

# TOASTMASTER®

## Leading with **Cultural Intelligence**

How to navigate the four facets  
of global communication.

PAGE 16



Meet International President  
**Jim Kokocki, DTM**

PAGE 22

# What Do Prospective Members Want To Know?



What questions did you have in mind before you walked into your first Toastmasters meeting? You likely wondered: Do people dress casually or in business attire? Will people my age be there? Are there men and women? Is it an ethnically diverse mix? Is the environment serious and formal, or do people have at least a little bit of fun?

Pictures from your club meetings can answer most of these questions for prospective members. I occasionally search Twitter, Instagram and Facebook for Toastmasters and I enjoy seeing pictures from club meetings. In

the casual photos, I often see members speaking, room set-ups and meeting agendas, as well as member preferences in coffee brands and soft drinks.

Do you agree with the old saying that a picture is worth a thousand words?


I hope your club is using available tools to promote images of itself to the world. Marketing and sales models tell us that if people are not aware you exist, they won't buy your service. And if people are aware you exist but lack knowledge of what you do, they won't buy your service. But when people

## I hope your club is using available tools to promote images of itself to the world.

have awareness and knowledge, interest can grow, desire to purchase can grow and more people will take action to purchase.

You can probably think of a product or service you eagerly purchased once you had awareness and knowledge of it. First Vice President Balraj Arunasalam, DTM, recently told me about a luggage packing-cube product for travelers that I wish I had known about 10 years ago.

Applying the marketing model to your club, you can use photos to drive awareness and knowledge for prospective members. Still today, too many people say they have never heard of Toastmasters, or they have heard of us but don't have any idea what we do. You may very well have heard your friends and co-workers make such statements. Images of members speaking and having fun at meetings can help immensely in driving awareness and knowledge of your club, and of Toastmasters in general.

Thank you for your membership in Toastmasters. I'm sure you are enjoying benefits far beyond what you initially expected. Let's find methods to reach more people, so that they, like us, can realize the benefits of participating in our supportive clubs. 

**Jim Kokocki, DTM**  
International President

# TOASTMASTER®

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

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

### Toastmasters International Mission:

We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



**WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE**  
[www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org)

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Club milestones give many Toastmasters around the world a reason to cheer. Congratulations to these clubs!



900th meeting  
Adelaide Toastmasters club  
Adelaide, South Australia,  
Australia

10th  
anniversary  
Eagle Club  
Victoria Island,  
Lagos, Nigeria



25th  
anniversary

Talk of The Town club  
Kitchener-Waterloo,  
Ontario, Canada



60th anniversary

Salinas Sunrise Toastmasters  
Salinas, California



Send your fun club photos to [photos@toastmasters.org](mailto:photos@toastmasters.org). Include a description and your club name and location. Photos must be in .jpeg format and they can't be blurry. In addition, they should have a resolution of at least 300 dpi (dots per inch) or 1 megabyte (MB). Each email we receive is limited to 25 MB. If your photos are too large, please attach them to separate emails or use Dropbox. All pictures of Toastmasters materials must display the current brand.

# Features



22

## 22

INTERVIEW

### Meet Jim Kokocki, DTM

Toastmasters' 2015–2016 International President is a Canadian businessman who embraces innovation and new challenges.

Read about his journey as a leader and his future goals as president.

*By Toastmaster magazine staff*

# Articles

## 16

COVER



### Leading with Cultural Intelligence

How to navigate the four facets of global communication.

You don't have to memorize a list of dos and don'ts to be CQ smart.

*By David Livermore, Ph.D.*

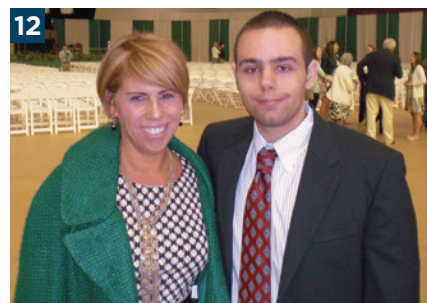
## 12

SUCCESS STORIES

### MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS

Cheers to you!

*By Toastmaster magazine staff*



12

## 14

HUMOR

### WHEN STORIES GO STALE

How to make your comedy fresh and authentic.

*By Judy Carter*



14

## 20

HUMOR

### A FORMULA FOR FUNNY

Structure your humor around three elements: surprise, tension and relationships.

*By John Kinde, DTM, AS*



20

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- More photos
- Links to additional resources, including videos, relevant articles and websites

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## Articles

26

### LOOKING AT LANGUAGE THE BENEFITS OF BEING BILINGUAL

Members of Madrid club alternate between Spanish and English.

*By Julie Bawden-Davis*



28

### EDUCATION PROGRAM MENTORING MATTERS

Formal program in REP will increase mentoring benefits.

*By Paul Sterman*

29

### FOR THE NOVICE LEADING A CLUB MEETING FOR THE FIRST TIME?

These 10 tips will help you handle the Toastmaster role with confidence.

*By Felicity Barber*



## Columns

2

### VIEWPOINT

What Do Prospective Members Want To Know?

*By Jim Kokocki, DTM  
International President*

11

### MY TURN

Anniversary Meeting

*By Mitch Mirkin, CTM*

30

### FUNNY YOU SHOULD SAY THAT

Classic Stuff

*By John Cadley*

## Departments

3 MEMBERS' FORUM

6 QUICK TAKES

10 TRAVELING TOASTMASTER

### ▶ MEMBER MOMENT

# Rising to the Challenge



Rory Horne, CC

As an extrovert, Rory Horne naturally enjoys socializing with people. But actually speaking to them hasn't always come as easily.

Ordinary words that most people have no problem saying would get stuck on Horne's tongue in stressful or unfamiliar situations. It wasn't until he was in graduate school that he decided to face the problem he'd been trying to hide since he was a child—his stutter. Horne, CC, was

born in South Africa, and moved to New Zealand when he was 5. He studied mechanical engineering as an undergraduate and in 2014 earned his master's in engineering.

With help from both Toastmasters and the McGuire Programme [a course for people who stutter], Horne is more confident than ever in his ability to not only speak in social situations, but to deliver speeches in front of a crowd. He finds support from his fellow members at the Avon Club in Christchurch, New Zealand.

#### Why did you join Toastmasters?

I joined for the reasons most people do—to gain confidence and improve my speaking skills. The main difference is that I have a stutter, so a place with a positive atmosphere and good feedback was particularly important to me. In 2010, I joined a Toastmasters club called U-Can-Speak at my school, the University of Canterbury, and eventually became president. Once I started my career at Trimble [an international technology company], I switched to the Avon Club.

Since joining Toastmasters, my stutter has steadily become less of a factor in my life. My job as a user experience analyst involves interviewing people who use products and asking what they like or don't like about them. This is something I would have never done without the communication skills I gained through Toastmasters. Toastmasters has not only helped me become a better oral communicator in presentations and interviews, but also to communicate better in written reports.

#### Have you conquered your stuttering?

I wouldn't claim to have overcome my stutter; it doesn't really work like that. But I can look back and see that there is definitely a big difference in my everyday speech. Today, I feel like my stutter is just something that I deal with like I would anything else. I try to get enough sleep, exercise regularly and try to keep my speech at a level I like.

#### What tips do you offer others who struggle with their speech?

My advice would be to practice talking and reading out loud in a place where you feel really comfortable. Learn what good speech feels like and pay attention to what you do physically with your breathing and mouth. Then bring that understanding with you when you are out of your comfort zone.

#### Do you have any accomplishments you'd like to share?

Competing at the division level in the International Speech Contest was a big achievement. I was lucky enough to have a great mentor building up to the contest, and I must have rehearsed the speech dozens of times. I gave it almost flawlessly and received a lot of positive comments afterward.

Also, I joined a Big Brother program about a year ago in which I mentor a young boy at a local school. He has a stutter and I find it very rewarding to give him a comfortable place to talk, and to help his teachers understand how to help him. I'd highly recommend donating your time like this.

### ▶ IN BRIEF

#### SAVE THE DATE

Every August, members around the globe convene to celebrate the year's successes with like-minded friends. Mark your calendars for the 2016 International Convention, which will be held in Washington, D.C., August 17–20.

#### MEET THE BOARD

Let's welcome the new Board of Directors. Read about them at [www.toastmasters.org/Board](http://www.toastmasters.org/Board).

#### SEND YOUR PHOTOS

How do you speak or lead in your community, at work or at home? The *Toastmaster* magazine seeks images of you using your Toastmasters skills outside of your club. Send high-resolution photos (1 megabyte or larger) to [photos@toastmasters.org](mailto:photos@toastmasters.org).

Did You Know?

The Revitalized  
Education Program

will include training for mentors

Contact your local ambassador  
[www.toastmasters.org/REP](http://www.toastmasters.org/REP)

## ▶ SNAPSHOT

# A Global Gathering

*Members from Germany, Switzerland and Mexico pose in front of the Tsar Cannon in the Kremlin during their March visit to a Toastmasters conference in Moscow.*



## ▶ WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

**What does diversity in your club mean to you?**

“ I belong to a club in Qatar. Our members come from different nations and cultural backgrounds. We have members from the U.K., the U.S., India, the Philippines, Ireland, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Qatar and Egypt. The diversity makes our meetings interesting and fun, and it leads to a productive learning session.”

