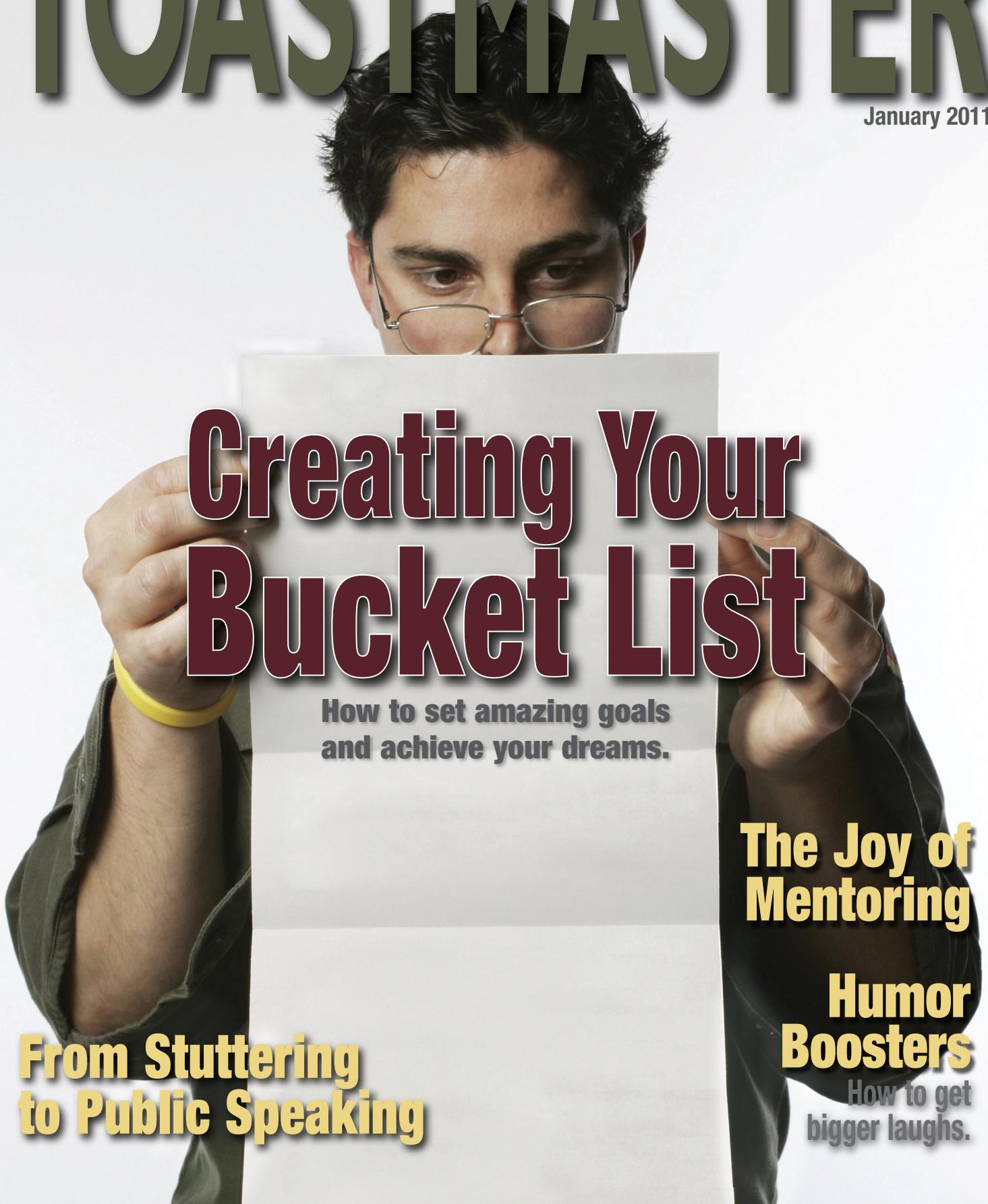


TOASTMASTER®

January 2011



Creating Your Bucket List

How to set amazing goals
and achieve your dreams.

From Stuttering
to Public Speaking

The Joy of
Mentoring

Humor
Boosters
How to get
bigger laughs.



Listen With Your Heart

Empathic listening involves much more than registering, reflecting, or even understanding the words that are said. Communications experts estimate that 10 percent of our communication is represented by the words we say, 30 percent is represented by our sounds and 60 percent by our body language. In empathic listening, you listen with your ears...with your eyes and with your heart. You listen for feeling, for meaning. You listen for behavior. You use your right brain as well as your left. You sense, you intuit, you feel.

— Stephen R. Covey,

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Listening is a fascinating process. I often find myself thinking about listening and how much energy it consumes.

As Toastmasters, we enjoy having someone who listens to us, who simply attends to us while suspending judgment and activities. It is the most amazing experience to feel heard and understood.

The Toastmasters program teaches us to become careful listeners. Listening is a fading skill. And yet, in Toastmasters we reference “better listening, thinking and speaking skills.” I love that listening comes before thinking and speaking. We need to be attentive listeners in order to become great communicators. One way we learn this is through the role of grammarian. We train our ears to hear the Word of the Day, filler words, verbal viruses, descriptive language and brilliant turns-of-phrase that speakers use.

And as speech evaluators, we learn to listen for the objectives of the speech, and for congruency between words and body language. We also listen objectively and without judgment.

Former U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk wrote, “One of the best ways to persuade others is with your ears – by listening to them.”

A fun exercise to try next time you meet a group of friends is the “Listening Game.” See if you can identify, in your own mind, which people exhibit these types of listening qualities:

- Ignoring – choosing not to listen to the person speaking.
- Pretending – inserting phrases like “uh huh” and “oh yeah,” while pretending to listen.
- Selective listening – hearing only the portion the listener is interested in.
- Attentive listening – paying attention and focusing energy on the words spoken.
- Empathic listening – listening with the intent to understand. This is when we get into the speaker’s frame of reference, see the world as they see it, understand their viewpoints and understand how they feel.

Empathic listening ought to be our goal as Toastmasters. I leave you with these final words by author and psychotherapist Sue Patton Thoele: “Deep listening is miraculous for both listener and speaker. When someone receives us with open-hearted, non-judging, intensely interested listening, our spirits expand.”



Pat Johnson, DTM
International President

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A Toastmaster's Promise

As a member of Toastmasters International and my club, I promise...

- To attend club meetings regularly;
- To prepare all of my speech and leadership projects to the best of my ability, basing them on projects in the *Competent Communication* manual, *Advanced Communication* manuals or *Competent Leadership* manual;
- To prepare for and fulfill meeting assignments;
- To provide fellow members with helpful, constructive evaluations;
- To help the club maintain the positive, friendly environment necessary for all members to learn and grow;
- To serve my club as an officer when called upon to do so;
- To treat my fellow club members and our guests with respect and courtesy;
- To bring guests to club meetings so they can see the benefits Toastmasters membership offers;
- To adhere to the guidelines and rules for all Toastmasters educational and recognition programs;
- To maintain honest and highly ethical standards during the conduct of all Toastmasters activities.

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

Speak Less About Sports

As a student and enthusiast of foreign languages, what I like best about Toastmasters is its international flavor. I like practicing the languages I study with fellow Toastmasters of foreign origin. However, I have to give a thumbs down to the October issue of the *Toastmaster* magazine, for its mega-focus on sports.

I feel that sports, and athletes, are already overglorified – even deified – in our society at large. If athletes hear a clap of thunder, they walk over to the window and take a bow!

Lawrence K. Marsh, CC • Tech Corridor Toastmasters
Gaithersburg, Maryland

Testosterone Overload

The *Toastmaster* magazine's October issue was an interesting one, but I'm still suffering from residual testosterone overload. The articles were almost exclusively male-oriented (with the exception of the piece on former basketball coach Celia Slater and the inclusion of Laura Mallory in the story about her dad and brothers climbing Mount Everest).

I was particularly surprised that in the main feature, "Speaking about Sports," the author didn't include a single woman. Out of the nearly 260,000 members in more than 12,500 clubs in 113 countries...?

Just as gender-specific language is something we need to avoid in our speaking assignments, the *Toastmaster* magazine needs to be careful to present a more balanced image in its coverage.

Barbara Bigham • Keizer Communicators • Keizer, Oregon

A Word About Contests

As Janet Reese points out in her article "Planning a Speech Contest" (November), it indeed takes a lot of planning to organize a good speech contest. Some organizers forget that a good contest is one that allows the contestants to perform

their best. The competitors put in a tremendous amount of effort and deserve an environment that facilitates their presentations.

All too often organizers are eager to showcase their own ability, making long introductions and announcements, highlighting upcoming events, etc., while the contestants speak toward the end of a long evening when they are tired. When I compete, I much prefer that our speeches take place before any announcements or speeches by dignitaries.

James Ng, ACB • Unionville Toastmasters • Markham, Ontario, Canada

New TI Champ Inspires Others

I loved Beth Black's article, "A Death-Defying Flight to Victory" (November), about David Henderson, Toastmasters' new World Champion of Public Speaking. I enjoyed learning more about David and how he crafted and molded his World Championship speech. I especially liked his comment: "We get so wrapped up in our own ideas that we just assume other people are going to get wrapped up in our ideas, too."

It's a dream of mine to win the World Championship, and I am making my run this year. So this article was well timed!

Ryan Jenkins • Peachtree Club • Atlanta, Georgia

Why Toastmasters?

For more than 10 years I have been a member of our local Toastmasters club. I am 72 years old, and over and over again I have been asked, "Why Toastmasters?" After all, my business years are in the past. However, I simply enjoy Toastmasters.

About a month ago my 44-year-old niece died unexpectedly. I was asked to do the eulogy in front of about 90 people. The audience saw me being led forward with my walker – just a little old lady with physical challenges. Then I opened my mouth

and told the story of my niece. At times people laughed, at other times they cried. At one point, I effectively described a very difficult time in my niece's life. Sometimes just the tone in my voice made a difference.

