what Seligman refers to as “the disease model” and focuses not on what’s wrong with people but instead on what’s right with them.

“Psychology should be just as concerned with human strength as it is with weakness,” Seligman says in a 2004 TED Talk, adding that researchers are developing measures of “what makes life worth living” and “different forms of happiness.”

Shawn Achor, a leader in the field of positive psychology and founder of GoodThink Inc. and the Institute for Applied Positive Research, has found that increased happiness leads to “a 23 percent reduction in stress, 39 percent improvement in health and 31 percent improvement in productivity.”

Achor writes in a 2012 issue of the *Harvard Business Review* that “because success is a moving target—as soon as you hit your target, you raise it again—the happiness that results from success is fleeting.” He argues that people who already have a positive mindset perform better due to a “happiness advantage” where “every business outcome shows improvement when the brain is positive.”

Specifically, Achor found that happiness leads to increased cognitive function, improved problem-solving ability, increased memory and retention, higher accuracy and greater creativity. All of these things give happy people a significant advantage, allowing them to perform at their peak. Imagine how keeping your brain in positive mode could affect your next speech or conversation with your friend, boss or spouse.

### Organizational Harmony

Because individuals ultimately determine the success of an organization, a positive mindset is important in the workplace and in Toastmasters. A holistic approach is key to experiencing sustained success. Through his work in 50 countries, including with Fortune 100 companies, Achor discovered that happy people work smarter and produce significantly better results. They stay in an organization longer and are more engaged in achieving its vision. A great way for companies to foster a positive work environment is by sponsoring a corporate club.

Jessica Ferriter, CC, ALB, is an active member of the corporate club All American Toastmasters in Columbus, Georgia, which she describes as supportive and positive. The club consistently maintains 20 members and earns President’s Distinguished Club status year after year. “It’s almost impossible to leave one of our meetings without a smile on your face,” she says.

When employees are happy, they often are more productive. Achor found that three things predicted 70 percent of job successes among his research subjects: their optimism levels, social support and “ability to see stress as a challenge instead of as a threat.”



### How to Be Happy

Below are four practical strategies to use in and out of Toastmasters to keep your brain in “positive mode” and create the “happiness advantage.”

#### 1 Practice *gratitude*.

Gratitude and thankfulness are cornerstones of every Toastmasters meeting. Skilled evaluators congratulate and encourage speakers, offering practical suggestions and support by highlighting speakers’ strengths, just as positive psychology focuses on strengths versus weaknesses.

The human brain is designed to scan the world for danger, which often means focusing first on the negatives. People are inclined to notice when things go wrong more often than when they go right. A disgruntled customer or broken equipment tends to get the attention, whereas people doing daily tasks well are often overlooked.

Leaders can shift this paradigm by “catching” people doing things right and thanking them on the spot. Immediate and specific feedback creates a nurturing environment in which people thrive, because prompt, affirmative reinforcement increases positive behavior and motivation—people do more of what they are thanked for. This is why genuine praise is one of the best parenting, relationship and management techniques available. Just think how you could use it to build trust and appreciation: “I like seeing the way you packed all your toys away so neatly today, Sam ...” “Thanks so much for sorting out that recycling, honey ...” “I really appreciate the effort you put into that report, Sarla ...”

You can practice thankfulness at any moment by focusing on the things you’re grateful for. The more you do so, the more you

train your brain to scan the world for positives. In a TEDx speech in 2011, the year he released his book *The Happiness Advantage*, Achor reported that “90 percent of your long-term happiness is predicted not by the external world but by the way your brain processes the world.”

#### 2 Actively encourage *kindness*.

You can rarely give a gift without getting something back yourself. As we give out “random acts of kindness,” we feel a deep level of contentment that keeps our brains in positive mode. Kind acts also deepen social connection, a key indicator of happiness.

The New Zealand College of Fitness fosters kindness by ending team meetings with each staff member awarding a gold star to a colleague, publicly explaining why that person was chosen. The gold stars go up on a large wall chart to track progress toward rewards. This one small practice creates immense positivity; staff members are more inclined to help one another and feel valued hearing direct compliments from co-workers.

“Psychology should be just as concerned with human strength as it is with weakness.”

—MARTIN SELIGMAN

The magic of Toastmasters is how clubs draw people together in a kind, supportive environment where members are appreciated and applauded for their every effort. Jim Carty, DTM, of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, serves as District 61 club growth director





and values the way Toastmasters “lifts people up.” Like positivity, kindness is contagious; it breeds more of the same, creating an environment people want to be part of. Carty describes the kindness others showed him from the moment he joined the organization: “Toastmasters made me better than I was ... for that I owe a lot of people.”

