

TOASTMASTER®



Continental Europe Makes History

How two districts grew to six



Speechwriting 101

The Feeling
Is Virtual

The latest about
online club meetings

Sustaining Our Organization

We, the members, are the cornerstone of success for our organization. We, the members, are at the apex of our organizational structure. The next level in the Toastmasters organizational chart is the club and then the area, division and district. Districts within a specific geographic area form a region, and our 14 regions around the world make up our international organization.

To operate each of these entities (clubs, areas, divisions, districts, regions and international), our members hold leadership positions. Each club has seven officer roles and each district has six. These district leaders form teams within their positions to accomplish their goals. Region advisors support the districts in their regions.

The strategic direction of our international organization is determined by a Board of Directors comprising 20 members, which consists of six executive committee members and an international director from each of our 14 regions. And, to support this global organization, we have a World Headquarters staff of approximately 150 people in Englewood, Colorado. This is *our* global organization.

“You have shown me that we can achieve our mission if each member receives a quality club experience that helps them reach their goals.”

We are member-driven and leadership-sustained. What does this mean? We have more than 360,000 members worldwide with around 115,000 of these members filling leadership roles. These leaders are elected and appointed to achieve our organization’s mission. We should hold one another accountable for fulfilling the club, district and international missions.

I have the privilege of meeting leaders from around the world at all levels of our organization. You have shown me that we can achieve our mission if each member receives a quality club experience that helps them reach their goals.

We are responsible for the success of every member, club, area, division, district and region—for the success of our global organization. World Headquarters is here to support us, but it is up to us to guarantee that every member receives the full value of their membership payments through quality clubs and our new education program, the Pathways learning experience.

What will we personally do to achieve our goals in Toastmasters? What will we personally do to support our clubs, areas, divisions, districts, regions and OUR international organization in achieving our mission?

The success and sustainability of our organization is up to us! Are we up to the challenge? I believe that we are. I know we are!

Lark Doley, DTM
International President



TOASTMASTER®

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Toastmasters International Mission:

We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE
www.toastmasters.org

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Congratulations to these clubs celebrating anniversaries.



Super Speakers
Toastmasters club of
Puchong, Selangor,
Malaysia, celebrates its
10th anniversary with
heartwarming smiles
and signs.



Members of Talking
Tomorrow Together
Toastmasters in East
Hartford, Connecticut,
celebrate their one-year
anniversary in a local park.



Toastmasters in
Fredensborg,
Denmark, celebrate
their 6th anniversary.



Send your fun club photos to photos@toastmasters.org. Include a description and your club name, number and location. Photos must be in jpeg format with a resolution of at least 300 dpi (dots per inch) and size of at least 1 MB (megabyte). Out-of-focus images cannot be accepted. It is not necessary to include the Toastmaster magazine or other branded materials in your photos, but if Toastmasters materials are displayed, they must reflect the current brand.

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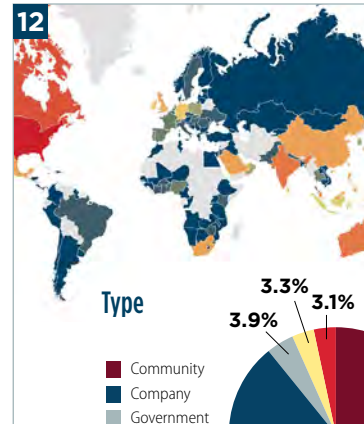
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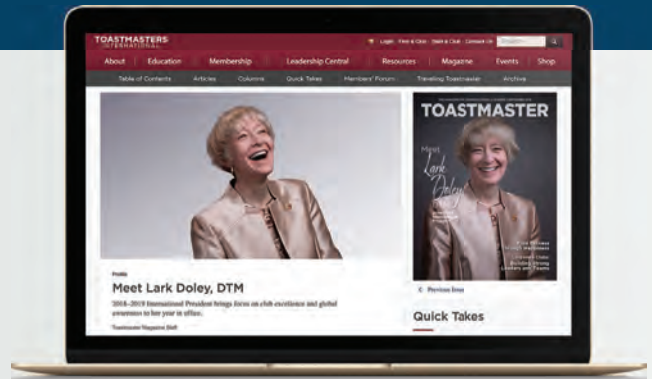


Toastmaster Magazine Online

See more photos, videos and links online at www.toastmasters.org/Magazine

October Online Extras:

- **Finding a New Path to Speech**—Learn tips and techniques on increasing your personal power in a video with Glenn Bott. ▶
- **Continental Europe Makes History**—Watch a video with Toastmasters from Europe to find out more about their club experience. ▶
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▶ MEMBER MOMENT



Formerly Homeless Veteran Succeeds Through Accountability

Eight years ago, Joel Dawson, DTM, was feeling so low that he weighed ending his life. A former United States Marine, he was living in a shelter for homeless veterans in Houma, Louisiana. He felt he had no control over his circumstances. “I couldn’t believe what had happened to me—I didn’t know how I’d gotten there,” he recalls.

Shortly after that dark moment alone on a highway overpass, he had an epiphany about accountability. Dawson came to see that he alone controlled his life. Determined not to be a victim of his circumstances, he took responsibility for his future and built a life he wanted to live. “I’d always tried to do what others told me to do, but I realized I could live my life as I wanted.”

Just two years after leaving the home for veterans, Dawson joined the Tri-Parish Toastmasters in Houma. He built a thriving insurance business and achieved the title of DTM in less than two years. He now works as a speaker and trainer, teaching advanced selling strategies to sales professionals.

Tell us about your Toastmasters journey.

I joined Toastmasters in 2013 to improve my skills in conducting seminars for my insurance business. I did not have a fear of public speaking; I just wanted to get better.

During my first five months in Toastmasters I only gave one speech. Eighteen months later I was a DTM. But being an effective speaker is a continual learning process—you never “arrive.” I remain focused on improving my leadership and coaching skills. Speaking is how I get my training clients; it is the best marketing tool I have.

Who has inspired you?

I was introduced to LaShunda Rundles [one of only five women to win the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking to date] through the documentary *Speak*. In it, LaShunda shared her story on the physical challenges of having eight toes amputated due to lupus. She had fought a painful battle. But she got on that stage and you couldn’t tell—she was brilliant! In one speech she said, “When I speak, I speak in a loud voice. I may not be able to save my own life, but someday I may save someone else’s.”

I identified with her struggle and her determination. I had given up on life, but, more importantly, I had given up on myself. That night on that bridge I made a promise to myself that I wouldn’t give up on myself. LaShunda’s story reminded me of that promise and



Joel Dawson

showed me that you can have anything you want in life if you’re willing to work for it.

What do you enjoy most about Toastmasters?

I love being a mentor to other members. I love to see how excited they are to grow their communication and leadership skills. I try to encourage them and help them understand that they will get so much out of Toastmasters, and life, if they hold themselves accountable.

How did you go from struggling to successful in such a short time?

I decided that I wanted to be a professional speaker, and I developed a laser focus. Public speaking became a priority over anything I was doing; it’s all I thought about. I booked as many speaking engagements as I possibly could. I would take off work to go speak. My professional growth has been nothing short of amazing. Eventually I started getting compensated, so I gave up my insurance business to speak full time. Now I do what I love: speaking, coaching and training.

What does good communication mean to you?

Communication in Toastmasters is not just about writing or delivering great speeches. It’s about being able to have really tough conversations. That’s the real value of Toastmasters: learning how to keep the lines of communication open through good times and bad. That has given me the opportunity to have meaningful conversations with members as well as clients.

What advice do you have for members?

Whether you succeed or fail at your goals is not determined by the size of your club or the resources you have. Your success or failure is a direct result of the effort that you, as an individual, put forth. What my mother always said to me is still true: “If you can read and write, you can teach yourself anything!”

Tess Iandiorio is associate editor of the Toastmaster magazine.



Dialog Toastmasters Club of Union Place, Colombo, Sri Lanka, celebrates the induction of its executive committee with an “It’s All Greek to Me” theme.

▶ NEWS FROM TI

Happy 85th Birthday, *Toastmaster* Magazine!

Back in April 1933, a publication measuring no more than 6 inches by 3.5 inches (about 15 by 9 centimeters) was circulated among members belonging to each of the 20 Toastmasters clubs in the United States and Canada.

Printed in orange stock and displaying a copyrighted title, logo and the inscription “Vol. 1, No. 1,” it offered 18 pages of club information and news, including updates on club attendance and new officers.

The *Toastmaster* magazine has come a long way in the 85 years since that debut issue. Now with 32 pages in full color, it features articles on communication, leadership, humor, cross-cultural

communication, mentoring, member successes and more. The print edition of the *Toastmaster* continues to be a staple for many readers, but with the fast pace of the digital era, more options were needed over time. By 2011, a “flipbook” version of the magazine emerged online, followed by a tablet edition two years later. However, it was soon determined that an online magazine option that didn’t require readers to download an app was necessary.

After the magazine tablet app was discontinued in June 2016, the first web-based edition made its debut in October of that year on the Toastmasters website,

with online extras that can’t be found in print. Members can now visit www.toastmasters.org/Magazine and click on hyperlinks within articles for additional resources; view photo galleries of fellow members and fun club photos; and watch both feature and tips videos anytime, anywhere. Readers can also access PDF issues dating back to 2012 in a comprehensive magazine archive. In addition, the digitization of all past issues starting with 1933 are now available upon request as PDFs.

Change remains a constant for the 85-year-old magazine. As it continues to evolve, the *Toastmaster* will keep publishing content that best serves you, its reader.

QUICK TAKES

▶ MEET MY MENTOR



Pat Pitt

After joining the Weblec Toastmasters club in Maryborough, Queensland, Australia, in 1983, Patricia (Pat) Anne Pitt, DTM, went on to join other clubs in the Fraser Coast Region of Queensland. She has held executive positions as well as district positions. Pat is an eminent Toastmaster with a reputation for leadership in Region 12, District 69. Before retiring she worked as an executive secretary to the CEO of the Wide Bay Electric Company in Queensland.