Afterward my sister told me how amazed everyone was. Many told her how I had looked directly at them while I spoke.

I thank Toastmasters for the training to step forward at a delicate time, take charge of the room and help in the healing process. "Why Toastmasters?" Now I know why.

Lois M. Lockhart, ATMB, CL • Chehalis-Centralia Toastmasters Centralia, Washington

Toastmasters, the Best Experience Ever

Originally from East Germany, immigrating to West Germany before the wall came down, moving to New Zealand about 14 years ago and joining Toastmasters four months ago, my life has changed so much. Thanks, Toastmasters, for helping me create more positive change in my life.

With English as my second language, Toastmasters has given me a greater understanding and confidence to speak in public. I already have three speeches lined up for the next four weeks, with the biggest audience being 250 people, including a cooking demonstration in a large company!

I love reading the *Toastmaster* magazine from cover to cover – it's so interesting and alive. Toastmasters membership should be compulsory in schools to help students from an early age build up their confidence to speak in front of other people.

Steffi Mueller • Excel Toastmasters • Mount Maunganui, New Zealand

**Looking for the 2010 Magazine Article Index?
Past articles, indexed by year,
can be found on
www.toastmasters.org/articleindex.aspx**

Running 100 marathons and giving 100 speeches in 100 days.

Dream Big, Act Big in 2011

What big thing will you accomplish this year? Did you reach out and make your dream a reality? Don't be afraid of dreaming large. As Michelangelo said, "The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low and achieving our mark."

I have aimed high with my own dream. Starting on February 26, I will embark on a cross-country venture that combines two of my greatest passions: running and speaking. It's called the Dream Big, Act Big Inspiration Tour – 100 Marathons, 100 Seminars, 100 Days.

I plan to run 3,100 miles from San Diego, California, to New York City. Each morning I will speak to an audience, encouraging them to follow their dreams and rise above their circumstances. Then each afternoon I will run 30 miles (a little more than one full marathon) to my next stop. I will do this for 100 consecutive days.

Thus, 100 marathons and 100 speeches in 100 days.

Most of the speeches will be charitable talks to people in underserved communities scattered across America. In addition, I'll speak at a number of Toastmasters clubs along the way. (To nominate your own club as a speaking stop, go to www.dreambigactbig.com.)

My running stamina and my Toastmasters training will be huge assets in this epic endeavor. I wanted to launch a project that was bigger and better than any I've done before – and one that would help people.

Because I believe in myself and my dream, I know I'll succeed.

What Will You Do?

If you achieve only one thing this coming year, what is the one big thing that will make your life amazing or make the world a better place? If you could do anything and failure was impossible, what would you do? Start a foundation, complete the Toastmasters *Competent Communication* manual, become a professional speaker or lose 50 pounds?

My purpose in running across America is to prove that anything is possible and to motivate people to realize their own dreams. I have only been running for a couple of years and trained for this in less than a year. If I can do this, what can you do?

The common goal-setting advice is to make a detailed plan to achieve your milestones. How can you know what to put in the plan? You can't. Create the framework and the core goals, and then start taking action. Be flexible, adjust to setbacks, but *always move forward!* This is how I overcame the logistical challenges of the run, speaking tour, sponsorship, media relations and building a support team.

A dream and a plan means nothing if you do not take action. Not just any action – big, massive, bold action. Every free waking moment must be dedicated to your dream. That may be 15 minutes a day or 15 hours. Keep a rewarding balance with your family life and health, but the rest is focused energy toward your dream. Turn off the TV, e-mail and Facebook.

When I began speaking in public, I was a dreadful speaker. Then I took big, bold action: I joined five



Croix Sather

Toastmasters clubs in my first year to learn how to inspire audiences. I spoke at each meeting, earned a Competent Communicator award and became a division governor. I spoke at district conferences and at events in the community. My immersion in Toastmasters is the main reason for my success.

My greatest fear is to be at the end of my life only to see that I could have done more. To realize how my life would have been different if only I had insisted on *great* things instead of settling for what was merely good.

Rise to your potential. Dream big as a Toastmaster and make this the year your dreams come true. 

Croix Sather is a member of the West-Conn Toastmasters club in Danbury, Connecticut, and the author of the book, *Dream Big, Act Big – Become a Superstar in 100 Days*. Reach him at **Croix@DreamBigActBig.com** or visit his Web site, www.dreambigactbig.com, to learn more about his cross-country project.

When success is mere steps away.

Achieving Your Educational Goals

Arthuretta Martin, of the Get Up To Speak (GUTS) Toastmasters club in Annandale, Virginia, earned five Toastmasters educational awards in a single year. Countess Clarke Cooper of the United States Department of Education Federal Student Aid (FSA) Toastmasters club in

know exactly why they're in Toastmasters. "They have a vision and know what they want to get out of their time." For example, Martin's Toastmasters goals fell directly in line with her desire to become a professional speaker. Cooper places a high value on personal growth and development,

says. "Think: How many meetings does my club have in that time frame and how many speeches or roles do I need to fill? If I need to fill more roles than my club has meetings, then perhaps I need to visit another club. Be strategic." Joining multiple clubs can be an effective tactic if you'd like to achieve your goal quickly. Martin joined four clubs so that she could rapidly meet her goals.

Be sure to consider the impact your goal's time commitment will have on those in your life. Cooper alerted her family and childcare providers about her plans and the timeframe, so they could pitch in during her year as area governor. Notifying your VPE and other club members of your goal will help you get scheduled in the appropriate roles.

Tips for Success

With your game plan nearly finished, consider incorporating some ideas from the following experienced Toastmasters. Daniel Pollard, DTM of the United States Department of Education FSA Toastmasters club in Washington, D.C., emphasizes building bonds with other Toastmasters. "Go to a variety of events outside your club, such as area contests and training events, to network," he advises. By meeting other Toastmasters you will learn of opportunities to speak at other

"Achieving a Toastmasters' educational goal is a stepping stone along the way to achieving a larger personal goal."

Arlington, Virginia, worked toward her Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM), the highest achievement in Toastmasters, while juggling being a single parent, working multiple jobs and serving as an area governor. As you set your sights on your own educational goal for the current Toastmasters year, consider the advice of these, and other, successful Toastmasters.

Pick a Goal in Line with Your Priorities

People who tie their educational goal to their personal or professional priorities have greater motivation to complete their goal, especially when things get tough. Martin, who serves as Vice President Education (VPE) for her club, notes that those who achieve their educational goals

which the Toastmasters program assists her in achieving.

Consider: What are your top priorities in life? Which Toastmasters goal is most in line with your priorities? Depending on your situation, you may be more interested in the communication track, the leadership track, becoming a Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) or serving as a club officer.

Create a Game Plan

Once you decide which Toastmasters goal holds the most meaning for you, it's time to create a game plan that is tailored to your life. Cooper says that although Toastmasters lays out an overall structure for achieving goals, it helps to make the curriculum personal. "Put dates by your goal; then work backward," she



clubs, identify people who can serve as advisors and benefit from learning about their experiences.

Pollard further notes that "People seem to help each other in Toastmasters. The key is to let people know when you need help. If you don't tell people when you need help they'll have no way of knowing." Reach out to others if you are getting stuck or need assistance.

James Scarborough, DTM, of the Foggy Bottom Toastmasters club in Washington, D.C., counsels, "Always be working on something and get credit for it." For example, when serving as an area governor, there are many opportunities to speak. Get credit for those speeches. Finally, one of the more difficult requirements is the High Performance Leadership Program – which you can start earlier than one might expect. While this program falls under requirements for the Advanced Leader Silver award, you can begin it at any time. Pollard directs, "Get a head start by looking at this program early."

Achieving Your Goal

It happens to Toastmasters every day and it can happen to you. Your personal or professional life can leap from

mere dreams to amazing reality with the benefit of Toastmasters training. Achieving a Toastmasters educational goal is a stepping stone along the way to achieving a larger personal goal. And with each step you take closer to that new reality, you'll find even more reasons to pursue those goals.

You may be looking to advance your career through improved public speaking or leadership skills, increase your network and sense of community, or pursue personal growth through the Toastmasters program. These are all terrific benefits of succeeding with each goal.

What's more, you'll develop the confidence and skills to pursue your *ultimate* goal. If you don't already have an ultimate goal, now may be the time to consider it: *Where are you planning to take the experience and knowledge you gained in Toastmasters? Which of your educational goals was your favorite? What did you enjoy achieving the most?* Answer these to help you integrate your Toastmasters education into your personal or professional life. Then get ready to meet your dreams! □

Alison Horner assists college students and young professionals with

designing their life's direction. She is proud to have completed her CC in August. Her Web site is www.alisonelissa.com. She can be reached at coach@alisonelissa.com.



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Creating Your **BUCKET LIST**

How to set amazing
goals and achieve
your dreams.

By Craig Harrison, DTM

Kick the Bucket: To die, pass away (English slang).

Bucket List: A list of aspirations one wishes to achieve in one's lifetime before dying.

The Toastmasters Bucket List: A list of personal or professional goals within Toastmasters or resulting from involvement with Toastmasters clubs, contests or curriculum.

Tell a joke in Mandarin...Run for political office...

In *The Bucket List* (Warner Bros., 2008), a movie starring Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman, two men facing terminal illness realize they have limited time to achieve their goals. They construct a list of places to visit and experiences to enjoy; then they set about achieving them.

But why wait until you're old or ill to pursue aspirations you yearn to achieve? Now is the time to make your list, announce your intentions to others and work to achieve your dreams. Your Toastmasters club and worldwide network are poised to assist you in pursuit of all the goals on your Bucket List.

Your Toastmasters Bucket List

Earning educational awards all the way to your DTM is fantastic. You can set other goals for yourself as well. As Past International President Helen Blanchard puts it, "If you get out of Toastmasters all there is to get out of Toastmasters, you'll never get out of Toastmasters." My question is: What else, in this lifetime, would you like to achieve as a Toastmaster?

