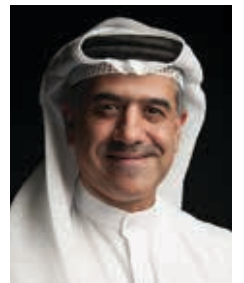


# TOASTMASTER®



## Cross-cultural Communication

How to bridge the language gap in the global age.



Meet International  
President Mohammed  
Murad, DTM



# It All Starts With a Perspective



If I were to offer you a full-time job that requires you to work up to 130 hours per week, with no vacation; requires you to work night and day while getting very little sleep; allows you to sleep only after your associate sleeps. And to top it off, it does not pay anything for your efforts. Would you take the job?

Hundreds of people were interviewed for this job and without exception, all refused to take it. After the interviews were over, the interviewer revealed that millions of people gladly accepted the position: They are mothers.

They are on the job nearly 24 hours a day.

How about if I offer you an adventure that will take you into a forest full of challenges, where I ask you to jump through waterfalls into dangerous waters? It will open many doors for you and present you with lots of

**It's amazing how our perspective determines the paths we take and the perceived value we expect from those paths.**

opportunities. It will also change the way you perceive yourself and will lead you to take control of your life. The only guarantee is that you will come out of it alive, but you are not guaranteed to remain the same person.

Thousands of people are offered the opportunity to take up this adventure, but over time, about half accept the challenge and reap the full benefits. The other half opt out. The adventure is Toastmasters.

It's amazing how our perspective determines the paths we take and the perceived value we expect from those paths. I wonder about those who left Toastmasters before gaining a true perspective of the experience, and what their paths would have looked like had they stayed?

Our organization's new mission statement has certainly enhanced our view of what we gain from being Toastmasters. It says, "We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders." It is up to us to ensure that this view is clear to those who are new to the journey, and most importantly, to those who plan to decline it simply because the job description given to them does not reveal the actual benefits.

Mothers nurture and raise future generations, and yet the details, hurdles and challenges of a mother's job are not as important as the end result.

So how about taking up the Toastmasters adventure with a fresh perspective? A perspective that helps individuals become better communicators, and, as a result, better leaders. **T**

**MOHAMMED MURAD, DTM**  
International President

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

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.



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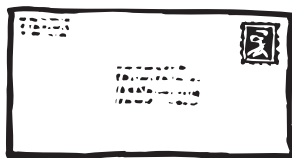
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“If leaders are not compassionate, we end up with many of the conflicts we see around us.”

— Mary Hayhoe, CC

### A Warm Welcome

I stayed in San Diego, California, for several months while on business. During that time, I visited two Toastmasters clubs: Toastmasters of the Cove in San Diego and Toastmasters of La Jolla. I thank their members for the many wonderful experiences I had there. I attended club meetings, a Table Topics contest, a workshop and an open house. The meetings were conducted professionally, in a supportive, educational and creative atmosphere.

When members come to Japan, we are ready to welcome them at Kamakura, one of the historic cities of Japan.

**AYUMU SATO**  
Kamakura Toastmasters  
Kamakura, Kanagawa, Japan

### Table Topics Tips

Reading “Speaking Off the Cuff” by Thomas Piccin and “Tactics For Tackling Table Topics” by Craig Harrison (both in June) helped broaden my horizons for answering Table Topics questions.

With Table Topics, you never know what the question will be, and you don’t have much time to organize your ideas. So, just as Harrison suggests, I go with my gut and follow my instincts. But now I know I can do better by associating a question with current events or processes, patterns, cycles or occurrences in nature.

I also agree with Piccin about the parallels between the worlds of improvisation and Table Topics. I recently saw an improv performance and marveled at the

performer’s ability to immediately connect the dots in order to evoke a beautiful picture in the listeners’ minds.

Learning how to answer Table Topics questions takes a lifetime, so I always celebrate “failure.”

**BRUCE YANG, DTM**  
Taichung Toastmasters  
Taichung City, Taiwan

### A Missing Word

In his May Viewpoint, Immediate Past President George Yen, DTM, states that confidence and communication are the two fundamental and universal qualities of a leader. I’d like to see a third “C” word: either “caring” or “compassionate.”

I’ve encountered people in leadership positions who had confidence and good communication skills, yet I would not want to be led by them. If leaders are not compassionate, we end up with many of the conflicts we see around us—be it in families or organizations—on a local or global level.

As Toastmasters continues to produce leaders, let’s make sure they learn and practice the third “C.”

**MARY HAYHOE, CC**  
Hilo Toastmasters  
Hilo, Hawaii

### Stage Fright

Colleen Plimpton’s “Flubs, Flops and Solutions” (April) gave me ideas on how to handle sensitive situations in club meetings, especially as they relate to members who abandon their speeches midway through when overcome by nervousness or fear. It isn’t always easy to handle stage fright experienced by new members; it is important for club members to share their experiences with those who fail to deliver their speeches.

It is also important that the meeting Toastmaster or Table Topicsmaster show empathy toward the speaker and offer some encouraging words.

**QIANYI BERTON**  
Lyon Toastmasters Limited  
Villeurbanne, France

### Not Skirting the Issue

Jayne Long, from Quincy, Illinois, wrote to the *Toastmaster* magazine (June) about

being offended by an expression in John Spaith’s article “The Art of Bragging” (March). In making an analogy, Spaith wrote that a miniskirt should be “short enough to keep it interesting, but long enough to cover the essentials.” Long wrote that such a phrase objectifies women, and that we need to have articles on gender and audience.

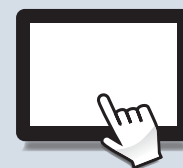
As a woman, I would give her point more credence if women didn’t actually wear very short skirts that barely cover the essentials. I have seen young college women on campus dressed as female body parts to promote a feminist club. These women objectify themselves, but then are offended by remarks made about such objectification.

I think the “short enough, long enough” expression is clever.

**LORA KINDER, CC**  
Saturday Morning Toastmasters  
Riverside, California

### DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

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



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To find the *Toastmaster* magazine app, visit the Apple App Store, Amazon Appstore or Google Play store.



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## 3 ways to enjoy the Toastmaster on the GO!

See the September issue and past issues on these tablets:

- iPad (second-generation iPad and newer)
- Android (4.03 or newer)
- Kindle Fire HD

Simply download the *Toastmaster* magazine app for your tablet from the Apple, Google Play or Amazon app stores.

September Special Tablet Features

- Watch a video of the interpreters who work at the headquarters of the United Nations.
- Learn more about the Professional Speechwriters Association and see photos of its first conference.
- See and learn about the seven wonders of Dubai.

For more information, go to [toastmasters.org/magazine](http://toastmasters.org/magazine).

# AROUND THE GLOBE

## MEMBER MOMENT



## Culture Connector

**Prasad Bakre, CC, CL**, grew up in India and started studying the Japanese language at age 7. He began his career as a translator and interpreter, and eventually moved to Japan to help companies there successfully conduct global business. Today, he is a full-time MBA student at the National University of Singapore.

Bakre belongs to two clubs in Tokyo: Sakura Toastmasters and Tokyo Toastmasters. As past chair of the District 76 marketing committee, he used his language skills to coordinate club-building efforts in Japan. For fun, he plays cricket in a national league and expresses his musical talents through the Indian drums called tablas.

### Why did you join Toastmasters?

A colleague suggested Toastmasters to me. I initially refused to attend, but the day I visited Tokyo Toastmasters, I felt it offered exactly what I wanted—a place to meet interesting people and express myself through speeches. It allows me to interact with amazing speakers and leaders in Tokyo.

### What are the members of your clubs like?

Sakura Toastmasters members are professionals in the early or middle stages of their career. The club is quite diverse, and it's the home club of Region 13 Advisor Kazuko Kawauchi, DTM.

Tokyo Toastmasters is famous for its competitive and professional atmosphere. Members vary in age. We have 20-year-olds and veteran Toastmasters with more than 20 years of experience. For the last four years, members from the club have represented District 76 as semifinalists in the International Speech Contest [held at the International Convention].

### What's the most useful thing you have gained from Toastmasters?

Toastmasters taught me two important things. The first is to listen. I can apply this skill by listening to the needs of my clients and to the issues faced by my team members. The second is to



*Prasad Bakre, CC, CL*

be a servant leader. I heard this term for the first time from Past International President Michael Notaro, DTM, and I try to lead by being a servant leader.

### What is the best advice you have ever received?

My mentor gave me the best advice before I gave my Ice Breaker speech. He said, "Please try to use the word *you* in your speech as much as possible." I realized that involving your audience is an essential element of speechcraft, and I have followed this advice in most of my speeches.

### What are your goals?

My professional goal is to complete my MBA, work for a mergers-and-acquisitions advisory firm and start my own company. On the personal front, I would like to travel to all continents of the world and complete my DTM in the next couple of years.

### Who is your role model?

Mahatma Gandhi. I really admire his oratorical and leadership skills.

## In Brief

### MEET THE BOARD

Let's welcome our new Board of Directors. Read about them at [toastmasters.org/MeetTheBoard](https://toastmasters.org/MeetTheBoard).

### VISIT THE HALL OF FAME

See monthly DTM awards and club anniversaries of 20 years or more at [toastmasters.org/HallOfFame](https://toastmasters.org/HallOfFame).

### UM, UH, ER ...

Presentation expert Ben Decker wrote an article, "How to Cut the 'Ums,' 'Uhs,' and 'Literallys' When Speaking," for *Entrepreneur* magazine. Check it out at [entm.ag/1oSAs3x](https://entm.ag/1oSAs3x).

### IT'S TIME FOR THE SMEDLEY CONTEST

Can your club add five new, dual or

reinstated members between now and September 30? For contest details, visit [toastmasters.org/membershipcontests](https://toastmasters.org/membershipcontests) and click on "Club Contests."