Be intentional and set yourself a goal. See how many acts of kindness you can do each week and share your stories with others. It will encourage a culture where people continue to “pay it forward,” not only making someone else’s day brighter but also boosting their own happiness.

### 3 **Don’t forget to *move*.**

Our physiology directly affects our psychology. Frequent movement is beneficial for both bodies and brains, improving creativity, focus and efficiency. Exercise augments neurotransmitters in the brain, increasing both short- and long-term happiness.

The good news for busy people is that studies show that even short intervals of exercise can be more effective than longer periods at a lower output. Try to integrate movement throughout your day by taking regular “deskercise” breaks, even for just 60 seconds. This will not only put your brain in positive mode and leave you feeling more alert, it will also increase your productivity. Consider having standing or walking meetings, using voice recording technology to take notes. For any meeting that lasts more than 30 minutes, designate an “active advocate” to lead a 30-second movement break at various intervals.

### 4 **Recharge in rhythm.**

Learn how to tune in to internal body-clock rhythms and

pay attention when it’s time to take a break—when you become distracted, tired, thirsty, hungry, fidgety or frustrated. It is possible to ignore these signals, say if you have a report deadline looming and just don’t want to stop; your body will go into fight or flight mode, pushing through with a burst of adrenaline. This is acceptable from time to time, but if you continue this practice day in and day out, you will reach a chronic state of stress, which has serious health consequences.

To refocus, create a change of state by spending a few minutes outside, standing, walking around or stretching. Your brain will be sharper, allowing you to complete your work faster and with greater accuracy, all saving time and making you happier and more productive than when you simply “push on through.”

Carty emphasizes how lunchtime Toastmasters meetings can energize participants and provide a much-needed break. “Most people recognize how invigorated they feel at the conclusion of a meeting,” he says. “These meetings launched me into an afternoon of meetings with new energy and made for a productive day.”

By fostering a thankful attitude, intentionally spreading kindness, integrating uplifting movement into your day and taking time out in rhythm with your body, you will not only increase your personal, physical and emotional well-being but also fundamentally improve your performance and experience greater success in all areas of life. **T**

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# Accelerate Your Toastmasters Experience



Tips from longtime members.

BY JENNIFER L. BLANCK

Sometimes Toastmasters are so busy learning the ins and outs of club meetings and roles or focusing on the next speech topic that it's easy to miss some of the simple, logical approaches that can propel learning and promote growth. Here are tips from some of us longtime Toastmasters to take your experience to the next level without waiting for years yourself.

## 1 Take advantage of introductions.

When speaking, let the person introducing you set the stage for your speech. Don't waste time and weaken your impact by presenting the information yourself.

At a minimum, all speakers should share a speech title and project information with the person introducing them. This is particularly important to help people learn the criteria of Pathways or understand the goals of the traditional program's advanced manuals. When practicing a speech for outside the club, it's even more essential to share who the real audience will be. This will provide context to your evaluator and club members.

Having participated in club and district events on three continents over 23 years, I have seen too many members start prepared speeches by giving their name and describing what they'll be presenting. I have also seen impromptu introductions undermine the tone of a presentation.

Speakers can provide a written introduction or talking points to the person introducing them. Cat Kipling, DTM, has been a member of Excalibur Speakers, an advanced club in London, for nine years, as well as a past area director, club coach and club sponsor. She says her club gives members an introduction template to ensure speakers include credentials related

to their topic and are able to formulate proper introductions.

## 2 Present a challenge.

Feedback is vital for all speakers to improve, yet too often people hesitate to evaluate or offer constructive feedback to experienced members. "As we are all at Toastmasters to grow, however experienced we are, it's always so disappointing to hear someone be told 'X is obviously an advanced speaker, and I don't have anything to recommend for next time,'" Kipling says.

If you can't think of anything helpful to say, consider advising speakers to try something out of their comfort zones or different from their established style. "I've heard natural comedians being challenged to tackle a more serious subject, flamboyant speakers to pick a topic that they will need to deliver with calm composure, and those who are technical presenters to try storytelling," Kipling says.

## 3 Let new members go their own pace.

Toastmasters is a journey, not an instant transformation. People join at different stages of motivation and development. When evaluating members, especially new ones, it's important to understand their goals and capacities and help them grow at a pace that makes sense for them.