Consider 53-year-old Buddy Burke, CL, of Sunrise Toastmasters in Walnut Creek, California, who ran for Congress in California's 10th District in 2010.

"It was something I always wanted to do. The only question was when." The catalyst: Toastmasters! "I felt like I was five steps ahead due to my Toastmasters experience," said Burke, who entered the race with just two months to go. "I hit the ground running, using my communication and leadership skills gleaned in Toastmasters. Table Topics really helped me with the question-and-answer sessions in my campaigning." Buddy's second club, Tales and Tellers in Danville, California, helps him hone his storytelling skills to connect with voters on a heart level. Though he lost in the primary, he identified 32 lessons he learned from the experience, and plans to run again.

Your Bucket List — Inspired by Toastmasters

Many famous people – politicians, actors and business tycoons – have used Toastmasters to propel them to greatness. You can, too. Your Bucket List may be filled



with goals and dreams inspired by Toastmasters, or made possible by the skills, confidence, experiences and relationships forged through your Toastmasters experience.

For inspiration, have you thought about what you like? From there, it's easy to formulate goals:

You: I like to speak and I love to travel.

Goal: Speak to clubs in all 50 United States, or in every province in Canada or China, or to clubs on every continent.

You: I like to compete in speech contests.

Goal: Win the World Championship of Public Speaking.

You: I like to share what I've learned and help others find success in life.

Goal: Start a Youth Leadership Program at a local high school.

You can also choose goals based on the tools you've developed in Toastmasters.

You: I can share the gift of improved communication and leadership skills.

Goal: Start a club at your favorite nonprofit or other organization dedicated to improving life in your community.

You: I've learned a lot about leadership, communication and conflict resolution.

Goal: Run for political office on the local or national level – or for a seat on Toastmasters' International Board of Directors.

The key is that you go for your goal – building on what you have learned so far – and that it be meaningful, powerful and transformative. "If you have a dream, go for it." So says Marshall Goldsmith, best-selling author, management guru and executive coach. "If you don't try to achieve your dreams when you are 25, you probably won't when you are 45, 65 or 85. None of us will achieve all of our dreams."

Goldsmith, the author of *Mojo* and *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*, helps top executives make lasting changes to increase their effectiveness. He advises: "The key question is not, 'Did I achieve all of my dreams?' The key question is, 'Did I at least try?' Old people almost never regretted the risks they took that failed. They almost always regretted the risks that they failed to take."

In that spirit, I'm taking 2011 to fulfill some of my lifelong Bucket List goals. Among the dreams I plan to work toward are:

- **To tell a tasteful joke in Mandarin**, from memory, at the Shanghai Humor Bilingual Toastmasters in Shanghai, China. (First step: learn Mandarin.)
- **To be a featured storyteller** at the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tennessee. (I accomplished one step by participating in an open mic storytelling event at the festival in 2005.)

Now It's Your Turn: Ready, Set Goal!

It may not be easy for you to decide on goals for your list. Don't be afraid to reach for the ambitions of a lifetime. The good news: Ideas put to paper take on a power of their own. Whether you meditate on it alone or hold a brainstorming session with others, you can formulate a spectacular Bucket List. The following questions can help:

Where else do I want to go?

What else do I want to achieve?

Who do I want to become?

Use the answers to build your list. Your goals can be an exciting blend of people to meet; places to visit or live; and companies to work for, do business with or emulate when starting your own enterprise. Are there significant events you want to attend? Would you like to run with the bulls in Pamplona? Create your own reality TV show? Play at Carnegie Hall? Experience the Summer Solstice at Stonehenge in England? How about the Cherry Blossom Festivals in Japan in April? The ideas end where your imagination stops.

Your List Should Be Under Constant Construction

Author, entrepreneur and former Toastmaster Harvey Mackay told me his friend, American Hall of Fame football coach Lou Holtz, once made a list of 108 goals he had for his life. Among his goals: Win a national championship in college football, meet the Pope and parachute out of an airplane. Each time he achieved one of his goals he checked it off his list ... and replaced it with a new goal!



Ask yourself, "What's new that I want to achieve?" Remember to continue to be bold. In fact, as you check off ambitious goals, you should gain the courage to add even more amazing dreams. Allow the items on your list to stretch you as a human being.

When you've created your initial list and you're ready with plans for more goals, the next step is to start making them happen.

Achieving Your Bucket List Goals

Remember these guidelines to help you work through your list:

- **Set it in cement.** Whether you handwrite or type your list, number each goal and commit it to paper. (Keeping it "in your head" will hold you back.)
- **Love the adventure.** Don't just write your ambitions down; post them so you can see them regularly. Whether goals are framed on your office wall, displayed on your computer screen or read aloud before you go to sleep each night and then upon waking – be "in a relationship" with your Bucket List goals.
- **Share the list** through speeches, conversations with others, your writings, journaling, blogging, tweeting and more.
- **Ask yourself: Can the High Performance Leadership program help?** Many Toastmasters find it facilitates achieving all or part of their goals.
- **Find resources.** Remember, the Toastmasters online store has resources to help you achieve your goals.
- **Generate fans.** Use social media to share your Bucket List with your network and garner support from around the world. Communicate with them regularly about your successes and setbacks. There is great power in numbers.
- **Review your progress weekly.** As you work toward a particular goal, turn it into a mantra. You can even record affirmations related to your goals to listen to while exercising or meditating, or before falling asleep.
- **Ask yourself: Who can help?** Build your dream team of local supporters. Don't forget your Toastmasters



network: your club, your district, Toastmasters' LinkedIn and Facebook communities and other groups around the globe.

- **Visualize each goal completed.** What does it feel like, sound like and look like?
- **Identify logical steps along the way.** By breaking down your fantastic goals into smaller steps or phases, you can tackle even the most complex or difficult goal and make it reachable.
- **Hold your vision at all times.** On sunny days and rainy days.
- **Celebrate!** Rejoice in each step achieved along the way (privately and with your team).
- **Keep the faith.** Understand that some items will occur almost effortlessly while others will appear to be unattainable. Achieving one may open new and unexpected doors to others. You can't always predict, nor dictate, the order in which your goals will be realized. But work toward them every day, week and month.

A Happy Ending

"When thinking about a goal, ask yourself, 'How do I want this story to end?' Then choose to live in the story that will have this happy ending." So advises Marcia Reynolds, author of *Wander Woman: How High-Achieving Women Find Contentment and Direction*. Reynolds reminds us all that we have little to lose by pursuing our Bucket List. "Most of the time people react to a fear that is unclear," she says. "Once they articulate the possible consequences, they see that the risk is not that big. In fact, the possible gain of freedom, pride and joy is much greater than the possibility of loss."

With this in mind, you can build a lot of happy endings before the end of your life. 

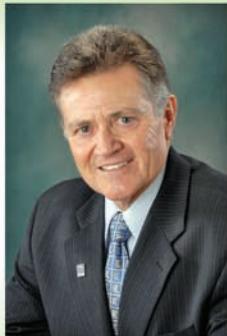
Craig Harrison, DTM, of Berkeley, California, is a past district governor, a professional speaker, author and founder of Expressions of Excellence. Contact him via www.expressionsofexcellence.com/toastmasters/.

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By Patricia Robinson

How to stay on track to reach your dreams.

Find Your FOCUS

Most of us have a hard time staying focused on our long-term goals. We are confronted with distractions, situations and inconveniences. So how can we manage the unmanageable?

What I discovered when I joined Toastmasters is that in order to achieve success at any given task, you first have to focus. Whether it's completing your *Competent Communication* manual or evaluating a speech, you must pay close attention to detail and remember your goal. Past International President Chris Ford, talking about setting and achieving Toastmasters goals, once wrote, "Distraction is the enemy of success, so don't allow other fascinating but less productive things to divert you from your mission."

Remember to FOCUS

"Focus" is such a small word but it has a powerful impact. The key is to never lose sight of your purpose and always return to your plan.

Follow your plan. When you find yourself getting off track, go back to your written plan. I've learned that visual aids can really help keep you on track; they remind you of your ultimate goal, and why you need to finish. That old cliché, "Out of sight, out of mind," is often true! Keep your plans in clear view as a constant

reminder of where you want to be. I have a picture of my dream car on my refrigerator at home and on my desk at work. I've mapped out how I plan to pay for my new vehicle and when I can make it happen.

Organize your day but leave time for situations and circumstances that inevitably arise. You may not be able to control every occurrence, but at least you can control how you handle them. Staying organized makes you a better manager of your time and gives you power to reach for your dreams. Try establishing a goal for each hour of your day. Then, create a clear map detailing how that goal relates back to your original plan. In an eight-hour day, that's eight steps toward accomplishing your dream. Don't have a free eight-hour day? Remember, not all strides need to be huge leaps. What can you accomplish in part of that time? Send an e-mail? Call a contact? Small steps can take you great distances.

Condition yourself to go the distance. Make sure that you don't burn yourself out doing too much of

nothing while never achieving something. When you are physically fit and mentally sound, it makes reaching your goals that much easier. Your journey should exhilarate you, not exhaust you to the point that you're too tired to compete. Opportunity sometimes only knocks once, so make sure you're always alert, fit and ready for the challenges ahead.

Underplay underestimation. When you underestimate your potential, you set yourself up to fail. Don't allow others to make you doubt your abilities. Now is the time for you to stretch – you will be amazed at the results.

I remember the first time I had to think on my feet during a Toastmasters meeting. I was out of my comfort zone, but I got through it, and I found myself eagerly volunteering for more off-the-cuff responses. Fear tends to be our first reaction to new situations. But to overcome the fear of inadequacy you have to take that leap – you have to try something so that you can amaze yourself with unexpected abilities.

Strategize. Sometimes you may have to go back to the drawing board and revise your plan. Strategizing your next move in almost any situation in life is critical. It's important to understand that making



hasty moves can be hazardous to your career, friendships, goals and sometimes even your health. So rewrite your plan when necessary, and always be flexible enough to change direction. Thinking ahead of the game is critical. For example, it helps to know your audience, so if you tell a poorly received joke during a speech, you can come back with another joke that is sure to make them laugh.

