

# TOASTMASTER®

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NOVEMBER 2012

8 SPEAKING THROUGH  
AN INTERPRETER

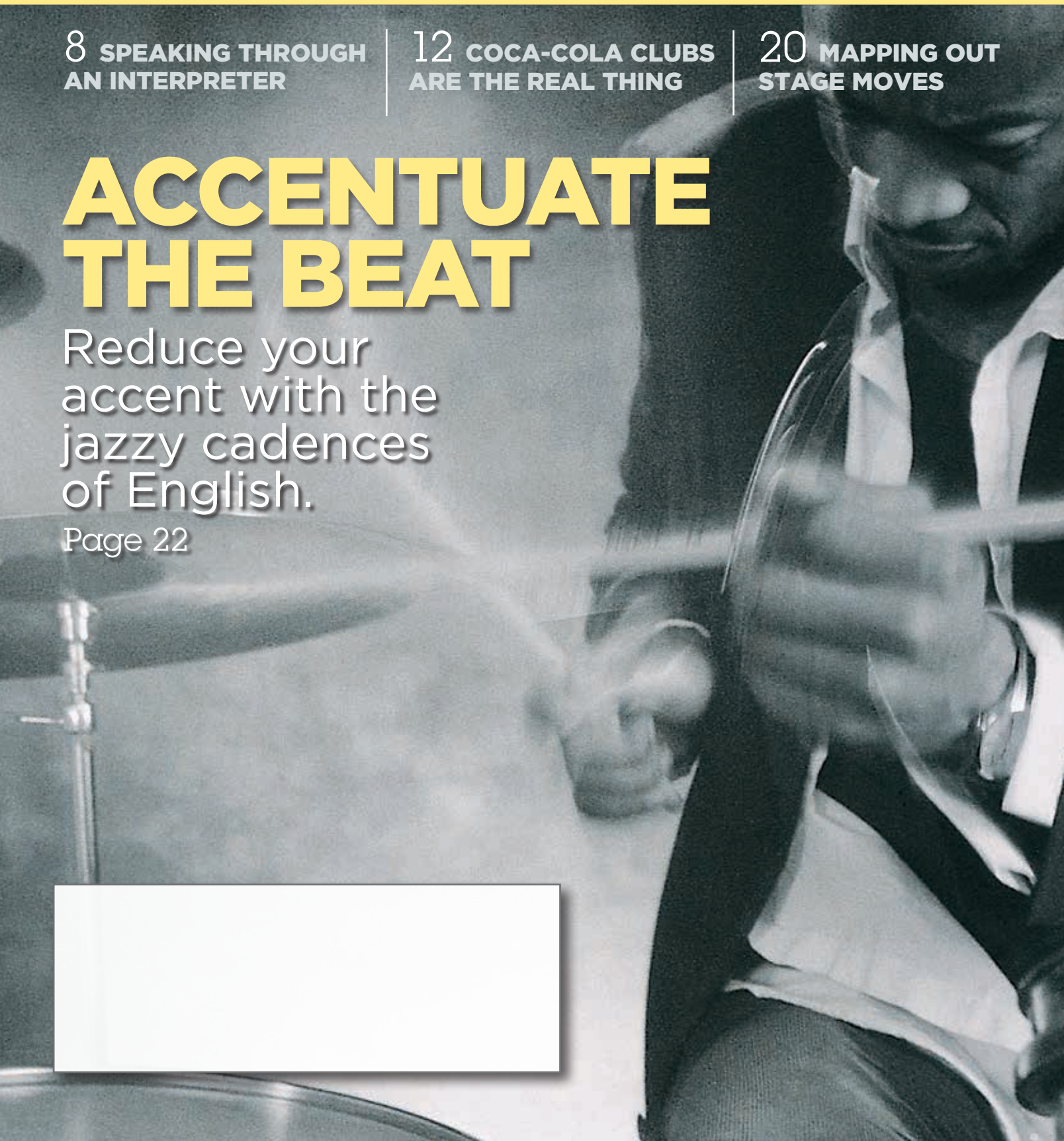
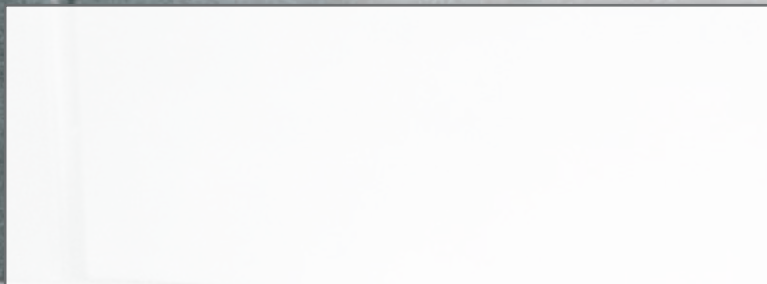
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ARE THE REAL THING

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STAGE MOVES

## ACCENTUATE THE BEAT

Reduce your  
accent with the  
jazzy cadences  
of English.

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# THE VALUE OF CORPORATE CLUBS



**I recently visited the Malaysia Airlines (MAS) Melor Toastmasters club in the Malaysian city of Petaling Jaya. The airline has five clubs nationwide. At the Melor Toastmasters meeting, I met Dato’ [a Malay state title] Capt. Missman Leham, a club member who is vice president of flight operations at MAS. He told me that Toastmasters’ communication and leadership training helped the airline win the prestigious 5-star ranking conferred by Skytrax at the 2012 World Airline Awards. The Skytrax awards are considered the global benchmark of airline excellence.**


“All MAS staff are encouraged to join one of the airline’s Toastmasters clubs to sharpen their communication and leadership skills,” says Leham. “This enables Malaysia Airlines to provide world-class customer service to our passengers.”

Malaysia Airlines has also won the World’s Best Cabin Staff Award from Skytrax seven times in a row. Leham attributes this honor to the staff’s ability to converse with passengers specifically, clearly and effectively. Through Toastmasters training, members of the cabin crew listen attentively to passengers to learn their needs, and they know how to connect with customers from diverse cultures.

Malaysia Airlines is one of many companies that sponsor Toastmasters clubs. Since the first MAS Toastmasters club chartered in early 2003, one of its members has been a Distinguished District governor, another served as division governor and many have been area governors. The leadership skills these individuals learned in Toastmasters enabled them to persuade, inspire, develop and support their teams to achieve success.

Effective workplace communication requires two or more parties to be engaged in a cycle of feedback that shapes their next actions. Communication should include a specific call for action supported by persuasive evidence that reinforces the desired outcome. While an executive may draft a memorandum to his team concerning a change in policy, the conversations that ensue after that determine the success of the policy change.

Organizations can determine the degree of effective communication by measuring the results of a specific action. Malaysian Airlines chartered Toastmasters clubs to groom its staff in mastering effective communication skills. Winning recognition from Skytrax was the result. The airline was happy, and so were its customers *and* staff.

Let us continue to share the benefits we gain in Toastmasters and ignite our passion in Toastmasters, where leaders are made. 

**JOHN LAU, DTM**  
International President

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**WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE**  
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November 2012 Volume 78, No. 11

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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.

By regularly giving speeches, gaining feedback, leading teams and guiding others to achieve their goals, leaders emerge. They learn to tell their stories. They listen and answer. They plan and lead. They give feedback — and accept it. They find their path to leadership.

**Toastmasters International. Where Leaders Are Made.**



“When I joined Toastmasters I was encouraged by how everyone paid careful attention to anyone who was speaking. Why should members tolerate anything less?”

— Candy Watson

Riverview Canusa Toastmasters club  
Riverview, New Brunswick, Canada

## Back to the **Future**

Flunking Speech 101 and acing Journalism 101 always puzzled me, but Judith Tingley’s article “The Power of the Pen and the Voice” (August) put it all into perspective.

My bucket list allures me to write a book and have it published. However, the anxiety of promoting a book has consistently stopped me in my tracks. I joined Toastmasters in March to acquire tools to overcome the fear I have had since college 36 years ago. My negative self-talk has now been replaced by confidence and inspiration from Tingley’s words. Now it’s full steam ahead!

Devra McMillen  
Bridgestone Babblers Toastmasters  
Nashville, Tennessee

## My First **Debate**

I read Christine Clapp’s article “When You Are a Panel Moderator” (June) several times, and recently completed the first project of the Facilitating Discussion manual (Item 226D) in a Toastmasters meeting. I followed Clapp’s tips in addition to the project instructions in the manual.

I was a little nervous about managing the time and questions, but I succeeded! I made the right decision at the right time to let someone ask a final question, and our meeting finished on time.

Thank you, Christine, for this very instructive article!

Danaé Margerit, ACB, ALB  
Rosemasters Club  
Toulouse, France

## Tough **Love**

Jenny Baranick’s article “The Scrupulous Sandwich Approach” (June) is a

good example of how to use encouraging words in your evaluations. It is so important to remember you’re trying to help speakers, not crush them. I appreciate the author’s decision to be “positive and encouraging.” We all need to strive for that ideal.

Janice Hallmark, DTM  
Gateway Toastmasters  
Springfield, Oregon

## **Distracted** Audience

I was appalled to read Tim Cigelske’s article “Dealing with a Distracted Audience” (July). Cell phones, laptops and iPads belong in a media center—not at a conference where a speaker would have taken pains to create a thoughtful presentation.

It is good manners to pay attention to what a speaker has to say. If the so-called “adults” will not stop playing with their toys, then a Toastmaster should feel no obligation to present his or her speech.

When I joined Toastmasters I was encouraged by how everyone paid careful attention to anyone who was speaking. Why should members tolerate anything less? Toastmasters International sets the standard for preparing and delivering material professionally. Why should it not also set the standard for audience behavior?

Candy Watson  
Riverview Canusa Toastmasters club  
Riverview, New Brunswick, Canada

## Not **OK**

Mr. John Cadley makes the common error of labeling *I’m OK, You’re OK* as a “self-help” book (“Help Yourself,” August). It is not. Just because it is a

best-seller, the book does not fit into the self-help category. I’m referring to the likes of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* and *Rich Dad Poor Dad* books. Transactional analysis [praised in *I’m OK, You’re OK*] is the best thing that has happened in behavioral theory, and, mind you, it is best when practiced under an expert.