Sometimes Toastmasters give too much feedback to new members, who may become discouraged, stop speaking or, worse, not return. Patrick Oei, DTM, a past international director and 23-year member in Singapore, believes new members are often overwhelmed at the beginning and should be nurtured. "Never judge anyone," Oei says. "A new member may take awhile

to be comfortable speaking to an audience. That person could be the next International President who needs our help in grooming him or herself."

## 4 Be prepared and make every meeting a showcase.

Many members don't realize the preparation that should go into each meeting role. The better prepared you are for a position, the more you can learn, help others, contribute to the meeting and energize the club.

One helpful resource is *A Toastmaster Wears Many Hats*, which is free and available in nine languages in the Toastmasters online resource library. The guide provides in-depth information on each meeting role's duties prior to, during and after the meeting. Some clubs send targeted messages before each meeting to remind people to prepare.

"The club is the face of Toastmasters to the community where it operates," says Beth Thomas, a six-time DTM, former district and international director, and current member of Rainbow Nation Toastmasters club in Vereeniging, South Africa. She sees a big difference when meeting officials are prepared and performing their roles to the fullest. Members learn more and stay engaged, clubs maintain a high standard of professionalism, and guests are inspired to join.

Don't wait for your own wisdom of the ages. See what other experienced members recommend to get the most out of Toastmasters now. ■

*Jennifer L. Blanck, DTM, is a member of Skyline Toastmasters in Denver, Colorado, and a regular contributor to the Toastmaster magazine.*



# Build a Compelling Club Website

Attract members and let your club's personality shine.

BY BILL BROWN

**N**o two Toastmasters clubs are alike. Each has a unique personality. Yet they all have at least two factors in common: They follow the Toastmasters program, and they want new members. Is your club doing everything it can to attract those members?

From time to time I have searched for a new club, and I've noticed that many clubs do not do a good job grabbing my attention. The primary place I look when searching for potential clubs is their website. I look for specific information on a site, and if I don't find it, I am off to the next club.

What exactly do I look for? Here are a few key features.

## Essential Elements of Your Club Website

The first page that comes up is, of course, the club's homepage. I like to see a brief statement about what makes this club unique. That might be a specific focus like humor or rigorous evaluations. It might be the type of person who primarily attends, like certified public accountants (CPAs), entrepreneurs or engineers. Or, if it is a club made up of newer speakers, it might be that it is a friendly, low-pressure environment for new speakers to spread their wings.

If the club is using FreeToastHost 2, a website template available through Toastmasters, the second page I look at is the "Meet Our Members" section to see if I recognize any names or pictures. Even if the person viewing the site is

new to the area or to Toastmasters, this section is important. All too often I see only two or three names, which makes me think no one attends, so the club must not be very good. If this is the template your club uses, I recommend that you get as many members on that page as possible. When writing about yourself, mention any experience or expertise you have in Toastmasters, personally and professionally. If you have a strong credential like a speech contest trophy, include it. If you are relatively new, you can talk about how friendly and helpful your club is and include a short testimonial about what you have accomplished in your brief time with the club. New speakers will be attracted to a kindred spirit. Help them feel as though they can learn a lot at your club.


## Don't Forget the Details

Other considerations when creating an online presence for your club include ensuring that meeting information is up to date, both on your own site and on the "Find a Club" portal on [toastmasters.org](http://toastmasters.org). If you include a map, make sure it's updated from an old location and verify that it is leading your visitors to the right place. In addition, be sure your color combinations

are easy to read. On one website I visited, the "Meet Our Members" page had white letters on a light-yellow background. It was so hard to read I was gone in two seconds flat.

Some clubs include an outline of the Toastmasters program on their website. I saw one example that had a nice description ... of the old manuals. If you do discuss the education program, be sure to update it to describe Pathways. And ensure your club's website reflects official Toastmasters branding. If your visitors are new to the organization, chances are they found you through the Toastmasters website's "Find a Club" portal. A logo ties the two together and tells them they are in the right place. You can get official, up-to-date logos and other graphics under the "Resources" tab at [toastmasters.org](http://toastmasters.org).

I encourage you to explore the websites of numerous clubs to see what they have done. Observe how they market themselves. Read their member bios. This should give you some ideas.

Your club has its own personality. If you don't know what that is, ask your area director to help you identify it. Then let it shine on your website so you attract visitors who are a good fit with your club. Your club's website is an incredible tool for networking and recruitment. Make sure it is working for you. 