John C. Maxwell, the well-known author and expert on leadership, says that if you are talented but unfocused, it's difficult to succeed, because you're moving in a thousand different directions. Your path isn't purposeful – it's chaotic.

"Focus can bring tremendous power," Maxwell writes in *Talent is Never Enough Workbook*. "Without it, you will often feel drained and unable to accomplish much. With it you will find that your talents and abilities gain direction and intentionality. And those qualities pay off by producing results." ■

Patricia Robinson is a Pennsylvania-based inspirational speaker, author and personal development coach. Reach her at **PatriciaRobinson@pa.net**.

On Your Mark, Get Set... Go!

Race to your 2011 dreams.

The New Year has arrived, and it's full of possibilities. Amazing achievements can come true for you. But how do you begin to pursue a big goal? And once you've started, how do you continue to put one foot in front of the other? Here are three simple and fun steps to staying motivated throughout the year:

On Your Mark

Dream big. Set ambitious goals. Helen Keller said, "Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see a shadow." You can become an area governor, region advisor or even a member of the Toastmasters Board of Directors. If you reach only part of your goal, you've still moved forward. What's your big dream?

Get Set

Give your attitude some latitude. Announce your goal to everyone. Talk about your dream in a strong voice, and you'll give each word the power to become real. Ask for support from your friends; they can help carry you to the finish line.

Go!

One step at a time. Let smaller accomplishments propel you toward your big dream. Give that 10th speech. Set up an Open House meeting for your club. Run a Speechcraft program. Of course, no one ever won a race simply by thinking about it, but every person with a success story found the motivation to get there. Are you ready to step up and be the Toastmaster you're meant to be?

Helping new members brings unexpected rewards.

By Bob Armstrong, DTM

The Joy of Mentoring

"My mentor helped me so much."

"It was great to go through my speech with my mentor."

I have often heard statements like these in my Toastmasters club. When you are new to our organization, it's great to have a guide. The benefits can be immeasurable: A good mentor can help a new member organize a speech, fulfill objectives for a project and assist in reducing distracting mannerisms, such as verbal crutches and ineffective body language.

However, as someone who has been a Toastmaster since 1987 and has coached many members, I can assure you that there are benefits to being a mentor as well. Let's look at the advantages of performing this important and rewarding role.

Racking up Rewards

First of all, when you are assigned a mentee who is serious about improving, it is satisfying to watch this person progress. An enthusiastic Toastmaster who is eager to learn is a mentor's dream. On some occasions in my club, I think I have been more excited than the speaker when listening to a presentation where I helped the speaker improve.

For example, I recall two instances in which I listened to someone's Ice Breaker in a practice session and was able to offer

valuable tips. Factually and logically the speeches were great, but they lacked a grabber – something to pull the audience in at the start. In each speech, the perfect opening was hidden – a rhetorical question in one and a humorous personal statement in the other. I made a note of this and commented at the end of each: "You know that statement about XYZ? That's your opening." We rearranged the speeches accordingly. I couldn't wait to hear these speeches at the club meeting to see how the new openings worked.

On another occasion, I was helping a young lady with a project. In her speech, she had a fairly long personal story that was amusing and also made a point. She was reading it from notes. After I had heard the entire speech, I said: "That's a personal story. I know you've told that story many times. If you were out with a group of friends and you were relating that story, would you need notes?" The obvious answer was no. I told her to throw the notes away and imagine telling the story in a more casual setting. She did and it worked wonderfully. It was rewarding to see the results of my coaching efforts at the Toastmasters meeting.

A particular joy in being a mentor is that we can enhance people's self-confidence by pointing out strengths they didn't realize they had. This can be a confidence-booster for both the mentor and the mentee with a wonderful principle of reciprocity at play here: By boosting another's self-esteem, we boost our own.

Yet another advantage of mentoring is that it allows me to reminisce about my own Toastmasters experience. When I am helping someone with a body language project from the basic manual, for example, I think back to when I did this project. I sometimes dig out my old manual. I reflect on my speech topic and the person that evaluated me. I also remember what I did well and the areas where I could have improved. This causes me to give better direction to the person I'm working with.

The process of mentoring has also made me a better evaluator. I am known in my club as the person who tells it like it is, and I often get requests from members to evaluate them. When you are an experienced mentor, you look at speeches differently, always seeking ways to enhance a person's strengths. I do this when I am observing world leaders and politicians, too. In addition, I know my performance in Toastmasters' annual Evaluation Speech Contest has improved as a result of being a mentor.



Reaping Dividends

Being a mentor has improved my life in numerous unexpected ways. Here are a few:

■ **I learn new things.** Sometimes I think I learn more than the member I am helping. On occasion a mentee will ask me a question for which I have to look up the answer. I will consult course notes or books from years ago. Occasionally I treat myself to a new book on public speaking as a result. This keeps me knowledgeable and current on the topic.

■ **I laugh more.** Since my speaking style tends to be on the humorous side, I am often asked to add humor to a presentation. This keeps me thinking along these lines and helps me to be more creative.

■ **It's music to my ears.** I recently began helping two friends with the guitar, one of whom is a Toastmaster. Because they have asked me questions about chord structure and picking techniques, I have been reviewing old theory books that hadn't been

cracked open in years. In order to share this information, I'm relearning it all. As my dad, a musician, used to say, "There's nothing more educational than teaching."

■ **It might be a business.** Many Toastmasters, myself included, have become professional speech coaches or seminar leaders on the topic

from 16 years ago is still a good friend. He has moved to another city, but we still keep in touch and visit each other from time to time.

■ **Networking!** Mentoring has put me on the map. One of the women I mentored recommended my business to her supervisor. This company is now one of my clients.

"Many times I have received a huge hug and heard the words, 'You changed my life.' The warmth just spread through me."

- Toastmaster Judy Suke, DTM

of effective presentations. This has resulted in travel and financial gain. I also write humorous speeches for clients or add humor to their existing presentations.

■ **I have a great social life.** I have been invited to people's homes on many occasions as a result of helping them with a speech. Long-lasting friendships can occur. One of my mentees

Enjoying the Process

A good friend, also a longtime Toastmaster, and I have developed what we call a "consenting mentoring relationship." When either one of us is preparing any kind of a presentation, we get together and do the mentor/mentee roles. This is over and above club assignments.

(Continued on page 23)

The Joy of Mentoring

(Continued from page 15)

Because we know each other really well, we are allowed to be completely honest. This has helped both of us immensely; we park our egos at the door and put the goal of a good presentation first.

Other longtime Toastmasters have had similar mentoring experiences. Judy Suke, DTM, of First Waterdown Toastmasters in Waterdown, Ontario, Canada, finds that she benefits as much as the mentee, if not more, from the process: "Many times I have received a huge hug and heard the words, 'You changed my life.' The warmth just spread through me." Don Rode, ATMS, CL, of Garden City Toastmasters in St. Catharines, Ontario, says, "I am always pleased and very proud when the student

surpasses the teacher! One of the ladies I mentored went on to leadership roles and contest wins within our area. Now, as a professional speaker, she is encouraging me to go where she has gone. I will be very happy to now learn from her."

I offer just one caveat: Unless you are an experienced public speaker when you join Toastmasters, do not start mentoring too soon. I recommend that you complete at least the *Competent Communication* manual or give several evaluations before serving as mentor. Jumping in and trying to mentor someone before you are ready can leave the mentee with a bad feeling about the process. A

good way to avoid this situation is to have an experienced Toastmaster in your club assign experienced mentors to new Toastmasters.

Mentoring – like forgiveness – is often a selfish act. It can benefit the giver more than the receiver. I urge you to get involved in this rewarding and enjoyable experience. Happy mentoring! ■

Bob Armstrong, DTM, is a member of Garden City Toastmasters in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada. He is a professional speaker, entertainer and entertainment agent. More information is at www.mergetel.com/entertain.

For more information, read "Mentor a Member" on the Toastmasters Web site. (The link is www.toastmasters.org/mentoramember.) Consider giving the *Successful Club Series* presentation about mentoring to your club. That program (Item 296) can be purchased on Toastmasters' online store.

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Humor Boosters

How to get bigger laughs.

By Gene Perret

*S*omeone once asked legendary comic George Burns what the difference was between a humorist and a comedian. With his usual wit and wisdom Burns replied, "If I get big laughs, I'm a comedian. If I get small laughs, I'm a humorist." After a slight pause he added, "If I get no laughs, I'm a singer."

The pros know there are not only degrees of funniness, but there are also tricks that can enhance the effectiveness of a comedy line. As a speaker who uses humor to support your presentations, you can often settle for those “little laughs” that George Burns spoke of. You can be content to be a “humorist.” However, when you do use a touch of comedy, why not go for the “big laughs”? Here are a few tricks that the pros use to enhance their humor:

1 Truth. At a roast I attended, the guest of honor sat at a table with several of his children. Afraid that they might not understand the friendly nature of the harmless insult humor we used at these events, the emcee said to them, “Please don’t be offended by anything we say about your dad tonight. We’re just kidding and it’s all done with love. Besides, many of the nice things we’ll say about your dad tonight aren’t true either.”

That line not only served a useful purpose, but it got a generous laugh from the family and the audience – because it had that element of truth to it.

2 Relax Tension. I once emceed a banquet and each time I approached the microphone, it whistled loudly. I had to back off several times, because the shrill noise was almost unbearable for the audience. Finally, someone who worked at the club adjusted the controls backstage and resolved the problem. Now I could safely approach the microphone. My first comment was, “Sometimes when they hold these banquets too early, I don’t always get time to run home from work and shower.”

The line got a huge response. Not so much because it was a clever line, but because it relaxed the tension. It put the audience at ease. In their minds – and in mine – the problem was adjusted and dismissed. We could now go on with the show.

