



The Lilac City Lowdown

Lilac City Toastmasters Club # 687 December 1999 Vol. 2, #3

"From Speechless to Speaker: What Toastmasters Has Done For Me "

by Lois Watkins, CTM

Vice President of Membership, Lilac City Toastmasters



One of my favorite quotes is by Eleanor Roosevelt: "You must do the thing which you think you cannot do." Speaking in public is one thing I not think I could do. I remember vividly a speaking assignment during high school English. The assignment was to stand in front of our English class and give an oral report. I stood up in front of the group of students and opened my mouth, but was so frightened, I couldn't speak!

High School was many years ago, but the fear of public speaking stayed with me for many years to follow. Finally, I decided that public speaking would benefit me in my job as a Technical Data Management Supervisor. In the fall of 1995 I started visiting several Toastmasters Clubs in the Rochester area.

As soon as I walked into the room where the Toastmaster meeting was held, my heart started racing! Just the thought of someone asking me a question frightened me. I was afraid I'd say the wrong thing or not know what to say.

A year later, in September 1996, I summoned the courage to join Lilac City Toastmasters. Encouragement from my friend Bob Corbin helped me to take this first big step. My first few speeches were short and my voice so soft people in the back of the room couldn't hear me. My knees were literally knocking and during one speech I froze from fear, as I had done so many years ago in high school. But, with the encouragement and suggestions from my fellow Toastmasters, I was able to return to the lectern and this time, complete my speech!

Since joining Lilac City Toastmasters, I've entered a Tall Tales Contest and been a judge at an Area contest. Thanks to help from fellow Lilac City Toastmasters, I was able to give a toast for my youngest daughter at a college function and even spoke at a funeral for a loved one.

Oh, I'm not a great speaker. I have many things to improve upon and I still get nervous. But, I can do the thing I didn't think I could do, thanks to the help and encouragement from my fellow Lilac City Toastmasters.

Presentations, Oral and Written

by Art Drummond, ATM-B,
Secretary, Lilac City Toastmasters



Toastmasters stresses good speaking techniques. Among the various aspects is the importance of organization. Stated briefly, good practice requests that an *opening statement* be aimed at getting the audience's attention. After this beginning, *an explanation* of why that opening was used should follow. This points the direction in which the talk is going. Next, the *subject* is detailed along with supporting evidence or quotations bolstering the speaker's reason for speaking. Finally, the talk concludes with a simple *call to action*.

This approach is also applicable to written work. In writing, you don't have to worry about maintaining eye contact and projecting your voice. But you still need to deal with distractions from your purpose. For example, while humor can be a welcome addition, it is not wise to open a written or oral presentation with a joke unless the joke is directly related to the subject matter, has appeal to the recipient to whom it is addressed, and is appropriate to the tone of the presentation.

An *opening* to a letter directed to a business, for example, might incite more interest if it begins with: "We can save 20 percent in our maintenance budget!" An *explanation* for this claim might be: "We should replace all the fluorescent bulbs in our building every 2 years to save money" The body or *subject* of the letter, would likely contain a comparison between the single cost once every two years and the disruption of replacing one or two bulbs at inconvenient and odd times, throughout the year. After obtaining information from a utility illustrating the savings, your supporting details might include suggestions that mass replacement be done at night, shut down times, or during vacations, eliminating disruption to the work force. The closing would summarize your objective, or the reason for writing with a clear *call to action*: "I suggest that changing the bulbs on a two-year cycle be adopted."

A second example of an attention getting *opening* might be: "One dollar worth of salt would have saved us \$10,000!" An *explanation* could follow with: "If the slippery steps had been salted on a regular basis, we might not be facing a lawsuit". The body or *subject* would then show the necessity of continually observing key walkways and roads. Research detailing the cost to the company of other accidents and suggestions for enlisting assistance from present employees could provide further support. A strong *call to action* in the closing: "I urge that ground maintenance have its hours altered to do snow clearing long before the work day starts and ends" ties together the facts and would then give the reader direction in using the information.

Of course, there are many other writing opportunities where the proper organization should be used; such as complaining to merchants or manufacturers. Many times a well written letter will bring you better results. In my own case, I have often been awarded multiple coupons. Letters to your legislators may change a vote, as when many letter writers complained about the First Lady's proposed changes to health care.

You don't have to "talk the talk" to communicate; you may also write. Toastmasters can help you learn organization. Visit us and find out how much fun and rewarding it can be.