### NEW WEBSITE LAUNCH THIS MONTH

The Toastmasters website ([toastmasters.org](https://toastmasters.org)) has a new look! The new version will be ready for you to explore early this month.



## SNAPSHOT



To mark the club's third anniversary, KEF Toastmasters hopped atop a double-decker bus in November 2013. Their families and members of the KEF Gavel Club joined in on the celebration. Toastmaster of the Day Jyothikumar Chandran led the meeting as the bus toured local landmarks in Doha, Qatar.

## LOOKING AT LANGUAGE

### The Roots of Idioms

Idioms are expressions that have a figurative meaning rather than a literal one. “It’s raining cats and dogs” means a heavy downpour of rain—not actual kittens and canines tumbling from the sky. Many idioms are so ingrained in the English language that their original meanings have been forgotten. The *Scholastic Dictionary of Idioms*, by Marvin Terban, fills us in.

EXPRESSION/ MEANING	HISTORY
<p><b>“Breaking the ice”</b> To say or do something that eases the awkwardness of a social situation.</p>	<p>This is far from a modern expression: Writers like Shakespeare were using it as early as the 16th century. Special boats had to break the ice in frozen-over waterways to clear the way before ships could sail.</p>
<p><b>“A breath of fresh air”</b> Someone or something that is new and refreshing.</p>	<p>Imagine: Breathing fresh air was once taken for granted. Then came the Industrial Revolution, which some historians say was an early cause of air pollution. Thus, fresh air started to contrast with “regular” air, which is why “a breath of fresh air” came to symbolize someone or something different (in a positive way) than the status quo.</p>
<p><b>“All that glitters is not gold”</b> Appearances can be deceiving: Something might seem attractive and valuable at first, but can end up being worthless.</p>	<p>This expression came from the late Middle Ages and appears in various forms in many other languages.</p>

## AROUND THE GLOBE

### WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

#### Why do you compete in Toastmasters speech contests?

“As in sports, competition is a great way to measure individual progress, receive excellent feedback from other club members, and develop a training plan to be implemented until the next speech contest.”

**Vitor Duarte, CC, CL**

Almada Communication Leaders club  
Setúbal, Portugal

“Entering a competition forces you to prepare in a whole new way. It also gives you an opportunity to refine your message. Too many Toastmasters give a speech only once and throw away fabulous material. Contests provide another opportunity to reach a wider audience with your message, and another chance to make a difference in someone's life—in a way that you never could if you sat on the sidelines.”

**David Reed, DTM**

Talk of the Tower club  
San Antonio, Texas

“I appreciate the opportunity to continually refine my speech as I advance through the contest levels. The speech I end up with is often quite different from the speech I give at the club level. Learning from different audience reactions has also been part of my growth experience, e.g., humor that went over big at the area level fell flat at the division level. Through it all, I've learned and grown.”

**Penny Gould, CC, ALB**

Sundowners club  
Spruce Grove, Alberta, Canada

Members contributed to the discussion on the LinkedIn Official Toastmasters International Members Group.

### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“The human brain starts working the moment you are born and never **STOPS** until you stand up to **SPEAK IN PUBLIC.**”

— ENTERTAINER GEORGE JESSEL

### INTERNATIONAL INTERPRETATIONS

## TV Trends: What Do You Watch?

In 2011, the average United States household watched about 8.5 hours of TV per day, nearly twice as many as the runner-up, Hungary, where the average household watched about 4.75 hours of TV per day. Of the countries surveyed, those with low average viewing hours per household per day included Chile (2.75) and Sweden (2.0).

Viewing habits differ from country to country, but similar genres are enjoyed worldwide. So which type of programs did viewers watch in 2013?

Chart-topping dramas included India's *Diya Aur Baati Hum* (a romantic drama about a woman's struggle to become an Indian Police Service officer) and the United Kingdom's *Broadchurch* (a crime drama about the murder of a young boy). Popular reality programs included *The Voice* in Australia (a singing competition) and *Where Are We Going, Dad?* in China (about fatherhood in modern Chinese families). Noteworthy comedy shows included Mexico's *Qué Pobres tan Ricos* (a romantic comedy about a wealthy family that loses its fortune) and the United States' *The Big Bang Theory* (about socially awkward physicists).

But program viewing is not restricted to the TV set. The Accenture Video Solutions Survey conducted in 2013 looked at online video-viewing habits in Brazil, France, Italy, Spain, the U.K. and the U.S. It shows 90 percent of consumers surveyed watch video content via the Internet on computers, smartphones and tablets.

Sources: News.Mic, “Here's How Much TV America Watches Compared to the Rest of the World” and Accenture, “Video-Over-Internet Survey 2013.”



*Did you know that Americans watch nearly twice as much TV as Hungarians do?*

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Add **five** new, dual or reinstated members now through **September 30** to earn a **Smedley Award Ribbon** and receive **10% off** your next club order! Visit [www.toastmasters.org/membershipcontests](http://www.toastmasters.org/membershipcontests) for details.

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## MEET MY MENTOR



# Charles H. Albright, DTM, PID

No one has the potential to influence a member's experience like a mentor. Christopher-Charles Chaney, ACG, ALB, senior program manager at Tennessee Valley Authority, a federal organization in Chattanooga, shares how his mentor Charles H. Albright, DTM, PDG, PID, has helped him. They are both members of Chatter Masters in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

### What prompted you to join Toastmasters?

I was encouraged to visit a club by the vice president of the company I work for. I went to the Chatter Masters meeting and enjoyed the diverse, supportive and friendly atmosphere.

### What goals did you want to achieve?

I wanted to practice delivering impromptu and prepared speeches in order to improve my corporate and community presentations.

### What makes your mentor stand out?

Charles is a member of several clubs, including Chatter Masters. He is passionate about helping aspiring speakers succeed. He gives thorough, honest feedback, which he shares quickly. He also helped me, having been my mentor for almost two years, to become a more effective leader. After earning second place in District 63's Humorous Speech Contest, I became vice president education, then club president, and I'm currently an area governor.

### What other successes can you attribute to your mentor?

Charles inspired me, as club president, to make a difference by thinking outside the box.

First, we kicked off the year with a theme of "Achieving Award-winning Excellence." At the start of each month, we highlighted our achievements (member education awards, gaining new members, club award recognition, and club activities such as Speechcraft) to create a sense of accomplishment for members.

Charles challenged me to be even more creative, and so after following up with club visitors, I invited them, and also new members, to participate in an informal teleconference to address their questions. As a result of Charles' mentoring and encouragement, we enjoyed a 69 percent increase in membership.

### What is your favorite thing about your mentor?

I appreciate his high expectations of me, and how he challenges me to jump higher, reach further and dig deeper.

### NOMINATE YOUR MARVELOUS MENTOR!

Do you know an exceptional mentor who has positively influenced you or other Toastmasters? Send a 200-word description and photo (1 MB or larger) to [MentorMoment@toastmasters.org](mailto:MentorMoment@toastmasters.org).



**FROM LEFT:** Christopher-Charles Chaney with his mentor, Charles Albright

## FACTS WORTH KNOWING

# Prominent Toastmasters

Do you know that some well-known professionals have been Toastmasters?



### CHRIS MATTHEWS

Host of MSNBC's *Hardball with Chris Matthews* and *The Chris Matthews Show*; author and journalist



### NANCY BRINKER

Founder of the *Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation*; former U.S. Ambassador to Hungary



### DEBBI FIELDS ROSE

Founder, *Mrs. Fields Cookies*



### LINDA LINGLE

Former Governor of Hawaii



### MARK EATON

Former pro basketball player for the Utah Jazz team in the National Basketball Association



### TOM MONAGHAN

Founder of *Domino's Pizza*; former owner of the Detroit Tigers baseball team

**EXPAND OUR LIST!** Tell us about a famous Toastmaster in your country. Send an email to [magazine@toastmasters.org](mailto:magazine@toastmasters.org).

## TRAVELING TOASTMASTER



**1 | DEVON DOWNIE AND KEITH ROY FROM VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA**, cruise past the Statue of Liberty in Upper New York Bay, New York.


**2 | CRAIG HARRISON AND LISA SAFRAN FROM BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA**, visit the Church of Saint George, excavated in Lalibela, Ethiopia.

**3 | JULIA AND TONY HASSALL FROM BALLANDEAN, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA**, stand by the MacKinnon Pass Memorial in Fiordland National Park, New Zealand.

**4 | KATHARINA DETREKÖY FROM BERN, SWITZERLAND**, participates in a dog sledding tour in Jameson Land, Greenland.



View more photos on your tablet or on our Facebook page: Toastmasters International Official Fan Page.

 **PICTURE YOURSELF HERE!** Pose with the *Toastmaster* magazine in your exciting surroundings. Email your high-resolution image (at least one megabyte) to [photos@toastmasters.org](mailto:photos@toastmasters.org). Bon voyage!



# Fighting City Hall

How my speechmaking skills helped improve my community.

BY BOB BAXTER, DTM

**Y**ou never know when your Toastmasters skills will come in handy. I discovered that for myself when I spoke out on a local transportation issue. The Regional Transportation District (RTD), a provider of bus service to an eight-county area in Colorado, proposed to do away with service to our community. We have a small, unpaved Park-n-Ride, where locals can park their cars and then catch a regional bus into the city. The RTD was going to vote on the matter at its board of directors meeting.

Like many governmental agencies, the board allows citizens the opportunity to speak at its monthly meetings. This was the community's only chance to convince the board not to discontinue service, and I planned to be among the speakers.

As I prepared my speech, I realized many of the techniques I was employing were learned in Toastmasters. The board permitted only three minutes for citizens to present their cases; even though most Toastmasters manual speeches are longer than three minutes, every one of them has a time limit. Starting with the first project in the *Competent Communication* manual (the Ice Breaker), we learn to keep our message within a certain time period.