I suggest Mr. Cadley read *I’m OK, You’re OK* again—seriously! He is denigrating author Dr. Thomas A. Harris by discounting his book.

Anil P. Nair  
Chartered Toast Masters club  
Kochi, India

## Initials **Defined**

I appreciated “Are You CC S-M-A-R-T?” (July), which featured abbreviations of education awards. I often see these initials and am unaware of their meanings. However, I then turned a few pages and read the article “Webinars and Virtual Presentations.” The author, Tom Drews, had the initials CTM after his name. I went back to the other article and was unable to find these initials in the list. Thanks for any clarification you can provide.

Lenny Caputo, ACB  
Speakers with Authority Toastmasters  
White Plains, New York

**Editor’s note:** CTM refers to *Competent Toastmaster*. It is the equivalent of the *Competent Communicator (CC) award*, and is no longer issued.

## **Do you have something to say?**

Write it in 200 words or less.

Include your name, address and club affiliation, and send it to [letters@toastmasters.org](mailto:letters@toastmasters.org).

# SAME LANGUAGE, DIFFERENT COUNTRY

When I moved from England to Canada, some words were lost in translation.

By Julian Worker, ACB

**W**e take our native language for granted. When I moved from England to Vancouver, Canada, in 2001, I was jolted from my comfort zone by the confusion I felt at times—when a word that had meant one thing to me now appeared to mean something entirely different. But as with all challenges, I grew from this experience.

It's important for people whose first language isn't English to realize that even native English speakers have problems when moving to another country.

I thought I was familiar with the Canadian accent, having seen many North American films and TV programs. However, some surprises awaited me. For some inexplicable reason, Canadians “miss off” the letter “h” when they say *herbs*. Instead of saying *basil*, Canadians say *baysil*, and *Cecil* is pronounced *Ceeecil*. *Football* became *soccer*, players were *ejected* from the game rather than being *sent off*, and *offense* had replaced *attack*.

None of this caused me any real problems. But there were occasions when differences in meanings took me out of my comfort zone. The first instance was the time my wife, Tania, and I stayed at a bed-and-breakfast near Kamloops in the interior of British Columbia. After checking us in, the owner looked at me and asked, “Would the gentleman like a comforter for the night?”

I looked at her for roughly five seconds, opening and closing my mouth like a goldfish before blurting out, “No, not tonight, but thank.s for asking.” I started giggling and had to turn away from the reception desk.

“Why were you laughing?” Tania asked when we were in our room.

“She asked me if I wanted a comforter. A comforter! I'm 41.”

“It's a quilt,” Tania said. “A *bed* quilt.”

In England, a comforter is a *dummy teat* used to pacify children. That night, I had a strange dream in which a woman tried to insert a quilt-sized dummy teat into my mouth.

A few days later, I was using a pay phone to contact someone at a government department. The voice at the other end of the line said, “Press the pound key for further options.”

I stared at the keypad for about 20 seconds, checking and rechecking. There was no pound key! At least not one showing the British currency sign—the only pound I knew. When a man walked by, I explained my dilemma.

“Here's the pound key,” he said, pointing at the key with a # symbol on it. I thanked him and pressed the *pound* key, but the line had already gone dead.

Two weeks later, more confusion ensued. Approaching a shopping mall, I saw a sign at the entrance: “Warning—

Automatic Door.” About one foot from the door, I realized it wasn't going to open, so I stopped and walked backward about six paces. In England, most automatic doors operate by pressure pads, so I tried my best to find the pressure pad. I must have looked like a cross between a traditional Irish dancer and a man trying to detonate a land mine. Of course, I failed to find any pressure pad. After a few seconds, a woman walked past me and grabbed the door handle.

“Handle,” she said slowly, looking at me pityingly. “Handle.”

“Yes,” I said, blushing profusely, “the door *handle*—to open the *automatic* door.”

Most of the time things went well as I settled into my life in Canada. I could understand and be understood. However, on occasion events would go awry and for a few minutes I couldn't decipher what was happening. These experiences made me grow as an individual and appreciate the richness of the English language. It's important for people whose first language isn't English to realize that even native English speakers have problems when moving to another country. 📌

**Julian Worker, ACB**, is club president of Tillicum Toastmasters in New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada. His articles have been published in several newspapers, and his photographs have appeared in various travel guides. Reach him at [julicn.worker@usa.net](mailto:julicn.worker@usa.net).

# AROUND THE GLOBE

## ▶ INTERNATIONAL INTERPRETATIONS

SHAKE IT LIKE YOU MEAN IT



The act of shaking hands dates back to ancient Greece. Traditionally, it is a gesture of greeting or an expression of gratitude. However, the length and type of handshakes differ from country to country.

In some Middle Eastern countries, such as Turkey, a too-firm handshake is considered rude, while Americans and Australians prefer a strong handshake. The Japanese and Chinese favor soft handshakes, with the Japanese preferring to initiate the action. In European countries like Belgium and Austria, people greet each other with a firm handshake, but don't forget to shake women's hands first in Switzerland.

Interestingly, the longest recorded handshake belongs to two men from New Zealand and two men from Nepal. It lasted 33 hours and 3 minutes.

## ▶ WHAT DO YOU SAY WHEN...

A FELLOW TOASTMASTER LOSES A SPEECH CONTEST?

**Members from the Digerati Toastmasters club in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, respond:**

"I will tell him that just by facing the challenge of speaking in public, he is already a winner. If he knows in his heart that he performed to the best of his abilities, then he is undoubtedly a winner—with or without the trophy!" — **DARLENE DANDAN, CC**

"I say losing is part of every competition. Losing is just the beginning of a more challenging journey ahead. Trophies and medals do not define the worth of a person." — **LUIS RODELAS JR. III, CC**

"I told my fellow Toastmaster after she lost an area-level contest that she had done a good job of speaking from the heart and had given her best. Though she failed to win an award, simply representing our Digerati Toastmasters club is a feather in her cap, and something she must be proud of." — **DONNABEL CANTILA**

## ▶ SNAPSHOT



Toastmaster Carl Walsh, ACB, (right, front), along with members of the A.C.T.S. club in Pasadena, California, gather in his back yard to watch the 2012 World Championship of Public Speaking finals streamed live from the Toastmasters International Convention in Orlando, Florida.

## BOTTOM LINE

### Call for Convention Presenters

Toastmasters International seeks experienced and dynamic speakers for the 2013 International Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. Apply in November at [www.toastmasters.org/callforpresenters](http://www.toastmasters.org/callforpresenters).



### Marvelous Mentors

Do you know a mentor who has always made an extra effort to help others? Send a 200-word description to [submissions@toastmasters.org](mailto:submissions@toastmasters.org) explaining how this person has positively affected you or someone else.

## ► LEADERSHIP TIP

### NO 'I' IN TEAM

Powerful leaders are only as strong as the group they manage. Foster effective teamwork by implementing these steps:

- **Develop trust.** All good teamwork starts with fellow team members having confidence in one another. As a leader, trust that your group is capable of doing the job well. This helps team members respect one other's perspective.
- **Share the work.** A large task seems less daunting when it's broken up into smaller duties. If everyone has at least one responsibility, no one will feel left out or overworked.
- **Follow up.** Have group members check in with each other at least a few times a week to review their work process. This solves problems and helps everyone stay motivated and on track.
- **Celebrate triumphs.** Success without acknowledgement feels meaningless. So give compliments or enjoy a team lunch to reward each other.

## MEMBER MOMENT

### REFLECTIONS OF A RUNNER-UP

Palaniappa Subramaniam, ACS, CL, won second place in the World Championship of Public Speaking in August, with his speech "Finding the Right Shoes." He is president of Oracle Advanced Toastmasters in Georgetown, Penang, Malaysia, and a member of Silterra Toastmasters club in Kulim, Kedah, Malaysia. A process engineer, Subramaniam credits the communication skills he has honed in Toastmasters for enabling him to advance in his career.



Palaniappa Subramaniam

### What's it like to compete in the World Championship of Public Speaking?

I enjoyed meeting many new friends from all over the world. The championship finals was the biggest audience I have spoken to. The energy in the contest room that day was amazing, and as a speaker that motivates me to share more.

### Why did you choose your speech topic?

I noticed that people around me are rarely satisfied with what they have, and they fail to realize there are many others who have less than they do. If I told someone this individually they might be offended, so I decided to make a speech out of it.

### How has Toastmasters helped you in your profession?

As an engineer, most of my communication at work is through email. Toastmasters helped me develop my face-to-face communication and listening skills. This set me apart from the rest of the technical staff, and I was able to go up the corporate ladder. Currently I am a section manager.

Contact Palaniappa Subramaniam at [thannee@gmail.com](mailto:thannee@gmail.com).

## Recognizing Success

Congratulations to members who have earned their DTM awards and to clubs celebrating anniversaries of 20 years or more. Visit [www.toastmasters.org/halloffame](http://www.toastmasters.org/halloffame) monthly to see who is being honored.

## Clubs in New Countries

Toastmasters welcomes clubs in four new countries: Bangladesh, Latvia, Malta and the Republic of Moldova!

**Digital Edition** A new issue of the *Toastmaster* magazine is available at the beginning of each month. Log in to see the current issue at [www.toastmasters.org/magazine](http://www.toastmasters.org/magazine) and send your feedback to [letters@toastmasters.org](mailto:letters@toastmasters.org).





# SPEAKING THROUGH AN INTERPRETER

Seven tips for overcoming language barriers.

By Nataly Kelly

**I**t's the dream of countless presenters. You've been invited to speak at an international event in a city such as Barcelona, Shanghai or São Paulo. You pack your bags, prepare an amazing talk and board your plane. You arrive at the venue ready to give the best presentation of your career. There's just one problem—the people in the audience don't speak the language you do!

In today's globally connected world, international conferences are more common than ever before. Chances are if you're presenting at an event that attracts attendees from other countries—or your speech is streamed over the Web—some people will need a translation to understand the information you will be sharing. You will need an interpreter.

The following seven tips will put you on the fast track to overcoming language barriers and connecting with your audience.