Don't throw away opportunities to advertise Toastmasters

by Arnold Krueger, DTM

Vice President of Publicity, Lilac City Toastmasters



What do you do with old Toastmaster magazines? You are not throwing them away I hope? They are one of the best tools we have for advertising Toastmasters International and the Lilac City Club. Did I hear you ask, "How?" By passing them on to a friend, that is how! On the other hand, you can do what I do with mine. I clip a Toastmaster business card to the first inside page and put them in the local library. (I put the card inside the magazine because some libraries object to such advertising.) Most libraries welcome magazines that are not too far out of date and place them where patrons have free access to them. This keeps down their costs and keeps the magazine out of the recycle bin. Thus, everybody wins.



Clubs in Area 4 Celebrate "75 And Sparkling"

On Friday, October 15th, the Area 4 Fall Evaluation and Humorous Speech Contest, "**75 and Sparkling**", was held at the Water's Edge Steak and Seafood Restaurant in Webster, New York. The evening's theme, "**75 and Sparkling**" was chosen to recognize the 75th year of Toastmasters International.

Lilac City had good-representation, as usual, in both its contestants and by those who participated in other ways. **Mary Ann Marchand** entertained all with her humorous speech, "Wagging Tales". **Art Drummond** employed both his skill and his natural sense of humor as our evaluation contestant. **Arleen Roth** served well as Chief Timer and as a Greeter at the registration table. **Lois Watkins**, **Arnold Krueger**, and **Leo Pfeiffer** employed their Toastmasters evaluation skills as judges. **Bob Corbin** gave generously of his time and talents in designing and copying the flyers and programs. He also did an excellent job as Assistant Teller and as the Closing Remarks speaker during the program. **Betsy Kalweit**, as Area 4 Governor this year, handled the restaurant details, acted as Master of Ceremonies and was responsible for coordinating the efforts of all the clubs in Area 4 who participated.

Members and guests from **Lilac City**, **Rochester Club 476**, **Frederick Douglass Club**, and the **Lyceum Club** largely comprised the forty-four people in attendance. Honored guests included **Patrick Olson**, our Target Speaker, and his wife, **Linda Olson**, who served as Assistant Timer, both from **Speakup Toastmasters**. . Since Central Division Governor **Carol Stafford** was called out of town, **Nancy Scott, DTM**, who also performed the duties as Chief Judge for the contest, spoke in her place to promote the Central Division Contest November 6th. **Ray Tardiff, DTM**, a member of both **Westside Toastmasters** and the **Advanced Toastmasters** club, acted as Sergeant at Arms.

Comments from District Representative **Ruth Parmenter, DTM**, Lt. Governor of Education and Training, who attended with her husband Ed, added to our evening, as Ruth urged everyone to attend the District Conference in Corning November 19th and 20th and assisted **Area 4 Governor Kalweit** in presenting the awards for the evening.

– *Betsy Kalweit*

Area Governor Report

by *Betsy Kalweit, CTM, CL,*
Area 4 Governor



An **Area Council** meeting was held November 3rd at the office of Rochester Club's President, Dinesh Chawla. Those present were: *Carolyn Bailey* and *Ronald White* from the *Frederick Douglass Club*; *Antonio Williams* from the *Lyceum Club*; *Dinesh Chawla, Bob Yost, Sharon Curynski* and *Kaushik Chaudhuri* from the *Rochester Club #476*; *Bob Corbin* and *Betsy Kalweit* from *Lilac City*. *Central Division Governor Carol Stafford* also attended.

Representatives from each of the clubs gave brief reports on the progress their clubs are making in meeting Distinguished Club Goals. Several people shared ideas each club is using in building membership and special activities planned. There was also a discussion concerning the expenses of the past Area Humorous and Evaluation Contest and suggestions for the Area Tall Tales and International Speech Contest to be held in March. Area Governor Kalweit distributed surveys to evaluate the Humorous and Evaluation Contest and to obtain suggestions for planning the next contest. She asked that these be taken back to the clubs to gather club members' opinions.