I had only three minutes to deliver an organized message to the board with a beginning, middle and end, something that is addressed in the second CC project, "Organize Your Speech." My speech had a point: Convince the board not to shut us down. That's Project 3, "Get to the Point." When preparing my speech, I carefully selected the words that would give it the most impact (Project 4, "How to Say It"). As I practiced, I carefully planned the vocal inflections to enable my speech to keep the audience's attention (Project 6, "Vocal Variety").

Facts and figures would make my argument more convincing. I researched how many extra miles would be driven by all those extra cars if the Park-n-Ride was taken away (Project 7, "Research Your Topic"). My speech was designed to persuade and inspire the board to continue our bus service (projects 9 and 10, "Persuade with Power" and "Inspire Your Audience," respectively).

The big day arrived. As I awaited my turn to speak, I watched and listened to other citizens plea for their particular causes. I remember one speaker, in particular. Even though his voice was



*When Bob Baxter spoke up to defend a local Park-n-Ride, he got more than what he expected.*

steady, I was close enough to see his body trembling. He actually reminded me of myself when I gave my Ice Breaker nine years earlier.

When the board called my name, I walked confidently to the lectern and stated my case. I pointed to the director representing my district (Project 5, "Your Body Speaks") and declared, "Our Park-n-Ride may be only a dirt lot but it's not an embarrassment!"—something he had asserted in previous conversations. The time buzzer went off as I delivered the last word of my speech.

The board voted not to do away with our Park-n-Ride. We kept our bus service because a few residents stood up, used communication skills, and took advantage of an open public hearing to state our case. In the scheme

of worldwide political events, our triumph was small. But to my community, the victory made it better. I was able to make a difference because of the skills I learned from the *Competent Communication* manual.

Over the next two years, the board considered other plans to reduce our bus service. Each time, I spoke out. When the board wanted to impose a parking fee, I used skills learned in Project 8, "Get Comfortable with Visual Aids"; I brought a picture of our 30-year-old "temporary" dirt parking lot and asked the question "You want to charge us for parking in this?!" A group of our residents eventually persuaded the board to build a permanently paved and lighted Park-n-Ride. It is now in service with free parking.

(A side note: As I was lobbying for our Park-n-Ride, I encouraged the Regional Transportation District to start a Toastmasters club. In October 2013, RTD chartered the Rock the Dialogue club in Denver, Colorado.)

Don't be afraid to speak at City Hall and governmental board meetings. Deliver your message and your opinions. You can make a difference. **T**

**BOB BAXTER, DTM**, is a member of the *Evening Stars Toastmasters* in Denver, Colorado. He served as the District 26 governor for the 2008–2009 program year.



# You Must Be Kidding: Tall Tales are a Tall Order

How to be the biggest liar this side of Mars.

BY CAREN NEILE, PH.D., ATMS, CL

*I was late submitting this article because the icemaker in my freezer was on the blink. It just wouldn't stop pouring out ice. Pretty soon the house was so cold that our parakeet froze solid in flight. And when I tried to boil water on the stove, the bubbles froze in the pot.*

**A** plausible excuse for a late submission? Hardly. But it does have the makings of a good tall tale. With Toastmasters fall speech contests coming up, this is a good time to highlight the Tall Tales Contest and the many aspects of this art form.

According to Carolyn S. Brown in *The Tall Tale in American Folklore and Literature*, a tall tale is “a fictional story which is told in the form of personal narrative or anecdotes, which challenges the listener’s credulity with comic outlandishness, and which performs different social functions depending on whether it is heard as true or as fictional.” In other words, because the tall tale is presented as a

“I stick to dogs, trains, and kids as subjects. Everybody knows about those things.” — Bil Lepp, award-winning storyteller

spontaneous reminiscence that happened either to the narrator or to an acquaintance—with true-life, ordinary details that build up almost imperceptibly to something outrageous—even listeners who hear it as fiction often play along and act as though they believe it to be true.

Perhaps the most common example of a tall tale is heard almost every day at docks and fishing holes throughout the land. My favorite traditional “fish tale” concerns the storyteller’s having become so attached to a prize catch that she taught it to walk, only to have it subsequently drown when she gave it swimming lessons!

If you plan to participate in the Toastmasters Tall Tales Contest, here are a few suggestions to bear in mind:

First and foremost, the tall tale must be a story—that is, a sequence of related events with a beginning, middle and end, as well as characters and action. It can’t just be a shopping list of absurd details. That said, it doesn’t have to follow a particular structure. It can be based on traditional tales you’ve heard; on actual, if unusual events; or on your own imagination.

### The Art of Exaggeration

The secret to a good tall tale is exaggeration. The most common types of exaggeration include size, abilities such as intelligence or

strength, or the aggressiveness of animals or weather. But exaggeration isn’t all that’s required. The teller should also compare things, says Brown, in a concrete and comical way. That includes making animals seem human, as in the fish tale above.

Here’s an excerpt from a tall tale called “Mississippi Mosquitoes,” retold by S.E. Schlosser, on [americanfolklore.net](http://americanfolklore.net):

*A visitor to Mississippi decided to take a walk along the river in the cool of the evening. His host warned him that the mosquitoes in the area had been acting up lately, tormenting the alligators until they moved down the river. But the visitor just laughed. ...*

*As he promenaded beside the flowing Mississippi, he heard the whirling sound of a tornado. Looking up, he saw two mosquitoes descending upon him. They lifted him straight up in the air and carried him out over the river...*

You’ll notice that the mosquitoes are compared to a tornado, and the way they carry off their victim is like vultures—big ones at that!

And now, a word about performance. While it helps to be a comic actor, the best tall-tale tellers use a deadpan style that helps to lend an air of believability to even the craziest story. It’s okay to laugh at the end of the tale to assure your audience you’re not losing your mind, but you may also choose to sum up by insisting that every word you said is true, or by inviting listeners to check out the evidence.

Tall tales should come across as stories of the common people, not highbrow literary creations. It’s helpful to speak in short, simple sentences, with pauses, vocal variety, variations of rhythm and timing, and all your other good speaking skills. Make your images sharp and easy to imagine. Use comic understatement. That is, when you say something absurd, don’t overplay it; let the details speak for themselves. Overall, remember that your goal is not to inform, inspire or touch, but to amuse.

### Bil Lepp: The Liars’ Liar

You don’t need to take my word for any of this. If you want to learn the truth about lying, there’s no better expert than Bil Lepp, an award-winning performer, author and storyteller. I first heard Lepp perform several years ago at the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tennessee. He told a tale called “Buck Ain’t No Ordinary Dog” from his album *Buck Meets the Monster Stick*.



*The secret to a good tall tale is exaggeration, such as embellishing the size and strength of fish, people or even violins, ships and staircases.*

The story features an image I will never forget: someone hanging from a speeding train by his frozen tongue.

I asked Lepp for his advice about creating a tall tale. “My best advice is to start with something true,” he says. “Most of my tales are based on things that have happened to me, or someone I know. I start with the truth, and stay true, or plausible, as long as I can, to lure the audience in.

“As far as presentation goes, I stick with Mark Twain’s advice: You have to tell the story like you believe every word, and you don’t get why the audience is laughing. I try very hard to keep a straight face on stage.”

The most common pitfall to creating tall tales, according to Lepp, is too much jargon. “I’ve seen people write tales about sailing or flying that might be very good but are so full of technical language that Popeye and [famed pilot] Chuck Yeager would leave scratching their heads,” he explains. “Write what you know, but make sure it’s also something somebody else knows. That’s why I stick to dogs, trains, and kids as subjects. Everybody knows about those things.”

After Lepp starts his tale with a simple, believable situation or statement—such as

“I have a dog”—he becomes playful. “I’ll do a few jokes, sort of like one-liners, to let the audience know that this is supposed to be fun. After that, I set the stage for what is going to happen in the tale. Then I start my gradual exaggeration, building slowly toward where the story takes off completely from the world of possibility.”

The end of the tale usually ties back into the beginning of the story in some manner. To find out more about Lepp, visit [leppstorytelling.com](http://leppstorytelling.com).

Before creating your own tale, you may want to familiarize yourself with collections of tall tales online or in libraries until you’re fairly comfortable with the form. Most of all, have fun, both during the writing and the telling of your story.

*This is a condensed version of an article published in the November 2007 issue of Toastmaster magazine.*

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The Toastmasters Tall Tales Contest is one of four contest types a district may conduct each year in addition to the International Speech Contest. The other three are: Evaluation, Humorous and Table Topics.

According to the *Toastmasters Speech Contest Rulebook 2014*, the subject for a Tall Tales speech must be “of a highly exaggerated, improbable nature and have a theme or plot.” In addition, humor and props may be used to support or illustrate the speech.



Short on ideas for your next tall tale?

Visit the *Toastmaster* tablet edition to access an idea generator!

# What's The Question?

The answer depends on how you ask.

BY JENNIFER L. BLANCK, DTM

*"Why do you always do that?"*

If someone asked you that question, what would you say? How would it make you feel?

What if that person instead asked, "Can you explain your process to me?" Would you answer it differently?

There's more to asking questions than simply seeking answers. How we ask them, or frame them, determines the kind of responses we get—either positive or negative. On a positive note, by asking strategic

**"You should not ask a question unless you are willing to listen and engage." — Renata Andrade, CC, CL**

questions we can connect people through dialogue or generate feelings of empathy and inspiration. But by asking questions in a negative way, we can seem judgmental and intimidate the person expected to provide an answer.

Aleta Margolis, founder and executive director of the Center for Inspired Teaching in Washington, D.C., observed this dynamic while studying theater and the art of improvisation in college. "I learned how drastically different a scene could become when the framing questions were changed," she says.

As a teacher, Margolis saw how students responded to questions posed in different ways. "Every question has the potential to evoke a wide range of reactions, and shifts in word choice and tone of voice can lead to very different responses," she says. "I found that students were much more open and willing to answer a question like, 'Can you help me understand what happened before class this morning?'

as opposed to, 'Why are you always late?'"