## 1 Ask Before You Go

Whenever you are asked to speak, you should confirm with the event organizer important details such as the number of attendees, the setup of the room and the equipment available to you. When speaking at an international event, you'll need to ask additional questions. Find out where the majority of attendees will come from. For example, did last year's

convention in Monaco attract mostly businesspeople from London? If so, you might not need an interpreter.

Find out what languages attendees are most likely to speak. Many countries have citizens who speak multiple languages, so find out which languages these individuals speak. For instance, many individuals in India speak English, but large percentages of the population do not. By learning such information in advance, you can customize your talk accordingly.

If the organizers indicate that some or all participants do not speak the language in which you plan to present, ask if they will provide interpreters. If so, it means more people will understand you. It also means you will need to prepare your presentation in a very different way.

## 2 Script Your Presentation for an Interpreter

Many speakers like to script their slides, not with the purpose of actually sticking with the script, but as a way to work out exactly what they plan to say. However, when you work with an interpreter, a script serves an additional purpose; it is a source of information. It allows the interpreter to become familiar with your topic before you give your speech. This is especially true if you plan to cover topics involving technical terminology.

## GOOD IMPRESSIONS COUNT

"It's always nice to use a few words in the local language to open up a presentation," says Benjamin B. Sargent, a senior analyst with Common Sense Advisory, an independent market research company. Sargent, a Toastmaster based in Arizona, recently delivered a keynote address in Poland, a talk in London and a speech in Helsinki in the space of a single week. "It's also a good idea to learn how to say the words 'thank you' wherever you go," he advises. "You can use that phrase at the end of your talk, or you can simply say it to the person who introduces you. Either way, it makes a good impression."

Often, an interpreter will sit down with such a script and review any unfamiliar words and phrases, looking them up to find the perfect rendition in the target language. On the other hand, if the interpreter has no prior background in your field and hears a new term while interpreting, she may

## KEEP IN MIND

Olga Cosmidou, head of the European Parliament's Directorate-General for Interpretation and Conferences, is an expert in delivering speeches with interpreters. She routinely organizes meetings being interpreted in 23 official languages, often with hundreds of interpreters involved in each meeting. "If presentation slides are used, make sure that the interpreter has a clear view of the screen and a printed copy of the presentation," she advises. "Also, if you are wearing a mobile phone, keep it away from the microphone, as it can sometimes cause interference."

have no other choice but to skip past it instead of trying to guess its meaning on the spot. An interpreter will rarely interrupt a speaker to clarify anything.

Professional interpreters attempt to keep up with new terminology; how-

Some languages require more words than others to say the same thing.

ever, most interpreters switch quickly from one topic to another. They may interpret for a human rights forum one week and a currency exchange rate summit the following week. The amount of technical vocabulary that an interpreter can memorize has its limits.

If your talk comprises technical terms, script it in advance. Some speakers, when dealing with evolving terminology, will define certain words for the interpreter, so he will be prepared to paraphrase, if necessary. Sometimes a word may not even exist in another language, since terminology tends to be invented when and where it is needed.

**3 Budget Time for Interpretation** Ask an event organizer if a *simultaneous interpreter* will be available during the event. If so, the interpreter

will speak while you are speaking. This is usually accomplished by the interpreter listening through headphones while enclosed in a sound-proofed booth. If the interpreter will be converting your words while you speak, the amount of time you will need for your talk will be roughly the same as if you were delivering it on your own, in your native language. However, you will need to slow your pace, because some languages require more words than others to say the same thing.

For example, at one telecommunications conference, a speaker used the word *slamming* in English, which refers to the practice of changing someone's long-distance telephone carrier without their permission. In some other languages, the word *slamming* does not exist, so the interpreter translated the word by saying "the practice of changing someone's long-distance telephone carrier without

their permission." Whenever this happens, the interpreter is in a race against time, trying to accurately convey information while listening to the speaker's next statement to determine how to convey its message.

Budget extra time for any question-and-answer session at the end of your speech. When questions come from individuals who don't speak the same language as the presenter, the interpreter will wait until the question is completely verbalized before relaying it back to the speaker, and vice versa. This process is known as *consecutive interpreting*; it takes nearly twice as long as simultaneous interpreting. In general, you should budget more time for any talk that will be interpreted, especially if there will be a question-and-answer segment.

## 4 Choose Words with Care

As you develop your script, try to avoid words with double meanings. These words could easily be misunderstood by the interpreter, who will be listening and speaking at the same time—which increases the chances of hearing something incorrectly. Read your script aloud. Do you struggle with any words? Does your speech include words that sound the same, like *to*, *too* and *two*? Train your ear to recognize these words as you practice your speech aloud, and delete them, if possible.

Try to break long sentences into shorter ones. Avoid using too many dependent clauses. Consider occasionally phrasing sentences as questions, because this way, even if you have an interpreter with a dry monotone, her intonation will change due to the natural dynamic of asking a question. If you cite a lot of numbers during your talk, include these numbers on slides, allowing the interpreter to look at the numbers on the slide, instead of having to rely on notes.

## 5 Prepare the Interpreter in Advance

Contact the organizer to find out how to get your script to the interpreter well in advance of your talk. "Many well-intentioned presenters wait until the day of their speech to provide notes to the interpreter," says Benjamin B. Sargent, a senior analyst with Common Sense Advisory, an independent market research company, and a Toastmasters based in Arizona. "By that time, it's usually too late for your interpreter to study up on the content."


The more advance notice you give the interpreter, the more familiar she will be with your topic, and therefore the better your talk will be.

If you have slides, provide your interpreter with copies. This will help her interpret both the content of the slides and your words. If you will present

to an audience in which most attendees speak another language, consider obtaining translations of the slides, and displaying the translations. Remember, you will need to be able to follow along and recall what the slides said in the source language prior to translation.

If you are able to meet the interpreter before your speech, you might ask her to signal to you when she wants you to slow down. Some conference setups allow the interpreter to press a button, which acts like a stoplight, to relay instructions to

you did well and what you could have done better. You might be surprised by what you hear. “If you’re an American giving a talk in Europe, keep in mind that your interpreter might not be familiar with American accents,” Sargent says. Perhaps your voice did not carry well, or you spoke too loudly into the microphone.

No matter what, getting feedback is likely to make your next experience with an interpreter that much easier—and even more successful! 

**In general, you should budget more time for any talk that will be interpreted, especially if there will be a question-and-answer segment.**

## 6 Pace Your Delivery

When the day arrives, the most important thing you can do for your interpreter is to slow down your speaking. Many people speed their pace when speaking before an audience, usually because they are excited. Remember to relax. It’s fine to occasionally pause or even take a drink of water to enable your interpreter to catch up with you. Your interpreter might need a break at that point, too.

the speaker. If the light is green, the interpreter is signaling you to keep speaking. If the light is yellow, slow down. If the light is red, take a deep breath or a sip of water to give the interpreter a chance to catch up.

## 7 Ask for Feedback

Before you speak, ask the interpreter to provide feedback after your talk. Request information on what

**Nataly Kelly** is chief research officer at Common Sense Advisory, a market research firm specializing in language services and global business. Her latest book is *Found in Translation: How Language Shapes Our Lives and Transforms the World*. Contact [nataly@commonsenseadvisory.com](mailto:nataly@commonsenseadvisory.com).

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# COCA-COLA CLUBS ARE THE REAL THING

Company employees find path to leadership through corporate clubs.

By Mary Nesfield

**T**he Coca-Cola Company lays claim to one of the most recognizable brands on the planet. Its reach boggles the mind. The Coca-Cola drink, which was once available only at a single drugstore in downtown Atlanta, Georgia, is now available in more than 200 countries. The company produces a broad range of beverages, including sodas, juices, coffees, teas and

Sharon Cobey, associate event manager at Coca-Cola and a member of the 310 North Toastmasters, says the benefits of Toastmasters membership extend beyond departmental boundaries. “For example, members of our sales and marketing departments have to make presentations all the time to managers as well as to customers, and the skills they learn

cept and development to merchandising and marketing, associates are challenged to share ideas with co-workers throughout the world—and to share them in new ways. To help achieve that goal, management assigns every employee a formal development plan.

“Many of our employees choose to include the Toastmasters programs as part of their formal development plan,” says Eberly. “For me, that creates real value for our employees and our company.”

Cobey first visited a Toastmasters meeting after being invited by the club’s vice president membership. After experiencing the meeting’s energizing atmosphere, Cobey chose Toastmasters as part of her development plan. Since July 2010, she has attended the 310 North Toastmasters meetings at 7:30 every Thursday morning.

“I have to get up early that day to attend, but I find that it energizes me,” Cobey says. “I haven’t experienced a boring meeting yet!” She now is president of the 40-year-old club, located at Coca-Cola’s corporate headquarters in Atlanta.

## Communicating Across the World

Coca-Cola employees are continually tasked with turning corporate plans into action. Cobey describes the challenges of Eberly’s role: “Ceree Eberly

“Toastmasters grooms associates today for tomorrow’s leadership challenges.” — Ceree Eberly, Senior Vice President

enhanced waters, and it employs more than 146,000 people worldwide.

And, for more than a third of its 126-year history, Coca-Cola has sponsored Toastmasters clubs for employees.

## Cultivating Leaders

As with most companies, the growth and continued success of The Coca-Cola Company depends on the interpersonal skills of its associates and the effectiveness of its leaders. Ceree Eberly, CTM, who belonged to the company’s 310 North Toastmasters club in Atlanta, is senior vice president and chief people officer of The Coca-Cola Company. She says, “In my role, I see a great value in Toastmasters International’s proven programs for developing great communicators and influential leaders.”

in Toastmasters directly transfer to their jobs.”

The company fosters a diverse and inclusive culture, and its two corporate clubs in Atlanta help in that regard as well. With Coca-Cola serving such geographically diverse customers, associates must be familiar with the languages, customs and cultural preferences of consumers in all the foreign markets they serve.

“We have a very diverse group,” Cobey says. “Some associates join [Toastmasters] to build their English-speaking skills, because English is their second language.”

The company culture itself has expanded as associates communicate globally, not only with customers but with each other. From beverage con-



- **The 10-year anniversary of The Real Thing club coincided with the award District 14 presented to The Coca-Cola Company for its sponsorship of Toastmasters corporate clubs.**



started as a Toastmaster. Today, she travels all over the world to communicate with Coca-Cola associates. Her job requires excellent speaking and communication skills, and so the skills she developed in Toastmasters serve her in her work today.”