For more information on building a website for your club or to submit a request to create a free club website, please visit [www.toastmastersclubs.org/welcome](http://www.toastmastersclubs.org/welcome)

**Bill Brown, DTM**, is a speech delivery coach from Las Vegas and a member of Pro Toastmasters. Learn more at [www.billbrownspeechcoach.com](http://www.billbrownspeechcoach.com).

# Common Challenges of Corporate Clubs

Tips on tackling problems and optimizing opportunities in a company setting.

BY K.T. LYNN

The most valuable part of any company is its people. Global leaders depend on human capital to drive the vision and mission of their businesses. Toastmasters' corporate clubs provide an in-house opportunity for employees to develop their leadership and communication skills. As a result of sponsoring a club, companies benefit from better leaders, more effective managers, closer-knit teams and higher productivity.

Toastmasters helps employees learn to:

- ▶ Conduct effective meetings
- ▶ Practice time management
- ▶ Enhance their listening skills
- ▶ Sharpen their presentation skills
- ▶ Boost team collaboration
- ▶ Guide successful teams

Nearly one-third of all Fortune 500 companies now offer in-house Toastmasters clubs to help employees become better communicators and leaders. Industry giants such as Apple, AT&T, Bank of America, The Coca-Cola Company, Exxon Mobil, Google, Microsoft and The Walt Disney Company have used Toastmasters as a staff development tool to benefit their organizations in a meaningful way. However, due to the unique nature of this strategic partnership, corporate Toastmasters clubs can have specific challenges.

## Recruiting New Members

The recruitment of new members can be a challenge in any Toastmasters club. Since the total membership pool in a corporate club may be limited to company employees, after initial recruitment it can feel as though the membership well has run dry.

Here are some tips on promoting club awareness throughout the company:

- ▶ Take advantage of company communication channels by providing weekly club updates via company emails and message boards.
- ▶ Include club information in the new employee welcome packets.
- ▶ Hold membership drives with special meeting themes. Invite interesting speakers who can create “buzz.”
- ▶ Host meetings with themes that are relevant to employees' jobs—for example, technology-themed meetings in an internet company or financial literacy topics in a bank or investment firm. Give the experts within reach incentive to share their experiences and shine!
- ▶ Give special mini-meetings or presentations to different departments within the company to increase exposure. Club awareness will spread organically if leadership is aware of the benefits to members.
- ▶ Invite a company executive to speak about the value of communication skills for the company.

One tactic for recruiting new members could include existing members sharing their success stories. Mohammed Qahtani, the 2015 World Champion of Public Speaking, is a member of Northpark Toastmasters and JHAH Toastmasters clubs in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. He credits his recent job promotion to Toastmasters. “My supervisor didn't need to guess whether or not I had leadership skills—he was able to see it firsthand from my work in our club,” Qahtani says. “Since I belong



to a corporate club, I was able to tailor my leadership experience to suit the needs of my organization while surrounded by the support of colleagues.”

Another key part of driving membership is ensuring the club meetings are not only productive but also function as “breaks” from the employees' workday.

“We've found that adding personal touches to meetings, loosening formalities to make a relaxing and fun atmosphere, and mixing up Table Topics styles keeps members returning for the ‘vacation’ from their workday,” Qahtani says. Meetings that are equally entertaining and productive are important for any club's success but even more vital for corporate clubs. Since meetings often take place during the workday and among colleagues, establishing “fun” as a pillar of each meeting allows members to feel engaged and forget about their workload for a while.

## Balancing Personal and Professional

Juggling a full plate of professional and personal responsibilities can be a difficult task. For many, attending a corporate club meeting during their lunch break is a good way to optimize opportunities for self-improvement. However, some fear the additional responsibility of club participation eliminates the only opportunity for downtime and food during work hours.



“Within the club, bosses are members like everyone else, and people who aren’t leaders within the company can be leaders at Toastmasters.”

Yahya Al-Semaiyen, a sergeant at arms for the Eagles Toastmasters club in Saudi Arabia, has participated in numerous corporate club executive committees and has encountered potential members who felt balancing their work responsibilities with those of a corporate club was not possible. He emphasizes the inherent benefits to both potential and current members, as well as to the company.

“Some cite a full schedule or too many pending work tasks as a reason for not joining Toastmasters, or not being able to keep up with responsibilities in a corporate club,” says Al-Semaiyen. “Members need to draw a line between fulfilling work duties and self-development. You need the latter for your mind and life, just like you need food to refuel your body.”