As a result of her experiences, Margolis established the Center for Inspired Teaching, an organization whose aim is to build a better school experience for students by transforming the way teachers are trained.

In Toastmasters, too, asking thoughtful questions is important. For example, club officers query new members to learn more about them. Siobhan McGarry, CC, past president of Carrick on Shannon Toastmasters in Leitrim, Ireland, says, "Members come to Toastmasters for their own reasons, and asking good questions helps us understand what they hope to achieve through membership, so that each club member can play a role in helping [new members] achieve their objectives."

## Listen and Engage

McGarry also touches on the fundamental link between questioning and listening. By asking questions in Toastmasters and in her work as a consultant, she improves her listening skills. "Asking good questions also involves listening to respondents' answers to ensure that I understand their perspectives and can then ask follow-up questions."

Toastmaster and lawyer Renata Andrade, CC, CL, a member of the Vila Olimpia English Toastmasters in São Paulo, Brazil, knows the importance of asking the right questions in her club and in the courtroom. "If you seek a straight and concise answer, then you have to pose a tailored, directed question that seeks to clarify a point, explore ideas or encourage further thought."

Like McGarry, Andrade emphasizes the importance of listening. Toastmasters listen attentively to speakers and fellow members. "Toastmasters helped me to



realize that listening is empathizing," she says. By listening without prior judgment and taking the

time to process someone's

answer, "you establish real communication and trust," she says. "You should not ask a question unless you are willing to listen and engage."

## Improve Your Skills

What makes a question strong or strategic? Margolis, the Washington, D.C. educator, advises people to ask "higher-order" questions, which prompt answers that require thinking and reflection, not just giving simple information. Examples include "Can you help me understand your process?" and "How did the atmosphere of the crowd change after the speech?"

Margolis says, "Higher-order questions require more effort to craft, but the payoff is you learn other people's independent observations and thought processes, not just the answer they think you want to hear."

Then, like so much in Toastmasters, we must practice, practice, practice. McGarry and Andrade both say the supportive and friendly Toastmasters environment is excellent for practicing the best ways to ask questions. Whether fulfilling a club meeting role, serving as a club or district officer or interviewing someone for speech material, the more we strive to ask smart and sensitive questions, the more we will continue to grow as leaders. As the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss said, "The wise man doesn't give the right answers, he poses the right questions." ■

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# Structure Your Speech for Success

Introduce a point, support it with evidence and drive it home.



BY BRENT KERRIGAN, CC

**P**rofessional speechwriters are freaks. Scratch the surface of one and you'll find somebody who dreams in metaphors, fantasizes about triads, and foams at the mouth when they hear the word "keynote."

I'm one of them. Speechwriting is both a profession and a hobby, making Toastmasters a natural fit. But here's the thing: In Toastmasters we discuss things like vocal variety, eye contact and body language. They're all vital to the ultimate success of a speech, but they're all part of speech *delivery*. We spend less time discussing how the speech is structured. Structure is the most important element of a speech.

**If the audience can't figure out how you're taking them from A to Z, and what you actually want them to do about it, you're just a dancing fool.**

You can dance, sing or weep on stage, but if the audience can't figure out how you're taking them from A to Z, *and what you actually want them to do about it*, you're just a dancing fool.

Speakers, from executives to entrepreneurs looking to pitch a product, tend to make the same mistakes when it comes to speech structure. They either have two minutes to explain their idea, and the speech becomes a race to pack in the maximum amount of information possible, or they get a keynote slot and turn it into an hour-long dissertation.

The cold truth is audiences remember little about any speech. We may believe they have an infinite ability to remember our funding analysis and statistics, but they

will remember one or two points, at best. We must therefore present information in a way that is not only easy to understand, but also easy to remember.

## A Formula to Follow

Here's a simple, effective formula: the 1-3-1 approach. One point—three themes to support it—one conclusion. Too simple? I've used this structure for clients ranging from top government ministers to United Nations speakers to business executives. It works.

Let's jump to the most important part of the speech: the point. Not the opening (which should introduce the point), not

the conclusion (which should summarize the point)—but the point. It's what I build upon and what I want the audience to remember, or do. Before you do anything, get to the point—in 140 characters. This is the age of Twitter. The point will (hopefully) be retweeted anyway—so help shape it.

Many writers will go astray in the middle of a speech. Instead of getting from A to Z efficiently, they can seem like drivers who can't remember where they're going or how to get home. Let's imagine we're dairy farmers tasked with writing a speech about why people should drink milk. The point: People should drink more milk. But we can't just *say* that, we need to *convince* people. We need three themes to form a body of evidence.

The best way to establish a speech's themes is by asking the "how" or the "why" of the point. For example, *why* should people drink more milk? Determine the three most convincing reasons.

Let's say the first supporting reason, or theme, is "you need to drink more milk *because it's good for your health*." Again, we must provide evidence to support that statement. But this does not mean reciting a long, boring list of statistics. It's important to provide facts that stick, told in a way that makes them stick. Stories and anecdotes are excellent adhesives.

A second theme could be: "You need to drink more milk *because it supports the economy*." Again, use the same process: State, support and summarize your theme. Do the same for the third theme.

Next, have a *call to action*, in the conclusion, when wrapping things up. After all, you are speaking for a reason ... to get someone to do something! In our milk speech, perhaps we urge the audience to put down the wine list and order a glass of milk. Or, maybe, buy a cow.

Whether a speech is 30 seconds or 30 minutes, its structure is vital to success. Before giving your next speech, map out a 1-3-1 plan. Know your point. Support it well, and ask the audience to do something. If you provide the right road map, they will follow. **T**

**BRENT KERRIGAN, CC**, is the founder of Global Speechwriter and a member of Mercury Toastmasters in Berlin, Germany.

# Advice from Prominent Speechwriters

Pros illustrate the techniques that help speakers win audiences.

BY BRIAN JENNER

*Despite our 140-character world, a good speech is still a game-changer, a route to the top of your field.*

— Fraser Seitel

Fraser Seitel, author and teacher of public relations at New York University, and other speechwriters came together in May at the university to speak to an audience of speechwriting professionals from around the world at the two-day inaugural World Conference of the Professional Speechwriters Association (PSA). They came to make, or hear, speeches ... about the art of speechwriting.

An audience is always receptive to humor. I listened as Seitel asked the most pertinent rhetorical question of the conference: “How do we turn a pompous bag of wind into a thoughtful and motivational speaker?”

It was a gathering of pioneers, celebrating the birth of a new professional body. The Professional Speechwriters Association is to help those who want to use their speechwriting expertise to earn a living with their recognized skills.

Conference facilitator David Murray says, “The PSA is the first and only global association for speechwriters. There is the U.K.



Speechwriters' Guild, the European Speechwriter Network, a German group and a number of regional groups here in the States ... but the PSA is the umbrella organization, where speechwriters from anywhere can connect with speechwriters from everywhere.”

Speakers and conference attendees came from the British Virgin Islands, Denmark, Holland, the United Kingdom, the U.S., Canada, Italy, Australia and Ireland to attend the conference. Representatives of British Petroleum, the U.S. Department of State, the European Commission, Silicon Valley and international governments also attended, and several worked for presidents, prime ministers and CEOs.

Speechwriters usually operate in the shadows, but at the first PSA conference, some of these prominent professionals were invited to speak.

## Winning the Audience Early On

The conference began with a speech by Edmée Tuyl, director of Speechless, a leadership communication consultancy in the Netherlands. Previously, Tuyl served as Head of the Speechwriting Bureau, Cabinet Affairs and Protocol for the Netherlands' Ministry of Economic Affairs, but she is also a trained ballerina.



Page 16, from left, Edmée Tuyl and David Murray

This page, clockwise, from upper left: Conference attendees Eoin O'Malley, Hal Gordon, Anna Fini, Jeff Weinstein, Ryan Heath and Harry Kruglik; and speakers Mette Højen; Jeff Ansell; Fraser P. Seitel; Eric Schnure; and Edmée Tuyl

We tend to see the entertainment industry as separate from the corporate and political worlds, but Tuyl was a government speechwriter before she became focused on the performance side of presenting.

The first step for any speaker is to be “present in the moment.” Tuyl had the audience stand up and do voice exercises. I thought this was a bold move, as most audiences tend to be grudging and skeptical early in the morning. But Tuyl’s charm won us over.

She grabbed the audience’s attention by sharing slides illustrating the principles of the famous British voice coach Patsy Rodenburg. She ended with a clip of Oprah Winfrey’s eulogy to Rosa Parks, encouraging the audience to dance out the words. Words contain movement and gesture, and Tuyl’s interaction with the audience made her presentation memorable.

### Using Humor

Eric Schnure, adjunct professor at the American University in Washington, D.C., worked as a speechwriter for former U.S. Vice President Al Gore. In his talk, “Take the Risk out of the Roast,” he reminded us that a humorous speech is not all about laughs; it’s

also about being liked. He used examples from the White House Correspondents’ Dinner, and showed a clip of a comedian telling cruel jokes. Schnure’s message was clear: “Singe, don’t burn.”

When you write a speech for politicians who plan to mock other politicians, be aware that those politicians may have to work together in the future. His mantra for crafting humor is: Reduce, recycle and reuse. Jokes can always be made better, and Schnure cited an example of one comedian who toured different clubs testing his lines for six months before using them on TV.

The message: If you need a joke—write 10. Use crowdsourcing; test your humor on your coworkers or in your club to see what works and what doesn’t.

### Playing on Emotions

The best presentation of the conference came from Danish rhetoric expert and trumpet player Mette Højen. She used a conductor’s baton and a trumpet to illustrate her theories on how to compose a good speech. Højen wielded her baton and invited members of the audience to come up and conduct from the front of the room.





### Pithy Wisdom

One conclusion derived from the conference was this: If you can write speeches, you're well-placed to shine on social media.