Internal Control Specialist Don Penovi, CC, joined The Real Thing Toastmasters club in Atlanta in 2009. Three years later, Penovi was transferred to corporate headquarters. He joined the 310 North Toastmasters club to get acclimated to his new work environment.

“I have created relationships through Toastmasters that have helped me tackle my new responsibilities,” says Penovi. “It’s about building relationships, and so much of my job requires that. Toastmasters has also helped with my confidence here at headquarters. I needed a boost and I got it.”

### Setting and Achieving Goals

Stephanie Kalman, CC, CL, president of The Real Thing club, is a senior logistics analyst at Coca-Cola Refreshments, the North American division of the company. She is responsible for performing supply chain modeling to evaluate long-term infrastructure planning projects for North America.

From her Toastmasters involvement, Kalman says, “I have learned time-management skills, which are critical to balancing my professional responsibilities and personal goals.” She adds that Table Topics has helped her develop the skills and confidence to field questions from management while delivering presentations.

Maria Higgins, ACB, vice president public relations of The Real Thing Toastmasters, became a professional speaker during a break in employment at Coca-Cola. For two years she spoke to clients about how to overcome fears while “gracefully handling change.”

Since being rehired as an information technology capability lead at Coca-Cola Refreshments, Higgins has participated in training and change management for the company. Although her role as a speaker has diminished, Higgins says, “Toastmasters gives me the opportunity to maintain my speaking abilities.”

### Spreading the Word

In a company with such a wide reach, you might think club sponsorship could sometimes fall through the cracks. But Cobey assures this isn’t the case. “[The company’s] online ‘Morning Message’ provides a list of the activities of the day, and our club meeting announcement is periodically included in that

message,” she says. “We also have recruitment drives, and we include our recruitment flier in our new hire orientation packets,” she says.

Cobey cites another example of how members get the word out: “Our club treasurer works in the finance department, and one day he had a meeting with the company’s chief financial officer. Our treasurer was wearing his Toastmasters pin and the CFO asked for a synopsis of the club experience. [Our treasurer] later told us how the experience was similar to giving a Table Topics speech.

“The key to the success of the club is in getting the word out, and we are committed to this process,” Cobey says. “As a matter of fact, Coca-Cola’s vice president of marketing is scheduled to be a guest speaker at a club meeting this month, and we are planning a membership drive to promote his speech, as well as to draw new members.”

### A Formula for Success

This past spring, District 14 presented The Coca-Cola Company with an award for its sponsorship of Toastmasters clubs. The recognition came as club members celebrated the 40-year anniversary of 310 North Toastmasters and as other members celebrated the 10-year anniversary of The Real Thing club.

*Continued on page 19*



► World Champion of Public Speaking Ryan Avery and his wife Chelsea.

# YOUNGEST WINNER EVER

25-year-old makes history with victory at World Championship of Public Speaking.

By Jennie Harris

**R**yan Avery, ACB, CL, became the youngest World Champion of Public Speaking in the history of the International Speech Contest on August 18, at the 2012 Toastmasters International Convention in Orlando, Florida. The 25-year-old defeated eight other

wanted to improve his communication skills so he could win a promotion. It worked—he was promoted to director of communications and marketing three weeks before the International Speech Contest Semifinals.

The 2012 contest drew 30,000 participants from 116 countries. With

and referred to a “What Would Michael Phelps Do?” motivational sign he hung in his bedroom. “If [Phelps] could get up early and practice every day, so could I,” he said in an interview after the World Championship semifinals.

Avery won over judges in the finals with his speech “Trust Is a Must,” which reflected on the value of a promise. He described a moment at his wedding when his wife-to-be asked him if he promised to be a good husband, triggering memories of the lessons on trust he learned long ago from his mother.

Avery impersonated his mother reprimanding him for drinking at a party after he promised he would not. She caught him in the lie when she found him at the police station. “Trust is a must,” he said, imitating his mother’s Texas drawl and hand-on-hip stance. He said she reinforced her lesson when Avery complained he had been cheated out of pay after designing a website for a man he later learned had given him a fake name.

“If [Michael Phelps] could get up early and practice every day, so could I.”

Toastmasters from around the world in the final round of the competition.

A resident of Portland, Oregon, Avery is a self-described member of the “like generation,” referring to young Americans who intersperse the word *like* in their speech, sometimes as a filler word similar to *ah*. He joined Toastmasters in early 2011 largely to eliminate such verbal clutter, especially because he gives media interviews as part of his work for Special Olympics Oregon. By his own admission, he also

so much competition, how did Avery become a World Champion after just a year and a half in Toastmasters? He followed the advice of his mentors and entered every speech contest he could, often earning second place at the area level. He visited most of the clubs in District 7 with his wife, Chelsea, to practice.


Avery likened his quest to become the 2012 World Champion of Public Speaking to that of Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps striving for a gold medal,

“I learned that a promise is only as good as the person who makes it,” he said.

During his acceptance speech, Avery dedicated the award to his wife for traveling with him to many clubs so he could practice his speech. “If you have a spouse who supports you like Chelsea,” he said while tearing up, “you’re blessed.”

Avery’s next goals involve earning his DTM award, and visiting districts around the world to give workshops and keynote speeches. Additionally, he wants more people from his generation to participate in Toastmasters. “I want to let all my friends and people my age know how important Toastmasters is for their personal and professional life,” he says.

The second-place winner in the 2012 contest was Palaniappa Subramaniam, ACS, CL, of Kulim, Kedah, Malaysia, with the speech “Finding the Right Shoes.” (See page 7 for an interview with Subramaniam.) The third-place winner was Stuart Pink of Attleboro, Massachusetts, with his speech “Brain Lifting: A Crash Course in Creativity.” In his speech, Pink encouraged audience members to exercise their minds by asking “What if?” more often.

Winners of the 2012 Taped Speech Contest (a category for members of undistricted clubs) were also announced at the convention. They are: first place, Peter Mutua of Nairobi, Kenya; second place, Joanna Makris of Attica, Greece; and third place, Maria Simiyu, of Nairobi, Kenya. 

To purchase online streaming or a DVD of popular convention events, visit [onlineevent.com/toastmastersconvention](http://onlineevent.com/toastmastersconvention).

**Jennie Harris** is junior writer at the *Toastmaster* magazine. She is a member of Spectrum Speakers in Irvine, California.



Convention 2012 keynote speaker Joel Manby

## CONVENTION IN REVIEW

Nearly 1,500 people attended the 81st annual Toastmasters International Convention to enjoy keynote presentations, learn best practices in communication and leadership, and celebrate a new lineup of leaders.

At the Opening Ceremonies, keynote speaker Joel Manby—an accomplished business executive—gave a passionate presentation on his leadership philosophy: leading with love. He stressed the importance for leaders to not only focus on profits, but also on employees’ happiness. “To lead a company successfully,” he said, “You have to hit the bottom line *and* have a balance between people and profits.”

The four-day program at Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek Resort, held August 15–18 in Orlando, Florida, included 10 communication and leadership skill-building sessions. Additionally, leadership expert John C. Maxwell gave an inspirational speech when honored on August 17 as Toastmasters International’s 2012 Golden Gavel recipient.

Tammy Miller, DTM, PID, of Port Matilda, Pennsylvania, and Patrick Hardy, ACG, ALS, of Lompoc, California, earned the title of Accredited Speaker, the highest speaking designation that can be achieved in Toastmasters. It represents mastery of professional speaking techniques.

John Lau, DTM, of Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia, became the new International President at the convention. He is the first International President from Malaysia. A chief executive of a management consultancy company, Lau joined Toastmasters 22 years ago and is a member of three clubs. “Toastmasters has been a blessing for me,” he said in a September *Toastmaster* interview. “It has provided me the opportunity for [career] advancement.”

George Yen, DTM, of Taipei, Taiwan, was selected as the International President-elect. Rounding out the 2012–2013 Executive Committee is First Vice President Mohammed Murad, DTM, of Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and Second Vice President Jim Kokocki, DTM, of Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada. Seven new members of Toastmasters International’s Board of Directors were also chosen. For complete election results, visit [www.toastmasters.org/annualbusinessmeeting](http://www.toastmasters.org/annualbusinessmeeting).

During the Hall of Fame ceremony, six districts were recognized as President’s Distinguished Districts. District 79 was honored as the highest-performing district in the world. The other districts receiving the President’s Distinguished District recognition were, in order of performance: 41, 85, 59, 76 and 34.



# COMMON SPEAKER PITFALLS

20 reasons speakers fail to connect with audiences.

By Craig Valentine

**A**s a speaker, you may have the greatest content in the world, but if you do not connect with your audience, it can all go to waste. It's like being on the phone and having something important to say, but there is static on the line and you can't hear the other person. No matter what you have to say, your message won't get through.

By understanding what stands in the way of connecting with an audience, you can make small adjustments that will lead to deeper and greater connections. Below are 20 reasons many speakers fail to connect.

**1 The audience does not relate to the speaker.** When the speaker

talks about success after success after success, audience members may think to themselves, Well, of course these strategies work for him. He's special. These strategies would never work for me. Whenever audience members feel the speaker is too special, they tend to cast off his or her advice.

**2 Audience members are not sold on why they should listen to the speaker.** Your biography, speech description and introduction should clearly show how the audience will benefit from your presentation. They should be excited before you even take the stage.

**3 Audience members are not sold on why they should take**

**the next step the speaker suggests.** If you do not sell the results that people can gain by following your advice (e.g., happiness, joy, recognition, money, saving time, reducing effort or doing more with less), they will not act on it.

**4 The audience is given too many steps to take.** "A confused mind says no" is an old saying. I've added to it: "A clear mind says go." Giving one exact next step to take helps you connect with your audience during and after your speech. For example, in one of my speeches I ask people to visit my website, and I stay connected with them. Because I don't give several next steps, I can use my entire speech to build the case for



getting them to take that one step. That's a powerful and clear message.