**Gil Bangalan, DTM**  
Filcom International club ▶ Doha, Qatar

“ I am an American and a member of a Toastmasters club in England. The majority of our members are Americans, but we have English members also. Some members who are American citizens have come from other countries. I see Toastmasters as an international organization that allows members to visit any of the clubs around the globe. This diverseness is one of the many reasons why I fell in love with this organization.”

**Sharon Flanders**  
RAF Mildenhall Toastmasters ▶ Mildenhall, England


“ I come from the Central African Republic, and I've been a member of a club in England for a short period of time. Toastmasters is definitely international, and communication is a worldwide concept. It is interesting when you take advantage of this cultural diversity to gain new perspectives.”

**Olivia Kowabis**  
Aylesbury Speakers ▶ Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, England

“ I gave a speech on this at my club a few years ago, and at the time I counted 19 different nationalities in the club. I love and appreciate the diversity, and I have learned tolerance from being exposed to people of different cultures.

“The effort put out by members for whom English is a second (or third, or fourth) language is inspiring. Hearing how others view the world shows me that my view isn't the only or "right" way to see things. Having connected with Toastmasters around the world via Facebook and LinkedIn has made me feel part of a larger, more valuable group of people.”

**John Schneyer, DTM**  
Boca Raton Toastmasters ▶ Boca Raton, Florida

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



▶ 90TH ANNIVERSARY

# Marking Our 90-year Milestone in Style

Since last October, Toastmasters clubs around the world have been celebrating the organization's 90th anniversary in fun and innovative ways.

Many clubs held 90th-anniversary parties, putting up festive decorations and talking about Toastmasters history. Some brought in customized cakes adorned with the Toastmasters anniversary logo. Members from District 87 in Jakarta, Indonesia, paid tribute with a yellow rice cone.

Other clubs commemorated 1924, when the organization came into being, by holding 1920s-themed meetings, their members dressing in the fashions of the time. One club, Conservatively Speaking in Newcastle, Washington, re-created the first meeting, held October 22, 1924, in Santa Ana, California. At Smedley Chapter One, the original club started by Ralph Smedley in Santa

Ana, Toastmasters International CEO Daniel Rex spoke at the club's anniversary meeting (which also featured a life-sized cutout of Ralph Smedley standing near the commemorative cake).

Some clubs produced anniversary-related videos, as did World Headquarters, and a number of special products were made available by World Headquarters, including 90th anniversary T-shirts, buttons and pens.

In October, the yearlong celebration will officially come to an end. As the organization moves into its next chapter, there is much to be excited about, including the revitalized education program, which will give members more opportunities than ever to learn and grow.

And, remember, the centennial is only nine years away!

- 1 | SMEDLEY CHAPTER ONE CLUB, IRVINE, CALIFORNIA
- 2 | TOASTMASTERS FROM RWANDA
- 3 | TOASTMASTERS ZUG IN SWITZERLAND
- 4 | LILYDALE TOASTMASTERS CLUB IN AUSTRALIA
- 5 | TOASTMASTERS FROM KLUANG, JOHOR, MALAYSIA





## ▶ MEET MY MENTOR

# Mentor Marilyn Mucha, CC

Rupak Sarma, a process improvement professional currently employed with Walmart, discovered Toastmasters while studying international business in the U.K. He grew up in India and went to the U.K. to pursue higher education. He was an active participant in the Sheffield Speakers club in Sheffield, South Yorkshire, U.K., during his last three months in the country before relocating to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, to study supply chain process improvement.

Soon after arriving in Edmonton, Rupak joined the Core Development Toastmasters club. He wanted to network with people who had similar career interests. He also enjoyed practicing storytelling and wanted to develop a spontaneous speech delivery.

Marilyn Mucha, CC, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP Public Sector sales director and a charter member of the club, welcomed him warmly during his first visit. She asked Rupak about his professional background and interests, and invited him to the club's next social event. Being new to the club and to the country, Rupak was particularly appreciative and he volunteered to be Toastmaster at the next meeting. Marilyn extended her support and offered to mentor him.

### What makes Marilyn stand out?

She is a sensible, caring person, but my favorite thing about her is her humility. She is down to earth despite being so successful professionally. She is committed to helping others, and is passionate about mentoring. Marilyn is an excellent critic, too. She helps me with speechwriting and is an acute listener. She once booked the office conference room during lunch just so I could practice!

### What have you accomplished while under her guidance?

When I first took on the meeting role of Toastmaster, Marilyn guided me through the entire process. She gave me constructive feedback and shared practical tips for success. I have overcome stage fright and I can now deliver a speech with confidence.

## ▶ CLUB TIP

# Controversial Speech Topics

Toastmasters International does not officially prohibit or place restrictions of any kind on any speech topic, content or language. Clubs are simply encouraged to exercise good taste and cultural sensitivity for the greater good.

Individual clubs do have the right to limit speech topics, content or language by a consensus of members. Club leaders should guide their members on how to observe good taste and sensitivity in the context of that particular club.

Club websites are useful for advising members and guests of established club practices and policies, and ensuring continuity through changes in leadership.



FROM LEFT: Marilyn Mucha, CC, and Rupak Sarma

Apart from Marilyn being my Toastmasters mentor, I also regard her as a life coach.

### What is the best feedback you ever received from Marilyn?

Speak as though you are the president of America! Deliver with confidence.

### NOMINATE YOUR MARVELOUS MENTOR!

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



# TRAVELING TOASTMASTER



**1 | ANTHONY SIMEONE, CC, FROM OAKLYN, NEW JERSEY,** poses in front of El Castillo in the Mayan city of Chichen Itza, Mexico.

**2 | SIRI PAYAKAPAN, DTM, FROM FULLERTON, CALIFORNIA,** visits the Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet, China, at 12,000 feet above sea level.

**3 | JEFFREY MUTNIK, ACG, ALB, FROM MIAMI, FLORIDA,** enjoys the view at Hanauma Bay on the island of Oahu, Hawaii.

**4 | REGINA CRUZ, CL, CC, FROM CLERMONT, FLORIDA,** stands in the Intag Valley in Ecuador.



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



**PICTURE YOURSELF HERE!** Pose with the *Toastmaster* magazine—print or tablet edition—during your travels and submit your photos for a chance to be featured in an upcoming issue. Visit [www.toastmasters.org/Submissions](http://www.toastmasters.org/Submissions). Bon voyage!

## Anniversary Meeting

How I celebrated the links between marriage and membership.

BY MITCH MIRKIN, CTM

It was April 1, 2015—my 25th wedding anniversary. My wife, Lauren, and I were attending our biweekly Toastmasters meeting, and I was Toastmaster of the Day.

I knew I should mention our special occasion to the group, but I wasn't sure how to work it in. I thought about telling a joke about the food processor I had bought for Lauren as a gift. (OK, I'm not the romantic type. I didn't get her any silver, but at least the appliance has a nice stainless steel blade.)

Then it hit me. I realized that the qualities we develop as Toastmasters are the same ones that make for healthy, long-lasting personal relationships. Toastmasters, after all, involves more than just public speaking. It's about good communication, self-aware-



*Lauren and Mitch Mirkin*

The qualities we develop as Toastmasters members are the same ones that make for healthy, long-lasting personal relationships.

ness, self-improvement, integrity and leadership. Whether it's a marriage, friendship or business relationship, these qualities pave the way to success and fulfillment. So in my opening remarks from the lectern, I focused on three attributes, in particular, where I saw a strong link between Toastmasters and relationship-building:

### Listening

Lauren, a trained counselor, has helped me see the importance of good listening and taught me ways to improve. It hasn't come easy. I often find myself thinking about how I'm going to respond to someone, rather than truly focusing on what the person is saying. Fortunately for my marriage, I've made some progress.

Toastmasters is a great place to practice the skill of listening. We don't multitask during a meeting; we don't check our cellphones. Everyone's attention is on the speaker. Listening is especially critical when you want to deliver a meaningful, thoughtful evaluation. Try applying the same skills in personal or business conversations.

### Giving

If a newlywed came to me for advice, the first thing I'd say is, "Be a giver, not a taker." Think about what you can do for the other person, and how you can enrich his or her life. President John F. Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." Replace the word "country" with spouse, partner or friend and you've got the idea.

Toastmasters cultivates this same mindset. In our club, when a role needs to be filled, people are quick to step up. Members put a lot of thought, energy and creativity into their speeches and

Table Topics ideas. They aren't stingy with their time, nor with their passion. Their core motivation seems to be, How can I make this a meaningful and productive experience for others?

### Growing

My wife may snicker when she reads this, but I'd like to think that I'm far more mature and self-aware than I was when we met. Without self-growth on the part of both partners, a relationship won't thrive.