Here are some memorable quotations and sound bites from the event:

"The power to speak well is taken as the 'surest index of a sound understanding'"

— *Isocrates, ancient Athenian orator*

"Don't call yourself a freelancer. Call yourself a 'professional speechwriter.' And don't have photos of cats on your website."

— *Dan Gerstein, political writer and communications strategist*

"Leave with the vivid air signed with your honor."

— *Fraser Seitel, public relations expert*

"We don't want our speeches to sound like vuvuzelas [a plastic horn]—always the same."

— *Mette Højen, rhetoric expert and trumpet player*

"Five percent of the people think; 10 percent of the people think they think; and the other 85 percent would rather die than think."

— *Thomas Edison*

"Research is where you get the gems that make an excellent speech."

— *Hal Gordon, corporate and political speechwriter*

It was an effective metaphor for how a speaker needs to act at the lectern. The conductor leads, encourages, admonishes, harmonizes and highlights the various sections of the orchestra.

Højen drew a graph. On one axis she listed reactions: applause, sadness, tears, laughter and sleep. On the other axis she marked time in minutes. She urged us to think about what emotional reaction we want to generate in the audience each minute and plot it on the graph.

A strong speech has an emotional impact. To illustrate the point, Højen played "Danny Boy" on her trumpet to the Irish tune of "Londonderry Air." She asked the audience to recall the death of someone close while listening. I saw a lady reach for a tissue. Using props, analogies and music, Højen made her presentation meaningful and memorable, and suggested CEOs hold a baton at the lectern to remind them of the purpose of their speech.

#### Prepared Speeches vs. Conversation

One modern school of thought suggests a formal speech is old-fashioned and rather stuffy, and that audiences prefer something more relaxed, like an interview format (or a question and answer session). While some media executives might believe this, speechwriters at the conference were more skeptical.

### "How do we turn a pompous bag of wind into a thoughtful and motivational speaker?" —Fraser Seitel

Retired United States Army General David Petraeus conversed on stage with David Murray, facilitator of the conference and editor of the website *Vital Speeches of the Day* ([vsotd.com](http://vsotd.com)). The former general and former CIA director, now a fixture on the international speaking circuit, pointed out that such a conversation may only require a few briefing notes. By contrast, an important speech might go through 30 or 40 drafts. The writing may be scrutinized, rehearsed and edited for weeks or even months, to create a speech rich in thought, style and structure.

Petraeus said a good speech is worth investing in because it can lead to articles, blog posts, YouTube videos and tweets.

As interesting as the conversation between Petraeus and Murray was, a conversation doesn't have the same intensity as an "old-school style" speech. I yearned for a substantial, charming, witty, persuasive and uplifting speech, and a conversation rarely achieves that.

#### Calming Nerves

Media and presentation coach Jeff Ansell's speech on "How Instantly to Train Your Speakers to Be Something They Are" described his own battles with performance anxiety and how they led to panic attacks on TV and radio. He resolved to become a "flawed vessel through which information flows."



From right, David Murray holds a capnote conversation with retired General David H. Petraeus, previous director of the CIA.

Ansell illustrated how one-liners can improve a speech designed to be inspirational: “How do you slow the racing brain? One thought at a time ...” He also advised speechwriters to add the word *breathe* to the top of each page of their speech, because “98 percent of the people in the room don’t breathe enough.”

“I will not write speeches for you unless I can hear them and ride with you in the car to get you ready [to deliver them].”—Retired U.S. Army General David Petraeus

### Speaker Preparation

Petraeus also spoke about an early assignment in his career, when he wrote speeches for U.S. General John R. Galvin. Galvin encouraged him, as a young speechwriter, to express his views frankly. Petraeus told him, “I will not write speeches for you unless I can hear them and ride with you in the car to get you ready [to deliver them].” Galvin graciously accepted his requests. Petraeus gained Galvin’s trust, and accompanied him to each speech venue.

In his closing statement, Petraeus said, “If you can’t communicate, I don’t care what field you’re in, you’re not going to be effective.”

### Something to Consider

On the plane home to England I thought about the job of being a speechwriter. We often have to work with very important people. We have to find the words for what they’re thinking. In the case of men like Petraeus, the speeches they deliver shape the policies of governments and the future of nations.

Speechwriters have always been around, but they had different job titles. I thought of Joseph from the Bible. Joseph was an “interpreter of dreams.” He worked with the Pharaoh of Egypt to transform the Pharaoh’s dreams into action to save the country from famine.

The title “interpreter of dreams” might be a bit too startling to include on one’s business card, but there was some discussion at the conference whether the title “speechwriter” was entirely appropriate for what we do. Sometimes “executive communication specialist” or “head of communications” better describes the tasks at hand.

Approximately 60 people attended the inaugural conference. Similar events have taken place in the United Kingdom and other places in Europe. The most uplifting part was being in a room with other people who all do the same work. It’s our task to persuade the executives and politicians around us that they can’t do their leadership communications on their own.

**BRIAN JENNER** is a professional speechwriter and founder of the U.K. Speechwriters’ Guild. He is president of his Toastmasters club, Hallmark Speakers, in Bournemouth, Dorset, England.

To learn more about the Professional Speechwriters Association, visit [vsotd.com/speech-writers-association](http://vsotd.com/speech-writers-association).



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*Toastmasters International's 2013–2014 Board of Directors poses at the 2013 International Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. The Board of Directors shapes the organization's policies and represents it in a variety of capacities.*

# Is Board Leadership Your Calling?

Why international directors find service gratifying.

BY TOASTMASTER MAGAZINE STAFF

**T**he 14 directors and five officers elected to serve on the Toastmasters International Board of Directors have an important role: They ensure the overall strength and growth of our organization, as well as shape its vision and policies.

**“The skills I gained through the campaign process were phenomenal, and I will always cherish the opportunity I had to meet Toastmaster leaders from around the world.”**

— Board member Karen Blake, DTM

The men and women serving on the Board of Directors have taken their leadership skills to the highest level in Toastmasters. Have you ever wondered what it takes to be a Board member?

International directors represent one of the 14 Toastmasters regions and are elected to two-year terms. Board members are working ambassadors for the organization and represent it in a variety of capacities. They reflect a global perspective in

policy discussions and incorporate member needs into organizational decisions. Among other responsibilities, they must:

- Participate in events such as Board meetings, committee meetings, and district visits and conferences
- Support the Strategic Plan and the organization's operations
- Approve and oversee the annual budget and financial matters
- Review and recommend administrative and education plans and programs
- Serve as an introducer, facilitator, presenter or contest official at the International Convention and Mid-year Training

Those who have served find the experience deeply rewarding. *Toastmaster* magazine recently talked with former Board member Christine Temblique, DTM, who served two terms (a rarity), and four 2013–2014 international directors, about what it's like to campaign for a director seat and to serve as a Board member. The four directors are Joseph Gomez, DTM; Patricia Hannan, DTM; Deepak Menon, DTM; and Karen Blake, DTM.

### Witnessing Progress

Temblique says the most fulfilling aspect of serving on the Board was “the privilege of witnessing the progress and growth of our organization between my first term in 2001–2003 and my second term in 2011–2012.”

Gomez says the most fulfilling aspect of being a director is “making policy decisions and being able to contribute to the future of Toastmasters International.”

Hannan provides another perspective by sharing how she enjoys visiting other districts and serving as an ambassador for the organization. “I have also formed great



friendships with the region advisors and fellow Board members,” she says. “They enrich my life.”

The group also provided insight on the process of campaigning for a director seat. The costs of mailings, travel and accommodations (for visits to districts and the International Convention), and giveaways such as handouts and posters, are all part of the process. Asked how much they spent on their respective campaigns, the group gave answers ranging from \$4,000 to \$8,000.

“The biggest budget item for me was the giveaways,” says Blake, but she acknowledges, “I could have spent less on those.”

“The skills I gained through the campaign process were phenomenal,”

she adds, “and I will always cherish the opportunity I had to meet Toastmaster leaders from around the world.”

The directors also answered the following questions. (Answers have been edited for length and clarity.)

### What motivated you to run for the Board of Directors?

**Hannan:** I wanted to pay forward to others the benefits I have received from Toastmasters. Being a Toastmaster has changed my life, and the lives of those around me, for the better.

**Temblique:** I wanted to contribute my personal learning and knowledge for the

welfare of members, especially since the districts outside North America—Asia, in particular—are expanding their composition in our total membership.

### How do you balance your professional work with your responsibilities as a Board member? Is the time commitment required of a Board member more or less than you expected?

**Blake:** I balance my work with my Board member responsibilities by being extremely organized. I carefully block out my schedule to accommodate work, family and Toastmasters. The time commitment required of a Board member is less than I expected.

**Menon:** I spend an average of 10 hours a week fulfilling my Board responsibilities. This is very close to the time I expected and leaves me enough time to take care of my professional commitments.

### Outside of Board meetings and teleconferences, on average how much time per month do you spend on Board-related matters?

**Gomez:** Outside the board meetings and conference calls, I spent a minimum of an hour a day on strategic matters for Toastmasters. The conference calls inspire my thinking.

**Blake:** On average, I probably spend about 10 hours per week on Board-related matters. Of course, the time commitment varies from week to week throughout the year. Much of the time is spent on phone calls, and on the computer, so I am home much more now, which my husband loves!

### What advice would you give someone who is considering running for the Board of Directors?

**Menon:** My advice would be to plan carefully for the campaign and predict potential obstacles and pitfalls so they can be avoided. A good campaign team to support the campaign, drawn from regions around the world, is a prerequisite. ■

*To better understand the roles, attributes and responsibilities of a Board member, read the organization's Leadership Roles document at [toastmasters.org/LeadershipRoles](http://toastmasters.org/LeadershipRoles).*

## CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS

Members who serve as international directors must have a demonstrated understanding of Toastmasters International's direction and purpose. They must also have communication and leadership experience and achievement in and outside of Toastmasters.