This device works so well that comics often create their own tension. I once saw a comedian who played guitar and sang a few songs as part of his act. In the middle of one of his songs, he began choking. He called offstage for a glass of water. It didn’t come immediately. He continued to cough and said, “I swallowed a bug and it’s stuck in my throat. Can I get a glass of water?” Still no one brought water. Finally, he said, “Oh never mind, I’ll just let him walk down.”

The audience was at first concerned for him. Then they realized they’d been put on, the anxiety was relieved and they laughed at his practical joke.

3 Shock. Audiences respond when they’re shocked. Blue humor – which I never recommend – is basically shock humor. However, there are other valid uses for shock humor. Even dignified comics get laughs when they kid well-known people. That’s a form of shock comedy, too. Those of us in the audience are aghast that anyone would say such a thing to a famous person. As long as this is not done with malice, insults can be a valuable tool for the humorist. But it’s a fine line: Be sure to add boldness without being offensive.

4 Attack Authority. The higher up the totem pole you aim your humor, the bigger the resulting laughs will be. The *hoi polloi* love gentle comedy aimed at the upper echelon.

I once watched a humorist tease the CEO of a company about his terrible golf game. He said,

“It is a fine line: Be sure to add boldness without being offensive.”

“He never uses a golf cart when he plays. Where he hits the ball, it’s cheaper to take public transportation.” He added, “And he cheats, too. After dinner he had a cup of coffee. He took three lumps of sugar, but he wrote down two.”

The more he kidded the boss, the more the listeners enjoyed it. Finally, he explained, “I only joke about people I really respect. I would only kid a person I knew was big enough to take it. Your boss is, of course, and it helps if he’s also a terrible golfer.”

That was the final barb in a well-received routine.

Aim some of your material – gently – at those who are in a position of authority.

5 Involve the Audience. The crowd loves it when you make them part of your presentation. A comic I worked for used to get laughs with a standard line in almost any city he worked in. For example, in Philadelphia he would say, “It’s nice to be in Philadelphia, gateway to Conshohocken.” It always got a big laugh. Basically, it’s not that humorous a line, but the audience reacted because they were

mostly Philadelphians and just the mention of “Conshohocken” drew a response. In other cities, this comic would use the same line and simply substitute another funny-sounding suburb.

People enjoy being “insiders” on the gag. It’s as if they’re saying, “Conshohocken! Yeah, we know that place.” Then they laugh. If you can take a standard gag or comedy line and add some element that the folks in the audience will recognize and associate with, you’ll get bigger laughs than the line deserves.

Suppose you have an anecdote that begins, “Two guys were sitting at the bar.” That story will become funnier if you instead mention two gentlemen who are well-known by the audience you’re addressing. Just beginning a joke with the names of two people who the listeners recognize gets a laugh.

If possible, bring the audience into your routine. One comic I worked for had good results with this routine:

“I was just reading the other day that one out of every four people in this country is mentally unbalanced. One out of every four! Now here’s what I want you to do – think of three of your best friends ...”

At this point the laughter begins because folks in the audience look around the table and laugh at one another.

“Do they seem all right to you?”

This gets a much bigger laugh because they’re now laughing at each other.

The comic goes on.

“Because if they do... then you’re the one.”

This short routine always worked well because the people were not only listening to the gag, they were part of it.

Six Ways to Pack a Killer Punch

By Jan McInnis

You’ve interviewed the client for the purpose of delivering a humorous speech to his group. You are ready to kick off your presentation with some hilarious jokes. In fact, you’ve already pulled together a couple of witty set-up lines. Now all you need to do is fill in the punch lines and, boom, your jokes will rock!

“Comedy is all about extremes – somebody isn’t 100 pounds, they’re one thousand pounds; they aren’t 120 years old, they’re 246 years old.”

But how do you drum up a punch line out of the blue? As a comedian and professional speaker, I launch almost all my humorous keynotes with comedy aimed at the group I’m speaking to (such as corporations or nonprofit organizations). Let me share a few techniques for creating targeted punch lines:

1 Make it a problem. Look at your set-up line as if it’s a problem you need to solve, and then make your punch line an extreme solution to that problem. Comedy is all about extremes – somebody isn’t 100 pounds, they’re one thousand pounds; they aren’t 120 years old,

they’re 246 years old. You don’t even have to word the set-up line as a problem, just envision it that way, and then come up with ways to solve it. In one of my hospital jokes, I mention that “new hospitals are now being built so that each patient’s window faces a garden, because some designers believe that this helps the patient get well faster.” Then I drum up a whacky solution: “Hey, if you want the patient to get well faster, why don’t you have his window face a cemetery?” Okay, maybe a little too extreme, but funny.

2 Be naïve. Most industries have their own language and procedures that those of us “outsiders” are totally unfamiliar with. Use this to your advantage by taking some of their words or standard practices and make up comments about what you think they’re talking about. I was able to use this recently at a pediatric nursing conference when I found out they use Botox on kids.

I’m sure it’s not to make them look younger, the way Botox is used for adults, but I had some fun with that angle anyway. I feigned naïveté, asking, “What’s it for? So a 5-year-old can look like he’s 3?” And then went from that premise to several more jokes. Even if you are familiar with the subject, try to put yourself in the shoes of someone who’s not familiar with it, and think about what that person might think.

3 Confuse it. Along with being naïve, you can also take something you’ve never heard of and confuse it with

6 **Just Be Funny.** This simple statement deserves to be in the list of humor boosters to make the point that if you have a line, a quote, an anecdote or a story that is flat-out funny, use it. It doesn't have to be categorized, explained or excused in any way. If it gets a big laugh and doesn't offend anyone, it's worth being a part of your presentation.

Remember, audiences love to laugh and they especially love the speakers who bring out their biggest laughs. **T**

Gene Perret is a three-time Emmy winner who has written for Carol Burnett and Phyllis Diller, and was the head writer for Bob Hope. His latest book, *Tales from the Script*, is a memoir about his career in TV comedy. To learn more, visit www.writingcomedy.com.

Line

► Connie Merritt makes a humorous point during her presentation at the 2010 Toastmasters International Convention.

something that you are familiar with. For example, I did a show in which the group did "speed networking." I can guess what that is, but I had more fun spending the whole networking time asking dating questions, pretending that's what I thought you were supposed to do. "Oh, it was speed *networking*? I thought it was speed dating. I think I owe some of you guys an apology."

4 Sound it out. Sometimes the subject of your joke sounds like something else. When you learn the name of a company or product, give some thought to what it sounds like or reminds you of, or even rhymes with. I recently did a show for a group who made security software for computers, and its company name was extremely odd – basically just a mix of letters in the alphabet. So I pointed out that while the company may make security software, its name sounded like a computer virus. It got a good laugh and an "ah-ha" moment for the owners!

5 First impressions. What is your first impression of a product the company sells or an activity at its event? What do you think someone else's first impression might be? Take a step back from your writing and really look at the subject. One group I spoke to told me that its conference registration gift would be grooming kits with tweezers, nail clippers and the like. By looking at what my (or anyone's) first impression would be when they received that out of the blue, I came up with a great opening line: "Before I get



started, I just want to be sure I'm not the only one who showed up at registration and was given a grooming kit!"

6 Look for the obvious. There's a fine line between doing a joke about the audience that they've probably heard before, and doing one that's obvious but may not have been done. Telling lawyer jokes to a bunch of lawyers is not a good idea, but sometimes you can take a chance if you think they may not have picked up on something obvious. I successfully did this when I spoke to a company that makes boxes and found out the company owner's name was Jack. Get it?

After talking with several employees, I realized that no one ever mentioned that connection. I kept wondering, "Why not – do they not see this?" Usually clients will point out the obvious jokes, but no one did. So I tossed in the Jack-in-the-box [toy] observation and got a huge laugh. As a saver, I made sure that I had a quick follow-up joke in case people groaned about it!

So next time you're working on some killer, customized comedy for a group, run your subjects through these scenarios to make your humor a hit! **T**

Jan McInnis is a comedian, professional speaker and comedy writer based in Southern California. She's the author of *Finding the Funny Fast: How to Create Quick Humor to Connect with Clients, Coworkers and Crowds*. Jan can be reached at www.ComedyWriterBlog.com.

These members took control of their speech and their lives.

From Stuttering to Public Speaking

Back in 1988, when a memo landed on Russ Hicks' desk at Texas Instruments regarding the formation of a Toastmasters club, he didn't think membership was a viable option for someone like him. But before he disregarded the invitation, he recalled hearing someone speak about facing your worst fears.

"I marched to the co-worker's desk and said, 'This is the craziest thing I've done in my life, but do you still need members?'" recalls Hicks. "He told me yes, and if my check was good, I was a member."

For Hicks, approaching his co-worker and joining Toastmasters 22 years ago was not easy. Hicks has stuttered all his life, and like many stutter-

ers estimates that 1 percent of the world's population stutter, and four times as many males as females struggle with the disorder. According to recent neurophysiological research, several factors contribute to stuttering: family history (genetics), developmental delays in childhood, family dynamics such as high expectations, and processing speech and language in abnormal areas of the brain.

The Stuttering Foundation helps people with this communication problem, offering its assistance to people in 127 countries by directing them to support agencies and therapists.

Jane Fraser, president of the foundation, frequently hears from stutterers about the benefits of Toastmasters.

"When you talk to a stutterer, listen to what we're saying, not how we're saying it."

- Russ Hicks, DTM

ers, he once considered public speaking impossible. Today, however, he regularly gives speeches and presents workshops at national conferences, speaking on the topic of stuttering.

"My advice to anyone who stutters is to face your fears and try Toastmasters," he says. "It will change your life."