**5 The audience does not feel involved.** I remember watching the movie *Lean On Me* decades ago and hearing the line “No involvement, no commitment.” Hearing that line has produced change in every aspect of my life. People buy into what they help create, so in speaking it pays to make them part of the speech creation. How? By asking questions. Engage your audience members in quick activities. Listen to them as you speak. Involve them in your stories. Jump on spontaneous moments. Find ways to get and keep audience members involved.

**Audience members realize in 30 seconds whether or not they want to hear more.**

**6 The audience does not feel this is the only time you have given your speech.** In other words, they don't feel it's fresh. Instead, they feel like it's something you have rehashed time and time again. Perhaps it is, but your audience shouldn't get that impression. As a speaker, it's important to find ways to make the speech fresh for you so it will be fresh for your audience.

I use what I call the Fabric Softener Approach. When you include a fabric softener sheet while doing the laundry, it refreshes the entire load. In speaking, I rarely give a speech without trying out at least one new line or story. In doing so, that new piece becomes like the sheet of fabric softener—it actually makes the entire speech fresh for me, and that helps keep it fresh for my audience. I also dedicate every speech I give to someone somewhere so that it's just as important every time I give it.

**7 The speaker is not all there.** If you are not emotionally involved in your stories during your speech, you do not stand a chance in connecting with your audience.

**8 The speaker has not done the pre-speech research** necessary to meet audience members where *they* are. Too many speakers give what they want to say rather than what the audience needs to hear. That's a recipe for trouble.

**9 The speaker does not match the energy of the audience.** Have you ever seen a speaker come out way too energetic and loud for the laid-back audience in front of him? Have you ever been that speaker? It's not about bouncing off the walls. It's about matching your energy to the energy of your audience members, and then moving them to where you want them to be.

**10 The speaker does not tease audience members before sharing the message.** Get your audience to thirst for your message before you quench their thirst. Otherwise they won't value what you're saying as much, and they won't have enough curiosity to stay connected.

**11 The speaker favors a side of the room and does not look at everyone in the audience.** I have seen so many speakers turn slightly and face one side of the room for most of their speech. Each person must feel you are speaking to him or her, or you will not connect. Look at everyone throughout the entire speech.

**12 The speaker does not respond (at least visually) to the audience's reactions.** There will be many moments during your speech where audience members will react in certain ways. If you keep talking without at least visually acknowledging their reactions, you will not connect with them. Instead, it will seem as if you could give the same exact speech without your audience

even being there. Speaking involves a back-and-forth flow of energy. Blocking that energy is like blocking the blood flow in a person's body. The results are disastrous.

**13 The speaker “tells us” instead of taking us back to her story.** Don't tell a story from the past; let your audience experience your story in the present. You can do that with dialogue, expressions, reactions and involvement.

**14 The speaker does not use relatable characters.** If your stories are about climbing Mount Everest and doing things your audience has never done and never wants to do, you might have a problem connecting, unless you use journey-related universal principles that can bridge that gap.

I remember speaking to a group in a nursing home early in my career and wondering, How will these older folks relate to me? The answer is they didn't have to. I told stories about advice I received from my grandfather and they, being grandparents and great-grandparents, related to *him*. So they related to me indirectly through my characters.

**15 The speech is a verbal autobiography** that leaves audience members wondering what they should get out of it. Don't make people work that hard. They need to know what they'll get out of your speech from the beginning—not just at the end. The speech can't be, “I did this and I did that and I did this other thing ... and you can do it too.” That's not audience-focused enough to connect. You need to be audience-focused from the very beginning.

**16 The speaker does not come out with a bang.** Audience members realize in 30 seconds whether or not they want to hear more. Make those 30 seconds count.

## 5 TIPS FOR WINNING YOUR HUMOROUS SPEECH CONTEST

By Rich Hopkins, ATMG, CL

**17 The speaker sounds like someone else.** You must be yourself or you'll never connect. I remember watching a speaker who had great content—but there was a problem with his delivery. He faked a Southern accent. It seemed as though he was trying to have a Zig Ziglar-type drawl. This completely destroyed his connection. Why? Because it wasn't his way; it was Ziglar's way. Only Zig Ziglar can be Zig Ziglar. The rest of us need to be ourselves on stage.

**18 The content is not original enough.** As soon as someone starts talking about the starfish or the bricklayer, many people will think they have heard this before, and they will tune out.

**19 The speaker's stories don't stir anything in the audience.** If a speaker's stories are one-dimensional and flat, he will not provoke any emotion (tears and regret, happiness and joy, etc.) in the audience and, therefore, the speaker will not connect.

**20 The speaker does not get the audience to reflect.** If the audience does not reflect, the speaker will not connect.

Perhaps you have been guilty of some of the above-mentioned mistakes. I know I have. This list is in no way exhaustive—there are many other reasons speakers fail to connect with their audiences.

Which ones can you think of? **T**

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Some speakers seem to be born funny. Luckily, true humor is the result of discovery within the ordinary—meaning you can glean funny material from everyday life. Here are five tips to help you prepare for your Humorous Speech Contest. You may not bring home a trophy, but at least you will have a shot at getting your audience giggling, if not outright guffawing.

**Start Funny.** If you want your audience to laugh, give them permission by being humorous as early as possible in your speech, unless you plan for a huge payoff at the end. Getting to the humor quickly doesn't mean starting your speech with a joke. It means delivering unexpected and humorous content within the parameters of your message. If you don't get the laugh you hoped for, at least you didn't stray off topic.

**Exaggerate.** While reality offers humorous moments, *exaggerated* reality will up the ante. Whatever the scenario, say you were going faster, the weather was worse or the colors were more gaudy. As long as it doesn't change the spirit of the message, exaggeration will make your speech more memorable.

**Characters.** The funniest situations often involve your interaction with others. Paint a clear picture of your characters, and look for humor in who they are—perhaps even embellishing a characteristic where appropriate. Drawing on other characters when you deliver humor—while remaining the "straight man"—makes you more likable to your audience, as you instead of others become the object of punch lines.

**Costuming.** This is a risky move, but it can pay off in a big way if handled correctly. I've seen hospital gowns, surprise outfits underneath dress clothes, older women in Harley-Davidson gear, and, of course, cross-dressing. The most important question to ask before dressing up: Will it add to your speech or just be a sideshow?

**Closing Laugh.** If your audience is laughing at your closing line, your chances of winning skyrocket. You can end with a crescendo, taking the audience somewhere they never expected to go, or employ a call-back strategy, referring to a funny aspect of your speech to emphasize your overall message. Either way, stay on topic.

Keep in mind that humor is subjective. The more familiar your topic, the greater the opportunity for universal laughter. Avoid divisive humor and controversial topics—particularly those involving religion and politics. Win or lose, if you get them laughing, you've won the right trophy.

**Rich Hopkins, ATMG, CL**, is a member of the Solar Speak Club in Broomfield, Colorado. He has been a finalist in the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking and is a speaker, author and communications coach whose blog on public speaking is [speakanddeliver.blogspot.com](http://speakanddeliver.blogspot.com).

## “We Believe in the Program!”

### CLUB PROFILE

Continued from page 13

Kene Iloenyosi, DTM, past District 14 governor and a member of two clubs in the district, cites the reasons for the honor. “The Coca-Cola Company shows its support for Toastmasters clubs not just by paying members’ dues, but by giving clubs a budget for [hosting] special events,” he says.

“Through its clubs, the company has sponsored several district conferences, and has produced a number of district leaders who also have been supported by the company.”

The success of The Coca-Cola Company cannot be denied, nor can the success of its Toastmasters members. 🕒

**Mary Nesfield** is an associate editor for the *Toastmaster* magazine. Reach her at [mnesfield@toastmasters.org](mailto:mnesfield@toastmasters.org).

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—Scott Ginsberg, *The Nametag Guy*



▲ **President Stephanie Kalman, CC, CL, and Vice President Public Relations Maria Higgins, ACB, of The Real Thing Toastmasters club.**

Ceree Eberly, senior vice president and chief people officer at The Coca-Cola Company, is the main executive sponsor for the company’s 310 North Toastmasters club at its Atlanta, Georgia, headquarters. She shares her insight about Toastmasters.

### Q: Why is Toastmasters membership valuable for Coca-Cola employees?

**A:** Toastmasters grooms associates today for tomorrow’s leadership challenges. It provides a safe and fun place where people learn to not only prepare and present speeches and presentations, but also to think on their feet in front of an audience.

There is also the opportunity to share information and to get to know leaders and future leaders throughout the system. It is so exciting to see the growth in each associate who takes on this process. We believe in the program!

### How do you recruit new members?

With more than 3,000 employees in our downtown Atlanta complex, our focus this year was on creating more awareness for our Toastmasters club, which we have done through weekly announcements via company emails and message boards. In addition, we have started to include information on Toastmasters and our club in every new employee’s welcome packet. Finally, we have held membership drives by creating special meetings with interesting guest speakers.

### How do your officers keep meetings going in slow times?

We rely on the Toastmaster for that week to use his or her leadership skills and ensure that the key roles get filled. We always seem to find a way to have productive meetings ... even during a slower week.



2012 World Champion of Public Speaking Ryan Avery.

## MOVING ON STAGE

Tips for putting your best foot forward.

By Laurence Bacchus, ACB, CL

**I**f you had been at the District 72 Conference in 2009, in Auckland, New Zealand, you might have seen me videotaping the Toastmasters Humorous Speech Contest. My task was fairly easy: Zoom in far enough, and make minor movements to the right or left if the speaker moves out of range.

Most of the time I didn't have to move the camera at all. But then one of the speakers, a pilot from Air New Zealand who gave a very interesting talk, did one thing that was quite distracting: He walked continuously back and forth across the stage. This made the speech difficult to film. But more importantly, it was hard to concentrate on what the speaker was saying.

There are three reasons to move on stage: You want to create a timeline, you want to structure the stage, or the

action in your story prompts movement. These are particularly applicable when you are telling a story.

### Demonstrate Action

If the character in your story moves, then you should move. For example, if the character repeatedly walks into his boss's office to ask for a raise, then you—as the character—should repeatedly walk toward the spot on the stage where the office is represented.