Sue Sainsbury, DTM, is from the Philippines and worked as a recruitment interviewer with Timex Philippines in Cebu. She also worked in the financial services industry in Sydney, Australia, before retiring in Maryborough and joining the Maryborough Club where she and Pat met.

Sue, what impressed you about Pat?

I first saw Pat's name in our local paper in an article about Toastmasters that Pat had written, which she did frequently. When I later met Pat, I knew I wanted her to be my mentor. Pat's inner strength as a leader was apparent, and her confidence when discussing Toastmasters was captivating and galvanizing.

What did you hope to get out of Toastmasters?

After I graduated from the university, I taught psychology at Southwestern University in Cebu, Philippines. In Sydney, Australia, I worked in wealth management. When I retired I thought I would like to develop my public speaking skills again.

How has Pat acted as a leader to you or others?

Pat never stopped working, even when her health was failing. To ensure the conference for the Central Division was a success, she delegated tasks clearly and efficiently. In addition, Pat's work with the younger generation through the Youth Leadership



Pat Pitt, left, and Sue Sainsbury

Program demonstrates her wider commitment to the ideals of Toastmasters.

What's the best advice Pat has given you?

Pat's best advice to me was to believe in myself and to always look at the bright side of life. Her guidance helped me tremendously during my tenure as president of the Maryborough Club and as area director for District 69.

What do you value most about your club experience?

I am grateful to have the confidence necessary to communicate with people from all walks of life and to have the opportunity to speak competitively.

Tess Iandiorio is associate editor of the *Toastmaster magazine*.

WANT TO NOMINATE AN EXCEPTIONAL MENTOR?

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

▶ NEWS FROM TI

We Want to Hear From You

Do you have a Toastmasters success story you'd like to share about yourself or another member? Whether lauding your inspiring mentor, showering a deserving speaker with praise or sharing your own breakthrough, we want to hear about it! Submit an article in 300 words or fewer and send it, along with a high-resolution (300 dpi, 1 MB) photo, to submissions@toastmasters.org. Recurring magazine

features such as Member Moment, Meet My Mentor, Member Achievements and Portrait of a Toastmaster (as seen on social media) provide opportunities for you to share your story of personal growth or a fellow member's success.



► CLUB EXPERIENCE

Dealing With Difficult Members

Learn how to respond to members with disruptive attitudes.

Toastmasters clubs are intended to support all types of personalities and speaking styles. It's natural for disagreements to occur when so many people interact with one another. However, you may occasionally need to intervene when a member's negative attitude or disruptive behavior starts to affect club morale. Here are some leadership tips on how to deal with so-called "difficult" members:

Listen before you act.

Listening to others is one of the most important skills a Toastmaster can possess, and it's something practiced at every club meeting. Listen closely to disruptive members when they talk—whether they're giving a speech or just making conversation. This might allow you to understand their motivation and help you offer constructive feedback that could positively impact their attitude.



Analyze your response.

How we react to a person's behavior can often tell us more about ourselves than those we are reacting to. If a member is bothering you, try analyzing why you are reacting to them in a negative way. Defusing the conflict could be as simple as coming to a better understanding of yourself.

Speak with them privately.

Instead of gossiping about a difficult or disruptive member with other Toastmasters, consider approaching the member privately to address your concerns. One subtle way to do this is to "sandwich" your criticisms in between compliments. Saying positive things about the member, along

with your constructive criticism, will help keep your conversation positive.

If all else fails, try a mediator.

If you've exhausted the above options and are still unable to reach a resolution, ask another Toastmaster to step in and mediate. Find an impartial member who can hopefully lead both of you to an agreeable solution. This is a great opportunity for everyone involved to grow their communication skills.

Above all, remember the Toastmasters Promise you agreed to when you first joined. It's every member's responsibility to provide a supportive environment for their fellow Toastmasters—even the difficult ones.

► MEMBER CONNECTIONS



Toastmasters in Taiwan

Members of NCYU Toastmasters and Cheng Kung Toastmasters clubs visited the Alishan National Scenic Area in Chiayi County, Taiwan, to celebrate friendship between the two clubs.





1

1 | KARISHMA TIWARI, of Redmond, Washington, U.S., at Diablo Lake reservoir in Washington's North Cascades National Park.

2 | NADARAJEN MOOROOGAN, of Quatre Bornes, Mauritius, celebrates reaching the 5,895-meter/19,341-foot summit of Uhuru Peak, Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania.

3 | AARON KIM, of Long Island, New York, U.S., enjoys the colorful art and ancient architecture in Genoa, Italy.

4 | FELICIA KETCHESON, ACS, ALB, of London, Ontario, Canada, explores the 700-foot-deep magma chamber of dormant Thrihmukagigur Volcano near Reykjavik, Iceland.



2



3



4



View additional photos in this month's *Traveling Toastmaster* photo gallery at www.toastmasters.org/Magazine.



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

Finding a New Path to Speech

How Toastmasters aided my speech recovery after a severe traumatic brain injury.

BY GLENN BOTT

It was late June and perfect bicycling weather in Colorado. I called my wife, Brenda, to let her know I was going for a quick bicycle ride before dinner.

When she arrived home and I wasn't there, she was surprised. She assumed I must have had a flat tire. As darkness loomed, however, she knew something must be wrong, and she and her brother went looking for me. They checked the path circling a nearby reservoir where I frequently rode but did not see or hear any sign of me. In desperation they called the police, who said they'd send an officer immediately. By now she was really nervous.

When the police officer arrived, he asked what I had been wearing, if I had any distinguishing marks and what type of bicycle I rode. He quickly discovered that someone matching my description had been admitted to the local hospital as a John Doe. (They found no identification in my bicycling pack.) My wife and family raced to the hospital.

Brenda ran into the intensive care unit and saw me banged and bruised, hooked up to machines. I had been hit head-on by a sport utility vehicle.

My wife soon learned from the emergency room doctor that I had suffered a severe traumatic brain injury (TBI). He explained that the prognosis was extremely poor because of the severity of the injury; if I lived through the night, odds were high that I would require round-the-clock care.

She returned to my side, held my hand and said, "Don't listen to them. If you need to leave I'll be fine, but I really hope you decide to stay, and we'll continue our great life together. You can heal yourself. Take as long as you need."

Although I hadn't moved or spoken in hours and failed all the brain tests, I gave her hand a couple of gentle squeezes. At that moment she knew I would be alright.

After an entire summer of speech, occupational and physical therapy, I was



Glenn Bott, shown here in Broomfield, Colorado, in July 2018, enjoys riding again after recovering from his brain injury.

released from the hospital. I had to relearn how to walk, talk, chew, swallow, reason and speak.

One common complication that arises from brain injuries is the inability to speak clearly and smoothly. My thoughts would come through uninterrupted, but my speech was halting and staccato. Words would get hung up between the thoughts and actually speaking them. To help regain my cognitive and speaking skills, I joined Toastmasters.

During my recovery I decided to try speaking in front of others who had suffered similar injuries—coaching and encouraging them to reclaim their self-sufficiency and resiliency using the same tools and techniques I had used. Throughout my life I had been trained in positivity, being impeccable, meeting commitments and using lateral thinking. These tools that helped me succeed as a research manager at Coors also helped me recover from my TBI. I didn't waste energy on what was

wrong but rather focused on my vision and committed myself to achieving it.

Without the love and assistance of the fine folks at the Talking Ideas Toastmasters club in Westminster, Colorado, I don't know where I would be now. Their support and encouragement were constant reminders to keep improving and moving forward.

One day, just after I joined the club, I volunteered as a Table Topics speaker. After 20–30 seconds my mind went totally blank—I didn't have a clue what to say next. I apologized and quickly sat down. No one made a big deal of this and most probably don't even remember it. What I remember is the positive feedback I received and my deeper commitment to not have that happen again.

One of the great benefits I have taken away from my time with Talking Ideas is how to craft a speech to get the audience engaged and keep them focused on you. In today's world, with distractions on phones and computers, this is an extremely useful skill to master, no matter what business you're in or what you have been through.

I speak and coach others on how to maintain a positive attitude, monitor their thoughts and consciously develop positive habits. I try to help them see the benefits of lateral thinking and understand that for every problem there is a solution.

I continue to ride my bicycle, but on bike paths—not roads. **T**

GLENN BOTT, ACG, CL, is a speaker, author and resiliency coach. He joined the Talking Ideas Toastmasters club in Westminster, Colorado, in 2014. To learn more about Bott, please visit www.glennbott.com.



ONLINE EXTRAS: Learn tips and techniques on increasing your personal power in a video with Glenn Bott.

The Facts Are In!

The past Toastmasters year (July 1, 2017–June 30, 2018) proved to be one of growth for the organization.