When I served as Toastmaster of the Day on my anniversary, it was my first time in that role. Performing any role for the first time—especially delivering an Ice Breaker—pushes you out of your comfort zone. That's what is expected in Toastmasters. There's no standing still. Stick around long enough, and there's a good chance you'll become a club president, or maybe even a district officer. With each new responsibility, you tap into latent abilities and strengths you didn't know you had.

There may be more romantic or exciting ways to celebrate an anniversary. I'm sure some couples go on a cruise, spend a wild weekend in Las Vegas or even go skydiving. But if you ask me, there's no more appropriate place to be than a Toastmasters meeting.

As I continue to build my relationship skills, I'm looking forward to the next quarter-century of marriage. Check back in 2040—I'll let you know how it goes. **T**

**MITCH MIRKIN, CTM**, is a member of Randallstown Network Toastmasters, in Pikesville, Maryland. His wife, Lauren, CC, is the club's president. Mitch works as a writer and editor for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

# Member Achievements

Cheers to you!

As Toastmasters, you are accustomed to clapping for other members after they give a speech, evaluation or Table Topic. But it's also important to acknowledge your fellow members for the accomplishments, big and small, that they've made along their journey of self-improvement in leadership, communication and public speaking. Let's give a round of applause to these members and their success stories!



**SANDRA CITTADINO AND HER SON JOSEPH  
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK  
EMPIRE STATESMEN CLUB**

## Speaking Through Adversity

I am a widow of 13 years and have been raising my son Joseph, now 23, on my own. Joseph graduated from college with a political science degree. He has Asperger's syndrome, an autism spectrum disorder. I established a parent support group for those with autistic children, and my son started a social club for young adults with Asperger's. I joined Toastmasters to gain better speaking skills so I could speak publicly and to my group about autism. I have gained so much from my club!

My son is a gifted public speaker, which is rare for people with autism. He speaks on behalf of the autism community, and lends support to local senators here in Syracuse. He joined our club about six months ago and is soaring! The time we spend together is valuable. I have seen so much growth in him—not just in his speaking ability—but also in his social interactions. Since joining the club, he has learned and practiced an increasing number of social skills.

## A Regal Reception

Rolande Tobias, DTM, received a royal decoration from the Governor of Sint Maarten on behalf of King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands on April 24. Tobias was among seven citizens who were honored for their prolonged outstanding service to the community. He performed volunteer work in the areas of education and community development, motivational speaking, moderating, and radio and TV.



**ROLANDE TOBIAS, DTM  
(PICTURED LEFT)  
PHILIPSBURG, SINT MAARTEN  
CARIBBEAN TOASTMASTERS**

Tobias is the Chief Ambassador for District 81 in the revitalized education program. He is also a past district governor who led his district to the seventh position in the world in the District Recognition Program.

*Provided by District 81 Public Relations Officer Malcolm F. Jacques, DTM*

## All Aboard!

I have had the privilege of being one of the many guides for the U.S. National Park Service and Amtrak's Volunteer Trails and Rails program. My Trails and Rails audiences travel on select Amtrak trains between Springfield and Chicago, Illinois. When I walk the train, I interact with individuals and small groups. Participating in Table Topics has helped me to feel comfortable answering unexpected questions. During formal presentations, I use my Toastmasters skills to entertain passengers and share facts about Abraham Lincoln, geology, animals and the history of the communities we travel through.



**WAYNE ABBOTT, ACS, CL  
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS  
STATE FARM SPEAKEASY**

When I hear the train's loud horn, I know my audience is about to arrive and I'll get to use my Toastmasters skills again. All aboard!

## The Jump

When I joined Toastmasters 12 years ago, I never thought I would speak at the National Association of Corporate Directors conference. Toastmasters provided me a practice field where I've gained the skills and the confidence to make the jump into the corporate world of leadership.

During my delivery of the conference speech, I moved comfortably onstage, and used vocal variety and appropriate body language. As I continued, I remembered the importance of maintaining eye contact, so I left the stage to get closer to my audience.

Just like a fish jumping out of a small bowl of water, I would never have jumped had it not been for Toastmasters. I had to build my confidence to make that jump. You might say that members of my club were coaches from whom I've learned the art of speaking.



**DR. LOLA GERSHFELD, ACS**  
**ORANGE, CALIFORNIA**  
**PAUL REVERE CLUB**

## U-Turn

When I decided to attend my first Toastmasters meeting, I drove halfway there, made a U-turn, and went back home. I wasn't worried about giving a speech. Instead, I was concerned about having to say anything at all during the meeting.

I have dystonia, which is a neurological disorder similar to cerebral palsy. Dystonia does not affect a person's intelligence, but it does cause many physical symptoms, including making it difficult to speak. Fortunately, at my first Toastmasters meeting, I was able to speak clearly as I introduced myself. I also did well the following week when I gave my short Ice Breaker speech. I then went on to participate in the Table Topics Contest at the area conference where I was thrilled to be named the first-place winner.

How could someone like me, a person who often struggles to speak, win a speech contest? It's only because of the support and encouragement I receive from Toastmasters members. I am grateful that I did not let my physical disability keep me from attending club meetings and becoming a member of this outstanding organization.



**CAROLYN BOLZ**  
**RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA**  
**INLAND VALLEY CLOSERS CLUB**



## A Daily Experience

What an incredible experience it has been to attend Toastmasters meetings around the world. On average, I have attended at least one Toastmasters meeting every day for the past three years, which means I have attended more than 1,000 meetings! I have traveled to Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong, China; Seoul, South Korea; and Melbourne and Sydney, Australia. I visited clubs at restaurants, churches, synagogues and museums and always got a familiar feeling, and often a surprise! I laugh. I learn. I grow. I share. And I still forget to use the Word of the Day! It's such a gift to be a guest, and as a result I treat guests differently at my own club!

*Abby Ross stands in front of Toastmasters World Headquarters wall listing Past International Presidents.*

**ABBY ROSS, DTM**  
**KEY BISCAVNE, FLORIDA**  
**MIAMI ADVANCED CLUB**



# When Stories Go Stale

How to make your comedy fresh and authentic.

BY JUDY CARTER

**H**as this ever happened to you? You have a “really funny story” about something that “really happened” and you’re excited to tell it at your next Toastmasters meeting. But when you do, you’re met with deadly silence. “Well, I guess you had to be there,” you mumble.

Yipes! What happened? How can we re-create real-life humor when in front of an audience? As a longtime comedy coach and author of a how-to guide on comedy, I have some tips.

### 1 Capture Laughs as They Happen

The best way to write killer material, the kind that rocks a room and threatens to cause hernias in people laughing too hard, is to capture events and details that get laughs as they happen. When you plot out “funny” stories while sitting at a computer, those stories can sound literary, and not like something that really happened.

When you see something funny, write it down on a notepad or record what is happening on your smartphone. These are great ways to save special moments. When you get home, review your notes or transcribe your recording. If the incident made you laugh, it will probably get a laugh onstage.

Let’s say you’re at a party and the subject of bad dates comes up. You join in with stories about your own dating problems and you get laughs. Write those stories down. Capture the energy of your delivery and save it for your audience.

Have you ever had a fight with someone that turned funny? There you are, two people yelling at each other when suddenly you take a right or a left turn into the funny zone. You’re still angry, but you both start laughing. Write down the details before the other person does—so they won’t accuse you of stealing material!

Or what about this: While shopping with a friend, you look at yourself in the mirror and notice you’ve gained weight. Instead of calling yourself a worthless tub of lard, riff on your bulging midriff and tell yourself about the advantages of being fat. Flaws can be funny. You have leaped into the funny zone. Write it all down.

Start mining your own life for laughs and you’ll find a gold mine of material to use for the Humorous Speech Contest.

### 2 Get a Comedy Buddy

Jimmy Fallon, Tina Fey and Ricky Gervais don’t develop material alone—and neither should you. Running material by



a comedy buddy is an important step to take before trying things out on an audience. You want a critic and a friend who will be your sounding board. Note to comedy buddy: Be honest, but gentle, in the feedback you give.

When working with a comedy buddy, be careful not to shoot down any ideas. Your job is to add to them. A productive comedy session is like a hot game of tennis. Play only with someone who is going

someone or something, *perform* for your listeners by becoming the person or thing that you mention in your story.

Here is an example of an act-out from veteran comic Wanda Sykes.

*"I was hanging out with my little nephew, and the kid, he had a helmet, shoulder pads, knee pads, shin guards and gloves. And he says, 'I'm going to ride my bike.' I'm like, 'Where? Through a minefield?'"*

clichéd material deals with bathroom topics, sexual topics, ethnic stereotypes or any of those things that have been done to death. Don't go there!

Trying too hard to get a laugh works as well as trying too hard to get love. Neediness is a turnoff. The audience will smell it and reject it.

One thing that has not been done to death is your truth, the original story that you tell. Communicating with authenticity will get you laughs.