Or, if you are speaking about handing out fliers for a new business, walk across the stage as you pretend to place the fliers into letterboxes along the way. If you are talking about trying to lose weight but find yourself constantly walking to the refrigerator, then pick a spot on the stage to represent the refrigerator and walk toward it.

Maybe you are staggering backward while fending off an attack, or maybe you are carefully feeling your way through the house after the power has gone off. Fast or slow, your movements should be determined by the action in your story.

### Create a Timeline

If you give a speech that has sequential segments, give the first part of the speech at a place on the stage that represents the beginning of the timeline, and then move along the timeline as you deliver each subsequent segment. People read from left to right, so start the timeline at your right, which is your audience's left, and move across the stage from there.

This way, as you move from point to point in your speech, you will be

## IMAGINARY PEOPLE AND CLINT EASTWOOD

transitioning visually. At the same time, transition verbally by saying something like “Fast forward with me 10 years.”

In spot one, you might share how you were frustrated by a certain problem you had. Moving to spot two, you could share how you researched and discovered the tools that helped you overcome this problem. Moving on to spot three, you could share how your life has become better now that you have the tools you need to solve the problem.

### Structure the Stage

There are two ways to structure the stage. The first is to use ideas; the second is to use imaginary characters.

The first approach is similar to the timeline technique, but instead of having sequential events, you place the main points of your speech on different parts of the stage. You can still use the timeline approach of moving from your audience’s left to right.

For example, if you are talking about how to invest in real estate, you can start at spot one (on the audience’s left) and talk about how to arrange financing. You can then move to spot two to talk about how to buy a property. And finally, you can move to spot three to talk about how to negotiate the deal while working with real estate sales representatives.

In the second method, you place imaginary characters on stage, in spots you refer back to visually. For example, if you give a speech about the advice your grandfather gave you as a child, set up a spot to the side of the stage where you visualize your grandfather sitting in his favorite armchair. As you go through your speech talking about problems you have had in your life, refer back visually to where your grandfather is represented. Indicate that spot with your hand; while doing this, talk about how you applied his advice to your problems. “I was

By now, you’ve probably seen Clint Eastwood’s surprise appearance at the U.S. Republican National Convention in August. He bantered with an imaginary President Obama, whom Eastwood presented as a character seated on an empty chair beside him. His performance sparked a flurry of comments on the Internet, specifically Twitter.

Eastwood’s performance aside, the idea of using imaginary characters is not new. Here’s a brief selection from YouTube:

**“The Empty Chair”** ([youtube.com/watch?v=jlO-sJZH-0o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlO-sJZH-0o); 2:49)

Christine Robinson, DTM, uses an empty chair to symbolize her place in the family, and to describe the impact she had on her family when she wasn’t there.

**“Lessons from Fat Dad”** ([youtube.com/watch?v=rHmBSU9rk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHmBSU9rk); 6:05)

Randy Harvey, DTM, 2004 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking, imagines placing his mother on a chair and describes how his father used to hug her.

**“Just So Lucky”** ([youtube.com/watch?v=m0a\\_EcZyQts](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0a_EcZyQts); 1:20)

Jock Elliott, ATM, clearly creates a spot on the stage for each of three friends he describes in the speech that won him the 2011 Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking.


**“My Alter Ego”** ([youtube.com/watch?v=fUFhh8wSUJA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUFhh8wSUJA); 0:59)

In Robert MacKenzie’s 2008 speech in the International Speech Contest, he describes his alter ego by setting it up as a character on stage—looking up at it, walking around it with his hands held wide apart, and even stepping inside it.

wondering how to deal with this problem, when I remembered what my grandfather always used to say ...”

So there you have it: Move with the action in your story, or create timelines or imaginary characters on stage. Move for a reason.

If you were to highlight every word in this article, nothing would stand out. Speaking coach and Toastmasters’ 1999 World Champion of Public Speaking Craig Valentine says the same thing happens if you move

constantly when you speak. Nothing would stand out. However, if you move with purpose, your movements will mean something. They will add emphasis, impact, emotion and clarity—and they won’t get lost in a sea of constant motion. 

**Laurence Bacchus, ACB, CL**, is president of Pania Toastmasters club in Napier, New Zealand. Email [drbacchus@gmail.com](mailto:drbacchus@gmail.com) for more information.



# ACCENTUATE THE BEAT

Learn the jazzy cadences of English to reduce your accent.

By Paddy Kennedy

---

**I** love the English language. It's a magnificent communication tool—one that has successfully spread its lexicon around the globe for more than 500 years. Throughout the world, English words are commonly heard and seen: *hamburger, TV, blue jeans, OK, airport, stop, golf, tennis, no problem*, and more. These *English-isms*,

*"I was afraid to fail in job interviews, and to sound ridiculous over the phone or even at an informal gathering with friends." — Katia Meirelles*

and hundreds more like them, have successfully infiltrated the vocabularies of many world's languages.

Indeed, English has been the *lingua franca* of the worlds of business, entertainment and international affairs since the dawn of the British Empire. (Today, the form of English used most is Standard North American English.) *The Economist* reports that, today, two-thirds of all scientific papers are published in English. Nearly half of all business deals in Europe are conducted in English. More than two-thirds of the world's daily emails are written in English. English is the official language of Toastmasters International.

Since communication skills, particularly *oral communication skills*, are essential to success in business, making

yourself understood in English is imperative for those who want to express their thoughts to an English-speaking audience. But doing this poses a problem for the international, or "English as a Foreign Language (EFL)," speaker of English, since speaking skills are the most difficult of all language skills to master. Speak-

ing skills are also the least studied and practiced in most international-language school curricula.

Spoken international business English remains a great stumbling block for professionals who are EFL speakers. Foreign accent interference is the number one challenge restricting the open exchange of world-class solutions to worldwide problems. Some of the world's great ideas are not being fully or clearly articulated simply because many EFL speakers feel inadequate, intimidated or inconsequential speaking up at meetings because of their foreign accents.

Yet this doesn't have to be the case. By learning, understanding and using the basic vocal features known as *intonation, rhythm* and *stress*,

EFL speakers can successfully convey meaning and be clearly heard and understood in the process.

## **An Accent Is Not a Problem**

Many international speakers of English, such as the globally popular actors Jackie Chan and Penelope Cruz, have strong accents, yet they are both well understood by native speakers of English. They both make lucrative livings in spite of their accents. Why? We love their accents. In fact, we love accents of all kinds—so long as the speaker is speaking in accordance with the "sounds of English," or what we call the "pitch" and "rhythms" of English. As long as the sounds are harmonious to our English-speaking ear, native speakers can easily understand foreign accents.

Chan and Cruz speak "in harmony" with the rhythms, intonation and cadence patterns of North American English. They have mastered where to place stress within a sentence and how to easily manage the beats and rhythms of the language.

As someone who coaches business professionals on accent reduction, I know that the problem for most EFL speakers is not in the fact that they have accents; rather, it's simply that they have not yet trained their ear to hear the basic sound patterns of English—i.e.,

## JAZZ UP YOUR ENGLISH

*Lingua franca*: a language that is adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different.

English has been the *lingua franca* of international commerce since the 16th century. The form of English used most today is Standard North American English (SNAE). SNAE pronunciation and accent patterns are akin to the sound patterns of American jazz. Believe it or not, hearing, learning and using the jazzy stress, rhythm and intonation patterns of SNAE are not difficult skills to learn and use.

Here's how to do it:

- ▶ **Develop a great ear.** Listen to how things are said.
- ▶ **Imitate what you hear.** Record English-speaking podcasts and radio and TV programs as often as you can. Play them back, while repeatedly stopping them to give yourself time to imitate *exactly* what you have just heard in exactly the same way it was said.
- ▶ **Exaggerate to start.** Make your sounds big. Make your North American accent sound "over the top." Then, after a few practices, use a normal voice to say the sounds. You'll be shocked at how much you've improved.
- ▶ **Don't be shy.** Allow yourself the freedom to play with the sounds. Experiment. Have fun. Try to sound just like the native speakers you hear around you. Remember: Practice makes perfect!



the rise and fall of the voice, the uses of stress and de-stress, and the pitch variations used in every oral expression. Subsequently, they are not yet speaking in harmony with the intonation and cadence patterns of the language.

Most often, the problem lies in the fact that they are applying the sound patterns of their mother tongue to their spoken English. Once EFL speakers hear and grasp the

melodies of English, they can sing along with the vast repertoire of its enormous songbook.

A case in point is Katia Meirelles, whom I coached for more than a year while she was living and working in New York City. When Katia moved to New York from Brazil, people made fun of her because of her strong accent. She says some would even mimic her. "I always

felt so embarrassed," she told me recently. "I was afraid to fail in job interviews, and to sound ridiculous over the phone or even at an informal gathering with friends."

But as we worked together, Katia learned to pay attention to the musical quality of words and sentences, and how to relax and exercise the tongue and the muscles of the mouth.

"My speaking has really improved," says Katia, who now works for Itaú Private Bank International, which does business throughout the world. "I became confident that I could be understood in any situation, because English became much easier for me to understand."

**You must train your ear to hear the way in which native speakers speak.**

### Speaking in Sound Units

Typically, learners of EFL are taught structure, lexicon, the functions of grammar and the parts of speech. They are taught in classrooms with textbooks open. They are taught English word by word, function by function, with a strong emphasis on word order, vocabulary and grammar. Although EFL students are taught pronunciation, rarely are they taught accent reduction.

When learning to actually *speak* English, it's best to temporarily put aside everything already learned from textbooks. Why? Because in the classroom we learn new languages word by word, but outside the classroom we do not *speak* word by word. Rather, we speak in very melodic sound units, especially in English. You must train your ear to hear the



way in which native speakers speak. Learn to hear the words within the melody of the sound units, rather than as individual words as they would appear written on the page.

For example, American mystery novelist Ann Cook explains in her book *American Accent Training* that we don't say "Bob is on the phone." We say "Bobizon thephone"—two separate sound units. "How are you?" sounds like "Howareyou?"—one sound unit. "Good evening, fellow Toastmasters" sounds like "Goodevening fellowtoastmasters"—two sound units. North Americans shorten and contract words, gliding them together harmoniously into melodies.

We love accents of all kinds—so long as the speaker is speaking in accordance with the "sounds of English."