CLUBS

143
COUNTRIES

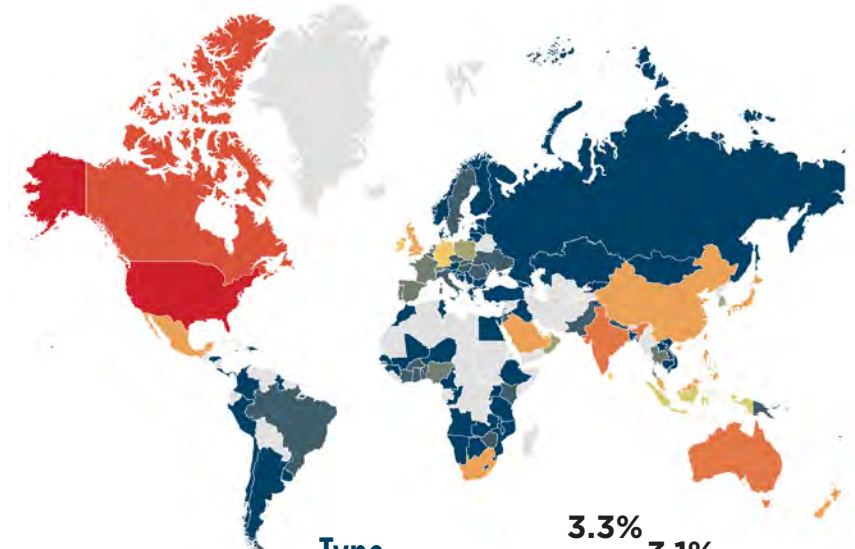
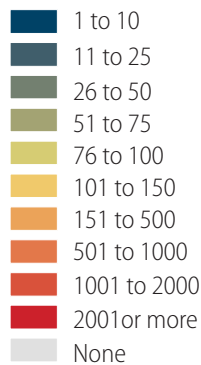
+1.2%
CLUB GROWTH

>16,600
CLUBS

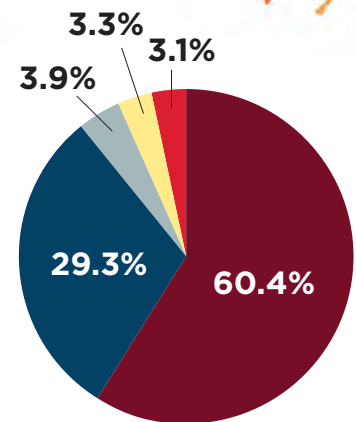
>1,400
NEW CLUBS

50.0%
ACHIEVED
DISTINGUISHED

Total Clubs



Type



MEMBERS

Pathways

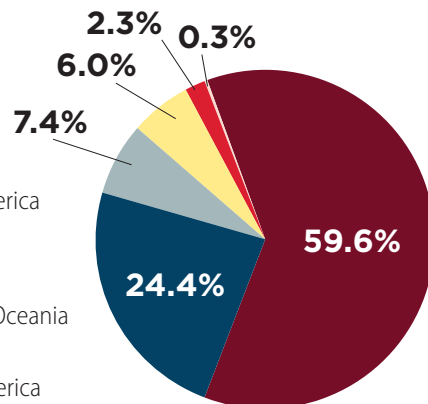
127,058
TOTAL PATHS

10,840
TOTAL LEVELS COMPLETED

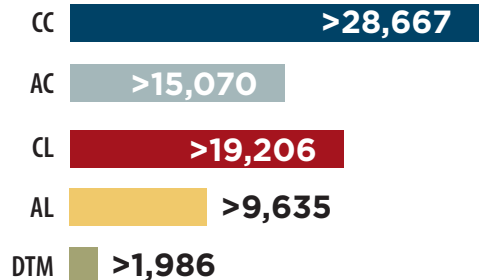
Membership

>357,000
MEMBERS*

+1.4%
GROWTH



Awards



*Total membership for the October 2017 renewal period (includes dual memberships).

Back to Basics: Focusing on Excellence

Ideas for making this season your most productive ever.

BY KATHY LEE STRICKLAND

With the Board of Directors' decision to discontinue October–November district conferences, Toastmasters members who are accustomed to organizing or attending these events may find themselves with extra time. As club and district officers settle into their roles—and new clubs and members become familiar with the organization—opportunities abound to bring all clubs to excellence.

Work to be done includes training, recruiting, marketing, mentoring, planning, building new clubs and engaging members in the club experience. This time also provides the chance to get creative and have fun with smaller events like leader workshops, corporate summits and time-tested sessions like “Moments of Truth.”

“The time spent on planning and delivering a district conference is substantial, involving dozens of volunteers and countless hours,” says International President Lark Doley, DTM. “Using this time to create new clubs and to strengthen our existing clubs will benefit far more members.”

Time to Train

Area and division directors should have completed their training by September 30. As the Toastmasters year gets underway, directors begin putting that training into practice and assessing the needs of their clubs. New issues become apparent, and questions often arise.

“The great thing about training at the start of the Toastmasters year is that it's nice and early,” says International Director Monique Levesque-Pharoah, DTM. “But then you get into the meat of the year, and there might be other things you need training on. When people sign up for these roles they want to do the best job possible, and training all at once makes it hard to retain all of that information.”

Continuing training opportunities for October and November include leadership workshops. At the district level, past

and current leaders share their experience to assist newer leaders with challenges they are facing and to inspire others to take on leadership roles. District-sponsored club-leader workshops focus on best practices in education, public relations, member recruitment and other key responsibilities that help clubs meet their mission. Consider a team-building experience where club officers explore how their roles work together.

“I’m excited about the potential for our district leaders to demonstrate their leadership by delivering creative, mission-focused activities in place of the October–November conferences.”

—LARK DOLEY,
INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

Fresh Perspective

Toastmasters need not limit workshops and educational sessions to their own clubs or districts; members will gain valuable perspective by involving people from their local communities and the corporate world. An event that can provide insight to existing Toastmasters and potential members is a corporate summit.

When Levesque-Pharoah served as region advisor, she worked with districts that hosted corporate summits. These events introduce companies to Toastmasters and show how the skills members build through their experience in the organization—including specific paths in Pathways—apply in a business environment. Officers can invite (or co-host with) major employers in the area, small businesses and corporate clubs whose

members have demonstrated improved job performance as a result of the communication and leadership skills they developed through Toastmasters.

A corporate summit can motivate a company to invest in its own club or increase awareness of what Toastmasters has to offer. It's also a great way to gather testimonials that can be used in marketing efforts, Levesque-Pharoah says. In her experience, “Once a company's leadership sees and understands the benefits their employees are gaining from the program, they are more than happy to give a testimonial.”

Focus on Quality

However Toastmasters choose to use the time that is now available to them this month and next, it's essential to ensure that those efforts are aligned with the mission of the club, district and organization.

The district mission is to build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence. A requirement to become a Distinguished Area is having at least 50 percent of the club base designated as Distinguished or better. In order to become a President's Distinguished Area, there is an added requirement to build a new club. Therefore, a high-level area training could be targeted around building a club—starting with role-playing a cold call and moving on to the pitch meeting, the demonstration meeting and how to find and train sponsors and mentors.

“I'm excited about the potential for our district leaders to demonstrate their leadership by delivering creative, mission-focused activities in place of the October–November conferences,” says Doley.

This is also the perfect time to do a reset and evaluate the club or district success plan. And there is now more time to make the conferences in April and May that much more effective! **T**

Kathy Lee Strickland is a former senior editor of the *Toastmaster* magazine.

The New Bulgarians

Building a university club in Eastern Europe.

BY DIANE RUBINO, DTM

It was a few weeks before our flight back to the United States after teaching in Bulgaria for a semester. My partner and new-club co-sponsor, Jesse Scinto, was playing saxophone with a group of musicians at the Delta Blues Bar, a tiny music hall in the capital city Sofia, filled with attentive listeners in a memorabilia-studded room. One of our members, club president Stoil Pramatarov, had come to listen. As if responding to a high-pitched cue only Toastmasters can hear, Jelio Dandanov, a member of Sofia Toastmasters, coincidentally stopped by.

In the midst of music and good vibes, Stoil and Jelio hit it off, and Jelio agreed to co-sponsor the club with Boyan Kelchev. We were happy to have secured continued support for the students we had grown to care for and respect.

Going the Distance

The first time we met Jelio, CC, CL, and Boyan, CC, was when they and five other members of Sofia Toastmasters and Toastmasters Business Park carpooled 65 miles from Sofia to the American University in Bulgaria's southwestern campus in Blagoevgrad one wintry night. They drove down the A3, a modern roadway that slices through the nation's beautiful, undeveloped countryside. After securing university seed funding to launch the club, Jesse and I planned a demonstration meeting. This exercise requires the participation of experienced members, but Bulgaria has only three clubs. I contacted the groups via their e-forms on toastmasters.org, and Sofia Toastmaster Diyana Yosifova floored me with enthusiasm: "Excited by your message, love your initiative, and

would very much like to join. Please, let us know what roles you still have unassigned; we'd be happy to contribute as much as we can."

It all began when Jesse, a frequent contributor to the *Toastmaster* magazine, was awarded a teaching fellowship at the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG). I submitted a resume after learning I could be an instructor too. My Toastmasters experience caught the attention of Dean of Faculty Robert White, who was a member in his native New Zealand during college. White credits Toastmasters with providing him an opportunity not only to develop public speaking and leadership skills but also to cultivate his capacity to run a well-structured meeting. He wanted to give the university community in Bulgaria the same opportunity he had.

"This was something that students needed, but in the past they didn't know they were lacking it or how to address it," White said. "I was hopeful that the students would come along; I just wasn't expecting the reaction to be so positive and for people to be so excited by it."

Given my own Toastmasters experience in the U.S., I wasn't worried about launching a club when planning for the semester abroad. I'd have the organization's straightforward materials, Jesse's help and Toastmasters World Headquarters' support. But what seemed easy from a distance proved to be formidable.

Hatching a Club

Money was the first hurdle for us in the European Union's poorest country. The cost of dues was a stretch for many



American University in Bulgaria's Skaptopara campus in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. PHOTO CREDIT: AUBG

Bulgarian students, not to mention for those from other countries, like Albania. Add to that the challenge of attracting students to a virtually unknown organization in the middle of the year, after other groups in the university's vibrant extracurricular scene—including the Broadway Performance Club and Model United Nations—had already been established.

We used every available channel to promote the demonstration meeting. With the support of our collaborators from Sofia, the event went well. Toastmasters International's global standards translated into a shared understanding of how to run the meeting.

"We didn't have to think about how we should organize the meeting in order for things to be well done," recalls Stoil, who became the club's president. "It was easy to follow. The only thing we had to focus on was improving."

Nine hands went up when Jesse requested help establishing AUBG's club at the end of the demonstration meeting. The students also surprised us during an organizing meeting a few days later. I suggested holding a meeting the following week; they wanted to start immediately. I explained the option of meeting every other week;



Viktor Domme (at lectern) takes part in Table Topics during a Toastmasters@AUBG meeting at American University in Bulgaria.

they wanted to meet every week. I offered names; they invented Toastmasters@AUBG. They snapped up officer positions; when two people wanted the same post, they decided without prompting that the upperclassman had dibs.