Are you the right person for the job?

The International Leadership Committee (ILC) nominates director and officer candidates from the pool of applicants. To be a director candidate, you must meet specific qualifications:

- You must be an active member of a club in good standing. For the 12 months before you are nominated, that club must be in a district in the region you wish to serve.
- You must have served a full term as district governor *or* have served as the head of a non-district administrative unit during the entire administrative year before the unit became a district or provisional district.

If you're thinking about running for a director seat, ask yourself these questions:

- How will serving in this capacity enhance my leadership development?
- How will I balance family, work and Toastmasters?
- How will I offer support to the organization?
- What do I bring to the position?

### Campaigning for Office

The cost of your campaign depends on you. If you use resources effectively, you can run for office with minimum expense. To help defray costs, you can set up a campaign website, and with social media you can create your own campaign page to promote yourself to a broader audience.

Toastmasters International recommends that the focus of your campaign be on your accomplishments—in Toastmasters, in your community and in your professional life. Voters are interested in how Toastmasters has contributed to your personal growth, and how you have helped other members. And you should have a thorough knowledge of Toastmasters, its programs and its governing documents.

To apply to be a candidate, visit [toastmasters.org/candidateinformation](http://toastmasters.org/candidateinformation).

“If you love our organization and want to serve on the Board of Directors,” says 2013-2014 Board member Joseph Gomez, “please pursue that Toastmasters vision.”



For the third year in a row, the election of the Toastmasters International President marks a first for the organization. Mohammed Murad, DTM, the 2014–2015 International President, is Toastmasters' first top officer from the United Arab Emirates, just as George Yen last year was the first from Taiwan, and John Lau the year before was the first from Malaysia.

Murad, who was elected at the International Convention in August, has been a member for 17 years. A resident of Dubai, he served on the Dubai police force for 20 years and headed a number of different departments during that time, including Emergency Medical Services. He is now an entrepreneur and the managing director of three companies.

Murad, who enjoys adventurous sports such as bungee jumping and mountain climbing, has an MBA degree and a master's in quality management, both from the University of Wollongong in New South Wales, Australia. He is also a graduate of the City of Dubai's Leadership Development Program, and has received training at Harvard University, the London Business School and the Singapore School of Government. A member of the Dubai Toastmasters club, he has held a series of leadership positions within Toastmasters.

Family is very important to Murad. He and his wife, Zareena, have been married for 27 years, and they have two grown daughters, Eman and Amal. He is the oldest of five siblings.

"When we get together for a weekend lunch every week in my parents' house," he says, "we average around 20 family members, both children and adults, and we have all the fun in the world."

# Meet Mohammed Murad, DTM

Toastmasters' 2014–2015 International President is a Dubai entrepreneur who is passionate about leadership, business ... and bungee jumping.

BY TOASTMASTER MAGAZINE STAFF

## **When and why did you join Toastmasters?**

In 1996, a business acquaintance, William Sampson, invited me to a Toastmasters meeting. At that time, the club I visited was the only club in Dubai, and only the second in the UAE [United Arab Emirates]. I was amazed at how much applause there was every time someone came up front to speak. But I didn't give much thought to how it could affect me personally, and I went on with my life.

It was only when William invited me a second time that I signed up, and that was only because I won best Table Topics for the evening. The vice president membership was there with an application form. William, thank you!

## **Was there a specific skill you wanted to develop?**

I wanted to become a better speaker, and in those days Toastmasters was known mainly for teaching communication skills. Little did I know there was a component of leadership development. I am glad that our organization now emphasizes leadership, which I believe is our core strength.

## **Describe the three different companies you own and run.**

My wife and I are partners in two of them. One is an event management company that specializes in wedding decoration, where we provide bespoke [custom-made] designs and execute them. The concept of weddings is a bit different in our part of the world; here we have separate parties for the women and men, and our business caters mainly to the women's receptions, which on average have a thousand invitees. The name of the company, TanseeQ, is an Arabic name and means "coordination."

The second company is a fashion label for women's evening wear. It has been in existence for around 20 years. The label is called Zareena, named after my wife, who is the creative one in the businesses.

The third company is a management consultancy firm, where we provide training and consultation on leadership and business development. It is called Thought Provokers, and that is what we do—provoke thought.





*Mohammed Murad's wife, Zareena Murad (center) stands with the couple's two daughters, Eman (on the right) and Amal.*

### **As managing director of these companies, what are your responsibilities? Do you often give speeches?**

My responsibilities are to make sure the companies are profitable and running smoothly. Apart from that, I supervise the brand images and participate in the training of my staff, not because I have to, but because it gives me a feel for their sentiments and what the company needs to focus on.

As far as giving speeches, I do not do much of that in my own businesses, because I prefer to have a dialogue with my employees. Outside my businesses, I do quite a lot of speeches, since I often receive requests to give keynotes and motivational messages.

### **You are the first International President from the United Arab Emirates. What does it mean to you and to Toastmasters in the Arab world?**

I am a proud Emirati, and proud to have represented my country in the different levels of a global organization. Not just in the Arab world but globally, we need to become better communicators and leaders. Toastmasters is a great platform for realizing dreams and closing the gaps in cultures. By taking up leadership roles in organizations that are making a difference,

Arabs, and specifically Emiratis, can proudly say they are part of making this world a better place, starting with their own communities.

No individual should perceive others through stereotypes associated with culture, religion and race. People need to be evaluated on their merits and capabilities. I hope that my Toastmasters presidency serves as motivation for individuals—not only in our organization but also in other organizations with a diverse membership such as ours—to take up leadership challenges and succeed in adding value to our communities, however big or small.

### **What languages do you speak?**

I speak Arabic—my mother tongue—and English, because students here are taught two languages, starting in kindergarten. My accent is a mix of British and American due to the influence of formal education and American movies. I also speak Urdu fluently, as well as Persian, and I speak a little Russian, which we learned in the police force after the separation of Russian republics and the influx of Russians into the UAE.

## **I'm excited about our revitalized education program launching next year.**

### **What aspect of Toastmasters do you like best?**

Seeing the extent to which the program can change people, including myself, for the better, and also being able to proudly say that I was part of helping even one person develop skills and confidence. It is fascinating to see that every part of the Toastmasters journey can add value to people. So it is not individual aspects of the program that I like best, it is the overall experience that entices me.

I'm excited about our revitalized education program launching next year, which will be a catalyst to focus and connect the whole Toastmasters experience.

### **Give an example of how Toastmasters has helped you in your professional life.**

One very prominent example is the step I took from being an employee to becoming self-employed. After 20 years of service in the police force in Dubai, I gathered enough guts and bravery to ask for voluntary retirement and start my own business with my wife. This was the most important step in my life.

Taking a bold step requires self-confidence and the positive belief that if you focus on a goal, you will achieve it. I gained those characteristics through Toastmasters. In Toastmasters, an individual gains confidence and learns more about his or her abilities and skills through continual self-monitoring and evaluation. These benefits are a collective result of attending and participating in club meetings and taking on leadership roles.

### What advice would you give to someone serving as a Toastmasters leader for the first time?

Take the role as seriously as possible, but have as much fun as you can while going through the experience. Serving in a leadership role is a responsibility and a challenge at any level.

### Who are some leaders you admire and why?

Mahatma Gandhi is my idol. I love the way he translated his vision into reality; he was a leader who was firm yet caring, decisive yet flexible, focused on detail yet leading others at the highest levels.

### Tell us about your interests outside of Toastmasters.

Extreme sports are something I have great passion for. I seek the adrenaline rush wherever I go, so bungee jumping, skydiving and whitewater rafting are sports that excite me. I go on hiking and mountain climbing trips whenever I have the time, which I don't have much of lately. And because I am a photographer, I like taking photos of what I see.

I am also a collector. I collect watches, limited edition pens and daggers.

### How do you balance your job with your responsibilities as an international leader for our organization?

Simple time management skills and prioritizing tasks is key to successful balance. Many members get so involved in Toastmasters that work and family become secondary. I wholeheartedly encourage balancing all aspects of life. A service mind-set is a leadership trait, but sometimes it is good to politely say no.

### What are your goals for your year in office?

My goal is not related to how successful my year in office will be—it is to look back five years after I finish my term and be satisfied with what the organization has achieved. It is the continuity and progress of an organization that marks the success of a leader, not timebound results. Our organization will celebrate its 90th anniversary this year; our success is what we have achieved all these years, not just the last one.

### If you had one piece of advice for every Toastmaster, what would it be?

To me, Toastmasters is a way of life, not just a program. So my advice is: Take advantage of every opportunity in your Toastmasters journey, and stay in the organization long enough to reap the real benefits, which are embedded not only in becoming a better communicator, but in becoming a better leader. **T**



Visit the tablet edition of *Toastmaster* magazine to learn more about Dubai, home of International President Mohammed Murad.



1) Mohammed Murad is introduced at the 2011 International Convention as a candidate for Second Vice President on the Board of Directors. He served in that role during the 2011–2012 program year.

2) Our new International President is an avid photographer—and hiking enthusiast—who took this photo during a trekking adventure in the mountains of Oman.

3) Murad chaired the World Championship of Public Speaking at the 2013 International Convention.





*Moyara Ruehsen from California went to Iraq to conduct finance training sessions as part of an international development program funded by the U.S. She also visited the Lebanese Family Club in Baghdad to deliver a speech in which she states the expression “The glass is half full, not half empty.”*

## Breaking the Ice in Baghdad

Economics professor forges connections using interpersonal skills more than language.

BY MOYARA RUEHSEN, ACS, ALB

In 2012, I was invited to train Iraqi professors from universities throughout Iraq so they could develop courses to train the next generation of bankers. I was selected for my unique area of expertise; I consult government agencies and the private sector on anti-money laundering compliance and financial crimes, and one of my specialties is Middle Eastern economies. I am also a professor at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, a graduate school in Monterey, California.