## The best way to write killer material, the kind that rocks a room and threatens to cause hernias in people laughing too hard, is to capture events and details that get laughs as they happen.

to return your ideas and maybe even put a new spin on them. If you keep serving and your comedy buddy never gets the ball back to you, think about working with someone else.

To find a buddy, post a note at [myspeakerbuddy.com](http://myspeakerbuddy.com), a social network for aspiring speakers.

### 3 The Holy Grail of Comedy—The Act-Out

If you tell a story that got laughs somewhere but doesn't hit the mark at your Toastmasters meeting, try acting out your dialogue. An "act-out" is when a comic or speaker animates the people he's talking about in a scene, which typically scores big laughs. It's not show and tell; it's *show, don't tell*. Instead of talking about

The boldface portions indicate where Wanda acts out the character—both when the boy makes the statement about his bike, and when she replies. Practice the effect by reading the example aloud.

An act-out makes your story come alive. It gives it immediacy. The more you, as a storyteller, embrace the full emotion and tone of the character, the funnier your presentation will be. Try this with several different scenarios to see how it helps your presentations.

### 4 Keep Away from Clichéd Material

Comedy novices are sometimes tempted to use worn-out, clichéd material—especially graphic stuff they think will shock people into laughing. This is trying too hard to get a laugh rather than simply telling a funny story. Forced,

### 5 Keep Your Stories Meaningful

To connect with an audience, tell stories with messages that are meaningful to you. Not ones that were meaningful in the past—ones that are meaningful *now*.

Let's face it, some of you have told the same story over and over again—even when it no longer works. It's like eating leftovers. For a long time I did a routine about my biological clock running out and how I wanted to have children, and it always got a laugh. Then suddenly it stopped getting laughs. It was nothing I did—I didn't change the language, the timing or the attitude—it just stopped working. I realized it was over.

The best comedy is fresh, original and timely. Funny is all around you. Write down what you see. Keep a journal of what is happening today to draw laughs tomorrow. ■

**JUDY CARTER** is the author of *The Comedy Bible* and *The Message of You Journal: Finding Extraordinary Stories in an Ordinary Day*. The books are available for download at [judycarter.com](http://judycarter.com).

# Leading with CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

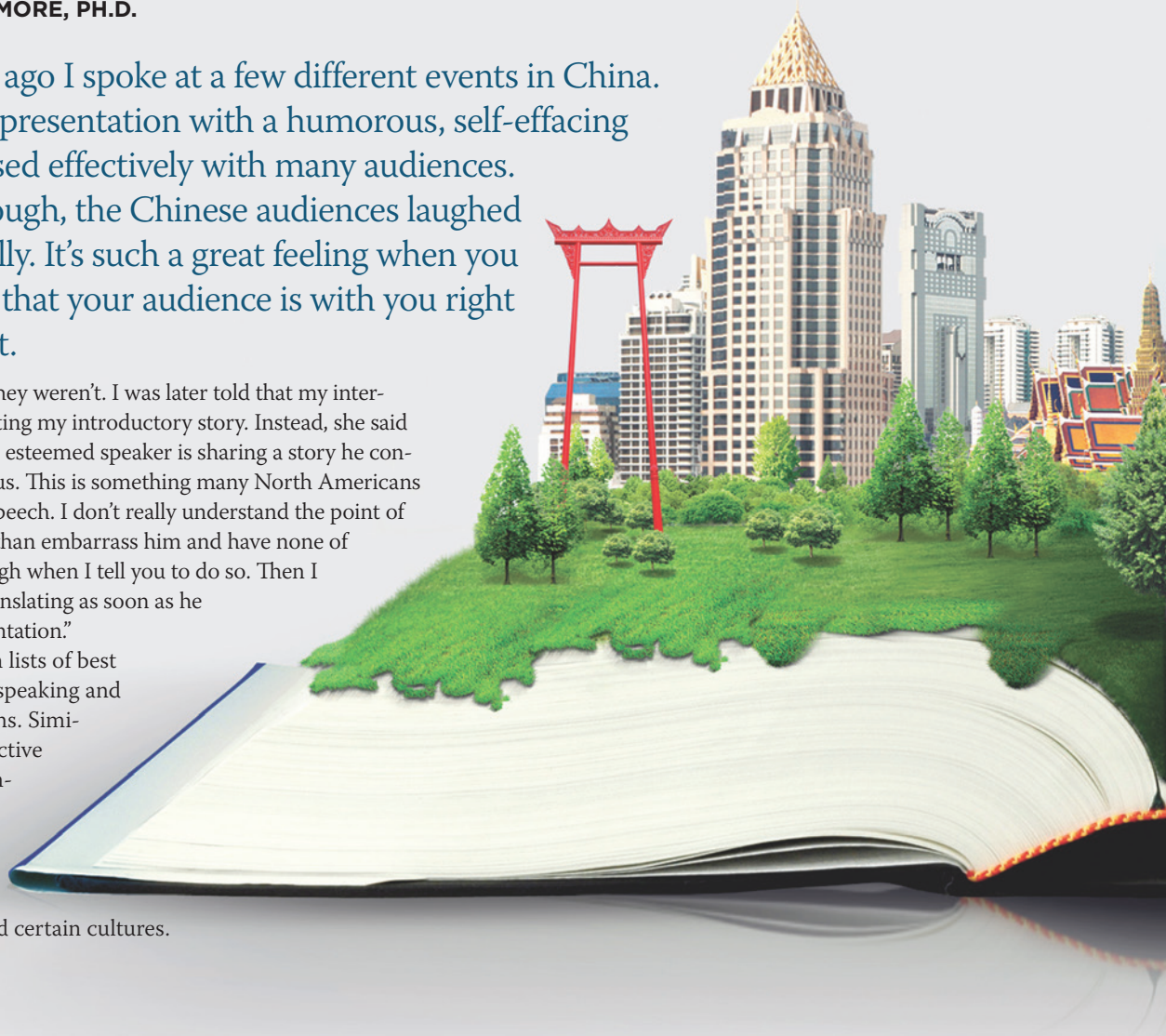
You don't have to memorize a list of dos and don'ts to be CQ smart.

BY DAVID LIVERMORE, PH.D.

Several years ago I spoke at a few different events in China. I began each presentation with a humorous, self-effacing story I had used effectively with many audiences. And sure enough, the Chinese audiences laughed enthusiastically. It's such a great feeling when you get the sense that your audience is with you right from the start.

The problem is, they weren't. I was later told that my interpreter wasn't translating my introductory story. Instead, she said something like, "Our esteemed speaker is sharing a story he considers to be humorous. This is something many North Americans do when starting a speech. I don't really understand the point of the story but rather than embarrass him and have none of you laugh, please laugh when I tell you to do so. Then I promise I'll begin translating as soon as he begins his real presentation."

We're often given lists of best practices for public speaking and keynote presentations. Similar lists exist for effective leadership or demonstrating executive presence. The problem is these practices are almost always biased toward certain cultures.







Speaking with charisma and telling self-effacing stories build credibility in some contexts. They erode it in others.

Nowadays, I often find myself speaking to audiences with people from several different backgrounds. I suspect the same is true for you. So what do we do? How do we account for the diversity of preferences and still speak authentically?

These are the kinds of issues and dilemmas that have informed the research my colleagues and I have been involved in for the last couple of decades. Our work is focused on cultural intelligence, or CQ, defined as the capability to be

## The motivation to understand other cultures is more than just a touchy-feely, lofty ideal. It's directly tied to the bottom line.

effective in culturally diverse situations. We've surveyed more than 50,000 professionals across 98 countries. In these surveys, global leaders tell us they need a more sophisticated approach to working across cultures than learning simplistic generalizations about, say, French versus Chinese or tips on how to exchange business cards.

Instead, they want to develop an overall skill set that allows them to be both effective and respectful. Thankfully, the research on cultural intelligence offers a way forward.

Four capabilities consistently emerge among those leaders who can effectively work in culturally diverse situations. And we've developed a CQ Assessment that measures an individual's skill level in each area. The four CQ capabilities are:



*Pictured left, Toastmasters International Officers exchange pins at the 2014 International Convention's President's Inauguration ceremony. At right, Al Mohd Rudzie (in black) and Claudia Chuang, members from Malaysia and Indonesia, respectively, stand in front of flags from different countries, at the 2014 convention.*

## 1 CQ Drive: Having the interest, confidence and drive to adapt cross-culturally

This is your level of interest, drive and energy to adapt cross-culturally. Do you have the confidence and drive to work through the challenges and conflict that inevitably accompany cross-cultural work? To what degree do you understand the relevance of cultural understanding to how you effectively communicate and achieve results?

A survey conducted by the *Economist Intelligence Unit* found that 90 percent of leading executives from 68 countries identified

## Ninety percent of leading executives from 68 countries identified cross-cultural leadership as the top management challenge for the next century.

cross-cultural leadership as the top management challenge for the next century. Cultural intelligence is no longer just a “nice-to-have” skill set; it’s become a critical capability for leading in the 21st century world.