Although university staff attended the demonstration meeting, only students joined the club, due in part to our decision to hold evening meetings after struggling to find a day and hour agreeable to members in different academic pursuits and schedules. Over the next few months we met Thursdays while continuing to recruit members with a sustained marketing blitz—via email, social media, the campus radio station, CC-TV screens and posters around campus.

Each session had at least one Ice Breaker, and role recruitment went swiftly. Jesse and I split the Toastmaster and General Evaluator duties. But we stepped aside when students began volunteering for those positions.

“If you join you should really take roles,” says new club member Viktor Domme, an exchange student from Bavaria, Germany, who came to study in Bulgaria for the school year. “If you just sit, you can see how other people speak, you can see other

people be evaluated. But you need the experience; that’s way better than just sitting.”

A warm, collaborative spirit prevailed in the weekly officer meetings. I led the discussions but soon realized the club president could do the job. Still, it took time to recruit 20 members. We prevailed, chartering in April.

A Lasting Commitment

Toastmasters@AUBG was faring well. But Jesse and I were going home in June. A university club deals with attrition like any other, in addition to regularly losing graduates and exchange students. New students roll in every year, but they often hail from areas of the world with scant awareness of Toastmasters. Further, though club membership offers many rewards, the taint of serious effort can make it a tough sell.

We identified AUBG staff and faculty who would provide occasional support. But I worried about the club’s sustainability without the support of co-sponsors who would attend every session—both the officer and the regular meetings.

“One of the best things for me as a learner was to receive constructive

criticism from seasoned Toastmasters,” notes Stefan Solarski, a Macedonian math major and the club’s vice president membership. “When I received positive comments, it gave me a boost of motivation and confidence. Toastmasters allowed me to take the responsibility of helping to lead a club and provided a new type of informal education that the university didn’t offer before.”

I wanted the students to continue having ready access to an experienced member—which is when serendipity intervened and Jelio entered the Delta Blues Bar.

At the final Toastmasters@AUBG meeting, we had Table Topics, unprepared speeches and food. The students went out of their way to ensure I finally tried *lutenitsa*, a local tomato spread, and surprised us with gifts.

During our five months in Bulgaria, we got to work with students to co-create a university club. It was a privilege and a memory I will not soon forget. **T**

Diane Rubino, DTM, is a communications instructor at New York University’s graduate school.

Continental Europe Makes HISTORY

How two districts grew to six.

BY JENNIFER L. BLANCK, DTM

Earlier this year, something special happened in Toastmasters. Due to unprecedented growth, Districts 59 and 95—two districts comprising 31 countries across Continental Europe—became six. It was only four years earlier that District 59 split into two, giving birth to District 95. The number 95 was selected intentionally for its mirrored digits

—a way of representing the close connection between the two districts and the people within them.

District 59 itself was only founded in 2003. And it was a long road to that accomplishment.

A Slow Start

The first club to charter outside of North America was in Southport, England, in 1935. World War II would cause this club to close and delay any real growth of Toastmasters in Europe. After the war, clubs spread throughout Great Britain, only arriving in Ireland and Continental Europe in the 1950s.

Toastmasters' presence grew in the United Kingdom and Ireland. It was slower in Continental Europe, where language, cultural and geopolitical issues served as barriers. As of 1956, Continental Europe had one Toastmasters club: Bossuet Gaveliers, which started in France and later moved to Luxembourg when its NATO-based host organization relocated. Twenty years later only nine clubs existed in Continental Europe. Some of the earliest clubs there were started on U.S. military bases or by U.S. military personnel.

"The clubs were partly started for improving skills and partly started for social events," says 2005–2006 District 59 Director and current Region 10 Advisor Elizabeth Nostedt, DTM, from Gothenburg, Sweden.

In 1979, even with fewer than 10 clubs spread across the continent, a small group of ambitious and dedicated Toastmasters from the existing clubs formed the Continental



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Toastmasters from across Continental Europe gathered in May 2018 for a joint conference in Greece called "Rebirth in Athens" to connect and celebrate the birth of new districts, growth of clubs and newfound friendships.
PHOTO CREDIT: ANA ISABEL FERREIRA



Council of European Toastmasters (CCET). They understood the benefits of the education program and how it could help individuals and commu-

nities. The members wanted to host conferences, provide leadership training, hold contests and spread the word about Toastmasters throughout Europe.

The 10 CCET countries were Austria, Belgium, former Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland. Some of the countries already had clubs; others did not but were located in between countries with clubs. “The expectations were to fill the holes and build new clubs where there weren’t any,” says Nostedt.

“The leaders spent their own time and paid their own expenses to connect to other Toastmasters in Europe who also had that burning desire to connect and help others succeed,” says Nostedt. “The first directories of clubs in the CCET were type-written, copied and mailed out by regular post.”

In 1998–1999, then CCET Vice Chairman Robert Cockburn, DTM, visited each area during its contests to discuss the benefits of being a district with as many members as possible. Two-time CCET chairman and 2002–2004 International Director Cockburn now lives in Perth, Australia. He says, “In creating a district, as with any project, it is paramount to plan how to communicate the right messages to the leaders as well as to the general membership. Communication with our members was limited, which was one of the problems in being a territorial council, so it took us a long time to get all the clubs on board. Once we achieved critical mass and became a district, the benefits of the formal training and extra resources that belonging to a district provides took hold.”

The Birth of New Districts

With hard work and perseverance, the CCET grew its membership and club numbers. “In 1997–1998, CCET Chairman

Christopher Magyar, DTM, chose ‘Make Like a District’ as a slogan to raise awareness that there was something else and that would be better than what we are now,” says Cockburn. The CCET became a provisional district in 2000 and then officially became District 59 in 2003 with 42 clubs. Two short years later District 59 had nearly tripled its clubs to 117. By 2010 that number almost doubled again to 207. Skip ahead just four years to 2014, and the district nearly doubled itself again with 407 clubs—adding about one club per week during this time.

After such rapid growth, the district became so large it had to be split into two, becoming districts 59 and 95. In 2015, just one year after the split, another district reformation planning process began.

Reasons for Growth

The following components are key contributors to the growth Europe is now experiencing.

Communication Skills

“Initially, people saw the value in developing skills in English,” says Morag Mathieson, DTM, from Moehrendorf, Germany. Mathieson is currently international director for Region 11 and was the driving force behind the creation of four new districts in Europe.

Odile Petillot, DTM, from Paris, France, who served as District 59 Governor in 2004–2005, says when new countries joined the district, such as Portugal and Poland, their citizens were eager to improve their English communication skills, so they joined Toastmasters. “They were relatively new in the European Union and wanted to be ‘visible,’” says Petillot. “The best way to do so was for them to improve their communication in English, which is the common language in Europe.” When the Baltic countries joined then-districts 59 and 95, their citizens followed suit. As a result, the number of clubs grew quickly.

The new countries also brought something else. “The incorporation of the countries in the eastern part of continental Europe—like Poland, Hungary and Romania, to name a few—have given fresh blood, energy and creativity to the western part,” says 2014–2015 District 95 Director and current Region 14 Advisor Kees Broos, DTM, who now splits his time between Europe and New Zealand.

“All around you, people are going through huge transformations as leaders and individuals.”

—MORAG MATHIESON, DTM

Broos experienced that creativity on a trip to Poland for a Toastmasters Leadership Institute. “The first eye-opener was that I should make myself available for the whole weekend, in comparison to the half day of training I was accustomed to,” he says. There was dinner and a party on Friday night with more than 80 members, a full day of training and networking activities with more than 350 members on Saturday, and a half day of programming

on Sunday. “This event has now been successfully copied in other parts of the districts in Continental Europe,” says Broos.

Learning English is still a motivator for many people. Pathways materials are available in eight languages other than English—including French, German, Portuguese and Spanish—and more translations are coming. As a result, native-language clubs are growing throughout Europe.

Leadership Skills

From the days of CCET to today, leaders have consistently emphasized training. Nostedt says that, even early on when there was a need to focus on building clubs, the CCET and district leaders also emphasized preparing officers to ensure clubs were effective and well-functioning. She describes the philosophy as, “Build them and train them. If the leaders are there, people will come.”

In addition, members value the opportunity to gain intercultural leadership experience. Mathieson says members look at officer roles as opportunities, rather than simply work to do. “All around you, people are going through huge transformations as leaders and individuals. You see the potential of what can happen,” she says. “For example, serving as a district director gives a whole year to be a CEO at a culturally diverse organization.”

Friendships

In addition to skills, people build community through Toastmasters. Sabyasachi Sengupta, ACB, ALB, of Utrecht Toastmasters in Utrecht, Netherlands, joined because of what he calls “the expat factor.” He found Toastmasters to be a place where he could learn and make friends at the same time.

Inspired by the founding mission of the first clubs in Continental Europe, there is a long history of incorporating a strong social element into the Toastmasters experience. Utrecht Toastmasters meets on Fridays, and Sengupta says members often stay after the end of the meeting to get to know each other better and develop relationships. They also go on trips and attend district conferences together.

As a result, Sengupta describes a rare combination of “the friendship and the feedback.” He says, “The feedback is not sugar-coated. But because people know each other so well, they can be very candid with each other in a supportive way, and people are open.”

That same camaraderie can be found at area, division and district conferences and trainings throughout Continental Europe. Social activities are planned during and around those events too.

Modern Relevance

Technology has also fostered the growth of Toastmasters in Europe. Social media makes it easy to spread the word about the Toastmasters experience. With the advent of TEDx and YouTube, audience expectations have changed and inspired a cultural shift. In the past, cultural norms throughout much of Western Europe emphasized subject-matter expertise and content above public speaking prowess. “I have heard great scientists and researchers who were

awful at delivery, but nobody seemed to care then,” says Petillot. Now professionals are looking to improve their presentation skills. Bea Bincze, DTM, 2018–2019 District 110 director from Budapest, Hungary, says, “Schools in Europe don’t offer public speaking training, and Toastmasters fills the need.”