The sound units of Standard North American English are steeped in the rhythm patterns of the indigenous music of the United States—American jazz. As you train your ear, you begin to hear the many sounds of North American English that are so often contracted and staccato, like Charlie Parker's saxophone playing: "Should have" becomes "should've," "going to" becomes "gonna," "they will" becomes "they'll." Other sounds glide together as smoothly and as sensually as the sounds of Chet Baker's trumpet: "Smooth as silk" sounds like "smooooth asilk."

As you begin to speak how you *hear*, you'll realize that your accent is not the problem. You'll begin to focus on the sounds of what is being said. Once you begin to speak in harmony with these sounds, even

though your mother tongue is still evident, you will be easily heard and understood because you are in sync with the resonances of the language.

### It's Not What You Say but How You Say It

This old adage has been around for a long time, and it speaks clearly to learning and practicing accent reduction. North American English is heavily "stress-" or "beat-driven." Its articulation and stress patterns are strongly influenced by the speaker's emotions and intended meaning. Take, for example, the following seven-word sentence: "I never said he stole the money." Where we put the stress within the sentence depends

upon the emotion we want to convey while making this statement:


- ▶ I never said he stole the money. (meaning: I didn't say it; someone else said it!)
- ▶ I *never* said he stole the money. (meaning: I never said it; I did not!)
- ▶ I never *said* he stole the money. (meaning: I never said he stole it; I may have insinuated it.)
- ▶ I never said *he* stole the money. (meaning: I didn't mean him; I meant someone else.)
- ▶ I never said he *stole* the money. (meaning: I didn't say he stole it; I said he borrowed it!)
- ▶ I never said he stole *the* money. (meaning: not the special money; he stole some other money.)

- ▶ I never said he stole the *money*. (meaning: he didn't steal the money; he may have stolen the jewels, however.)

This seven-word sentence can have seven different meanings just by changing where the stress is placed within the sentence. Stress, tone of voice, rhythm and pauses—these are the musical elements of speaking English well.

### Speak to be Heard

Even if your English grammar is Cambridge University-perfect, and you can correctly pronounce all of the individual vowel and consonant sounds of English, foreign accent interference will continue to block the expression of your ideas, concepts and solutions until you master the stress, rhythm and intonation patterns of spoken English.

The good news: Once you train your ear, you're well on your way. Begin to listen to how things are being said. Explore. Be curious. Get out of the box. The only way to beat foreign accent interference is to practice, practice and practice speaking "like a native speaker." You'll be amazed at how great you sound. 

**Paddy Kennedy** is a former area and division governor from District 53. She is founder and principal of Kennedy Communication Studio in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, where she coaches business professionals on international business-communication strategy, accent reduction and intercultural etiquette. Contact Paddy at [paddy@communicatesuccess.com](mailto:paddy@communicatesuccess.com).

# CRAZY FOR GRAMMAR

How to talk yourself into using the right word.

By Jenny Baranick

**C**omedian Jerry Seinfeld famously joked that at a funeral, most people would rather be the corpse than give the eulogy—since studies show people fear public speaking more than death. It can be terrifying to stand in front of all those people, imagining them judging your every word—not to mention your outfit.

I'd rather be considered crazy than use *who* and *whom* incorrectly, wouldn't you?

But I would like to highlight a major benefit of communicating via the spoken rather than written word. When we're speaking, nobody knows if we spelled *there* instead of *they're*, *to* instead of *too*, or *affect* instead of *effect*. Unfortunately, however, a handful of common grammatical errors are impossible to disguise when speaking; they include mistakes regarding the ever-confusing *who* versus *whom*, *I* versus *me*, and *lay* versus *lie*.

These issues confuse us because the technical explanations are confusing: We use the pronouns *who* and *I* when referring to the subject of a clause—the person doing something—and *whom* and *me* when referring to the object (the person having something done to them). When using the verbs *lay* and *lie* in relation to setting down something or reclining, we use *lay* if it takes a direct object and *lie* if it doesn't. But if you're willing to engage in some craziness, you can easily master these grammar rules without intimidating jargon. You only need to talk to yourself, deny the existence of others and burn your Bob Dylan records.

People who talk to themselves may look crazy, but I'd rather be considered crazy than use *who* and *whom* incorrectly, wouldn't you? Consequently, here's a typical conversation between me and me:

▶ Me: Should I use *who* or *whom* in the following sentences: “\_\_\_ invited me to the party? I need to know \_\_\_ to buy the gift for.”

▶ Me: What sounds more natural to the ear: “*He* invited me” or “*Him* invited me”?

▶ Me: *He* invited me.

▶ Me: Then the first blank is *who*. As for the second blank, does it sound correct to say, “I would buy the gift for *him*” or “I would buy the gift for *he*”?

▶ Me: I would buy the gift for *him*.

▶ Me: Then the second blank is *whom*.

As my inner dialogue shows, there's a trick: When we answer the *who/whom* question with *he*, *who* is the correct choice. When we answer with *him*, *whom* is correct. It's easy to remember because both *whom* and *him* end in *m*.

Denying the existence of others might also sound quite nutty, but it's terribly helpful when deciding whether *I* or *me* is correct. For example, when trying to decide whether *I* or *me* accompanied George to Jerry's party, we pretend George doesn't even exist:

▶ ~~George and I~~ attended Jerry's party.

▶ ~~Me and George~~ attended Jerry's party.

It's grammatically correct to say *I* attended the party—not *me* attended the party; therefore, *I* is correct. Let's

deny George's existence one more time to figure out another *I* vs. *me* decision:

▶ Jerry thanked ~~George and I~~ for coming.

▶ Jerry thanked ~~George and me~~ for coming.

It's correct to say Jerry thanked *me*, not Jerry thanked *I*, so *me* is the right choice.

This last trick might seem particularly insane, but if you want to correctly employ *lay* and *lie*, consider burning your Bob Dylan records. The fact that Dylan titled a song “Lay Lady Lay” proves that he may not be as gifted grammatically as he is musically. The lyrics say “Lay lady lay. Lay across my big brass bed”; however, we use *lay* when we set something down in a position of rest. Therefore, if the lyrics had said, “Lay that book on my big brass bed,” that would be correct. We use *lie* when we place our own selves in a resting position, and since Dylan was asking the woman to recline herself on the bed, *lie* would have been the correct choice. Here's a tip: The word *lie* contains the letter “i” (as in *I*, myself), so we can remember we lie *ourselves* down.

Dylan isn't the only grammatically challenged musician. Eric Clapton's title “Lay Down Sally,” Queen's lyrics “I'd like for *you and I* to go romancing” and Bo Diddley's title “*Who* Do You Love?” are all grammatically unsound. Maybe they need to jump on Ozzy Osbourne's “Crazy Train”—for grammar. **T**

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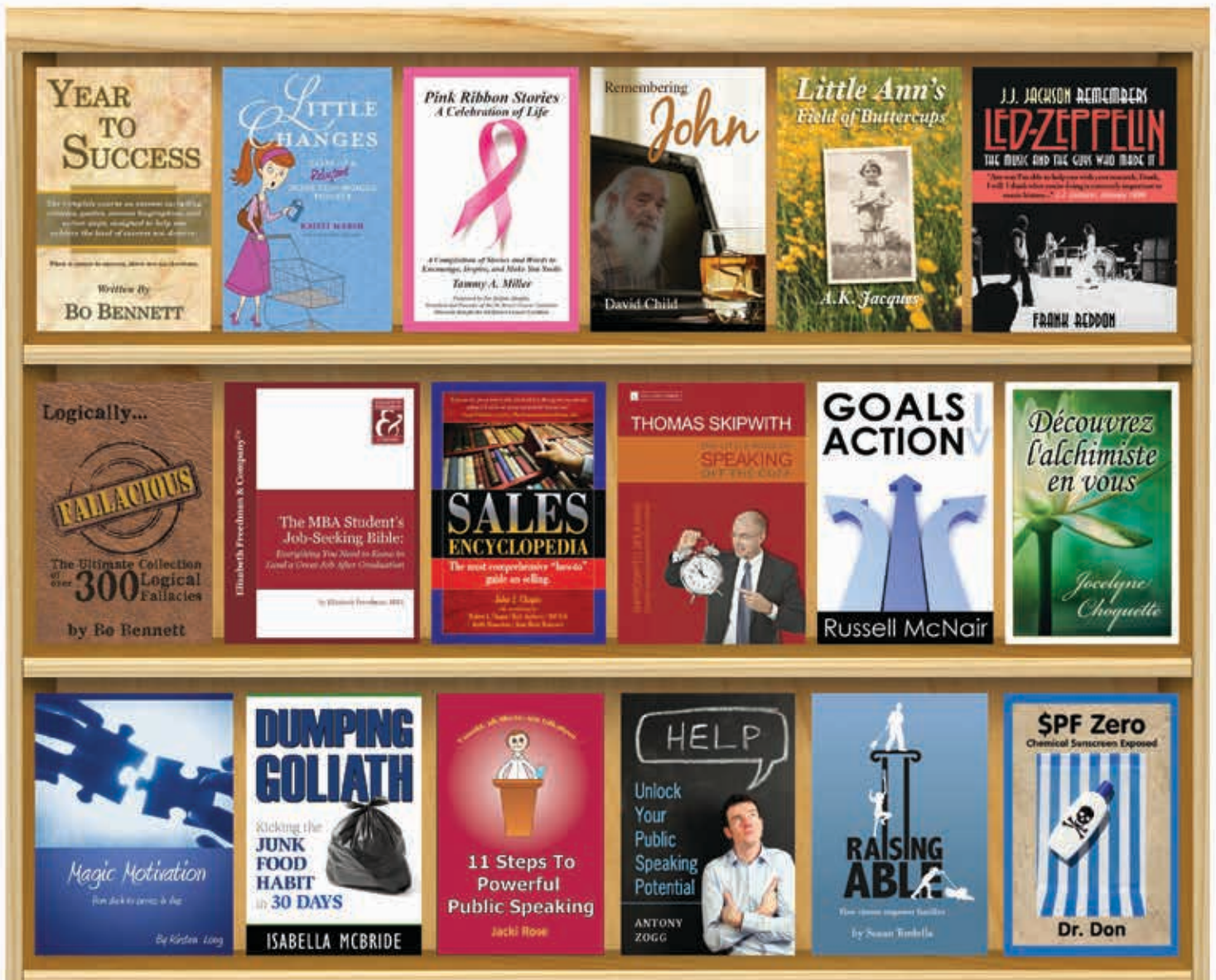
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# A VOLUNTEER'S OLYMPICS

Londoner enjoys once-in-a-lifetime experience at 2012 Games.