Stuttering, also called stammering, is a communication disorder in which the flow of speech is broken by repetitions (such as th-th-h-i-is), prolongations (lllllike this) or silent periods where no sound is uttered. The Stuttering Foundation of America

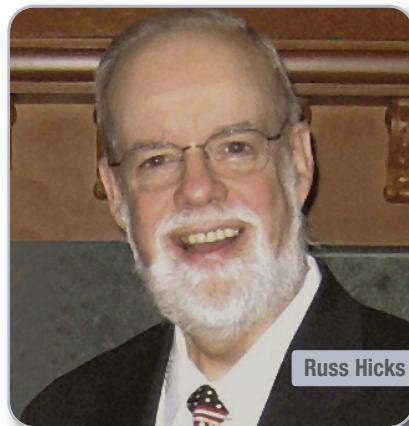
"Many people have told us how helpful the organization has been for them," she says. "Not only do they gain valuable public speaking experience in a friendly and encouraging atmosphere, they are relieved to discover that most 'normal' speakers are also terrified to speak in public."

Here are the stories of a few stutterers and how Toastmasters membership has helped them gain fluency and self-confidence:

Russ Hicks, DTM

When Russ Hicks swallowed his fear and joined a Toastmasters club at

Texas Instruments, a Dallas, Texas, technology company where he worked as a computer consultant, he found the experience exhilarating. "I discovered that if you face your fears, you find that your fears aren't



Russ Hicks

as real as you think they are," he says. "It's one of the most empowering feelings in the world to do something that you or other people think you can't possibly do. Pushing yourself to do something you're afraid of is really good for you."

Hicks benefited from Toastmasters membership immediately. "I learned very quickly that Toastmasters is all about communication, not fluency, and that it's fun," he says. Encouraged by members who found his speeches interesting and inspiring, Hicks discovered that he was actually good at public speaking and learned to enjoy it.

Now a member of two Texas clubs – the 2 Change U Toastmasters in Plano and the Roving '49ers club in Richardson – Hicks often uses

speaking opportunities to educate people about stuttering. "I think it's important for fluent individuals to hear people who stutter speak – and to understand how best to communicate with us," he says. "When you talk to a stutterer, listen to *what* we're saying, not *how* we're saying it. Keep normal eye contact, even if a stutterer looks away, and don't finish sentences for us, because you can't be sure of what we're going to say."

Anna Margolina

When Anna Margolina immigrated to the United States in 2001, she had already undergone many years of speech therapy for stuttering in her native Russia. Within a matter of months, however, she found it difficult to speak without heavy



Anna Margolina

blocking. "My self-confidence and fluency plummeted as I became painfully aware that I spoke with a strong, hard-to-understand Russian accent," she says. For several years she lived with the ever-present shadow of stuttering looming over her until she started speech therapy in 2009 and stumbled on the book *Redefining Stuttering* by John Harrison. "In his book he recommended Toastmasters, so I decided to give it a try," she says.

At her first meeting, Margolina won best Table Topics when she answered the question, "Why Toastmasters?"

"I told the club about my goal to overcome stuttering, and they were impressed with my courage," says Margolina, a member of the Redmond 2828 club in Redmond, Washington. "Stutterers tend to be ashamed about their stuttering and afraid to talk about it, but that is not a good idea, because people do notice it, and if you haven't acknowledged your stuttering, they don't know how to react," she says. "Toastmasters helps take the focus off stuttering. You relax and gain more control over your speaking and realize that people are there to listen to your message."

Margolina says her stuttering is very mild these days and doesn't limit her social interaction in any way. Feeling much more confident and relaxed, she says she can finally enjoy speaking and sharing her experiences.

Wade Miner, DTM

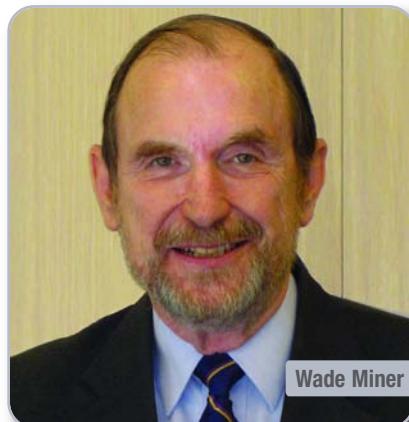
When Wade Miner was in the fourth grade, his parents took him to a speech clinic where they recorded him speaking. "Until I heard that recording, I hadn't realized how severely I stuttered," says Miner, who went on to have a particularly difficult time in high school. "I felt so shut out of things that teens do, such as calling girls on the phone," he says.

In 1973, after graduating from college, Miner joined Toastmasters and very quickly saw positive results. Seven months later, he presented a paper at a convention in Boston. "The previous year I had presented at the same convention and stuttered fairly badly, but that second year it went a lot better," he recalls.

Today, the longtime engineer has a fluency that he never imagined years ago. "Before I joined Toastmasters, I could not have held a conversation with someone on the phone, and I certainly couldn't have

given an effective speech. Now I make phone calls and give speeches with no particular problem."

Miner, a member of the Spear and Gear and At the Helm clubs at Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding in



Wade Miner

Newport News, Virginia, thinks that Toastmasters' secret to success is the atmosphere. "The organization provides an encouraging and supportive environment that accepts everyone, and this gives the stutterer the opportunity to build brick by brick, small success upon small success. If you take enough of those small successes, just as if you take enough bricks, you can build a wall and then an entire building."

Greg Danko, DTM

There was a time when Greg Danko sat in the corner at social gatherings and avoided speaking. A severe speech impediment caused him to stutter with every third word, and he spent 30 years in speech therapy trying to overcome the disability. When a business associate told him about Toastmasters in 1999, he was skeptical but attended a meeting.

"What struck me at first was that club members had a lot more patience with my stuttering than my family and friends," he recalls. "I participated in Table Topics and stuttered profusely, but they waited



until I finished. After the meeting, one of the charter members advised me to exhale, because he noticed I held my breath."

That first meeting was just one of numerous occasions when Danko received assistance from Toastmasters. "Joining had life-altering consequences for me," says Danko, a member of two

enjoyed even more satisfaction at his 25th high school reunion. "In high school, I didn't date or participate in many activities because of my stuttering," he says. "So when I spoke with fluency at the reunion, everyone's jaws dropped to the floor."

Paul Noor

Listen to Paul Noor speak today and you'd never guess that he once suffered from stuttering so severe that he considered learning sign language. Born in a village north of Iran and south of Russia, Noor spent his early years on a small farm, during which time he developed stuttering. "My parents were very concerned about my speech difficulty, but they had no idea what to do because there was no help available in the village or surrounding areas," he says.

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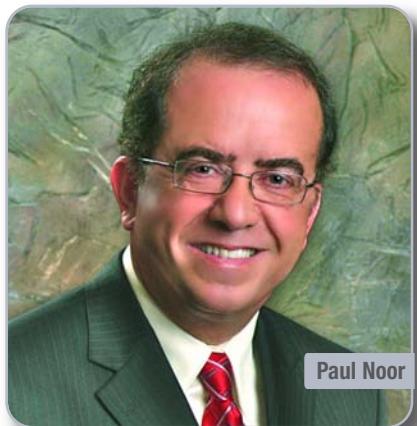
clubs in Ohio: Independently Speaking in Independence and Akron Advanced in Akron. "The organization helped me build my confidence, and I noticed improvements in my speaking within six months of joining. Today I stutter about every hundredth word – it's barely noticeable."

In 2008, while attending the District 10 Spring Conference, Danko gave a last-minute speech to 1,000 people when the scheduled speaker failed to show up. "I had knowledge about the subject, which was 'The Key to Organization,' because of my work as a project manager," he says. "The speech went really well." Danko

When Noor was six years old, the family moved to a small city so he and his sisters could get a formal education, but his stuttering progressively worsened. Noor kept his spirits up, though, and secretly harbored a desire to become a professional speaker. He studied hard in high school so that he could gain acceptance into a top engineering school at the University of Tehran, where he could also receive speech therapy.

"Unfortunately, when I went for therapy during college, I was shattered to discover that there is no cure for stuttering," he says. Noor refused to give up on his dream of public speaking, however. He

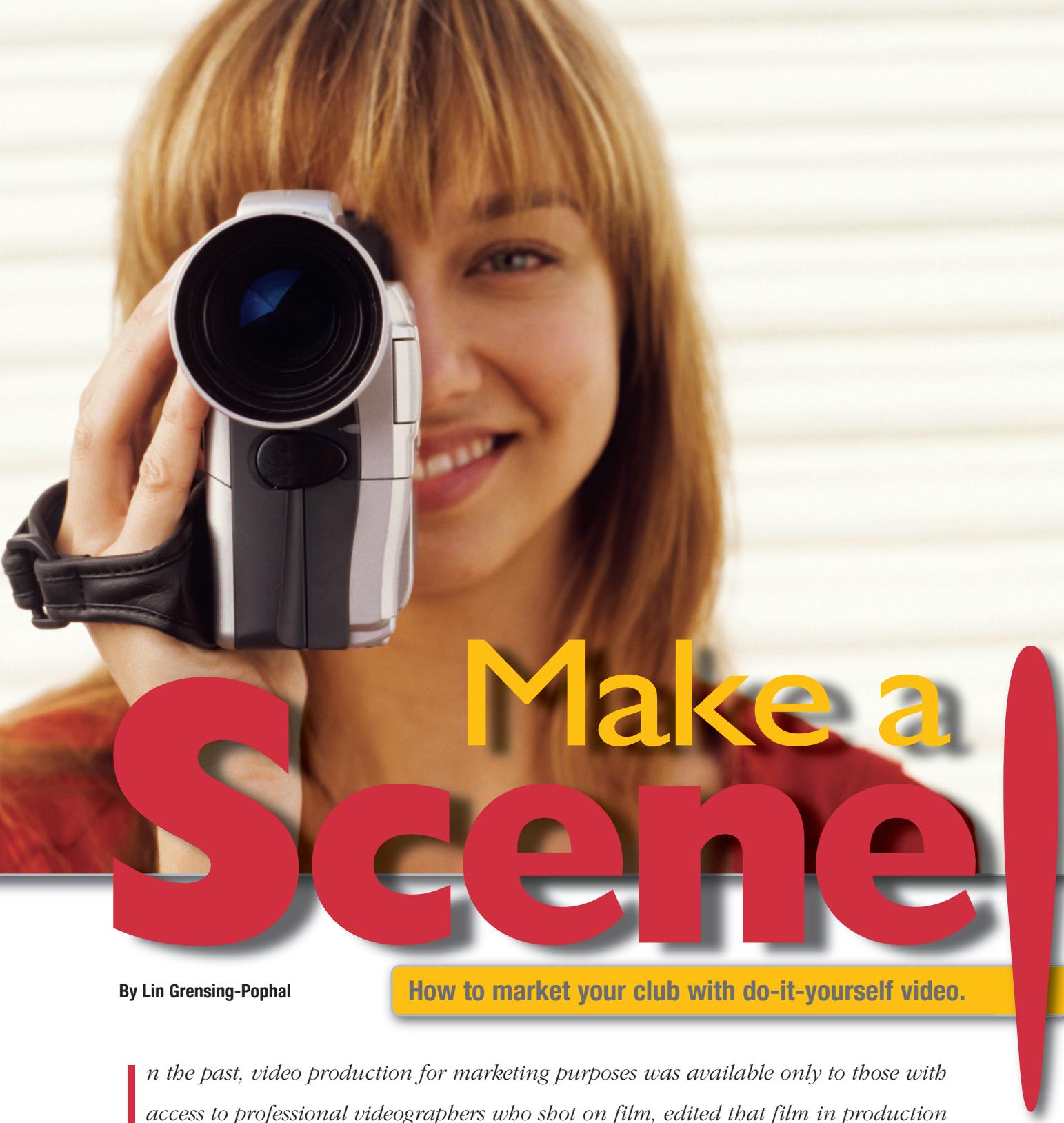
moved to the United States in 1979 to work on his stuttering and his Ph.D. in structural engineering. He soon found it difficult to reduce his stuttering and learn a new language simultaneously, but he trudged on, working in the engineering business and finally discovering Toastmasters in 1989.



