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The Communicator

First Oakville Toastmasters Club (#2245)

In This Issue:

Message From Our President	P1
More Than the Manual	P2
International Speech Contest	P3
Grow Leadership Potential	P4
Maximize Your Return	P5

President's Message from Toastmaster Katherine Ryell

First Oakville Toastmasters is a very special club!

I know this because we recently celebrated 52 years, which makes us one of the oldest and most distinguished clubs around.

Our club today is a result of 52 years of Toastmasters leadership and growth, and the commitment of those before us. Many unique and special traditions have been introduced over the years such as the charter party and dinner meetings. Our history makes us special.

I visited a few other clubs this year and learned that many of their members belonged to First Oakville at one time. Though they may have moved on to other clubs to help them grow, it's nice to hear they strive to be like our club and use us a measuring tool.

Isn't it great knowing you joined the right club!!

Distinguished Club Program Update

One of our measuring tools for determining that we continue to grow and develop is the Distinguished Club Program (DCP), a set of 10 goals we strive to achieve throughout the year.



Check out our club banner with all the ribbons reflecting our achievements over the years. This year we will achieve Select Distinguished Club status. How have we done this?

Congratulations to Michael Walornyj, Susan Power, Vincent Daly and Donald Knowles for completing their Competent Communicator manuals.

Congratulations to Jennifer Czerniak, Karen Cooper and Hal Shaw for completing their Advanced Communicator Bronze (two advanced manuals).

Congratulations again to Jennifer who is on track to become FOTM's first member to complete the new Competent Leadership manual.

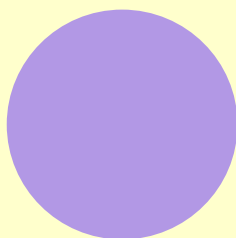
Thanks to all of our new members who joined this year, and to our club officers who attended training and submitted reports to Toastmasters International in a timely manner.

Together we continue to grow and achieve our goals.



"Much speech is one thing, well-timed speech is another."

Sophocles



"In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity"

Albert Einstein

THE 2008 – 2009 EXECUTIVE

Katherine Ryell, President
Akeel Ghaib, VP Education
Deborah, Bartucci, VP Membership
Andy MacPherson, Treasurer
Gerry Bramm, Secretary
Donald Knowles, Sergeant at Arms
Susan Power, VP Public Relations



Toastmasters...It's Not Just About Completing The Manuals

By Susan Power

"Your attitude speaks so loudly that I can't hear what you say"

Unknown

*" Living with integrity means: Not settling for less than what you know you deserve in your relationships. Asking for what you want and need from others. **Speaking** your truth, even though it might create conflict or tension; behaving in ways that are in harmony with your personal values. Making choices based on what you believe, and not with what others believe"*

Barbara De Angelis



"Make sure you are finished speaking, before your audience is done listening"

Dorothy Sarnoff

When I signed up for Toastmasters, it was for one reason, "To become a confident, comfortable public speaker." I thought this is a good way to force myself to practice speaking in front of a larger group, and that was about it. Little, did I realize that there are so many other things to learn at First Oakville Toastmasters... mainly from the other members who show up each week.

Humor is Paramount

There are so many styles and approaches to communicate a message effectively. However, I think harnessing one's natural ability to use humor effectively is the most important way to connect with your audience; it helps your audience tune into what you are saying and enables them to actually listen and want to understand your message. This is something that a few of our longstanding members are really talented at delivering; and something for us all to aspire towards. Humor makes your audience feel warm and like you, and want you to succeed. It makes you more persuasive.

Be Authentic

While it is so tempting to try to copy or mimic a gifted speaker's mannerisms and speaking style, you really need to find your own unique style otherwise, it will come across as fake. This is not to say that you cannot learn from watching other people speak, and soak up what you like about their delivery, but you need to find a way to make your delivery true to your own personality and experiences.

Audience-Centric

There is something very appealing about a speaker who listens and observes their audience. They have reached the point where they are not a bundle of nerves; and can connect one-on-one with audience members. They are not just there to talk about themselves, but have a message that is well-thought out one that they genuinely want to deliver and express to the audience. They are able react impromptu to speak and react to their audience members so they are not just talking at them; and they instinctively know what their audience wants and needs.



"There are always three speeches, for every one you actually gave. The one you practiced, the one you gave, and the one you wish you gave."

Dale Carnegie

February 2009 - International Speech Contest



It is an annual club tradition to hold the international speaking contest offsite at a semi-formal event. Family and friends are invited to a three course meal; and this year we combined it with Valentines day at RattleSnake Golf Club in Milton. It is a fantastic opportunity to speak at a dinner event; and enjoy a party and dancing afterwards. Our winner this year, Val Clements, shares her experience and lessons learned from competing.

Q: What did you learn by participating in the contest?

A: To trust my instinct about how to deliver my content.

Q: What was the most challenging part?

A: To settle down those beginning nerves enough to get into and enjoy what I'm doing.

Q: Any advice you have for first time contest participants?

Go with it....don't doubt yourself....be confident.

Q: Is it a lot different speaking at the annual charter party in front of such a large group versus the normal meeting setting?

Yes it is. But surprisingly enough I liked it better at the Charter Party. I got caught up in the excitement and wasn't as nervous.

Q: What did you learn from the next level of competition?

You just never know which way the judges are going to go!

Q: How did you prepare for the contest?

I never write my speeches. I just organise it in my head. So rehearsal is important. I would practice a lot. At home in the car, when ever I had a moment... Prior to the Charter party I did use a 'coach'. I would do the speech and get instant feedback and develop from there.

Q: Do you plan to participate next year?

Yes, absolutely. I enjoy the competitive spirit. I do get a little nervous but it's more of an adrenaline rush and excitement and that's addictive!