The training, held at the University of Baghdad, was for a financial-sector development project financed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The program was developed because banks needed help finding qualified graduates to work in the financial services sector. The project entailed several different assignments, including giving talks to staff of the Central Bank of Iraq, consulting with private banking representatives, and instructing banking faculty from across Iraq.

At the project's headquarters, two thirds of the staff were Iraqi. Most of the other professional staff came from all over the world: the Philippines, Australia, Kenya, Canada, Great Britain and the United States. Indeed, the national diversity wasn't that different from the two community clubs that I belong to in Monterey: Monterey Institute

Toastmasters and the Naval Postgraduate School club. Both clubs are defined by a tremendous diversity of culture and ethnicity.

My duty for the contract was to not just focus on content, but also on pedagogical techniques and modern presentation skills. Even though I have been teaching at the university level for more than 20 years, it was not until I joined Toastmasters that I was able to take things to a new level and discover many bad habits. After more than five years as a Toastmaster, I'm still learning, but I am at least equipped with many lessons I can pass along.



In all of my roles, including as a consultant in the USAID office at an undisclosed location outside the Green Zone (a heavily fortified international zone), I used skills that I cultivated in my Toastmasters clubs: interpersonal skills, presentation skills, and working with translators and interpreters.

### Breaking the Ice

I developed a packet of training materials, which the staff translated. One of my goals was to convey that teaching does not have to follow a dry lecture format. So I introduced three of my favorite Toastmasters tools: props, visual aids (not bullet points) and humor.

However, I believe the professors came not to hear me speak, but because my presentation was free, and it gave them a chance to get away from work and network. I was conducting a week-long training session, but what could I, an American woman, tell banking and finance professors that they didn't already know? I wondered why they would bother listening to my presentation five hours a day for five days straight via simultaneous interpretation, with its awkward several-seconds delay.

There is an important difference between simultaneous and consecutive interpretation. Consecutive is when the speaker completes a sentence or paragraph, and the interpreter then translates that segment. Consecutive interpretation doubles the time it takes to deliver a message, so, if you have a highly trained interpreter, simultaneous interpretation is the best way to go. I had the opportunity to use both, although the consecutive interpretation experience was entirely unplanned.

When I delivered the opening, in Arabic, to a skeptical crowd, I heard several audience members respond, "Oh! She speaks Arabic!" Their initial skepticism soon melted away and was replaced by laughter, and enthusiasm, as they accepted the messages I delivered. My Arabic skills had been good at one time. I studied Arabic for four years in university and graduate school, including a summer at Yarmouk University in Jordan and a year as a Fulbright scholar in Bahrain. After 25 years of little practice, I was capable only of polite small talk, but I broke the ice!



*Moyara Ruehsen, who specializes in Middle Eastern economies, trains Iraqi banking and finance professors on pedagogical and modern presentation techniques as part of a USAID project at the University of Baghdad.*

### Using Interpreters

The next challenge was working with translators and interpreters. Translation is for the written word, and interpretation is for the spoken word. The Monterey

instance, the concept of a "moral hazard" is difficult enough to explain in English. It cannot be translated or interpreted literally as "moral + hazard." The phrase is a reference to situations in which parties (e.g.

## We hired two outstanding interpreters for the training course, and they proved their dedication when a series of bombs went off one morning all over Baghdad.

Institute where I work is well-known for its professional interpretation program, so we have been blessed with the ability to make use of these services for our Toastmasters club meetings, with graduate students interpreting on special occasions

Interpreters are a critical part of a team. To ensure the success of the presentation, a speaker should share notes, slides and other materials days in advance and clarify idiomatic expressions and jargon. For

banks) take unnecessary risks knowing that they will be protected (e.g. bailed out) from the consequences if things go badly. It took much discussion to clarify this notion and find a way to express it properly in Arabic.

We hired two outstanding interpreters for the training course, and they proved their dedication when a series of bombs went off one morning all over Baghdad. We were located at the



*Moyara Ruehsen poses with her personal security detail in Baghdad, Iraq.*

University of Baghdad that day, and one of the interpreters was stuck in a cab at a checkpoint when a car bomb went off five cars ahead of him. He saw the body of the soldier manning the checkpoint fly up into the air, and the interpreter's first thought was "They need me at the university; my interpreting partner cannot manage alone." So while still in shock, and with his heart beating frantically, he walked into the opposing lane of traffic to hail another cab and find another route to the university. We were astounded by his commitment.

**It was a good thing that years of Table Topics practice had honed my impromptu skills, because at least 10 different media outlets were there with camera crews and correspondents.**

### **Ready for the Unexpected**

I was invited to attend a press conference announcing an educational partnership, and, in the car ride to the event, my boss said I might be asked to say a few words about the importance of training the next generation of bankers on anti-money laundering compliance. By "a few words" he meant a speech! And, with the consecutive interpretation, it ended up being a long speech. I had not prepared anything, but years of Table Topics practice in Toastmasters club meetings had honed my impromptu skills. It was a good thing, too, because at least 10 different media outlets were there with camera crews and

correspondents. A week later I went to get my haircut from an Iraqi barber, and when I walked in the door he said, "I know you. You were on television."

### **Using Translators**

In addition to interpreters, I also had to work closely with professional translators, not just for the training course materials, but especially for an important speech I delivered at the Lebanese Family Club on the banks of the Tigris River. A few days before the speech, I met for several

hours with a team of three translators to finesse some politically sensitive content. The translation team was able to give me helpful feedback to alter the tone and wording in places, and I was able to confirm several idiomatic expressions. I began and ended the speech with "The glass is half full, not half empty." I wanted to make sure they had that expression in Arabic, and, indeed, they did. The result was a beautifully printed translation of the speech, which we handed out at the event. Even though the audience members listened with headphones to the simultaneous interpretation, they could refer to the printed version later.

### **Connecting Cultures**

The trip was more successful thanks to the skills I learned in Toastmasters. Over the years at club meetings we've had some funny cross-cultural misunderstandings, but we learned so much from each other and about other cultures. Most of all, we learned to appreciate one another. The tools I acquired in Toastmasters undoubtedly helped me to connect with my Iraqi colleagues.

My only regret was not being able to help them start a new Toastmasters club in Baghdad. At the time, the security situation made the logistics too burdensome. Currently there is only one club in Iraq, in the northern city of Sulaymaniyah.

At one point, one of my Iraqi colleagues asked me, "So what is your impression of Iraqis?" I answered truthfully: They were no different from other professionals I have worked with around the world. Some have kind and generous dispositions, and some less so. Some are intellectually brilliant and extensively knowledgeable, and some less so. Some are hard-working and highly competent, and some less so. Some are introverts and others extroverts. In other words, the staff at the Financial Sector Development headquarters represented the full range of personality types one would find in most work environments (and Toastmasters clubs). I'm convinced that the ability to work with many personality types, and to build interpersonal skills in general is far more important than language ability when it comes to forging connections with others abroad.

**MOYARA RUEHSEN, ACS, ALB**, is a professor at the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California. She specializes in anti-money laundering and financial crimes, with a regional expertise in the Middle East. She has delivered guest lectures and training modules throughout the U.S. and overseas to both the private sector and government officials.



Go to the tablet to watch "United Nations, A Day in the Life of Real Interpreters," a special video from the movie, *The Interpreter*.



# Diversity in Dubai

Club draws strength from its multicultural membership.

BY CHRISTINE COOMBE, PH.D., DTM

With 29 different nationalities represented among its 56 members, Dubai Internet City (DIC) Toastmasters is proud of its cultural diversity and its role in fostering cross-cultural communication and leadership.

The club is based in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Dubai itself has one of the most diverse populations in the world, with more than 200 nationalities represented, so it is not surprising that DIC Toastmasters attracts members from diverse cultural backgrounds. One of more than 100 clubs in the UAE, its executive committee includes members of seven nationalities.

Carole Spiers, a guest broadcaster with BBC and an international expert on workplace stress, first heard about the club on a visit to Dubai. She has given speeches and education sessions to the club and is an honorary member. She mentioned the club many times in her weekly column in the *Gulf News*, the biggest selling regional newspaper in the UAE.

Members of DIC Toastmasters consider their ethnic diversity a badge of honor and source of strength. John Nolan, CC, CL, a past club president and a current Division F governor, says the club makes an effort to promote itself as an “international environment where people can come together and learn and develop.”

Diversity enables club members to grow as individuals, exposing them to different groups of people and opening their minds to different ways of life.

As the immediate past Division F governor, I had the pleasure of attending a



*Dubai Internet City Toastmasters in the United Arab Emirates attracts members from widely diverse cultural backgrounds.*

DIC club meeting, where I heard members from a wide variety of countries share their varied experiences. Toastmaster of the Day Assita Kone, originally from France, opened the meeting; Artie from Kazakhstan took home the trophy for Best Speaker; and Toastmasters from the Republic of Mauritius, India and the United Kingdom participated in Table Topics.

A couple of unique principles contribute to the success of the club:

DIC does not schedule meetings around any national or religious holidays. If a meeting is planned on a holiday, then members who celebrate that holiday simply skip that meeting.

The club encourages members who are non-native English speakers to take on the grammarian role. This ensures that varying perspectives are heard, and it calms members who might be self-conscious about speaking in English.

## Club Success

For the 2012–2013 program year, DIC Toastmasters increased membership and achieved President’s Distinguished Club recognition for the first time. In addition, two of its members advanced to the district finals in Toastmasters speech contests. Another two members went on to serve as area governor and division governor, respectively. DIC Toastmasters also became a corporate-club mentor, with members having assisted two newly-formed corporate clubs. The club earned

President’s Distinguished recognition for the 2013–2014 year as well.

Club member Greg Pogonowski, ACB, ALB, a past area governor, credits club success to an ethos of, “We all work hard. We also play hard.” He explains that high-quality meetings are mixed with more relaxed events like an end-of-the-year club party, making the group “a cohesive unit that appreciates both the work associated with club meetings and the social aspect and camaraderie that goes along with it.”

