



The Voice

District 83 Newsletter
“Better You, Better World”

September 2009

The Voice is dedicated to inspiring Toastmasters in District 83 to achieve their goals. Let **The Voice** be *your voice* by sending in your success stories—the way that Toastmasters has helped you either personally or professionally. Everyone has a story to share and your experiences can help others find *their* voice. Please send your submissions to Joanne Callahan, your District 83 Newsletter Editor, at greenbriar206@yahoo.com. Photos are also welcomed!

Toastmasters - Success is just a Speech Away

By Paula Markert, ACB, ALS



Anyone who knows me knows that I am not shy - far from it! I have been teaching and training for over 25 years now. I know how to work the crowd. But, in those situations I know I am the expert. I am the one who has the experience to get up in front of a crowd and expound principles or techniques.

Recently, however, I was put in a situation where, even though I knew the topic, I was going to be presenting material to a group of people who (90% at least) had more experience in my field. I wrote my presentation two weeks before the presentation and then rewrote it twice the night before! I was so nervous that I got no sleep the night before the presentation. Even worse, my biography stated that I was a Toastmaster!

The morning of the presentation, with my third re-write in hand, I sat in front of the group and took many deep breaths. I was nervous as heck! Me, cool, calm and unflappable, was nervous! I thought back on all the basics presented in Toastmasters: deep breaths, remember to speak slowly, start off with something to put you at ease with the group, etc. Everything I learned, everything that was reinforced at Toastmasters meetings, everything came back to me. My first comment to the group set me at ease and I was able to complete my presentation with enough confidence that I actually demonstrated that I was an expert in the field.

Afterwards, I was approached by a member of the audience. Her comment, “Great job. You were a breath of fresh air.”

Thank you Toastmasters!

The Techie Toastmaster



In order to help his fellow Toastmasters become technologically savvy rather than watching us become technologically challenged,, Joel Heffner has volunteered to write a monthly column explaining the latest and greatest that technology has to offer.

August 14, 1984 was a significant day in public speaking history. PowerPoint was created on that day. For the past twenty-five years, PowerPoint has been both loved and hated. Some say it has helped millions of presentations while others say it has ruined an equal number.

The problems with PowerPoint are relatively simple. Some people automatically turn to PowerPoint even though there is no need to turn on a computer and darken a room. It's become a standard in many offices. Probably the worst feature of PowerPoint is the dreaded bullet slide. Bulleted information is probably the least effective way to get your points across. They also tend to make members of the audience drowsy. Are there ways to make a PowerPoint presentation useful and effective? Sure. Here are some suggestions.

Avoid writing sentences on a slide. Members of the audience shouldn't have to read a sentence. Slides are meant to supplement what you say. NEVER read a slide out loud!

Use images wherever possible. As the old expression goes, one picture is indeed worth a thousand words...on a slide. The background and font colors should contrast to make the words more readable.

Use simple fonts. If you use an ornate font, it may look pretty to you, however it's likely that members of the audience will have trouble

reading it. Basic Helvetica works great. Make sure the font size is large enough to be read. Before you speak, turn on the projector, walk to the back of the room, and make sure you can read the words.

Some speakers like to give their slides away as handouts. Tom Peters, a business guru, gives away all of his slides, for example. However, if you look at them, you won't be able to make out the point on most of them. You have to really be there to know what they mean. Speakers should provide handouts that summarize the most important facts. The slides, standing alone, shouldn't really be of much value. If they tell the whole story, why not just give them out and not speak at all?

PowerPoint, in the right hands, can be an awesome tool for a Toastmaster.

[Joel Heffner is a member of the New Day Toastmaster (Staten Island). He'd love to answer your tech related questions. You can send him an email at techquestions@joelheffner.com.]



You Can Do It!

Fran Mann, CL
Area 22 Governor



I have been doing seminars and workshops for years and did not really join Toastmasters to improve my public speaking skills. Rather I was looking for the team experience and for feedback from others as I was used to doing everything on my own. I like to think of myself as a cheerleader for Toastmasters. I really believe that everyone has their speaking ability inside and all they really need to do is be cheered to believe that it is there.

My parent club is Park Toastmasters in Ramsey which has been chartered since 1961. One time I was at a meeting with quite a few people who struggled because English was not their native language. During a Table Topics session one man partially raised his hand, obviously tentative to participate, and I called on him to speak. "I can't do this", the petrified guest admitted, and I simply told him "Take your time and just do it!" The man stood up and the proverbial flood gates opened and he wouldn't (or didn't want to) stop talking. At the end of his speech, I enthusiastically told him "You said you couldn't do it but you did it, you did it!" People just simply need to be encouraged. As a four time Area governor, I like to get down and dirty with club members in order to help lift them up and to show them the best that they can be.

Evaluations are my strong point. In my Ramsey club, we have members that have gone to area level competitions and some that have gotten as far as the district level and in doing so have learned about what really works. Vice Presidents of Education in all Toastmasters clubs should be encouraged to give 3-4 minute educational talks to members on a routine basis on how to give effective evaluations, as well as the importance of mentoring. These talks help to personalize the experience, rather than just showing a training video during a Toastmasters meeting.