When corporate clubs have the buy-in of company leadership and human resources, members needn’t worry about devoting time to an activity that isn’t “work-related” during work hours. Judson Stone, a former member of First Rate Toastmasters in Arlington, Texas, is no longer part of the corporate club due to his recent retirement from First Rate Inc., but he is well-aware of the benefits and challenges of meeting in a corporate club environment.

“Although sometimes company events required the relocation of club meetings, my workplace fully supported Toastmasters

because they recognized the value from public speaking and evaluation skills,” says Stone.

### Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone

In work and in life, it’s easy to get into a routine. In a well-established company hierarchy, challenging the status quo of leadership can be difficult and uncomfortable. Toastmasters clubs can shake that up.

Within the club, bosses are members like everyone else, and people who aren’t leaders within the company can be leaders in Toastmasters—it can be an effective equalizer. Within the safe and fun space of a meeting, employees can develop the skills and confidence they need to become tomorrow’s leaders, all under the direct support of company leadership.

In the normal confines of a daily schedule, it can be difficult to find opportunities to venture into the unknown. If members can step aside from their established job roles and responsibilities, they can find a perfect place to prepare and present speeches and presentations, as well as to think on their feet in front of an audience. Although this can force people outside of their comfort zones, which can be slightly more awkward in front of an audience full of colleagues, it can provide a great foundation for team-building activities and letting your light shine.

The challenges found within corporate clubs only strengthen their ability to provide members with a valuable and enriching experience. Stephen Austin, a member of the Hong Kong Achievers, a community club, can attest to the value of corporate clubs from an outside perspective.

“I’ve been very happy to take part in a number of meetings run by other corporate-sponsored clubs, affiliated to various banks around the city,” says Austin. “The energy level seems higher, and members invest a lot of time into their work performance. Participating in a corporate club is another form of that investment. They are a perfect example of a win-win situation. Both the company and staff benefit in equal measure, and in addition it is an ideal vehicle to promote the Toastmasters brand and philosophy.” **T**

**K.T. Lynn, CC, CL**, is a member in Shanghai, China. A copywriter by day and a novelist by night, she aims to promote cross-cultural understanding through her work. Read more about her at [www.ktlynn.com](http://www.ktlynn.com).



**ONLINE EXTRAS:** Discover the benefits of corporate clubs through the eyes of 2014 World Champion Dananjaya Hettiarachchi in a Toastmasters video.



## The Reader's Dilemma

So many books, so little time. What to read next?

BY JOHN CADLEY

**A**s a Toastmaster, I'll bet you're an avid reader. So perhaps you can understand my dilemma. I've just finished a book and am trying to decide what to read next. You know the feeling: *Hmmm ... what am I in the mood for?* In my case, I've just finished Ron Chernow's biography of Ulysses S. Grant, the great American Civil War general and U.S. president. I like reading books like that. They make you feel so *knowledgeable*. I can tell you, for instance, what that famous middle initial "S" stands for. Nothing! It was a clerical error on Grant's application to West Point that just happened to stick. His real name is Hiram Ulysses Grant. I like learning things like that. And now I finally know who's buried in Grant's tomb.

Usually, I'll balance out a "big book" like that with some fiction, sort of like a palate cleanser. But what to read? I am of the mind that modern fiction can't hold a candle to the Jane Austens and Gustave Flauberts of the world, so I'm always looking for a good classic. Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* has been on my list for years, but, alas, I've waited too long. At seven volumes, 4,125 pages and 1,267,069 words, I probably wouldn't live to finish it. And once I start a book I *have* to finish it. (It's compulsion. You wouldn't believe the trash I've read. But I read it!) Not that I expect my last words to be anything quotable, but I certainly don't want them to be, "I can't die! I'm only halfway through Volume 4!"

I could go the totally classic route and try Dante's *Divine Comedy*, but I haven't been to church in a while and don't really

want to read graphically poetic descriptions of what happens to backsliders in the Ninth Circle of Hell. Or I could tackle Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. But then ... am I really in the mood to go wandering around the misty moors of England with a creepy guy named Heathcliff?

The Russians are always good for a great story. But if I'm not up for creepy, then Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The House of the Dead* is out. Leo Tolstoy is an option. I've read *War and Peace*, but *Anna Karenina* beckons from the bookshelf. A definite possibility—as long as I forget that in the end she gets run over by a train.

**"When I look at my bookcase full of self-help books that haven't helped, I have to wonder: Will one more contain the magic formula for happiness?"**

People have told me I should try science fiction, which deals with strange, weird things that happen in the future. Personally, I'd prefer a book that explains the strange, weird things that happen in the present—like *The Bachelorette* TV show.