The top two reasons organizations need culturally intelligent leaders are the increasingly diverse markets and the growing diversity among the workforce. For most organizations, the greatest opportunities for growth exist in expanding across diverse markets at home and abroad. And one of the best ways to effectively reach these diverse markets is through a diverse workforce.

The motivation to understand other cultures is more than just a touchy-feely, lofty ideal. It’s directly tied to the bottom line.

## 2 CQ Knowledge: Understanding intercultural norms and differences

This is your knowledge about culture and its role in shaping how you lead. Do you understand the way culture shapes how people think and behave? It also includes your overall knowledge of how cultures vary from one another.

For example, the dominant preference in the United States is for a speaker who uses humor, focuses on the big picture and offers a succinct introduction and summary that ties together what has been communicated. However, the dominant preference of many in Germany is to listen to a speaker read a well-prepared manuscript that describes the theoretical background of the argument being used, offers a detailed analysis and holds back on suggesting too much application too soon.

There will be many from the U.S. and Germany who deviate from these norms. But having a broad understanding of the different values people learn based upon their cultural background plays a pivotal role in effectively leading and communicating across cultures.

A similar understanding is needed to effectively negotiate across cultures. The art of persuading an individual or organization to do business with you requires insight into what motivates them, how to build their trust and knowing what they perceive as a “win.”

To have high CQ Knowledge doesn’t mean you’re a walking encyclopedia for every culture you encounter. That’s impossible. Instead, it means developing an understanding of the variations on key cultural values, such as a preference for a top-down approach to leadership or direct-versus-indirect communication.

You don’t need to know exactly where a culture falls along these cultural dimensions. Instead, as you build your understanding of their differences, you’ll be able to identify them as you listen and observe colleagues and clients in various situations.



*The Toastmasters community is an ideal place to build your CQ. Ask other members what characteristics of leaders and speakers are important to them.*

### 3 CQ Strategy: Making sense of culturally diverse experiences and planning accordingly

This is your ability to be aware and strategize when crossing cultures. It's the ability to draw on your cultural understanding (CQ Knowledge) to solve culturally complex problems.

The importance of CQ Drive is pretty obvious: *How can you be effective if you have no interest in another culture?* And the cross-cultural understanding that comes from CQ Knowledge has been emphasized for years in cross-cultural management courses and books. But CQ Strategy pulls it all together. It's the linchpin between your motivation and knowledge in developing effective plans that you can use in the midst of an intercultural interaction or presentation.

CQ Strategy draws upon understanding the tendencies that exist among various cultures. Some leaders resist the idea of doing this because it runs the risk of stereotyping. The reasoning goes something like this: "Instead of broad generalizations about Chinese leaders or millennial workers, why not just get to know people as individuals and avoid putting them in boxes?"

It's a valid concern and we definitely can't assume that culture alone predicts someone's behavior. That is the danger of CQ Knowledge by itself. I can't assume all Indians prefer a top-down approach to leadership or that all African-Americans enjoy large, extended family gatherings.

On the other hand, it's impossible to effectively lead without distinguishing between cultural tendencies when you plan. CQ Strategy helps leaders use cultural knowledge to plan an appropriate strategy, accurately interpret what's going on and check to see if the plan is appropriate or needs revision.

You might find that opening your speech with a humorous story works fine, even if it's not the norm. But it's better to be prepared than to simply assume you can lead from the gut and figure things out on the fly. Your gut is programmed to interpret things based upon your own cultural background. CQ Strategy helps you step back and consider what plan will work best in light of the situation and the cultures involved.

### 4 CQ Action: Changing verbal and nonverbal actions appropriately when interacting cross-culturally

Finally, CQ Action is your ability to act appropriately in a range of intercultural situations. Can you effectively negotiate a contract, give a presentation or motivate people in different cultural contexts? It's one thing to understand the different preferences of one culture versus another; it's another to actually adapt the way you behave in intercultural exchanges.

A challenge I've experienced when speaking to different audiences involves my rate of speech. I speak with a lot of enthusiasm and speed. That works great when I'm back with my fellow New Yorkers who enjoy the fast pace. But when I'm speaking in Tokyo, I need to temper my charisma and slow down, but not too much, lest I come off as inauthentic or, worse yet, insulting.

One of the most important aspects of CQ Action is in knowing when to adapt to another culture and when *not* to adapt. It would be unnatural for me to fully read a speech, regardless of cultural expectations. And I find that people from different cultures enjoy my more extemporaneous style, even if it isn't the norm for them. So I wouldn't change this aspect of my general speaking approach.

But I've learned to think about whether something like a self-effacing story is the best introduction for a culture in which making fun of one's self at the very beginning may be as much of a slight against the people who invited me than against me personally.

The good news is anyone can improve their CQ. And the global, diverse scope of the Toastmasters community is the ideal context for doing so. Talk with other members in your club about the characteristics that are most important for an effective leader. Ask them what kinds of speeches resonate most in their context. And build your repertoire of leadership and communication strategies for use as needed.

As you improve your cultural intelligence, you'll find that not only does it improve your effectiveness overseas, it also makes you a more effective leader closer to home—whether working with different ethnic groups, different generational cultures, various professional groups and organization cultures, or more. **T**

*Learn more about the CQ Assessments and training programs being used by leaders and organizations around the world at [www.culturalQ.com](http://www.culturalQ.com).*

**DAVID LIVERMORE, PH.D.**, has written 10 books on global leadership and cultural intelligence, including the newly revised *Leading with Cultural Intelligence* and his next book, *Driven by Difference*. He is president of the Cultural Intelligence Center in East Lansing, Michigan, and a visiting scholar at Nanyang Business School in Singapore. Learn more at [www.davidlivermore.com](http://www.davidlivermore.com).

## A Formula for Funny

Structure your humor around three elements: surprise, tension and relationships.

BY JOHN KINDE, DTM, AS

**M**ost humor is unplanned. It just happens. Spontaneous events with friends, clients and co-workers create the surprises and uncomfortable situations that call for humor as a coping tool.

Fifteen years of experience in comedy improv (teaching over 1,000 workshops) has taught me that humor surrounds us. In creating a scene, improv players arrive at the laughter not by going for the gag but by letting a natural scene unfold. Life is funny enough.

### When you structure a humor bit for a speech, don't signal that a joke is coming.

And so it is with creating humor for a Toastmasters speech. Tune in to what's happening around you. Be open to seeing the funny relationships, natural connections and stumbles that fall into your daily activities. Get in the habit of mining the humor in your personal stories. The humor is there. You just need to train yourself to see it, save it and say it.

Regardless of where your humor skills are now, you can improve them. Three elements will help you understand and structure your original and customized humor: surprise, tension and relationships.

These principles are illustrated by the classic slip on the banana peel. The slapstick spill produces surprise because we don't expect someone to fall. It creates tension because somebody could get hurt. And it twists relationships. Seeing a

distinguished person, perhaps wearing a suit, sprawled on the sidewalk is a relationship that is not normal. Surprise, tension, relationships ... we laugh!

We are startled by the person's fall and feel tension, which is then released with laughter after we see that he is OK. It's not a joke in the classic sense, but the same principles apply to the creation and delivery of many jokes. Tension, relief of tension, laughter.

#### Keep 'Em Guessing

When you structure a humor bit for a speech, don't signal that a joke is coming. We want the audience to be surprised. A line like "A funny thing happened to me on the way over here" announces to your listeners that a joke is coming. That lessens the element of surprise.

To enhance the surprise, place the punch line at the end of the joke. And within the punch line, say the punch *word* last. The punch word is the trigger that releases the surprise. By putting the punch at the end, we give the surprise more impact.

An example of that is the famous joke by the late comedian Henny Youngman: "Take my wife ... please!" The first part of that phrase, "Take my wife," signals this kind of meaning: "For example, my wife." But the last word—"please"—suddenly changes the meaning to: "My wife—you can have her!" The punch word gives the joke its humorous twist.



If your humor falls flat, just pretend as if you weren't trying to be funny. Since the audience didn't realize you were making a joke, you don't need to apologize for the misfire or explain it. Turn your surprise into your secret.

#### Tap into Tension

Laughter is a pressure relief valve that results in the involuntary release of tension. Uncomfortable situations, fear and pain are all tension builders that cry out for humor. Likewise, humor is often a coping tool in highly stressful work—in hospitals, combat situations and law enforcement, for example.

You want to provide your audience with an opportunity to release tension. To heighten your humor, place a pause just before your punch line or punch word. That builds a sense of anticipation, which is a form of tension. The ensuing funniness releases that tension.



Sharing a real-life humorous situation can be an excellent tool in a speech. Although there's nothing like being there, your set-up can improve on the actual event by embellishing it to create more tension. Sometimes you can do this by "raising the stakes"—elevating the consequences. Let's say the person who slipped on the banana peel was returning home from work; you could raise the stakes by instead having him slip on his way to a job interview. The consequences of falling are more severe with an interview looming, adding more tension to the situation. In theory, the gag is funnier.