Being an Area Governor has helped me form a connection with my clubs. While I do meet with the each of the clubs individually, I also routinely host a "President's Coffee" for my area. This enables these leaders to not only learn from each other but also to provide support for one another. When President's from different Toastmasters clubs get together as a group, they share their individual experiences and help each other out and the teamwork shown is both inspiring and encouraging. And isn't that what Toastmasters is really all about?

Editors Note: Fran is also a member of the Northern Stars Advanced Club in Morristown





Success Story

Sandy Sharf ACB, CL
Area 45 Governor



I never would have believed, after avoiding joining Toastmasters for fourteen of the seventeen years my husband was involved, that I would take the plunge. Somehow in a very weak moment it happened. I joined “No Limits Toastmasters, The Club On Wheels”. It was here that I gave my very first, as well as my fifth, seventh and tenth speeches on a television show on Staten Island which is hosted Fran Okeson. That means in front of lights and cameras. The other speeches were given at my other club, “Brunswick Toastmasters.” I am a 7th grade science teacher but it is very different teaching children, then it is speaking in front of your peers. I had a busy life raising three daughters, running a household and teaching, and no desire to join Toastmasters. Somehow things have changed.

I have now earned my ACB and I am working toward my ACS and my ALS. I have also become Area 45 Governor and I am busy doing my club visits. Guess what? I speak at each visit and I even enjoy it! I like to encourage others to learn, and to improve their speech and leadership skills—it is almost as rewarding as teaching. Who would have thought this would happen!

In addition to this I have met wonderful, caring people- people who like to help people. It continues to be an exciting and rewarding journey that I never imagined I would take and so I encourage you to try it, too. You never know where the road will lead you.



We Need Your Input!

Do you have a photo of a recent Toastmasters event or meeting? Will your club be celebrating an important milestone? Your District wants to know! Please send me pictures and articles for inclusion in upcoming newsletters. You don't have to be a literary genius or a professional photographer. Just a Toastmaster willing to share with the rest of us what your club already knows—and that is just how special you are! Please send your submissions to Joanne Callahan at greenbriar206@yahoo.com

We Want You!



Can you create an Access database? Are you PMP certified? Are you a graphics designer? Do you belong to the National Speakers Association? Do you work for a local newspaper, radio or TV station? Are you a whiz with Facebook and Twitter?

If any of these sounds like a line off your resume, think about lending those skills to Toastmasters District 83.

We know that the Toastmasters of District 83 are top notch. Each one of you has skills you're lending to your clubs to help them succeed. The district wants to create a web-based list so those dynamite skills can be leveraged throughout the district.

Contact Barbara Krasner, District 83 Public Relations Officer, at barbarakrasner@att.net for more information.

Toastmasters Hit The Road!

By Barbara Krasner

I went to New Brunswick, Canada to attend the Toastmasters International Region VII Conference, my opportunity to be trained as the incoming Public Relations Officer (PRO) for District 83 (NJ, Rockland County, Staten Island). On Thursday, 5-June-2009, Karen Seeman, Tom Somers and I spent a day out on the road to see the New Brunswick sights: Hopewell Rocks, lobster lunch in Alma, Dickson Falls at Fundy National Park, and Cape Enrage.



Cape Enrage



Dickson Falls



Hopewell Rocks



Karen Seeman and Tom Somers at Cape Enrage

KnowledgeNet 2.0

Your Opportunity to Volunteer, Network, and Learn

As our district moves into its second year, there is no better time to ramp up our success through an exceptional opportunity to volunteer, network, and learn at **KnowledgeNet 2.0**.

This event for and by Toastmasters District 83 will be held at the beautiful Woodcliff Lake Hilton in Woodcliff Lake, NJ on Saturday, November 14th. Features include:

- A choice of at least six educational workshops along three tracks:
personal development, professional development, and club development, including:
 - Techniques to network and interview for your next job
 - Tips on how to prepare for and improve your skills to achieve contest-level speeches
 - Opportunities for social media networking
 - A panel of fellow Toastmasters on how being a Toastmaster has transformed them personally and professionally
- Keynote speaker Dr. Dilip Abayasekara, 2005-2006 president of Toastmasters International
- “Night at the Improv”—the district’s Table Topics and Tall Tales contests

We’ll provide breakfast, lunch, and banquet dinner. We ask that you provide a passion for learning, meeting new people, and reconnecting with friends and colleagues.

KnowledgeNet 2.0—Take this opportunity to use and improve your communications and leadership skills!

Get the early bird rate—Download the registration form at www.toastmasters83.org and sign up now!

Any questions? Contact Barbara Krasner, Fall Conference Chair, at barbarakrasner@att.net or Lisa Pantano, Fall Conference Registration Chair, at lisampantano@yahoo.com.