When DIC club membership surpassed 60, another club was chartered earlier this year to ensure continued growth and success. DIC2 Toastmasters meets on the two Wednesdays of the month that DIC1 Toastmasters does not meet, and the two clubs share the same meeting location, resources and website ([dictoastmasters.com](http://dictoastmasters.com)).

Multiculturalism and ethnic diversity enable DIC club members to open their minds to new learning opportunities from others. Everyone benefits from diversity. As author Catherine Pulsifer says, “Without diversity life would be very boring.”

**CHRISTINE COOMBE, PH.D., DTM**, is a member of Dubai Men’s College Toastmasters and served as the 2013–2014 Division F governor in District 20. She has a Ph.D. in foreign language education, and was president of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) International Association in 2011–2012.





## How's the Weather?

Make sure you want to know, because, believe me, they'll tell you.

BY JOHN CADLEY

**W**hen did reporting the weather on a TV news program start looking like the Situation Room in the White House? Maps, graphs, radar, satellites and serious people who talk more like Washington policy wonks than recent college graduates with a degree in atmospheric science, or something related ... like English literature.

Let's start with the "storm team." One would assume that means a team of people who tell you about storms. One would be wrong. The "team" is actually one person—who gives you the forecast whether or not there's a storm. (I love hearing the "storm team" tell me that tomorrow will be sunny and pleasant.) I know this gives them gravitas so the real news people won't flick their

### Who in their right mind would care that there's going to be a one-degree difference between 1 and 2 a.m.??!!

ears and put whoopee cushions on their chairs. But they already have professional credibility. The "anchor" may be the big cheese on the program, but who wants a simple two-syllable title synonymous with dead weight?

These people are *meteorologists!* They don't sit in a comfy chair with perfect hair and perfect teeth, reading the news off a teleprompter. They're right out there on the "weather deck" braving the elements to give you the "First Alert" weather four minutes into the news broadcast.

That's what happens. You don't get one weather report; you get three. There's that "First Alert FastCast" right off the top, followed by another report 14 minutes into the program that is also called "First Alert." (It's actually the second alert but who's counting? And why is it an "alert"? It's a weather report, not a smoke detector.) Besides, it's the same as the first alert because the weather doesn't usually change in 14 minutes. Then there's the recap at the end of the show, which offers the same information as at the beginning. Thanks, people, but I just want to know the weather, I don't want to memorize it.

Somewhere in the middle of all this they bring out the big gun—the radar map. The thing covers the whole screen with

blobs of blue, green, red and yellow all over it and a graphic saying "Triple Doppler Radar." What's "Doppler Radar"? I'll tell you what. I looked it up. It's radar that uses the Doppler effect, which happens to be  $f_d \approx 2v \frac{f_t}{c}$ . I doubt that's the answer I'd get if I asked. So *there!*

I took all that time to do my homework and now they're giving me *Triple Doppler*. I don't believe it. When something's that complicated you can't triple it. The universe would explode. Besides, I think they're stretching it.

My research revealed that "partly because of its use by *television meteorologists* [italics mine], the term Doppler Radar has *erroneously* become synonymous with the type of radar used in meteorology. Most modern weather radars use a pulse-doppler technique to examine the motion of precipitation." Get that? With a small "d" no less. Gotcha! (I love correcting people when I know even less about it than they do.)

I can understand some of this. TV forecasters have all this new technology and they want to show you the cool things it can do. Fine. But I draw the line at the "Hour by Hour" feature. This is when they show you what the temperature is going to be *every hour throughout the night!* At midnight it will be 72 degrees, at 1 a.m. it will be 71, at 2 a.m. it will be 69 ... . What is this—the "Sleepwalkers' Report"? I'm in bed! I'm unconscious! Why are you telling me this? And who in their right mind would care that there's going to be a *one-degree* difference between 1 and 2 a.m.??!! Somebody down there needs to get a life.

Thankfully, the news is just about finished. All I need now is the "7-Day Outlook" and the "Bus Stop Report" so I don't send my kid to school in a hurricane.

Then the show's over. Free at last! The next show comes on and 30 seconds into it there's a crawl across the bottom of the screen: "Weather alert for Madison and Oswego County ... ." Don't these people ever stop? It makes me think of that book I used to read to my kids: *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*. **■**

**JOHN CADLEY**, a former advertising copywriter, is a freelance writer and musician living in Fayetteville, New York.



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The eBookIt.com bestseller *Gifts of the Heart* is a powerful and rich story that takes you on a fast-paced adventure around the world and changes your life forever. Hassan Tetteh tells the story of Dr. Kareem Afram, a young surgeon, who comes of age serving his country in the Afghanistan desert where he encounters the fragility of life. The story is at once raw and beautifully allegorical. The book transcends any particular creed. Ultimately, it is about living with a sense of unflinching gratitude for the gifts of life and using those gifts in service to something beyond ourselves.

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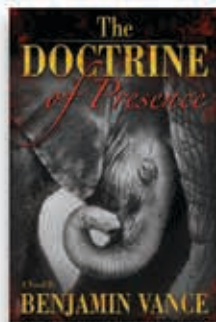
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On the surface, golf and poker seem to be two disparate entities with very little in common. However, the contents of Book 1 (golf) and Book 2 (poker) details and demonstrates that both are similar in many ways with the most important element being the sharing of mental attributes essential for initial and on-going consistent success. Both activities also provide ego-satisfaction along with supplying the challenge of attempting to bridge the gap between the actual competitor and the imagined competitor.

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*The Doctrine of Presence* introduces the reader to dedicated men and women, concerned with animal abuse and poaching in Kenya. There are no heroes in this adventure novel; just determined people, disgusted with the misguided waste of Earth's beauty and bounty. A bewildering transition

from benign exposition to bloody manhunts places the characters on a poacher's kill list, but *The Doctrine of Presence* demonstrates how leadership and evoked skills can meet any challenge; individually or governmentally fabricated. *The Doctrine of Presence* promotes active rescue and elevation of life, rather than the ongoing apathy toward the mass killings occurring worldwide ([www.benjaminvancebooks.com](http://www.benjaminvancebooks.com)).

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As the hopeless days of recession ticked away in corporate USA, sinister plans were hatched in the cubicles of Product Wave. The accountants would catch these fraudsters, or maybe it was wiser to just let management stay in the dark. The "Yes-Man Revolution" was born. A psychological satire on office life and boardroom mayhem, *Cubicle Envy* plays no favorites in the office pool. In the end, amid the rubble of flattened 401Ks, and a few too many irretrievable barbs, a small group will come out unscathed. It might not be who you think, but you may find new appreciation for your job.

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VEGAS is a riveting story of a fight against greed and corruption in American politics. A small group of lawyers, calling themselves the 1 Law 4 All Foundation, find themselves in an epic standoff with a cagey US Senator. The Foundation investigates the disappearance of a colleague's twin sister. Jimmy Kohl, the Foundation's point in Las

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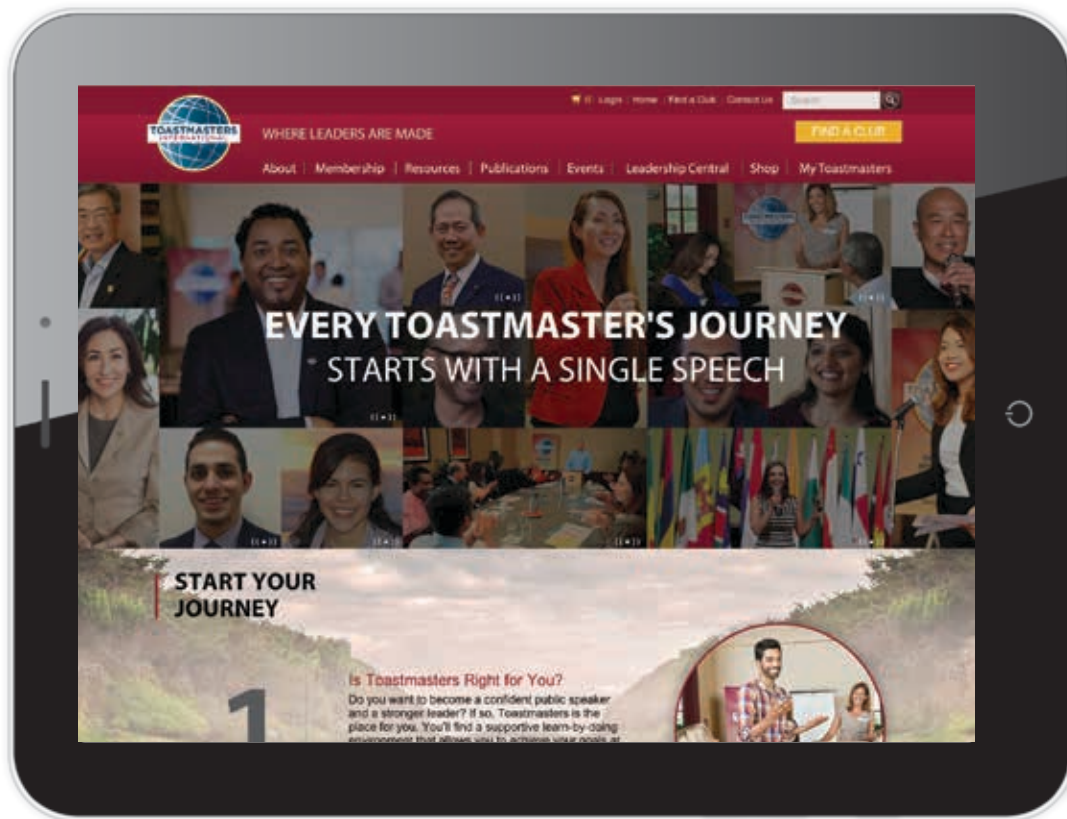


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