#### On a Related Note ...

The third principle of humor is relationships. I use this term not in the sense of personal connections between two people, but rather to indicate the existence of connections, similarities, links or

juxtapositions. The word also alludes to opposites, disconnects and how things are not related. You can create humorous twists by playing with the many facets of relationships.

To that end, try developing a humorous idea by making "shopping lists" from which you can search for comedic connections. Here's an example.

Let's say you are writing a speech on the fringe benefits of Toastmasters. You create three main parts: 1) thriving on feedback; 2) gaining self-confidence; and 3) making new friends. As part of your preparation, you think of a humorous idea to put in your speech: a list of five clues to tell whether a new friend is a Toastmaster. This will exercise your skills at writing original, customized humor for a Toastmasters audience.

You begin to develop the idea by making two shopping lists. One might be "things associated with Toastmasters," and the other "things associated with getting to know a new friend." Brainstorm to make each list as long as possible. The more items you have, the more likely you are to make humorous connections.

#### Be a Smart Shopper

As you make your lists, look for opportunities to branch out and create sub-lists to expand your chances of finding humor. For example, you might put the category of "evaluation" on your list of Toastmasters items, and then branch out into a sub-list of evaluation-related items—say, "constructive criticism," "the sandwich approach" and "evaluation contests."

On your list of "things associated with

getting to know a new friend," you might put "going for coffee," "having dinner conversations," "visiting the friend's home," "things about a new friend that are exciting" and "things that are annoying." Many of these categories will allow you to break off into sub-lists.

Then search for humorous connections between your two lists. Play with it. Then set your search aside and come back to it later. Once you decide on something with humorous possibilities, massage it to maximize the impact.

Let's say your Toastmasters list contains the term "Ah-Counter." And your "new friend" list has the word "judgmental." Can you form a clue to tell if your new friend is a Toastmaster? How about this: "She shakes her head every time you say 'ah.'"

Here are four other connections-turned-clues:

1 Dinner conversations are interrupted by green, yellow and red lights.

2 When he first asked you on a date, it took five to seven minutes.

3 His refrigerator is covered in Best Speaker ribbons.

4 When you visit a historic site together, she takes a selfie while holding a *Toastmaster* magazine.

Whether you're creating a funny list, devising a slogan for a poster, looking for a monologue to open a speech or training session, or just searching for one joke to make a point, try using the shopping-list technique to create humor. It works.

By understanding what makes comedic material work, you can add humor skills to your speaking arsenal, and become a more engaging and influential speaker. ■

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**JOHN KINDE, DTM**, is a member of the *Powerhouse Pros Toastmasters club in Las Vegas, Nevada*. He is an *Accredited Speaker and a humor specialist*. Learn more at [www.humorpower.com](http://www.humorpower.com).



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# Meet **JIM KOKOCKI, DTM**

Toastmasters' 2015–2016 International President is a Canadian businessman who embraces innovation and new challenges.

BY *TOASTMASTER MAGAZINE STAFF*

It was nearly 30 years ago that Jim Kokocki joined Toastmasters. Doing so, he says now, was one of the best decisions he ever made—a move that helped him in all aspects of his life.

Kokocki, DTM, is the 2015–2016 Toastmasters International President. He lives in Saint John, a city in New Brunswick, Canada, where he belongs to the Saint John Toastmasters club. He has held a number of high-profile leadership positions within the organization, including serving on the Board of Directors from 2002 to 2004.

**“It was quite a treat to address 2,700 members in that massive auditorium at the International Convention in Kuala Lumpur in 2014.”**

A business consultant and entrepreneur, Kokocki worked in the telecommunications industry for many years. His Toastmasters training has been a boon to his professional life. “The skills we exercise in Toastmasters serve our clubs and our broader organization, but they’re also transferable and useful to our lives outside of Toastmasters,” he notes.

In 2013, Kokocki earned his MBA at the University of New Brunswick in Saint John, where he had previously earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration.

When he’s not working or participating in Toastmasters activities, he enjoys volunteering, playing guitar and experiencing the beauty of Canada through bicycling and skiing.

## **Why did you join Toastmasters?**

It wasn’t my idea. I was working as a computer programmer way back in 1987. Two engineers came to my desk one day and said, ‘You’re a pretty smart guy, Jim, but you say nothing during meetings.’ Which was true.

So they brought me to the Saint John club. I joined immediately, as I saw there was something there I needed, but it took three or four meetings until I was brave enough to address the group.

After overcoming the fear of speaking, I pursued other changes and moved into sales and marketing, where I have spent most of my career to date.

## **Describe your professional work.**

I retired in 2011 from a large telecommunications company in Canada after a 30-year career with them. I worked for 10 years in various information technology roles, then the rest of the time in sales, sales support and marketing.

Most of that time was with the mobile phone business, where I managed a team responsible for business marketing. I had a strong team of people within a very strong organization and we were able to deliver stellar results consistently. I live in a lightly populated region in Canada and our company would work extremely hard to win and retain business.

I’m currently doing some consulting work in marketing and business development. Once my time on the Board is completed, I plan to explore opportunities with start-up companies.

### **Has your Toastmasters training helped you in your career?**

Absolutely. When we participate in Toastmasters meetings, we develop in many ways. Often it's not apparent to us, yet clearly apparent to others. By working with clubs to attain annual goals, I've learned to communicate objectives, report on progress, publicly recognize helpful behaviors and indicate how people can contribute to the objectives.

Delivering evaluations in Toastmasters has also helped me in giving feedback and in listening. I think I'm a good listener. I think this skill is so rare that people find it disarming when they're with someone who listens well.

### **“I love seeing new members find their voice and develop their skills and confidence.”**

In the same way, in Toastmasters we practice the general skills of assembling teams, or being assigned to teams, setting goals and short-term objectives, learning to work with one another, and developing plans and then adapting those plans as they are exposed to the real world. These skills serve our clubs and our broader organization, but they're also transferable and useful to our lives outside of Toastmasters.

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

I like to keep healthy. I eat mainly healthful foods and like to keep physically active. Cycling is my favorite activity and I fit that in quite well even during our Canadian winters. I like to ski and to play the sport of curling as well. I was addicted to golf many years ago and I'm over that, but I still play occasionally, although I begrudge the time it takes.

I'm a music fan. I started playing guitar when I was 6 and still play a little most days. I've traveled pretty far to see a favorite band or musician. Seeing B.B. King and Buddy Guy at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, Tennessee, was special. Reunion concerts for [English rock band] Mott the Hoople in London were worth every penny as was seeing [Mott the Hoople lead

singer] Ian Hunter in New York. John Hiatt [an American rock guitarist and singer-songwriter] is another favorite.

### **What was your worst speaking experience?**

I've had a couple of lessons in learning to do my best as a speaker even when the audience just isn't fully present. I recall one time presenting right before a Toastmasters district business meeting when the audience was preoccupied with a contentious issue that they had to deal with at the meeting. It was obvious [they were preoccupied] from the conversation before my presentation and by the solemn faces. The audience was physi-

cally present but not mentally present. I did my best, but sometimes the audience just won't be with you.

### **What is your favorite speaking memory?**

It was quite a treat to address 2,700 members in that massive auditorium at the International Convention in Kuala Lumpur in 2014. Aside from that, my favorite memories are being able to speak on short notice when I could make a contribution. I've been able to contribute at retirement events for co-workers, remembrances for family members who have passed away, weddings and wedding anniversaries. I enjoy having the skill and confidence to influence or contribute to the dialogue when appropriate.

### **What is your favorite part of Toastmasters?**

So much. I love seeing new members find their voice and develop their skills and confidence. I like to see the unique ways clubs run their meetings while executing and respecting our programs. I love to see the pride members have in their clubs—I think every one of our members believes that he or she is a member of the best club

in the world, and that gives me great comfort. It's within our clubs that our members experience the essence of Toastmasters.

### **Once you became comfortable speaking publicly, how did you grow in other ways?**

The confidence I gained early in Toastmasters helped me tremendously. I think that for many Toastmasters, once they have learned to manage their nervousness they're ready to take on new challenges. For me at the time, that meant taking a leave of absence from work and completing a bachelor's degree, and then moving from a comfortable job in information technology to a role where I provided technical advice alongside sales people in front of our customers.

I learned a lot in that role about understanding the audience and environment, and what to say when! I believe for many of our members, once they get past what is often a massively limiting fear or reluctance to speak in public, they get excited for new opportunities and challenges.

### **What motivated you to seek leadership positions?**

It was a combination of feeling that I have something to contribute and the challenge of the opportunity. I've also pursued leadership roles outside of Toastmasters. After I served on the Board of Directors from 2002 to 2004, I got quite involved with the Saint John Board of Trade. I saw that as the best opportunity to stretch and advance my skills.

I've recently joined a local board for a group called L'Arche Saint John. L'Arche is an international organization in nearly 40 countries. [It provides assistance to people who are developmentally disabled.] In similar fashion, I felt that at this point I have something to contribute to Toastmasters and there's challenge in serving as a member of the Board's Executive Committee.