I've missed the mystery bug as well, which I blame on my mother. She loved mysteries, especially Agatha Christie. She'd become so engrossed in the adventures of Monsieur Poirot that she'd burn the meatloaf and we'd all have to eat what was essentially a brick of charcoal. Hence,

from an early age mystery stories have literally left a bad taste in my mouth. Besides, who wants to read a book where you think you've put all the clues together, only to find out you were completely clueless?

Then there's that great modern genre of self-help. Always tempting. But when I look at my bookcase full of self-help books that haven't helped, I have to wonder: Will one more contain the magic formula for happiness? I sometimes think self-help is meant more for the authors—i.e., write a book and help yourself to some big bucks.

So what *will* I read next? I've known all along but am embarrassed to say. Yes, I enjoy "serious" books. But I also love a nice, juicy celebrity memoir, and for that I don't think anything is going to beat Keith Richards' autobiography, *Life*. The title alone is ironic since Mr. Richards' life would have killed most people. He is, as you know, the guitarist for The Rolling Stones, a band known for taking the rock 'n' roll lifestyle to a whole new level. I fully expect his book will span many genres. Aside from biography, the outrageously colorful things he's done could easily qualify as science fiction; the fact that he's still alive and kicking is definitely a medical mystery; and as a self-help book, it could easily be called *How NOT to Live Your Life*.

I can't wait to dig in. **T**

**John Cadley**, a former advertising copywriter, is a freelance writer and musician living in Fayetteville, New York. Learn more at [www.cadleys.com](http://www.cadleys.com).

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## CLIENT SPOTLIGHT - BO BENNETT, DTM



You might know Bo as the creator of FreeToastHost, the host of the Toastmasters Podcast, or the Founder of eBookIt.com. Or perhaps you never heard of the guy. Either way, you will enjoy his latest book, *Some Really Personal, Yet Entertaining Stories From My Life That You Will Enjoy and May Even Find Inspiring*.

What is a "normal childhood?" Does it include almost being murdered by your sister with an ax? Speeding around town in the back of a station wagon because your mom is chasing an "alien spaceship"? Being busted by the police for intent to light a pond on fire? Tackling your mom to the ground and wrestling a knife out of her hand because she was trying to kill your dad? While my stories may be unique, readers will be able to relate to the broader themes that are part of a normal childhood such as sibling rivalry, eccentric parents, doing stupid things, and frequently preventing one's parents from literally murdering each other.

Although some of the subject matter is not something one would generally laugh at, you have my permission to laugh. Social rules don't apply here; my rules do. It works for me, and who knows, after reading the stories from my past, you might be inspired to see your own screwed up past in a more humorous light.

*Some Really Personal, Yet Entertaining Stories From My Life That You Will Enjoy and May Even Find Inspiring* by Bo Bennett is available in ebook, paperback, and audio, at 

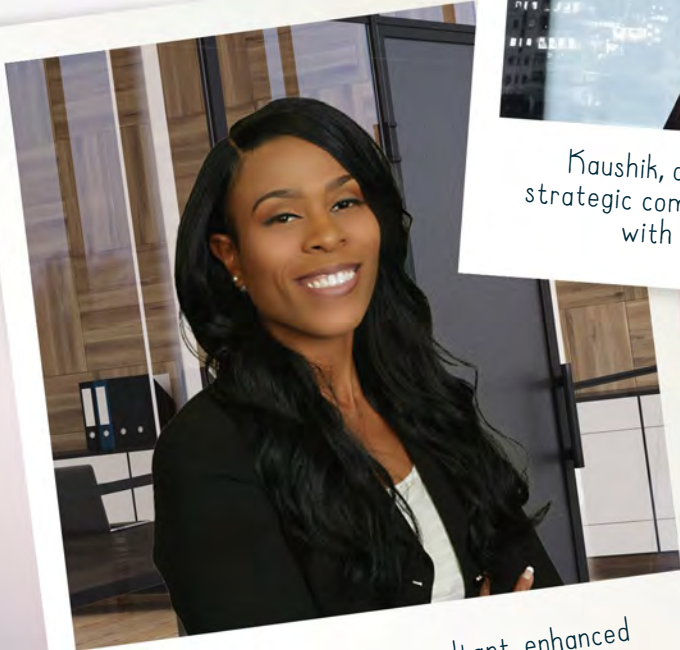
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