A **Division Council Meeting** was held November 16th at *Central Division Governor Carol Stafford's* home. Area Governors present were *John Kostecki (Area 1)* *Larry Ver Weire (Area 5)*, and *Betsy Kalweit (Area 4)*. Each Area Governor gave written reports to Central Division Governor Stafford for her use in preparing a report for the Fall District Conference business meeting in Corning. There was also a time for sharing progress being made in each Area and for discussing ideas concerning the Spring Area Contests. Suggested dates and ideas for the next Officer Training sessions were presented, and it was decided since membership building is a common concern, that should be our focus. The Officer Training will take place in January, and brief Area Council meetings will be held immediately following that session. Area Governor Kalweit will announce the place, time and date for the training to club officers as soon as it she receives this information herself. To earn points for the Distinguished Club program, each club must have a minimum of four officers trained at this session.

Among those attending the Fall District Conference in Corning were the following from Area 4: *Sharon Curynski, (Rochester Club #476)*, *Arleen Roth*, and *Betsy Kalweit, (Lilac City)*, and *Nancy Scott (Lyceum)*. The budget was adopted at the business meeting. In addition, representatives from each club that qualified under the Distinguished Club Program, received ribbons signifying their level of achievement. These ribbons can be attached to their club banners. Presentations were also heard by (or on behalf of) candidates for International Director.

One of the greatest benefits of attending the District Conferences, though, is being able to attend workshops devoted to helping Toastmasters improve their skills. If you would like to take advantage of this opportunity yourself, plan right now to attend the Spring District Conference. It will be held the weekend of April 15th at the Holiday Inn, Buffalo, New York. More details will follow in the New Year.



The Most Valuable Gift
by Betsy Kalweit, CTM, CL
Educational Vice President, Lilac City Toastmasters



“Give a person a fish and you’ll feed him for the day. Teach him how to fish, and he’ll be able to feed himself for the rest of his days.”

Many of us have heard this quote before, but perhaps never considered how it could be applied to public speaking. If we think about it, though, we can make some comparisons between helping someone learn to attain physical self-sufficiency and teaching someone the survival techniques required in everyday speech. Among other places, we face communication challenges in our work environments, in our neighborhoods, in our places of worship, and in our families.

Toastmasters, of course, provides the perfect opportunity for this type of learning to take place because members have the chance to regularly practice speaking and to gain additional insight from watching fellow club members. We learn much in life by example. The influence of others upon our lives can be so powerful, in fact, that some new speakers fall into the trap of trying to copy the mannerisms of speakers they admire. Making this mistake often results in speeches lacking credibility and effectiveness.

A workshop at the recent District Conference gave suggestions for helping ourselves and others to find our unique speaking style. One of these was to identify our own strengths and build upon them, rather than trying to become someone else when we speak. Through observing excerpts from various speeches, those of us present at this workshop were shown that real power in our speeches comes from just being ourselves!

Art Drummond built upon this precept in one of his recent educational bulletins dealing with gestures. They should be a natural expression of ourselves, as we would use in everyday conversation, for them to be convincing. When we are true to ourselves and relate to the audience as we would when speaking to one person, we will produce dynamic speeches.

This concept was further driven home to me last weekend when I attended an afternoon lecture with my daughter at the Eastman School. The instructor, who was speaking about singing, emphasized the importance of finding your own voice and developing that. Ignoring your own abilities and trying to sing exactly like your favorite singer could even be damaging to your own voice, besides sounding terrible!

This year we will harmonize our club’s activities with the District’s theme: “From Sowing to Growing”. As we gather new Toastmasters into our membership, however, let us always be aware of the most valuable gift we can offer to them and to one another. That gift is the encouragement to develop our unique abilities. This will inspire confidence and growth. As we cultivate the best in our fellow members, this is sure to produce a crop of Toastmasters equipped to not only survive, but to thrive in the new millennium!



Ring In The New Year With New Members by Betsy Kalweit, CTM, CL Educational Vice President, Lilac City Toastmasters



During the holiday season, many people give tokens of appreciation to those who serve them throughout the year. Letter carriers, the person who delivers your newspaper, the staff at your doctor's office, your hairdresser, your waiter, waitress, or perhaps even the UPS person are examples of people whose services mean so very much to us. This year, along with your usual gift, consider enclosing one of our club brochures. Vice President of Membership Lois Watkins put much effort and creativity into designing these attractive brochures and it is up to all of us to get them into the hands of those who could profit from our club. This year show those who serve you that you care by introducing them to Toastmasters. Even if they are not interested, they may pass the message on to someone who is. So use this and other opportunities unique to the holiday season to communicate to others what Toastmasters can offer them.

Do you have an article you would like to see published in the next edition of the "Lilac City Lowdown"? If you do, be sure to bring it to a meeting and give it to one of the staff members listed below!

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