"For the first five visits, I sat next to the exit door in case I felt the need to run out," says Noor. "Finally, on my sixth visit, I realized that if I wanted to reach my goal of becoming a speaker, I had to get out of my comfort zone, so I joined the club. When I gave my first speech, I failed badly, but I kept taking risks and learning from my failures."

All of the risks paid off. Today Noor is living his lifelong dream as a motivational speaker. A member of three clubs in Orlando, Florida, including Winter Park Toastmasters, he speaks on behalf of businesses about goals, sales and – quite fittingly – overcoming obstacles. 

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



By Lin Grensing-Pophal

How to market your club with do-it-yourself video.

In the past, video production for marketing purposes was available only to those with access to professional videographers who shot on film, edited that film in production studios and spoke in a language that few could understand. Today, much has changed. Rapidly emerging technologies and changing expectations of what looks like “quality” video means that suddenly any group can generate video to promote their products, services or themselves. And, they can do so quickly and efficiently, from their own homes or offices, with the use of tools that are often available at low or no cost.

Gerald Kimber White, senior managing director at RF/BINDER, a public relations firm headquartered in New York, sees video as an alternative to include in low-budget marketing plans. “For the vast majority of entrepreneurs and even small-business owners, do-it-yourself is a viable option,” he says. Toastmasters certainly fall into this camp. Video provides the ability for Toastmasters to capture their own presentations, edit them and share portions or entire segments online, through their own Web sites or on popular social media sites like YouTube, which boasts more than 75 million videos and growing.

While devices such as the Flip brand and other video cameras make it easy and relatively inexpensive to produce video content, not all video is created equal. Though high-end production values are no longer necessary, a do-it-yourself videographer who wants to create a successful marketing tool would be wise to follow a few basic principles.

David Burckhard, owner and operator of PicturePoint Online in San Jose, California, agrees. “Unfortunately, much of the DIY [do-it-yourself] video isn’t effective, doesn’t convey the message the video intended and, even worse, can damage a company’s brand.” Production values aren’t the only problem, he says. “Often a video tries to serve too many purposes, tries to emulate TV advertising, forgets its audience or goes too long,” says Burckhard. “Effective online video is not just perfect production technique, but a well-considered message carefully translated into a video presentation.”

The good news for Toastmasters is that key elements of effective video production are similar to planning, preparing and presenting programs for live audiences. Capturing those programs on video and then distributing that video in various ways allow you to leverage your skills and deliver presentations to broader audiences in a variety of ways.

Four Steps to Effective Video Production

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The same advice Toastmasters take to heart with their presentations is true in making videos: Preparation is critical.

White agrees. “I know we all say that preparation is important, but far too often people just don’t give it the

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Scripting the presentation is critical, says White. “Too many people set up bullet points and wing it before the camera,” he says. “That’s never going to work.” The process of actually creating the script – committing it to paper – even if you don’t actually use it, will make a big difference. And a script can help with more than the words; a good script provides a starting point for other planning that keeps the focus on a clear message.

“Consider what the audience wants or needs to hear, not what you want to tell them.”

Determining what goes into the plans – and ultimately the video – is essential. Bill Jeakle, general manager of Filmateria Studios (www.filmateria.com), a film/video production company in Seattle, Washington, that serves Fortune 500 companies, suggests that you consider the following three questions:

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The answers to these questions will help you target your message. Of course, you want to be clear about your message before shooting begins to allow time for gathering the right equipment. If your message, for example, is that people become great speakers in your club, then you might plan to tape a club speech. You’ll then need to arrange for a tripod and a lapel microphone to capture the speaker adequately. This can affect your choice of cameras.

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Still, despite the ready availability of these tools, "poor editing can minimize the communications power of the video," says Geibel. "A basic knowledge of editing is required – when to cut, how to cut, use of B-roll, sound beds, graphics and more."

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Remember: Just because you can doesn't mean you should. "Doing creative transitions may look fun as you're doing it, but it's not what people expect and it sort of tags you as being an amateur," says White.

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Distribution

After much preparation, trial and error, and perhaps a significant amount of angst, you have a finished product. *Now what?*

Again, there are a variety of options available to do-it-yourself video producers that will allow you to share the results of your work. A club or district Web site and YouTube are two natural starting points. It is relatively simple and entirely free to create your own YouTube channel where you can upload your completed video. Some editing tools will actually help you do this automatically as the final step in the editing process. Once your video is edited and you

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Let the fun of your Toastmasters experience come across, and your video will do its job. Then, all you have to do is make room for more members! 

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The Toastmasters International Web site has been upgraded over the holidays to benefit members in many ways. Chief among these benefits is a greater ability to access Toastmasters materials and information. Features will include streamlined administrative processes, an enhanced digital content offering and visibility into one's own Toastmasters achievements.

“The goal is to provide members with the highest-quality service possible,” says Toastmasters Executive Director Daniel Rex. “To that end, we are enhancing the site to give all members access to the information they need.”

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Single sign-on benefits you by providing a safe, secure and private online system.

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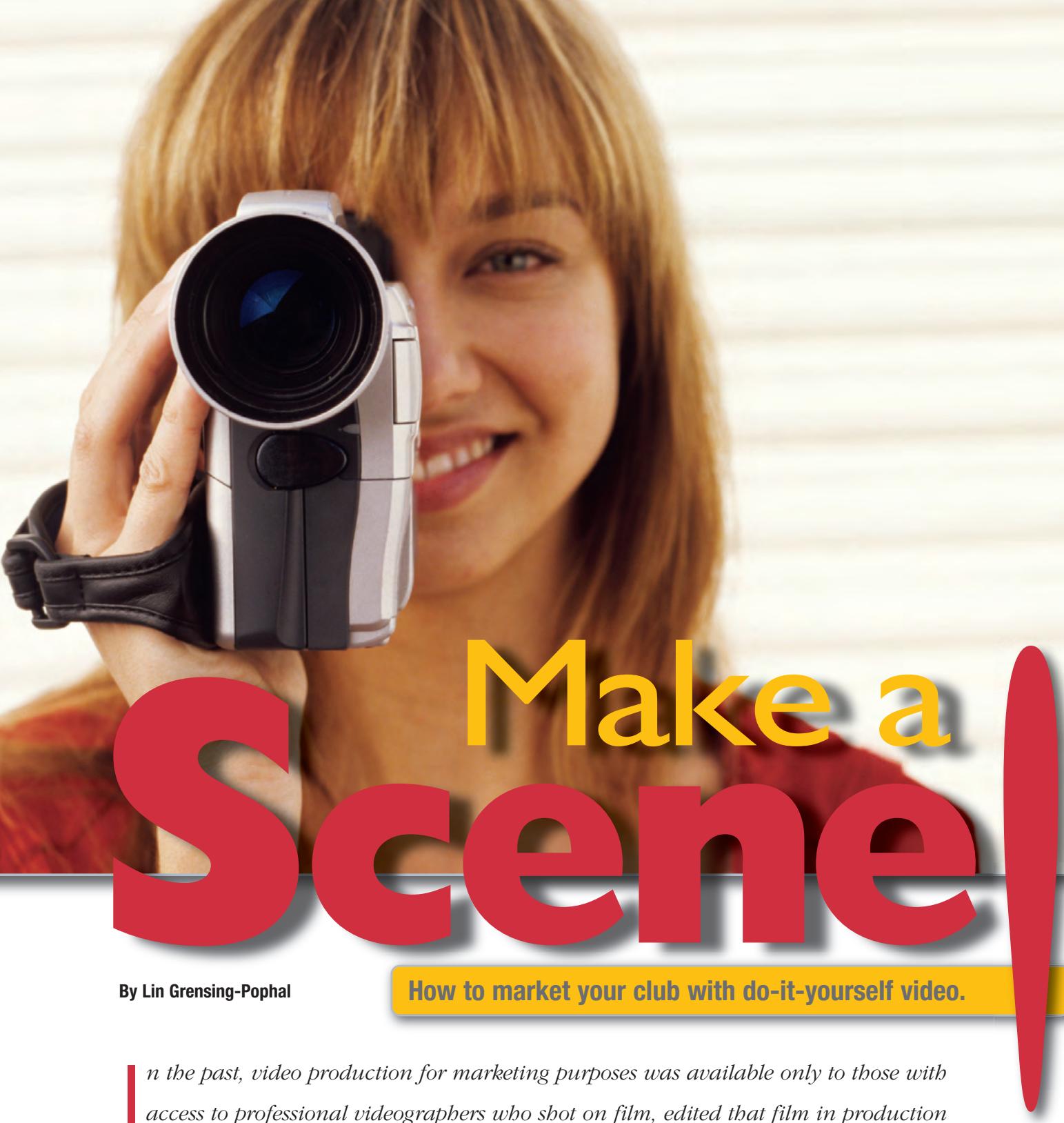
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These features – as well as more to come – will combine to make the Toastmasters Web site a user-friendly tool that enhances the member experience.



