



# RoadToasters

## Newsletter

### Toastmaster Club #1761



#### Mission of the RoadToasters' Club

*The mission of the RoadToasters Club is to provide a mutually supportive and positive learning environment in which every member has the opportunity to develop communication and leadership skills, which, in turn, fosters self-confidence and personal growth.*

## Listening

*“Learn how to listen and you will profit, even from those who speak badly.”*

– Cherokee Proverb

**L**istening is the most important aspect of communication; it is too important to leave entirely in the hands of the audience. All great performers “play off” of their audiences. It's essential that we speakers also respond and are affected by ours; that we close the circuit of feedback and create a living, dynamic relationship. This requires a sensitivity, an emotional intuition, and an empathic skill, also known as “reading the audience.”

Anyone who works with an audience needs to develop the skill of listening to them. Ideally, we want to create a dialogue with them, just as we do with a group of good friends in close conversation. When the feedback loop is closed and each party is reacting energetically to the other, that's when communication is the most successful and the most gratifying.

**S**tandup comedy is the clearest example of this phenomenon. When great comedians are hitting their stride, it is like a tennis match. The performer serves a punch-line and the audience returns laughter. The performer reacts to the laughter, listening for the perfect moment to slap another one across the footlights. An experienced comedian can build the momentum in an audience until they become hysterical with laughter. Sometimes the audience must burst into applause simply to win a moment's relief from laughter.

Few of us have the talent, skill, or experience to provoke that degree of response from an audience. But we each create some level of response and it's our job to listen for it, understand it, and answer it. When we talk of “eye contact,” most people think that is a gift we give to the audience, one of the speakers' tools of communication. That's just a by-product; the true purpose and value of eye contact should be reading them, paying attention to them, listening.

**I**t's important to read them correctly, and not to assume that they are hearing the same meaning you intend. This can be tricky because sometimes the audience is not aware of their actual perceptions. Misunderstandings often rise from mishearing or mislistening (*mistening?*). We hear what we expect, and we listen for what we secretly want to hear.

Isaac Stern, the great violinist, once gave a concert in Montreal that I was privileged to attend. For one of his encores, he played a piece that ended with progressively higher and higher notes ending with the highest of all played whisper-quiet to a rapt audience, hushed and still. Interrupting the applause, Stern stepped forward and asked how many of us had been able to hear the last note. Fully 80% of us raised our hands. "That's remarkable," he said, "because that note is impossible to play on the violin. I merely drew the bow across without touching the strings. You created the note yourselves out of your need to hear that sound."

Being heard accurately and correctly is not to be taken for granted. Speakers must be aware of all the obstacles, physical, mental, emotional, and musical that stand between an audience and perfect understanding.

### Meetings

Monthly  
2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesdays

12:05 – 12:55 PM

*(See schedule on next page for meeting location)*

*Visitors are  
welcome!*

—  
*Come grow  
with us.*

The above article was excerpted from “The Passionate Speaker” by Michael Landrum

# Speech Contest – A Trip Outside the Comfort Zone

*“In accordance with our principles of free enterprise and healthy competition, I'm going to ask you two to fight to the death for it.”*

– Monty Python

Competition. Is it beneficial? Public speaking and fear are synonymous according to many people. Furthermore, just the thought of being in a speech competition can cause alarms to go off and instant meltdown.

RoadToasters is an organization here at the Department of Roads that provides a friendly, yet helpful and supportive atmosphere to improve public speaking and leadership skills. Participants are taught how to deal with the fear of public speaking, learn good speech-making principles, and most of all, provides a means to practice those skills.

On August 13, 2003, our NDOR RoadToasters Club provided an opportunity for some of its members to practice in a unique way...a speech competition. Unique because there is a panel of judges, rules and procedures to follow, and the mental aspect of knowing “I am being judged.” For most, it is a trip outside of their comfort zone. Four volunteer members took that trip: Konstantin

Bogdanov, Jan Kollars, Cindy Shockey, and Bob Foreman. Through RoadToasters, they have become comfortable enough in their public speaking to take this step. Helping them, and deserving of special thanks for this contest, were: Chief Judge Dalyce Ronnau, along with judges Larry Briggs and Roe Enchayan, timers Mike Owen and Marsha Munter, ballot counters Wayne Foster and Sara Friedman. Sara also served in her usual role as Sargent-at-Arms.

All of our contestants prepared and spoke well. Jan Kollars was chosen as the best evaluator, and Cindy Shockey was judged to have the best humorous speech. They represented RoadToasters at the next level: the area contest held at Southeast Community College on August 28<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations to Jan and Cindy! We are all proud of you, and also proud of Konstantin and Bob for participating. What did they have to gain? For starters, there is the added confidence. Participants gain valuable speaking experience

and learn by observing other speakers. Also, and this is a little secret of Toastmasters but is very key: your listening skills are dramatically improved.

Competition is good, especially when you have a good mental approach, which is: don't get hung up on winning. Instead, put your focus on learning and enjoying. It will show.

- Jim Wilkinson

## Quotes of the Month...

*“Believe in yourself! Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you cannot be successful or happy.”*

Norman Vincent Peale (1898 - 1993)

*“You have to leave the city of your comfort and go into the wilderness of your intuition. What you'll discover will be wonderful. What you'll discover will be yourself.”*

Alan Alda (1936 - )

## RoadToaster Assignments (September – December, 2003)

	9/10	9/24	10/8	10/22	10/29	11/12	11/19	12/3	12/10	12/17
<b>Konstantin Bogdanov</b> – Member at Large, 3681	TM	E3	S2			TT	E1		CE	H
<b>Larry Briggs</b> – Member at Large, 489-3486		E2		S1		E1	TT		G	O
<b>Roe Enchayan</b> – Secretary 3682	★	TM	S1	G	S1	★	S2	S2	T	L
<b>Bob Foreman</b> – VP Membership, 4429	E1	CE	TM	T		S1	E2			I
<b>Wayne Foster</b> – Member at Large, 476-1943										D
<b>Sara Friedman</b> – Sargent-at-Arms, 477-6050	CE	TT	E1	S2		E2	G		TM	A
<b>Janice Kollars</b> – Member at Large, 4885	T	S2	E2	CE			S1		E2	Y
<b>Marsha Munter</b> – Member at Large, 4502	S1	G	CE	E2		T	TM			
<b>Kyoko Okamuro</b> – Member at Large, 420-2405	G	S1	T			TM	CE		TT	P
<b>Mike Owen</b> – Treasurer, 4735	E2	S3	G	TT		CE	T		S2	A
<b>Dalyce Ronnau</b> – Member at Large, 4544										R
<b>Cindy Shockey</b> – President, 3837	TT	E1		TM		S2			E1	T
<b>Jim Wilkinson</b> – VP Education, 4421	S2	T	TT	E1	S2	G		S1	S1	Y

★ = Area Gov. Duties  
 TM = Toastmaster  
 TT = Table Topics  
 S1 = Speaker #1  
 S2 = Speaker #2  
 CE = Chief Evaluator  
 E1 = Evaluator #1  
 E2 = Evaluator #2  
 G = Grammarian  
 T = Timer

Speechcraft 2003-04 is tentatively scheduled for the January to April timeframe. A detailed schedule will be published later.

The Spring Speech Contest is tentatively scheduled for March 10, but that may change as it will have to be coordinated with the Speechcraft schedule.