Q: What was fun about the entire experience?

It was a speech that was close to my heart. Speaking about my daughter and grandson so I really felt good with the material. I chose to make it more light hearted because that's more fitting with my personality. The dancing around etc. It was something I could have fun doing....and I did.



Val Clements (2009 Winner for First Oakville's Annual Charter Party Speech Contest) and contest chair Deborah Bartucci



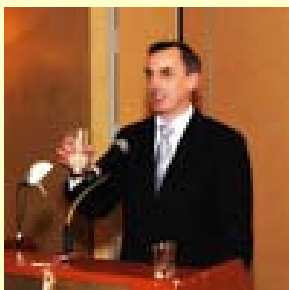
"It usually takes more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech."

Mark Twain



"According to most studies, people's number one fear is public speaking. Number two is death. Death is number two. Does that sound right? This means to the average person, if you go to a funeral, you're better off in the casket than doing the eulogy."

Jerry Senfield



Dave Webster delivers toast at Charter Party

Grow Your Leadership Potential as an Executive Member

Yes, there are numerous manuals to work through to hone your speaking skills, but this is just one aspect of the Toastmaster experience. There are a number of executive positions where you can develop your leadership skills in many areas. Your current executive members share below what they learned in their current role. Consider these as reasons why you should consider serving as an executive for the 2009 - 2010 year.

Sargeant-at-Arms (Donald Knowles)

"Being the SAA has been interesting as I have worked with outside vendors, facility managers, and almost all of the club members. I have interacted each meeting with every club member and ensured that the meeting space is set up and ready to go. If the club adopts the idea of having 2 SAAs then it will be easier to ensure that someone is on site for every meeting. It is a good position to learn about the club and the organisation, and to determine what to do next."

VP of Public Relations (Susan Power)

"In this role, there is the opportunity to represent the club externally. For the charter party, I provided content and pictures to local publications to get press coverage for the club. Additionally, the VP of PR, typically publishes a club newsletter a few times a year. This role gave me the chance to get to know other members better; and learning how to put together a newsletter was a valuable thing, especially if you have an entrepreneurial bent."

President (Katherine Ryell)

"In my role I have learned there is a tremendous amount of support and resources available. Whether that be at the club level where many of you have provided guidance and suggestions, or beyond the club at the Area, Division and District level, there are so many dedicated Toastmasters who are willing to help." Meetings take on a whole new perspective when you are on the executive. It's an opportunity to analyse - what is working and what is not. Are we ending on time? Are there enough tables and chairs? Are members actively engaged? I think I will be a stronger Toastmaster going forward, like many of you who continue to support the club and executive with lots of feedback and great ideas.

VP of Education (Akeel Ghaib)

Being the VP Ed has been a fulfilling and wonderful experience. It gave me the opportunity to appreciate the value and the quality members bring to each meeting. I learned:

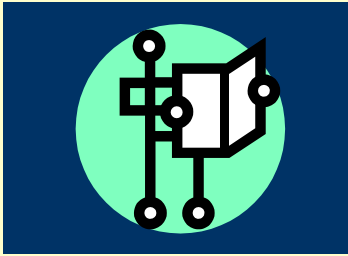
- Decision making
- Accuracy
- Respect for time and resources
- Organizing skills
- Listening skills
- Multi tasking
- Team work

Secretary (Gerald Bramm)

Like most of us, I joined Toastmasters to improve my speaking skills. Little did I know that I would also be receiving an education in "listening". While being an evaluator sharpens your listening skills, if you are looking for a master class in the topic I recommend that you take on the role of Secretary. This executive position challenges your ability to concentrate throughout an entire meeting. No small task for those of us with the attention span of a distracted house fly. Amidst the thrust and parry of the business session the secretary is expected to keep track of minutes, motions and amendments. And this is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. While the challenges of the role are gargantuan the rewards are immense. If climbing Mt. Everest isn't your thing then might I suggest the role of secretary as a worthy substitute.

VP of Membership (Deborah Bartucci)

This is my second time as VP of Membership. I believe my second year as a Toastmaster I was VP of Membership - as a newer member at that time VP of Membership allowed me to get to know the members from the time they initially come through the door. As a more seasoned member now my role as a VP of Membership again gives me the opportunity to get to know all of the members. It is always very satisfying to see the growth of a nervous guest become an accomplished Toast Master. It's a great executive role.



Maximize Your Return

By Hal Shaw

In these "interesting times", everyone is looking for ways to maximize the return on their investments.

When it comes to Toastmasters, here are three suggestions.

Research

Professionals advise us to research and study before we invest. Good advice for Toastmasters as we invest precious time in speeches, meeting roles and deciphering parliamentary procedure. TM International provide a plethora of well designed material that I'm sure many of us seldom take full advantage of (I know I haven't!) By taking 5 or ten minutes to review the relevant material you'll gain insight and confidence. A little bit of research goes a long way. Don't assume everyone else knows all this stuff. Remember, in the

Reach out

Our club offers a wealth of experience, most of which goes unmined and untapped. Few members are good at all aspects of Toast mastering, but many are very, very good at one or two. Chairing a meeting, doing an evaluation or improving you table topics...first ask your mentor and then ask a member in the club that you've observed excelling at that particular task.

Risk it

Take a chance, test your boundaries and try something new. Start the meeting with a song, whisper and shout at your audience or introduce a motion to disband the club. It's how we learn, grow and often have the most fun. And it won't turn out nearly as badly as your AIG portfolio.

First Oakville Toastmasters
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"Be still when you have nothing to say; when genuine passion moves you, say what you've got to say, and say it hot."

D.H. Lawrence

"Come on Vincent, Hit the High C!!!"

"Egg Nog, Anyone??"

"It's tough being blonde & beautiful, but someone has to do it"