Reformation Committee Member and 2018–2019 District 108 Director Piotr Chimko, DTM, from Łódź, Poland, says Toastmasters is a good alternative for the younger generation. “People in their 20s and 30s find it an affordable method to learn something that will help them build or develop their professional careers,” Chimko says.

The Toastmasters program not only improves people’s skills but also builds their confidence and career potential. “This feedback culture and supportive environment is essential for working with the young generation,” Bincze says.

District Activities

The location of the district leadership also makes a difference. “The speed of growth is completely interlinked to the enthusiasm of the district leaders to tap in to the potential and come up with the right marketing strategies,” says Broos. A growth spurt in Portugal occurred while the District 59 director at the time was Portuguese. Chimko, the 2018–2019 District 108 director, is from Poland, which is also experiencing tremendous growth.

The country hosting the district conference can also see a boost in membership. When members join Toastmasters, they typically focus only on skill development activities within the club. Many are unaware of the Toastmasters structure beyond the club—such as areas, divisions and districts—and the corresponding public speaking and leadership opportunities at those levels. “The district conference showcases how much more beyond the club people can grow,” says Bincze. Budapest, Hungary, was the site of the 2013 district conference, and the country has gone from two clubs



NEWS FROM TI

in 2011 to 20 as of this year. Poland hosted the 2014 conference, which has also contributed to the district's growth.

District conferences are fun learning opportunities. When Sengupta attended his first conference, he didn't know what to expect. He found people who were friendly and willing to help one another. Now he regularly attends and always leaves full of energy: "Anyone who has interacted with me weeks after the conference knows about it. Everyone who attends the district conference feels energized."

Continental Europe Today

That energy multiplied this year when Districts 59 and 95 assembled to usher in a new Toastmasters landscape across Europe. Approximately 850 people from at least 37 countries attended the Rebirth in Athens conference this past May, including 2017–2018 International President Balraj Arunasalam, DTM. With the conference vote making it official, six districts emerged from the original two. As of July 1, 2018, districts 59, 95, 107, 108, 109 and 110 comprise 34 countries and principalities across Continental Europe.

Led by Mathieson, the reformation was the result of years of work and went smoothly. "This was mainly due to the extensive consultation program put in place by the reformation committee," says Broos. "We did have the benefit of having gone through a split a couple years earlier and learning from that experience."

"Reformation can take a lot out of a district," says Mathieson. "There's lots of leadership and time required. It can also be emotional for members who are sad to be separated from other clubs and friends, especially those who work at the district level."

As a result, the conference was more than just a joint meeting; it felt like a family reunion. "There's such a *joie de vivre* with Toastmasters across Europe," says Nostedt. "I can call up a Toastmaster I met and say I'll be in that person's city, and I know there will be an invitation to get together." That feeling of camaraderie is so strong that the six districts are trying to schedule their conferences at different times so people from other districts can attend.

Today almost 600 clubs thrive in Continental Europe—and counting. The district leaders believe the growth trajectory will continue for years. "Europe is uncharted territory," says Bincze. "We are just at the beginning of the journey." **T**

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



ONLINE EXTRAS: Watch a video with Toastmasters from Europe to find out more about their club experience.

EUROPEAN DISTRICTS TODAY

The reformation of districts in Continental Europe as of July 1, 2018.

FROM

District 59: Belgium, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland

District 95: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Ukraine

TO

District 59: Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands

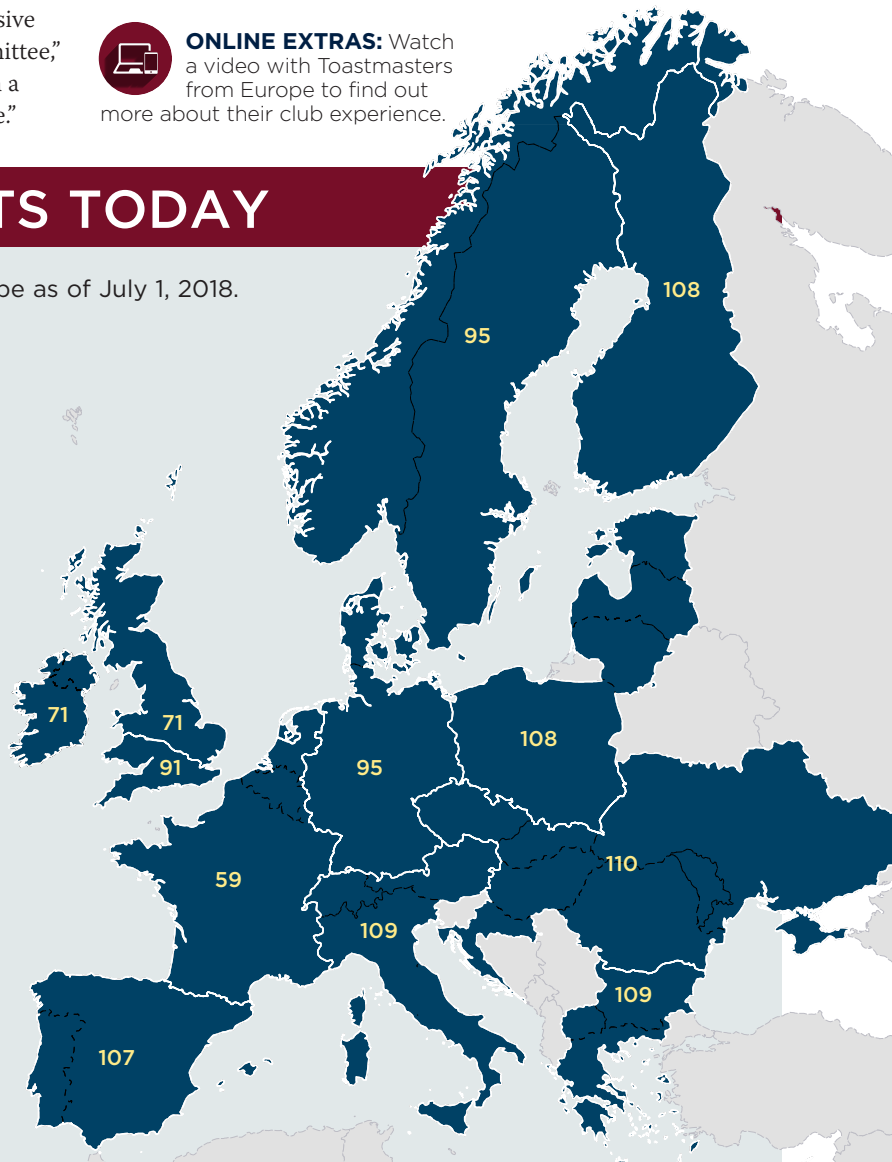
District 95: Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden

District 107: Andorra, Portugal, Spain

District 108: Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland

District 109: Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Lichtenstein, Republic of Macedonia, San Marino, Switzerland, Vatican City

District 110: Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine



The Short Version

Three ways to adapt your presentation to a shrinking time limit.

BY JOHN ZIMMER

Has this ever happened to you? You're asked to give a presentation outside your Toastmasters club, whether at your workplace, a conference or workshop. You're told the preferred topic, where and when the presentation will be given and your time limit. You agree and prepare for it diligently.

After you arrive on time and at the right location, you're told that because (a) there is a crisis at the manufacturing plant, or (b) the other speakers have gone over their time limits or (c) [insert your own reason here], your time has been cut (a) by 25 percent, or (b) by 50 percent or (c) almost entirely.

Unfortunately, this happens often. So, what can you do?

- ▶ Cram the entire presentation into the reduced time? This rarely ends well.
- ▶ Ask to reschedule? This is often not an option and conveys a bad impression.
- ▶ Keep to your original time and ignore the request to shorten the presentation? (Rude.)
- ▶ Slam your fist on the table, say that you refuse to work like this and storm out? Great if you're in a movie but otherwise ... no.

Quite simply, you must adapt. It might not be easy, but it will be easier if you planned for this possibility in advance. Below are three ideas on how to prepare your presentation to allow you to adjust quickly if your time is cut short.

1 Structure your presentation in sections and know your material so well that you can jump to any section at any time. When I practiced law in Canada, I frequently argued cases in court on behalf

of my clients. Cases usually had several points and I would structure my argument accordingly. There was no guarantee, however, that the judges would hear me out in the order I had in mind. Often, they would have me skip points, or go through the points in a different order, or raise a question about an issue that I did not consider relevant. In all cases, I had to be ready to react. Having my legal argument clearly structured made it possible. If you design your presentation in sections, it will be easier to decide which sections to drop (if necessary) and which to keep.

“Creating a short version is an excellent exercise because it forces you to think about what is most important in your presentation.”

2 Give an executive summary that captures the essence of your presentation in less than a minute. Depending on the audience and the situation, ask them whether they would like to hear an abbreviated version of the entire presentation or whether they would like you to skip some parts and focus in detail on others. This tactic is useful when the audience is small (10 or fewer), but cumbersome if you must poll a large audience where getting consensus will be difficult, if not impossible. If it's a large audience, make the call as to what is most important. You are the expert on your topic, after all.



3 Have a short version of your presentation that you can swap in for the original. This will be particularly handy if you are using slides. Yes, you could use the original slide deck and skip slides with the remote. Or, if you have a few minutes, you could go through the original slide deck and hide the slides using the relevant function in PowerPoint or Keynote. However, it would be far easier to use a shorter slide deck that has been prepared in advance. In fact, if you have a presentation (with or without slides) that you give regularly, I strongly recommend that you have a short version. And the short version should be no more than half the length of the full version. Creating a short version is an excellent exercise because it forces you to think about what is most important in your presentation. And, as you create the short version, you might realize that there are things in the full version that you just don't need.