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

Read up on “situational leadership,” a leadership theory developed by Ken Blanchard



and Paul Hersey. They write that a leader's style needs to adapt based on the task maturity of the follower. This is a powerful concept for leaders inside and outside of Toastmasters. Become skilled at assessing others' task maturity [the ability to take responsibility for the task at hand] and your own task maturity and adapting your leadership approach based on this.

Also practice connecting with people on the phone, or Skype or FaceTime, and of course face-to-face. It seems to me that too much today is communicated by email. Email is great for communicating goals and progress with words and images; however, although we can read email, it doesn't enable us to use our leadership senses to assess tone of voice, for example, or facial expressions.

### How have you benefited from mentors in your Toastmasters journey?

Mentors have helped at every step for me and will continue to do so. Something I find interesting is that our need for mentorship evolves as we evolve personally and professionally. My needs have changed over the years and will continue to do so. I believe it's a real sign of professionalism to be able to approach a possible mentor, to indicate what skill or ability they have that you admire, and to ask them to provide mentorship. I've had so many mentoring relationships over the years that I'm reluctant to highlight just one or two.

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

I'm still primarily a marketer, and as a marketer I hope to see us find ways to drive more awareness and knowledge of our clubs and Toastmasters in general. My first Viewpoint column [see page 2] is related to this.

My dream is to see every club be a Distinguished club. That would mean our area directors and district teams would be doing a great job of helping clubs to further develop their club quality. *It's important to be proud of our successes, but not complacent about them.* We can always keep improving personally and in the way our clubs operate. **T**

*Jim Kokocki feeds the elephants at a Bali zoo. He enjoys doing physical activities in his free time, including cycling and skiing.*



*Jim Kokocki presents a Corporate Recognition Award to Jong-Yeol Yang (center) and Yevgeniya Li, executives at POSCO, a steel-manufacturing company in Seoul, South Korea.*

*Jim Kokocki speaking at the International Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 2013.*



*Jim Kokocki is officially installed as President-Elect in 2014 by then-President Mohammed Murad. Looking on are Past International President John Lau and his wife, Rebecca.*



Members of the Nova Communication Bilingual Toastmasters club in Madrid attend their weekly meeting in the classroom of a business school.

## The Benefits of Being Bilingual

Members of Madrid club alternate between Spanish and English.

BY JULIE BAWDEN-DAVIS

**A**lejandro Saiz, CC, grew up speaking Spanish, the language of his home country, Spain. Yet in his current job, he finds it important to speak both Spanish and English.

"I work at Airbus in Madrid, and the official way of communication with other countries is English, but at the Spanish site [of the company], we hold most meetings in Spanish," he says. "We have frequent meetings in Spanish and frequent meetings and phone telecoms in English."

Saiz has found the perfect place to practice communicating effectively in both languages: the Nova Communication Bilingual Toastmasters club in Madrid.

The club meets weekly and uses an alternating format, holding its meetings in Spanish one week and in English the next. Chartered in 2010, it clearly fills a need: The club has more than 50 members.

Speaking both languages in the club, says Saiz, "means training in an environment as close as can be to my day-to-day work."

María José Cid, CC, CL, and a group of individuals she met during a leadership training course chartered the club. A native Spanish speaker, Cid says it was difficult when she started giving speeches in English.

"I suffered from a fear of public speaking and doing it in a second language was

tougher than doing it in my mother tongue," she says.

But eventually she became more comfortable and confident. Developing bilingual skills is vital in Spain, says Cid. "Current business and career demands make it a must for Spaniards to speak English."

The club's format of alternating languages from one week to the next helps members greatly, she adds.

"Every week, our mind frame is set for the language to be used [in that week's meeting], and all forms, including written evaluations, are in that language," says Cid. "We consider it language immersion for

Spanish speakers when the meeting is in English and the same thing for members of other nationalities when it is in Spanish. The use of both languages naturally improves with time and exposure.”

Saiz says the biggest challenge for him is adapting his speech delivery to the language in which he’s speaking.

“I have noticed that in my case the language has a significant influence over many aspects of the speech,” he says. “For example, I have the tendency to speak too fast in Spanish, but in English I think I control the pacing better. For this reason, when I am preparing a speech and I review the suggestions that I received from previous speeches, sometimes I need to put the suggestions into perspective, taking into account if I had given that speech in Spanish or in English.”

## “Current business and career demands make it a must for Spaniards to speak English.”

— María José Cid, CC, CL

### Diverse Membership

Nova Communication members hail from a number of different countries, making the club’s format even more valuable, says Gracia Uceda, CC, CL. “The bilingual format generates an environment of trust that makes it comfortable for all to participate in the meetings,” she says.

Graciela Tena, CC, a Mexican-American currently living in Spain, says she heard about Toastmasters from a friend when Tena lived in the U.S. When her husband’s work as a military diplomat brought her and her family to Spain, she became a member of Nova Communication.

“Since I joined the club, I have enriched my Spanish vocabulary and gained confidence presenting in Spanish,” Tena says.

The club, which meets at a local business school, uses video equipment to help members improve their skills. Tena edits and uploads videos to YouTube from each week’s speeches, noting that the videos help members “learn from their mistakes and embrace their strengths.”

The club’s strong mentoring program also helps members. Those preparing a speech in



Alicia Mancheño, CC, vice president education of the Nova Communication club (far right), hands an award to two members from the Standing Ovation club. In Madrid, several clubs have a “traveling award” as an incentive for members to visit other clubs.

their second language can meet with a mentor for whom that language is their native tongue, says Saiz, who served as the club’s mentoring coordinator in 2014–2015.

“Delivering speeches in two languages means more room for improvement (as there is always a language you are less comfortable with), and also more room for the mentors to help,” he says. “Some mentees send a preview video of their speeches to the mentors or even meet in person. It is always helpful to have someone review your speech, maybe tell you, ‘That part is clear’ or ‘That one is a bit of a tongue-twister’ and suggest other ways to say it.”

Nova Communication also helped one member, Pablo Ibáñez, CC, CL, with his stuttering problem. He’s now the club president.

“My goal was to speak in front of an audience and stutter and not be fearful or ashamed of it,” says Ibáñez, who says support from club members helped him realize this goal as well as become more fluent in both languages. **T**

**JULIE BAWDEN-DAVIS** is a freelance writer based in Southern California and a longtime contributor to the Toastmaster.

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# Mentoring Matters

Formal program in REP will increase mentoring benefits.

BY PAUL STERMAN

**W**hen Pat Johnson joined Toastmasters, she was petrified. Arriving at her first club meeting in Swan River, Manitoba, Canada, she summoned all the courage she had just to walk through the door.

Yet Johnson eventually flourished, achieving a Distinguished Toastmaster award and rising to become the organization's 2010–2011 International President. The help of mentors played a key role along the way.

"I would not have stayed in Toastmasters without mentors," says Johnson, leader of the Learning Masters group that provides key feedback in the

**Seventy percent of the club leaders said they wanted a formal mentoring program, one that has guidelines, structure, criteria and consistency.**

revitalized education program (REP). "I would not have achieved the level of success that I have without my mentors through the years."

### Formalized Mentoring

Johnson is not alone. Club leaders around the world say that clubs (and their individual members) achieve more consistently when they have an organized mentoring program. Indeed, mentoring is a fundamental aspect of the Toastmasters experience.

So fundamental, in fact, that Toastmasters is taking steps to strengthen the process. At the direction of the Board, the REP will include a formal mentoring program, complete with training, criteria and guidelines. The aim is to provide a consistent, reliable process in which experienced mentors encourage and support protégés, empowering them to achieve their goals.

First, some background. In 2013, as the revitalized education program was being developed, World Headquarters conducted a study on the impact of mentoring in clubs across the globe. Nearly 400 club leaders completed a survey, and their responses were summarized in the resulting report.

"The mentoring relationship has a very positive effect on the members' overall experience, including improvements in satisfaction and award achievement." In addition, mentoring "improves motivation and retention."

Seventy percent of the club leaders said they wanted a formal mentoring program,

one that has guidelines, structure, criteria and consistency.

The REP's mentoring program will meet those needs. It includes standardized criteria that calls for mentors to:

- Be a member for a minimum of six months
- Have completed mentor training
- Have expertise in the area in which the protégé wants to grow
- Meet with a protégé at least two hours every month for at least six months

### Many Benefits

Mentors provide members with help and practical advice, such as tips on preparing speeches and on club roles and responsibilities. They encourage protégés to grow as leaders and offer them reassurance if they hit a rough patch.



Past International President Pat Johnson

"A mentor shares what they have learned, their shortcuts and their insights, and they ultimately can ease the learning of the protégé," says Johnson, a Toastmaster for more than 30 years.

In the formal program, mentors—including those who want to meet with their protégé virtually—must participate in training. This involves completing a number of REP learning projects. For one such project, mentors learn and practice a set of competencies, which include recognizing the skills needed to be successful, and demonstrating a clear understanding of the mentor-protégé relationship.

After six months of mentoring, both the mentor and protégé submit a written evaluation of the experience to the club vice president education. In addition, the mentor will present a speech to their club describing what they gained from the experience.