By Paul Sterman

**W**hen David Marks studied Russian in college, he never imagined one day he would be translating English into Russian for athletes in the Olympic. But he did just that this past summer. The sales trainer was one of approximately 70,000 volunteers helping organizers run the 2012 Olympic Games. The mammoth international sports competition was held in London, England, where Marks has lived since 1979.

Turkmenistan is a former constituent republic of the Soviet Union situated in Central Asia, and its Olympic delegation consisted of 10 athletes as well as coaches, medical staff, administrative support and various officials.

Besides providing language assistance for Russian-speaking team members—and members of other Russian-speaking delegations—Marks also supported Team Turkmenistan by rooting for the athletes in their indi-

Even without the Toastmasters red timer light to guide me, I kept my answers under two minutes. Later I was given a choice of volunteering in a back-office role or working on the front line, and of course I chose to work with people. My Toastmasters skills, including persuasiveness and my ability to think on my feet, combined with my fluent Russian, equipped me to work with the National Olympic Committee of Turkmenistan.

**“Athletes, like Toastmasters, perform better when they receive support from their audience.”**

— David Marks

Called the “Games Makers,” the volunteers underwent a long selection and training process that started with the London Olympics organizing committee sifting through 240,000 applications for the roles. The volunteer force helped with many logistical tasks at the Olympics, including welcoming visitors, transporting athletes and posting competition results. Held July 27–August 12, the 2012 Games marked the first time London hosted the Olympics since 1948.

A member of four Toastmasters clubs in London—including Russian English Speakers—Marks served as a personal assistant to the Chef de Mission of the National Olympic Committee from Turkmenistan. (A Chef de Mission is the official leader of a country’s sports contingent.)

vidual competitions. (Getting to attend the sports events is one of the perks of being a National Olympic Committee assistant.) The Turkmenistan Chef de Mission even had Marks serve as a flag waver for the team one day. “Athletes, like Toastmasters, perform better when they receive support from their audience,” Marks says.

**Q:** What was the volunteer selection process like?

**A:** At the end of 2011 I was invited for an interview, at which my Toastmasters skills were very useful. The questions they asked included: “Why do you think you could help run the Olympic Games?” “How have you solved problems in the past?” “What would you do if you found a colleague doing something against company policy?”

**What was the main focus of volunteer training?**

Cultural awareness and skill were key training focuses, with the following suggestions: Be aware of personal space; be aware of language barriers; relate to each person as an individual and not a stereotype; think of yourself as an ambassador of your own culture; and incorporate small things, such as greeting people in their own language.

**What kinds of responsibilities did you have during the Olympics?**

My volunteer role involved driving the Chef de Mission and his staff to various venues, translating and interpreting for the delegates who speak Russian but no English, and generally smoothing out irritations that arose daily.

**What kind of car did you drive the Chef de Mission and his staff around in?**



▶ **David Marks, a volunteer at the 2012 London Olympics, stands near a set of Olympic rings in front of athletes' apartments in the Olympic Village.**



The National Olympic Committee of Turkmenistan had two cars—a BMW 3 Series and a Citroen Picasso.

### How did you become fluent in Russian?

In high school I studied French and German and then had the opportunity to go to Leeds University [in England] to study Russian. ... After graduating I was sent to Moscow State University as a British Council Exchange Scholar. I then met my wife-to-be, who persuaded me to remain in Moscow for two more years. I worked as a translator, translating popular literature from Russian to English. Among my translations were articles for the *Olympiad* magazine promoting the Moscow Olympic Games held in 1980.

### How did the Russian English Speakers club come to be?

As time went on I kept meeting Russian speakers in Toastmasters clubs, and the idea crystalized into setting up a bilingual club with English and Russian as the vehicles for speaking, evaluating and leadership. Russian English Speakers had its initial meeting in January 2012 and chartered in June in Canary Wharf, London. I am proud to be its first president.

I ensure that every meeting is opened with a short speech in Russian. During the Olympic Games

it was harder to keep attending all my clubs, but I made sure I did not miss Russian English Speakers, even though it meant I had to wear my [volunteer] uniform.

### What sports events did you get to watch at the Olympics?


Accompanying the Chef de Mission, I sat in VIP seats to watch women's judo and men's boxing and weightlifting. With the delegation's press attaché [press officer], I visited the Olympic Stadium where we had a good view of the men's 3,000-meter steeplechase, the men's hammer throw and the women's heptathlon high jump. I visited the White Water Centre and also the men's triathlon competition in Hyde Park.

I was overjoyed when the National Olympic Committee presented me with a ticket to the men's football (soccer) final between Brazil and Mexico in Wembley Stadium.

### As a longtime Londoner, did it feel good to help your country with this milestone event?

There have been many comments about the Games Makers in their distinctive uniforms—designed by [prominent British fashion designer]

Stella McCartney—being helpful and cheerful everywhere. When I was walking through Hyde Park, I was asked for directions and advice by several people.

I felt not only was I representing my city and my country, but I was in a small way contributing to world peace and cooperation by supporting the international community in the Olympic Village. Among the Turkmenistan athletes' neighbors in the village were Iranians, Palestinians, Israelis, Egyptians and Syrians. As with the Games of ancient times, the fighting stopped and friendship blossomed in a corner of East London for those wonderful weeks. 

Reach David Marks at [david@vkabd.co.uk](mailto:david@vkabd.co.uk).

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

# WHAT'S GOING ON WITH ENGLISH?

Thanks for asking, but he's not well.

By John Cadley

**H**i, this is the English language. I'm speaking to you from an undisclosed location, where I plan to remain for the duration of the United States presidential campaign. I'm not really in hiding. I'm here under doctor's orders. He's afraid that after the way I've been abused in every election since the birth of the republic, one more could do me in for good. And then all you language lovers would have to learn Esperanto.

What finally convinced him was my reaction to Republican candidate Mitt Romney's observation that illegal immigrants should deport themselves because they have decided they could do better by going home. This triggered an attack of Saint Vitus Dance so bad I nearly jumped through a plate-glass window. If the immigrants were doing better at home, *they wouldn't have come here!!* And how exactly do you deport yourself? Serve yourself papers, put yourself in handcuffs and escort yourself to the border? I never got the answer, because the doctor gave me a sedative that knocked me out for a week. During this time people had no language and could only communicate through grunts and facial expressions, which led to thousands of misunderstandings, several lawsuits and two unfortunate marriages. So you see why it's important that the politicians not find me, for my health and yours.

Speaking of health, when I woke up from the sedative I heard President Obama observing that Republican vice-presidential candidate Paul Ryan's budget proposal calls for "healthy

debate." Have you ever seen politicians debate? It's like watching *Waiting for Godot*. Nothing happens—except the complete desecration of *me*, the English language. A political debate today consists of 10 people talking for a solid hour while thousands of words—*my* words—float out of their mouths like soap bubbles, shiny, aromatic and full of *nothing but air!!* Healthy debate? Maybe for them. They walk away without a scratch. I, on the other hand, am left lying on the stage while paramedics try to restart my heart. At least no one suggested having a "substantive debate." That would have killed me.

I know I shouldn't be talking like this. I'm supposed to be resting. But I can't help it. Even in seclusion, I feel some of the inanity wafting over my hiding place, like I'm catching a whiff of laughing gas. For instance, what's a "presumptive nominee"? It's someone who is the nominee who isn't the nominee until he's made the nominee at a convention of people who made him the nominee before he got to the convention so they could nominate him at the convention.

And why does President Obama say "Let me be absolutely clear" just before he begins a speech on the Middle East with, "Israel is a strong friend of Israel's"? One thinks that would have been clear enough without the president having to spell it out. Or when he says, "We're the country that built the Intercontinental Railroad"? The only thing clear is that the president apparently doesn't know that trains can't go on water, unless someone

has built a bridge across the Atlantic Ocean that I don't know about.

Romney doesn't fare much better when he tells the electorate, "I have my budget plan and that's the plan we're going to run on." Who else's plan would he run on? Or when he describes his running mate, Paul Ryan, as "someone who recognizes that there are sometimes honest differences between honest people." I'm sorry, folks, but we're talking about politicians here. Honest differences between honest people? The only person they ever called honest in Washington, D.C., was Abe Lincoln, and he suspended *habeas corpus*, threw rival politicians in jail, and shut down newspapers that didn't agree with him. I mean, honestly ...

And finally, what's with the no ties thing? Every time you see Romney or Obama they're wearing jeans and a sport shirt, as if to say, "See, I'm just like the common folk." Yeah—except for getting free parking, free haircuts and guaranteed retirement; voting yourself a raise; taking really long paid vacations called "going back to listen to my constituents"; receiving tickets to every major sporting event; and having lifetime health insurance—with full *dental* coverage, no less!

I'd better stop. I just heard someone coin the word *Obamanomics*, and it's giving me vertigo. **T**

**John Cadley**, a former advertising copywriter, is a freelance writer and musician living in Fayetteville, New York. Reach him at [jcadley@twcny.rr.com](mailto:jcadley@twcny.rr.com).

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**Cody Wakeford** from Chestermere, Alberta, Canada, poses in front of Tower Bridge with the Olympic rings in London, England.



**Suzy Jeppesen** from Toronto, Ontario, Canada, smiles at Olympic Park Aquatics Centre during the 2012 London Olympics.



**Marcel Roubos** of Hoofddorp, the Netherlands, rests at Torres del Paine National Park in the Chilean Patagonia.



**Leah Geocarlis** from Island Lake, Illinois, visits the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California.



**Kiran Kotala and wife Sreedevi Kotala** of Dukhan, Qatar, visit a beach on Mauritius Island.



**Ninda Tane Sihombing** from Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, enjoys the view of Huta Ginjang in Indonesia.



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