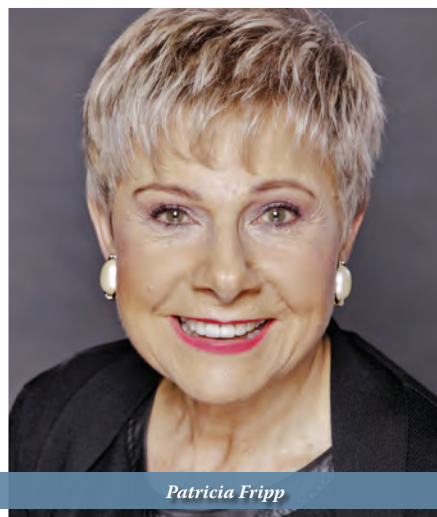
It is never easy to react when your time to speak as been cut significantly. But it can happen. If you are prepared, you can turn the situation into an opportunity to impress your audience with your ability to adapt quickly, calmly and effectively. **T**

John Zimmer, ACB, ALB, is a member of the International Geneva Toastmasters club in Switzerland. He is an international speaker and a 9-time champion of Toastmasters district speech contests and a semifinalist in this year's International Speech Contest. John writes the public speaking blog www.mannerofspeaking.org and is the co-creator of Rhetoric—The Public Speaking Game™.

Speechwriting 101

Expert speechwriters weigh in on the basics of crafting a speech.

BY MITCH MIRKIN



Patricia Fripp



Simon Bucknall



Pete Weissman

You're scheduled to give a speech in a week or two. You're sitting at your computer, staring nervously at a blank screen. Countless questions swirl around in your mind: How should I start? How do I get the audience's attention? Should I use humor? Do I need an outline? How do I conclude?

As a Toastmaster, you have access to resources galore. Each speech project has its own templates and guidelines. You also have mentors to help you over hurdles. But wouldn't it be nice to have a quick, handy guide to all the basics? A one-stop shop that concisely covers the fundamentals of how to write an effective speech—Speechwriting 101, condensed into a few magazine pages?

Look no further. I interviewed three world-class speech-making pros and grilled them on what every speechwriter—novice or veteran—should keep in mind to connect with audiences and get their message across. In the following Q&A, they share universal tips that apply to practically any type of speech in any setting.

Meet our expert panel:

- ▶ **Simon Bucknall** is a professional speaker and Toastmaster who won second place in the 2017 World Championship of Public Speaking. He provides executive speech coaching internationally.
- ▶ **Patricia Fripp** joined Cable Car Toastmasters club in 1975. Since then she has keynoted four Toastmasters International Conventions. She is a Hall of Fame keynote speaker and was the first female president of the National Speakers Association.
- ▶ **Pete Weissman**, a former member of Capitol Hill Toastmasters club, a 2012 International Convention speaker and founder of Thought Leader Communications, is an award-winning professional speechwriter, speaker and communications director who has worked with leaders in American government and Fortune 100 companies.

? Should beginning speakers write out their speech word for word, or use an outline?

Bucknall: I advise you start with a full script if you feel you need it, but then gradually progress to just an outline, and ultimately no notes as you gain more experience. Often, the best way to get to a brief outline is to first draft the speech in full. You then whittle it down, gaining clarity as you do so.

Fripp: It can be difficult to make a conversational-sounding script unless you are used to it. Talk through it aloud and then write down what you said.

Weissman: I often recommend writing out the entire speech, so you can perfect the voice, flow and transitions.

? Does it matter how you format the speech on the computer?

Bucknall: Avoid writing in paragraphs. They're a nightmare to edit and internalize as a speaker. Draft your speech in the form of one sentence per line, double-spaced. You'll see the lengths of your sentences; it's also easier to signal to yourself where to pause. Remember that you are writing a speech to be said, not read. The ultimate test of any speech is how it sounds out loud. Be sure to test that flow aloud (and ideally listen back to it) to gauge clarity, authenticity and naturalness.

? Can you write a conclusion first and work backward?

Bucknall: Absolutely. In fact, you may find it easier and more effective—in Stephen Covey's words—to begin with the end in mind. The creative process is messy. Feel good about building a speech in the same way you might assemble a jigsaw puzzle.

Fripp: It is OK to do so, as long as you're recording creative thoughts and insights that might go into the final speech. Very often with longer speeches, the body of the speech is what you work on first, and the inspiration for how you're going to open comes later.

Weissman: Use whatever creative process works best for you. No matter where I start, I usually get a burst of direction and enthusiasm the moment I figure out the angle of the speech. From there, everything lines up to support it.

? How can a speaker assess how formal or informal a tone to use?

Bucknall: In general, conversational language is good. Very occasionally, protocol might dictate more formal language—which is



fine, as a sign of respect for your audience. One of the most effective ways to achieve a conversational flow is to transcribe what you say, rather than the other way around. Record yourself talking about the topic, then write that down, rather than writing first and then speaking. Writing a “conversational flow” from scratch is very hard—just ask any screenwriter.

Fripp: A speech is not a conversation; however, it needs to sound conversational. With a conversation, there’s no script. It’s back and forth. With a presentation, you think in advance about what you’re going to say and the best way to say it. So you will have shorter sentences, better word choices and more specificity than in a conversation.

? When it comes to choosing the right words, is simpler better?

Fripp: Ask yourself if what you are saying is what you would say in a conversation. Are these words you would use around the dinner table? If not, don’t put them in your speech. They won’t make you sound smarter.

Also think about specificity. The question I ask my clients more than any other is, “What do you mean by *thing*?” That word is nonspecific. It has no value. One engineer said, “There are two things people love about ...” I asked, “If they weren’t things, what would they be?” He answered: “Innovative upgrades.” Then I said, “There are billions of people in the world. Which people love your innovative upgrades?” He said, “Systems engineers.” So instead of “There are two things people love about ...” we ended

up with “There are two innovative upgrades that systems engineers love.” You can see the difference.

Weissman: You want your speech to be easily understood. Even if you are talking to a technical audience, minimize jargon and highly scientific language. Don’t use an obscure or ornate “50-cent word” when a simpler one will do. I recommend writing at a seventh-grade level. You can check your level with a Flesch–Kincaid readability test, available in many word-processing programs.

? Audiences love to laugh, but is humor always helpful?

Bucknall: Humor is a skill, not a gift. If you practice and put in effort, you will get funnier. Humor is vital in speechwriting. Avoid crudeness. Self-deprecating humor is your safest bet.

Weissman: Humor—like stories, data and quotations—should be relevant to your topic and audience. It must support your main idea. If you tell a joke, your success or failure will be revealed immediately after the punch line. Instead, I recommend using wit and humorous stories [versus jokes] because they don’t have that immediate, high-stakes moment of success or failure.

? What about stories? Should every speech have at least one or two?

Bucknall: The overwhelming majority of speeches benefit from at least a story or two, though they may need to be very short.

Weissman: Yes, stories pull listeners in and keep them engaged. We all have different ways we prefer to learn. Not everyone can handle a speech that’s only assertions and data.

? Any tips on how to craft those stories?

Fripp: Stories are about people. Describe them so we can see them. We have to populate our stories with flesh-and-blood characters that other people can relate to. And when they talk to each other, deliver the dialogue, don’t report it: If I say, “I walked into the boss’s office and told him I needed a raise,” that’s reporting. If I say, “I walked into the boss’s office and said, ‘Boss, I need a raise!’” that’s delivering the dialogue. You can use energy and passion and emotion that you can’t if you’re merely reporting.

? What makes for an effective opening?

Bucknall: Establish the relevance and purpose of the talk before you outline what it is you want to talk about. So many speakers take for granted that the audience is interested in the topic. The

THE 7 VIRTUES OF SPEECHWRITING

Professional speechwriter, speaker and communications director Pete Weissman points to seven fundamentals of good speechwriting:

1. Be clear on the one big idea you want the audience to take away.
2. Make sure you have a relevant introduction that pulls them in.
3. Use a clear structure that is easy to follow.
4. Think about the speech from your audience's perspective to make it relevant.
5. Respect the audience's time. For example, don't waste their time and attention by talking about how hard it was to decide what to speak about.
6. Tailor your message to the audience so it speaks to their interests, needs, level of knowledge and preferred style (formal or informal).
7. Start writing your speech early so you have time to refine it before delivery.

reality is that you need to engage them in the value of the topic before they'll listen to you.

Many speakers assume the need for a “hard” opening—the big attention-grabber, which can often seem like a stunt. I've come to realize that “soft” openings can be equally effective, or more so. They are more conversational and natural, and draw the audience in. Either way, what's vital is that within a minute or two you get to a point that really does intrigue the audience.

“Stories are about people. Describe them so we can see them.”

—PATRICIA FRIPP

Fripp: There are many ways you could open. One is to transport the audience: You can take them to the future with “Imagine ...” or to the past with “I wish you could have been there.” You could start with a story. I don't think you should ever say, “Ladies and gentlemen, what a pleasure to be speaking to you all. I'm excited to be talking about ...” Who cares? They want to be excited to listen, and it's your job to engage them.

You could start with an interesting statistic or little-known fact. However, if you introduce a statistic, I would add an emotion: For example, “Would it surprise you to know ...?” or “Would it horrify you to know ...?”

? **How many main ideas can a speech include?**

Bucknall: You can make as many points as you like in a speech. The question is how many will stick. If you're comfortable with making lots of small points in support of one overarching point or message, then that works well. A speaker who tries to make a large number of equally important points will soon run into trouble.

Weissman: I recommend you try to share just one big idea, then have a few supporting points, data, examples or stories. Don't overload a short speech.

? **How can speakers transition from one idea to the next?**

Fripp: Pausing between ideas is a good way to transition. You can also move to a different part of the stage. Or you might say, “And the second lesson I learned,” and so forth, so you have a transition line, keeping a parallel structure. There's nothing wrong with using such a numbering system. But instead of just “points,” talk about ideas, strategies, formulas.

? **Should speakers repeat certain key phrases or points throughout their speech?**

Bucknall: I remember first being introduced to the concept of the “foundational phrase” by Craig Valentine, who was the 1999 World Champion of Public Speaking. It runs like a refrain or chorus line through a speech; it's very effective. Speakers often shy away from repetition for fear of patronizing the audience. Listening is hard work. Reinforce, remind and re-emphasize your points to be of real value to an audience.