Whether a member is new or experienced, struggling or thriving, everyone can benefit from working with a mentor. And the process is mutually beneficial, because it challenges both the mentor and protégée to share, trust and collaborate.

Odile Petillot, DTM, a member of multiple clubs in Paris, says helping other members grow and succeed brings definite emotional rewards.

"I find it extremely satisfying to work as a mentor; you can feel great pride while witnessing your protégé develop and become a great speaker," said Petillot in a 2013 *Toastmaster* magazine article about mentoring. "Plus, many of them have also become real friends." ■

PAUL STERMAN is senior editor of *Toastmaster* magazine.



# Leading a Club Meeting for the First Time?

These 10 tips will help you handle the role with confidence.

BY FELICITY BARBER

I'm a speechwriter and executive communications expert. For many years I've been behind the scenes, cheering for my speakers from the sidelines. But when I started my own business, Thoughtful Speech, I knew I'd spend a lot more time on the podium myself. So to brush up my skills I joined my local Toastmasters club in San Francisco.

After completing my first couple of speeches, I decided it was time to take on the role of Toastmaster of the meeting (often

**Your mentor will be the best source of advice, tips and tricks to get you through the meeting.**

called Toastmaster of the Day). My mentor and other club members were generous with their advice, and the experience gave me new insight into how the meetings work, the effort that goes on behind the scenes and the elements that lead to a successful meeting.

Here are my top 10 tips for being a first-time Toastmaster of the meeting:

## 1 **Set the meeting theme at least a week in advance.**

It will help you hold a more coherent meeting, because those with speaking roles will have time to incorporate the theme into

their speech. Encourage the Topicsmaster to tie the theme into his or her role too.

## 2 **Send a reminder email about the meeting the week before the event.**

It will help you to know who's attending, and people appreciate an early heads-up. When you email speakers, ask them to provide the title of their speech and a short introduction.

## 3 **Match speaker with evaluator.**

Try to match people of similar levels. But if someone is giving an Ice Breaker, try to pair them with a member who has been an evaluator at least once before. They deserve a good evaluation and it will motivate them to deliver more speeches. Try to plan this fairly early, and alert speakers and evaluators to any changes so they can communicate with each other before the meeting.

## 4 **Double-check pronunciation.**

Arrive a little earlier than usual so you can confirm the pronunciation of names of those who are on the meeting agenda. Even if you think you know how to say their names, check again.

## 5 **Pay close attention to time.**

Make sure all the starting and ending times on the agenda are listed correctly, and keep the meeting moving. You don't want Toastmasters tapping their feet because the meeting ran over.

## 6 **Lead the applause.**

People will take their cue from you, so make sure you know when to clap, and carry the rest of the room with you.

## 7 **Remind yourself of the other meeting role responsibilities.**

That way, if the timer or grammarian or

Ah-Counter makes a mistake, you can correct it quickly.

## 8 **Keep your meeting introduction brief.**

Remember, you also have to introduce guests at the meeting, and that often takes longer than expected. If there are a lot of guests, ask them to say just a couple of sentences about who they are and why they came to the meeting.

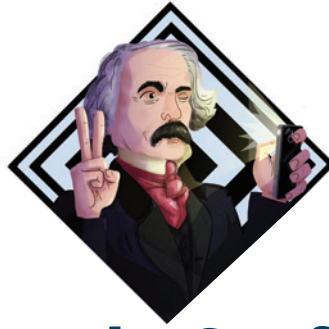
## 9 **Check in with the member responsible for food.**

In my Toastmasters club, we serve snacks 10 minutes before the start of the meeting. If your club does something similar, check that the person responsible for bringing food has remembered they signed up for the role—because there's nothing worse than a room full of hungry Toastmasters!

## 10 **Speak to your mentor.**

Your mentor will be the best source of advice, tips and tricks to get you through the meeting. I strongly suggest having a conversation, either in person or on the phone, because things tend to arise that you might forget to ask in an email. It's also worth asking this person to take a look at your agenda. He or she will be able to give you a fresh perspective as well as the wisdom of experience. ■

**FELICITY H. BARBER** is a member of the Rhino Business Toastmasters club in San Francisco. She is a speechwriter, executive communications specialist and coach, and the CEO and founder of Thoughtful Speech (<http://thoughtfulspeech.com>).



## Classic Stuff

When writers were writers, readers were readers,  
and books were, like, totally awesome.

BY JOHN CADLEY

I hate to sound like a crusty old curmudgeon, but then, being a crusty old curmudgeon, what else would I sound like? I've been reading Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* and all I can say is—they don't write 'em like they used to. Sorry, folks. You can name all the modern authors you want. None of them are going to open a chapter like this:

*It still lacked half an hour of sunrise, when Miss Hepzibah Pyncheon—we will not say awoke; it being doubtful whether the poor lady had so much as closed her eyes during the brief night of mid-summer—but, at all events, arose from her solitary pillow, and began what it would be a mockery to term the adornment of her person. Far from us be the indecorum of assisting, even in imagination, at a maiden lady's toilet! Our story must thus await Miss Hepzibah at the threshold of her chamber; only presuming, meanwhile, to note some of the heavy sighs that labored from her bosom, with little restraint as to their lugubrious depth and volume of sound, inasmuch as they could be audible to nobody save a disembodied listener like ourself.*

Are you kidding me!? Try reading *that* on a Kindle with your iPhone dinging and your Apple Watch playing the latest Taylor Swift download. Hawthorne respectfully pauses the story so the lady can get dressed in private. I'm going to guess that's not the way the author of *Fifty Shades of Grey* would have handled it. Then that name. Want to paint a vivid portrait of a lonely New England spinster with one word? Call her Hepzibah. You can just see the face. It's your grandmother after you ate her hard candies. And just the way he starts the whole thing—"It still lacked half an hour of sunrise." Sure beats "before dawn." I like that plural pronoun thing, too—"We will not say ..." "Our story ..." At first I thought, *How many people are writing this book?* But then I realized it was the author's way of keeping himself out of the story. I think that's called modesty, a quality sorely lacking in our present-day scribes, who craft every syllable with an eye toward book prizes, movie rights and a promo shot on the *Today* show.

Old Nathaniel would have been horrified by our culture of celebrity, and trust me—if television had been around in 1851, you can bet there wouldn't have been any reality show called *Keeping Up With the Hawthornes*.

Further on, he describes how another character, Judge Pyncheon, seeks to project a look of avuncular benevolence but fails, due to certain physical attributes:

*Owing, however, to a somewhat massive accumulation of animal substance about the lower region of his face, the look [of benevolence] was, perhaps, unctuous, rather than spiritual, and had, so to speak, a kind of fleshy effulgence, not altogether so satisfactory as he doubtless intended it to be.*

If television had been around in 1851,  
you can bet there wouldn't have been  
any reality show called *Keeping Up  
With the Hawthornes*.

Animal substance?! Fleshy effulgence?! That's the way to call somebody fat! It sounds like a compliment. And did you notice all those commas? This is a guy who took his time writing for people who took their time reading. Who takes their time today? Even funeral cars have permission to whiz through red lights. (Hey, people—the dead guy's not in a hurry.)

There's also a character named Phoebe, whose bright, innocent youth brings a spark of life to the gloomy old house. As she sleeps in her bed on the first morning after her arrival, Hawthorne writes:

*The morning light, however, soon stole into the aperture at the foot of the bed, betwixt those faded curtains. Finding the new guest there—with a bloom on her cheeks like the morning's own, and a gentle stir of departing slumber in her limbs, as when an early breeze moves the foliage—the Dawn kissed her brow. It was the kiss which a dewy maiden gives to her sleeping sister, partly from the impulse of irresistible fondness, and partly as a pretty hint that it is time now to unclothe her eyes.*

Did you get that? The sunlight creeps into the room, plants one on her forehead and wakes her up. That's better than a Digital LCD Alarm Clock blasting John Philip Sousa any day. ■

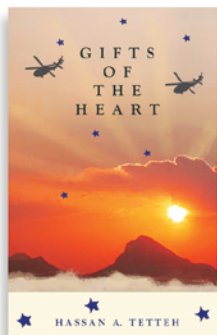
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JOHN CADLEY, a former advertising copywriter, is a freelance writer and musician living in Fayetteville, New York.

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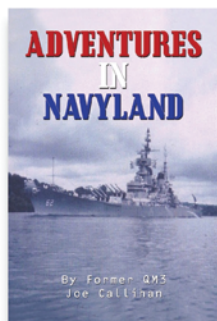
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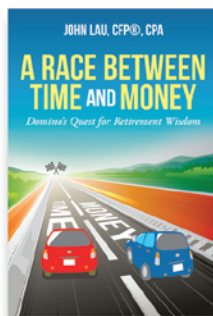
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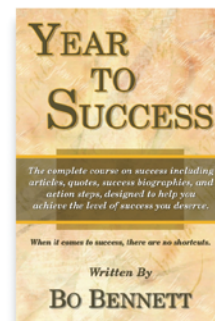
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