Make a Scene!

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voiceover describes how much fun it is to speak in your club. In the script, mark (VO) above any voiceover dialogue to signal that it is to be audio-recorded later.

Production

With the location set and the production crew and talent in place, it's time to get filming!

Writer/Director

Similar to a club agenda, the shot list will be the director's guide to help keep the videographer and production on track and running on time. Vargas advises making sure to film reaction shots: "If you're filming a club meeting like we did, remember to film audience reactions, such as clapping and facial reactions."

Videographer/Camera/Sound

When filming, consider the background. Does a flagpole appear to be sticking out of the talent's head? Don't forget to do sound checks and make sure your equipment can record what the script describes.

Postproduction

All of the video has been shot and now it's time to upload the footage, edit and add the finishing touches!

Editing

If you don't have the latest version of FlipShare, you'll need to download it at <http://bit.ly/dv1vWJ>. Once it's installed, you can import the footage you've shot and begin editing and arranging your video in the sequence you desire. For a great tutorial at FlipsShare Editing Software Training, go to <http://bit.ly/bM51AN>.

Music

When adding music, choose tunes without lyrics or heavy drumbeats so they won't compete with your speakers. The music offered through FlipShare has been composed for Flip Video and is licensed for customer use. If you're uploading your own music, FlipShare recognizes only MP3 format. Use royalty-free music (www.royaltyfreemusic.com) to avoid copyright infringement problems.

Graphics

Be sure to end the video with the contact information for your club. It's a good idea to create a graphic image of your club's Web address. It can appear about three-quarters of the way through the video – superimposed over the action – or at the very end after the video has faded to black. Remember: The entire video, combined with graphics, is not to exceed 60 seconds in length. Add -

itionally, for corporate identity and continuity, use only the Toastmasters International logo (<http://www.toastmasters.org/logos>) and refrain from using club logos.

Uploading for Maximum Exposure

If your club edits with software other than FlipShare, then you may need to manually upload your finished video from your computer desktop to your Web site or to a video share site like YouTube.

FlipShare simplifies the process by offering a quick and easy way to publish your club video using social networking services or by embedding it in e-mail.

A club video is a phenomenal marketing tool that works for your club 24 hours a day. Search engines offer video as a part of integrated search results, which can then drive traffic directly to your Web site and in turn get the word out about your club.

Now that you know what to do, get out there and create a club video that will help your Web site stand out from the pack in fun and dynamic ways! □

Barbara Seymour Giordano is an executive communications coach with a background in television, having worked for CNN and E! Entertainment. She is a member of Del Mar Toastmasters in Del Mar, California.

Make your club Web site come alive!

Stand Out with Video

These days the typical club Web site features the dryly written format of, “who, what, when, where and why.” While the basics are important for potential members, the problem arises when it’s time to differentiate one club’s culture from another.

An exciting and unique way to have your site stand out is to produce a club video. You can share your club’s story and visually welcome potential members to your meetings. A video can serve as both a recruiting tool and public relations tool. So it’s important to ensure that the video, as well as your Web site, give the right impression about your club.

While club members are initially excited about the prospect of creating a video, many find the thought of the production process daunting. Dan Cossack of Latin Leaders of Santa Ana, California, experienced that feeling. “I’d been thinking for quite some time about how fun it would be to produce a club video,” he says. “But I wasn’t sure where to begin, so I put the idea on the back burner.” With some encouragement and creative input from club member Cesar Vargas, they created a brief video of the club’s Table Topics session. “The entire shoot took us about 20 minutes...and our video (<http://bit.ly/aZsljf>) is getting positive reviews from club visitors,” Cossack says.

As a former TV journalist and corporate video and film producer, I’m thrilled to share with you some simple secrets of creating a winning

video. Here’s the process in three phases: preproduction, production and postproduction.

Preproduction

Before shooting, designate two key positions: producer/videographer and writer/director. For the first video, it’s best to keep the team lean so the process will be simple and fast.

Brainstorm the Key Message

To help you pinpoint the message, here are a few questions to consider before writing: What problem are you solving for the viewer? How is your club uniquely positioned to help the potential new member? What action do you want the viewer to take after they’ve watched the video? Additionally, when you shoot the video, how will your club’s story be told?

- Video of your club in action, perhaps with a voiceover?
- A script with members acting out roles?
- Personal testimonials?
- Some combination of the above?

Story/Script/Idea

Your script should reflect a short promotional video: either 30 seconds (approximately 65 words) or 60 seconds (100 words).

Open with a “hook” by asking a question or stating a problem. Dedicate the body of the script to the answer: your club. Then, leave the audience with a memorable tagline, a catchy phrase that should be no more than seven words in length.

Club Talent

Once you’ve decided on which story to tell, recruit a couple of club members to fill the starring roles. If you want, this can be a fun Table Topics experience in your club, as members “audition” for roles.

Wardrobe

Consider how you would like your club to be perceived. *Corporate?* *Entrepreneurial?* *Creative?* The way people dress in your video is an opportunity to reflect your general club culture.

Shot List

“Know what you want. Planning is everything,” emphasizes Vargas, who wrote, directed, filmed and edited the Latin Leaders’ video. “By knowing what you want to shoot and mapping it out in advance, you save a lot of time and effort.” Create a shot list – a planned chronological series of video scenes that will correspond to the script or idea. Writing down each scene to be filmed will save time on the day of the shoot and during editing.

Camera

If you’re using a Flip camera, you’ll need to use a tripod to avoid shaky-looking scenes. This means your camera will have to remain stationary. Your sound will be recorded by the camera, and so you won’t be able to record someone speaking clearly from a distance. To work around that, you could show a smiling speaker while



Say What?

You may recall last year when the Carnival cruise ship Splendor was adrift without power, lights, refrigeration or air conditioning. As reports filtered back from the stranded passengers, they all kept saying they couldn't wait to get back on "**dry land.**" While the humanitarian in me pitied their plight, the linguist in me bristled at their redundancy.

Yes, land is dry, the ocean is wet. We know that. Also, if they meant it literally there could have been a problem. What if the ship had returned to port on a rainy day? Then the Captain would have had to announce: "Please be advised that our return to dry land has been postponed due to mud, which as you know makes dry land wet. Those who wish to change their travel plans may disembark on to wet land at this time. Those wishing to return to dry land may remain aboard the ship until such times as those conditions become available. There is also the option of returning to semi-dry land when the rain stops but before the ground dries out completely."

I know this is silly. The people weren't being literal. What they meant is that they were tired of being surrounded by wetness, which is what the ocean is known for. This would have had the Captain wondering as the ship limped into port: "Should I say dry land when nobody actually got wet? People didn't even take showers because there was no hot water. Heck, these are the driest people on the planet. What I should say is: 'Ladies and gentlemen, we are returning from the fear of wetness

to the illusion of dryness, since your body is in fact 70 percent water and you are always soaking wet. If your wetness dried up you could fit in a glove compartment."

If the Captain were a Toastmaster I'm sure this is what he would have said.

Another phrase I struggle with is "**popular historian.**" Popular historians are in fact highly unpopular with everyone except the people who read their books. Other historians don't like them because they actually write history books that sell. Universities despise them because popular historians are rich historians, which runs counter to the time-honored academic tradition of underpaying history professors while requiring them to publish or perish—by writing unpopular history books.

History teachers resent them for making history interesting when they themselves have worked so hard to make it boring. (They also don't like it when popular historians vacation with Alan Greenspan and Katie Couric on Martha's Vineyard while they teach summer school classes to football players.) You can't even be a popular history student. Whenever I mention the Magna Carta in idle conversation it makes me very unpopular with people who think I'm trying to show off.

Then there's "**dizzying array.**" An array is a large grouping of things placed in some kind of order. Apparently, this made somebody dizzy once and it's been a dizzying array ever since. Why is it the array's fault? Perhaps they had an inner ear problem. Or a reaction to

**Tackling the task of
gleaning a meaning.**

medication. Or too much to drink. Considering all the things that can make you dizzy, it seems rather unfair to blame the poor little array. I've gazed on many arrays without a twinge of dizziness and I'm sure you have too. So the next time you hear someone mention a dizzying array, refer them to a neurologist.

I don't much care for "**final destination**" either. I usually hear it on airplanes when flight attendants announce where the aircraft is ultimately going. They may say Tucson or Chicago or St. Louis but that isn't my final destination. Or yours. We all know what our final destination is, and if the plane is going there, I'm gettin' off.

Lastly, there's the motto emblazoned on the police cars in my hometown: "**Serve, Protect, Defend.**" Sounds nice until you realize it's really a description of things going from bad to worse. The way I see it, police serve you by directing traffic, coming to the scene of accidents, and getting cats out of trees. If they have to move on to protecting you, something's gone wrong. And if they end up defending you it can only mean the protection has broken down. What happens after that—"Serve, Protect, Defend, Every Man for Himself"? At that point I would face a dizzying array of bad things that could happen, like going to my final destination on a cruise ship at the hands of a popular historian. T

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