? **Should a conclusion always offer a summary of the speech and restate its main points?**

Bucknall: Summarizing key points is fine. Giving the audience a clear “what next?” is better. Too many conclusions are retrospective. Make yours forward-looking, and it'll be much more likely to be of value to the audience. Your conclusion is your last opportunity to drive change in the hearts and minds of your audience. Rhetorical questions can work well. Likewise, an emotive story. Projecting a possible future also enables your audience to sense what the benefits will be of taking action. Finally, circling back to where you started serves to highlight the journey you've been on as a group. **T**

Mitch Mirkin, ACB, a Toastmaster since 2000, is president of Randallstown Network Toastmasters in Baltimore, Maryland. He works as a writer and editor for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.



The Feeling Is **Virtual**

The pros and cons of online meeting participation.

BY JESSE SCINTO, DTM

It's 7:30 on a Tuesday evening when members begin to arrive. The club president banter with guests as the sergeant at arms tends to final details. There's a friendly vibe and an air of expectancy, as you might find at any Toastmasters meeting. Members take their places, and the meeting gets underway.

What's different about Competitive Communicators is that this club meets online. Its members, hailing from opposite sides of the globe, connect once a week using Zoom, a video-conferencing platform. They may never meet in person.

Competitive Communicators was among the first to charter as an online-only club under new rules adopted by the Toastmasters International Board of Directors in 2015. Online-only clubs meet virtually, untethered to a physical room or geographic location. "It was quite a stir," recalls Toastmasters board member Monique Levesque-Pharoah, DTM, describing the groundswell that led to the change. Among established clubs, "there was a lot of excitement about being the first clubs to try it out."

The new rules also made it possible for traditional brick-and-mortar clubs to allow

up to half their members to attend online, beaming into the room through video-conferencing technology, as long as the majority continue to meet face to face. These hybrid clubs are officially referred to as "online-attendance clubs." Currently, Toastmasters International has 15 online-only and more than 600 online-attendance clubs.

The growth in virtual participation comes as organizations worldwide increasingly use video conferencing to reduce travel costs, boost productivity and accommodate remote workers. Globally, video-calling apps like Skype and WeChat

have become extremely popular. A 2016 study by market research company The NPD Group shows that smartphone users between ages 18–34 conduct video calls on their devices, while the Pew Research Center notes 47 percent of teenagers under the age of 18 use video calling or chats while on the phone.

Joining an online-only or online-attendance club is a great way to improve your video-conferencing skills. As I learned in my conversations with early adopters, there are many reasons to give it a try—as well as some important caveats.

Motivations Are Many

Paul Finkelstein, DTM, who co-founded Competitive Communicators, saw virtual participation as a way to get more speeches under his belt. Based in Delray Beach, Florida, Finkelstein earned credit toward his Distinguished Toastmaster award by serving as a club sponsor. He promoted the online-only club through Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, building it up to 50 members in the first year. “I told everybody, if they want to get an extra speech in, take advantage of this,” he says.

Others join online-only clubs specifically to improve their video-conferencing skills, because they use this technology for work. Among them is Graham Cairns, DTM, of Brisbane, Australia. “You can’t do today’s business with yesterday’s tools,” says Cairns, a former radio announcer. He belongs to three online-only clubs, including Online Presenters, which according to the club’s website, “caters to those who give online presentations professionally.”

Matt Krause, CC, a communication consultant based in Istanbul, was interested for similar reasons. Krause uses video conferencing to connect with far-flung clients. Last year, he launched a prospective online-only club with other members of Istanbul Toastmasters in order to work on webinar skills.

When it comes to online-attendance clubs, the motivation for joining may be slightly different. These clubs meet in a physical location, so online attendees often have some prior connection. Perhaps they normally attend in person but happen to be out of town. Perhaps they’ve moved. Or perhaps they’ve visited a club while traveling and want to maintain a connection.

There’s no doubt as to the utility. But if you’re considering virtual participation, you should be aware of the trade-offs.

Trade-offs

The biggest drawbacks of virtual participation are not technical but social. Although video conferencing allows for more nonverbal cues than telephone, it’s still limited compared with live speeches. “In a face-to-face club, you’ve got all these rich physical signals,” says Krause. “Online communication lacks very important physical signals, like eye contact, leaning in or back, really tiny facial expressions—they don’t really come across online.”

“It’s difficult to display body language,” adds Cairns. “Gestures used online have to be constrained and slower. You need more facial gestures and fewer body gestures.”

Speakers also find it harder to read the audience. “There isn’t any applause—and that was my favorite part of Toastmasters,” says Finkelstein. (Some clubs work around this by having members unmute themselves to clap.) You don’t hear the spontaneous

“Don’t expect the same magic that you’d get from a face-to-face club. An online club fills another role.”

—MATT KRAUSE

laughter that normally accompanies a well-delivered line. Audience participation may be awkward.

Members of online-only clubs also might miss the camaraderie of being in the same physical space. “Don’t expect the same magic that you’d get from a face-to-face club,” says Krause. “An online club fills another role. You’re learning skills, like how to appear on TV or how to do video.”

Being aware of these trade-offs will help set your expectations. If you’re wondering whether virtual participation is right for you, the best thing to do is just try it. You can find a list of online-only clubs via “Find a Club” at [toastmasters.org](#). You can also search the “Find a Club”



database for face-to-face clubs with “Online Attendance Accepted.”

Getting Equipped

The equipment needed for virtual participation obviously differs from face-to-face. Clubs must first decide on which video-conferencing platform to use. Although there are dozens to choose from, the majority of online-only clubs currently use Zoom. Clubs pay for a subscription and provide a meeting link (URL) to members, who download the software or app prior to use. Members

can log in using a laptop, smartphone or other internet-connected device, so long as they have a webcam and microphone.

Most clubs designate a meeting manager to monitor technical issues. The meeting manager, who has “host” privileges, can also mute/unmute attendees and choose which view appears in the main window by selecting from members’ video streams. This is useful for timekeeping, because the meeting manager can briefly show the timer’s stream in the main window, so people can see the flags. Audience members send written evaluations directly to the speaker by typing in the chat window.

Face-to-face clubs with optional online-attendance require additional

5 TIPS FOR PARTICIPATING IN AN ONLINE MEETING

Video conferencing technology allows you to connect with your club from the comfort of your own home. But it's tempting to get too casual. Keep these things in mind as you prepare.

1 Master the technology. Be sure to install necessary video-conferencing software well in advance of the meeting. Test your webcam and microphone. During the meeting, mute yourself when it's not your turn to speak to avoid distracting others with background noises.

2 Look into the camera. Whether using a computer or mobile device, it's important to place your webcam at eye level. Look directly into the camera instead of at the screen; any slight difference in the angle of your gaze will be noticeable to the audience.

3 Verbally direct traffic. Because of limited body-language cues, people may find it hard to tell when it's their turn



to speak. This is especially true when asking for audience participation or group introductions. You can alleviate this by calling on people by name and/or verbalizing the speaking order in advance. Well-placed pauses give your audience a chance to ask questions. If there's a planned time for Q&A, announce that as well.

4 Don't get too comfortable. It's easy to let your guard down, especially when connect-

ing from home. But remember that, even when you're not speaking, you're still on camera, and people can see you. Avoid slouching, resting your chin in palm or dressing too casually. Also avoid eating, clipping your nails or other distracting behaviors. Most video conferencing platforms have a "gallery" view that lets participants see each other simultaneously. As a sign of respect to others, keep your camera on and be mentally and visually present.

5 Watch yourself. If your club records its meetings, watch the video afterward and evaluate your own performance. Look for distracting mannerisms. "Everything gets exaggerated," says Angel Audiffred, a New York-based Toastmaster who works in television. "When you put your hand to your face, tug on your ear, push your hair back—whatever mannerisms that usually go unnoticed in daily interactions are exaggerated on TV."

equipment, such as a projector, screen and loudspeakers. These clubs designate a meeting manager as well as a camera operator. They must be conscious of the seating arrangement and placement of the lectern and screen. Some suggest keeping the screen to the side, so it doesn't distract from in-person speakers. When it's time for a virtual attendee to speak, audience members turn toward the screen.

Another concern for online-only clubs and online-attendance clubs is privacy. Some clubs (like Competitive Communicators) record their meetings and publicly post them to video-sharing sites like YouTube. Finkelstein finds this useful both for self-evaluation and for recruiting, as the videos are openly available for anyone to view. But it's important for clubs to have a clearly stated policy so members know what they're


"You can't do today's business with yesterday's tools."

—GRAHAM CAIRNS

getting into. Stating the policy upfront at every meeting gives people a chance to opt out if they don't want to be recorded.

Finally, adding an online-attendance option requires an amendment to your club constitution filed with Toastmasters International. Online-only clubs charter as such. There's no difference in chartering fees or dues paid to Toastmasters International, but clubs are responsible for maintaining their own software and hardware and finding their own video-conferencing platform.

Adapting to virtual participation requires an open mindset and sense of

adventure—character traits that many Toastmasters strive for. "We really subscribe to lifelong learning," says TI board member Levesque-Pharaoh. "It has more to do with personality than with age. If you're clear about your purpose and prepared to make adjustments, you'll find much to gain." 

Jesse Scinto, DTM, is a member of *Greenspeakers Club in New York, New York, and Toastmasters@AUBG in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria*. He's a Fulbright U.S. Scholar and lecturer in Columbia University's graduate *Strategic Communication* program. Follow him on Twitter @jessescinto.



Speaking Without Notes

How to memorize most or all of your speech.

BY BILL BROWN, DTM

You have just spent a considerable amount of time writing your next speech. Whew! You're done. And then, as you review your Pathways assignment, you read those dreaded words: *Don't use notes*. What?! Why in the world would I want to spend time memorizing it? I will answer that question and give some tips on how to get away from what is all too often our favorite crutch. The effectiveness of a speech is determined not only by the words you say but also how you say them. I am a professional narrator, and I am good at reading scripts. Yet I memorize my speeches. Why? Because I do a much better job delivering a speech when I do.

Reading a prepared text is appropriate in certain situations, especially if you are reading a quotation. But even that takes work (which I discuss in detail in an article I wrote for the February 2017 issue of the *Toastmaster* magazine).

You might be asking, "What's so bad about reading my speech?" First, you significantly limit your expressiveness when you do, and with it, your effectiveness. Next, it is easy to emphasize the wrong words and phrases. It is also far too easy to misread some of the words. Essentially, you risk sounding boring and artificial. And then there's the audience connection. When you read, unless you are using a teleprompter, you are probably looking down, meaning eye contact is minimal. This also makes you harder to hear, unless you are wearing a microphone. And what does your audience see when you are looking down? The top of your head. That might not be your best side. Just saying.

So, how do you get away from using notes? I use two approaches, depending on the nature and length of my speech

or presentation. The first method is for shorter speeches, like most you would give in a club setting.

Preparing for a Short Speech

When constructing a building, the contractors first create a foundation and basic frame, then attach the various components to it. Memorizing a 5- to 12-minute Toastmasters speech is very similar. You constructed your speech with a logical flow. That is your skeleton. Keep that in mind. Then memorize each thought or paragraph, one at a time.

“As a wordsmith, what I write is important to me, so I memorize most of my Toastmasters speeches word for word.”

Eleven years ago, I entered a Tall Tales contest with a story about a skiing adventure. I can still deliver that speech word for word today because I am visually going down that hill in my mind as I deliver it. My focus is on the skeleton. As a wordsmith, what I write is important to me, so I memorize most of my Toastmasters speeches word for word. I start with the first paragraph and keep at it until I can deliver it easily, naturally and accurately. Once I can do this without making a mistake, I move on to paragraph two. I continue until I can deliver the first two paragraphs word for word in sequence. Then on to the rest of the speech, until I know it verbatim.

Preparing for a Longer Speech

But what about a longer presentation, like the 45-minute Toastmasters training I recently conducted? For any speech longer than 15 minutes, I speak from a general outline—just the major headings. I don't start there, however. The logical flow is still important—as are brevity and clarity.

I start with a detailed outline of my presentation. As I practice it, I find out where there are logical holes and where I am too wordy. Then I edit accordingly.

Once I have the presentation outlined the way I want it, I practice it using that detailed outline. Over time, I end up knowing what I want to say with fewer notes. My outline, then, gets more general. Eventually, I only need the basic chapter headings, which I type as a numbered list in large font on a single sheet of paper.

These two approaches are different, but a key factor binds them together: practice. Relying on your memory without it is risky. Know what you are going to say, then practice it until you have it down cold. I hope this helps you move away from your notes. If you can speak clearly, concisely and effectively without using notes, you will sound like someone who knows what they are talking about, someone who has command of their material. And that, in and of itself, will go a long way toward making your presentation a real winner. **■**

Bill Brown, DTM, is a speech delivery coach from Las Vegas and a member of Pro Toastmasters. Learn more at www.billbrownspeechcoach.com.



ONLINE EXTRAS: In an exclusive recording, Bill Brown offers more tips on memorizing your speech.



Are You Aware?

Every dog will have his day. So will every squirrel, pickle and pancake.

BY JOHN CADLEY

Look out your window. Do you see a squirrel? Is he (or she—who can tell?) climbing all over your bird feeder? Biting a hole in your screen? Digging up your neatly manicured lawn to bury nuts? Never mind. Appreciate him—or her. You have no choice. October is International Squirrel Awareness and Appreciation Month, during which you are asked to contemplate the beauty of a creature you would normally consider an ill-tempered rat with an overgrown tail.

This isn't me talking. It's Gregg Bassett, the creator of this seasonal paean to rodentia. As the story goes, Mr. Bassett was hiking in the Grand Canyon one day when his bedazzlement at the surrounding grandeur was eclipsed by the sight of a fox squirrel standing on its hind legs and waving its arms. Was it saying hello? Asking for food? Speaking in sign language? We will never know. What we do know is that this sight so enchanted Mr. Bassett he went right home and founded the International Squirrel Lover's Club, complete with its own newsletter, *In a Nutshell*. (You could see that one coming.) Membership is \$28 per year (\$31 outside the U.S.).

If you think this is some kind of joke, I can assure you it is not. Neither is International Hexagonal Awareness Month (March), Caribbean Cuisine Month (June), Trucker Appreciation Month (September), Hair Loss Awareness Month (August) or the month of July, which, according to Wikipedia, asks that you give special attention to pancakes, pickles and gin

rickeys all in the same 31-day period. It would take a lot of gin rickeys to make me put pickles and pancakes together, but then maybe that's the point.

“Closing out the month on Oct. 31 we have World Savings Day, which is always a nice time to remember that you don't have any.”

Apparently, there is not a month—or, as you shall see, even a day—of the year that is not dedicated to the awareness of *something*, however insignificant it may seem. One person's yawn is another person's cheer. For instance, April 3 is International Tweed Day. On that day it is requested that you spend a good part of your time praising ... a piece of wool. If that seems frivolous, you probably won't be interested in International Mud Day either (June 29), which was originally created in Nepal to get children outdoors. They were encouraged to splash in the mud to their hearts' content, after which their moods seemed to greatly improve. It was made official at the World Forum in 2009 by Gillian McAuliffe of Australia and Bishnu Bhatta of Nepal—both of whom are currently in hiding due to the bounty placed on their heads by the mothers who have to do the children's laundry.

If this all seems too much, I can only say ... there's more. I mentioned that this month (October) is dedicated to squirrels. However, as we all know, a month is made of *days*—in this case, 31—each of which has its own *individual* object of worship. For instance, let's say it's Oct. 1 and you're dutifully appreciating the squirrels as they chew through your cable TV wires. Don't forget Oct. 1 is also World Vegetarian Day! So while you're wondering how much the cable guy is going to charge for repairs, you can start feeling guilty about your bad eating habits. July 28 is World Nature Day, Oct. 4 is World Animal Day and March 3 is World Wildlife Day, respectively, so you might as well go outside and ask the squirrels if there's anything else they'd like to destroy. Closing out the month on Oct. 31 we have World Savings Day, which is always a nice time to remember that you don't have any.

Who comes up with these days? Anybody, apparently. So I'd like to propose International Awareness Awareness Day, in which you spend your time being aware of all the things you're supposed to be aware of—like World Toilet Day on Nov. 19. This is a biggie. If your home latrine needs cleaning, repairing or even replacing, this is your day. And if you haven't used it in a while ... well, you've got a full 24 hours to make everything come out all right. **T**

John Cadley, a former advertising copywriter, is a freelance writer and musician living in Fayetteville, New York. Learn more at www.cadleys.com.

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CLIENT SPOTLIGHT - BO BENNETT, DTM



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

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

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

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

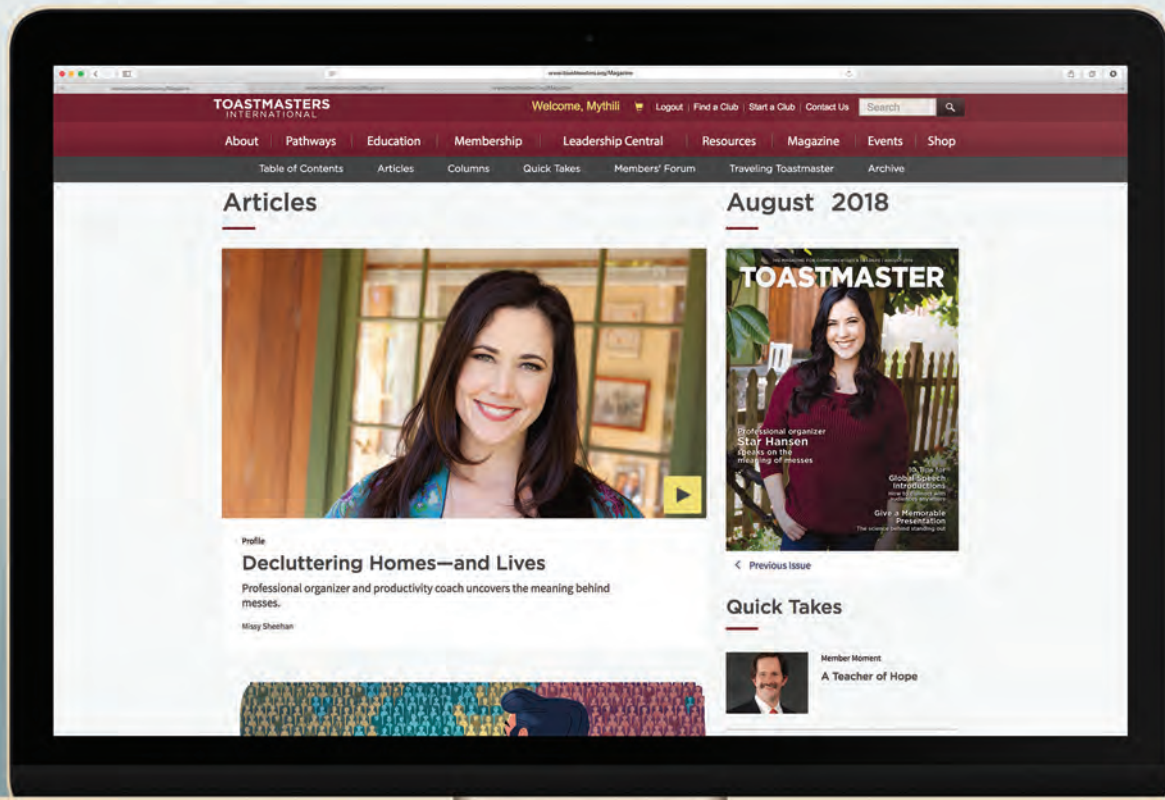
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