

The Dynamo

September 2006
Club #457, Area 16, District 5

Capturing the spirit of Dynamic Speakers Toastmasters

Laughter is the Best Medicine

By: Bruce Erloff



On August 25th, we held our special Humorous Speech and Table Topics Contests meeting and it was one of the best meetings ever, proving that laughter is the best medicine! The laughs began right away as **Monali Bhide** provided worms for everyone to snack on.

The meeting was actually two contests: a humorous speech contest and a Table Topics contest, and the winners of each category would qualify to represent our club in the Area contest on September 16th. The meeting was organized by Vice President Education **Monali Bhide** who conducted the meeting as flawlessly and professionally as she was dressed. Our very own Central Division Governor **Mark Kramer** explained the rules and we wasted no time getting on with the humorous speeches.

Bruce Erloff was first, providing a "Technical Briefing" on the Software Engineering Lifecycle. Usually a subject that would put everyone to sleep, he used many stage props and an analogy of a cup (is it half-full, half empty, or twice as big as it needs to be?) to demonstrate how software is really developed, poking fun at engineers and highlighting the pitfalls along the way.

Ben Le was next, sharing his most valuable life lessons. Unfortunately the most valuable, vivid lessons we learn are based on mistakes or embarrassments. He shared several such stories, such as how not to impress girls in junior high and how not to listen to your headphones in the library when you're lactose intolerant (and we'll spare the rest of the details...).

Louis Rader gave a motivational speech on "How to Feel Terrific!" in five easy steps: 1) Wake up really early and tell yourself "I feel terrific", 2) Look in the mirror and make yourself look terrific, 3) Tell everyone you see that you feel terrific, 4) Drink lots of water and eat raw foods, and 5) If you still don't feel terrific, buy his book for \$39.95 which contains all the answers. Awesomely delivered like a two-bit salesman on a midnight infomercial....

The Table Topics contestants were **Rich Preston**, **John Varenyi** and "just in time" **Ellen Czaika**. The question was "America's Funniest Videos usually shows people in painful situations. Why is other people's pain funny???"

Rich and **John** started out similarly -- "Because it is someone else's pain!" From there **Rich** took the scientific approach, citing studies about what makes humor funny, while **John** recalled his own funny story of riding his bike into a brick wall and through a window (I think I saw that episode of AFV a while back...). **Ellen** said that pain is definitely not funny and she prefers the silly things that kids and animals do.

The votes were counted, and the winners are...

Humorous speech contest

1. Bruce
2. Ben
3. Louis

Table Topics

1. John
2. Ellen
3. Rich

District 5 Installation & Awards Successes!

On August 12, District 5 held their annual Installation and Awards breakfast. Each club sends a representative and this year, our past President **John Varenyi** represented Dynamic Speakers. Also in attendance was our past Area Governor and new Division Governor **Mark Kramer**. The purpose of the breakfast is to install new District officers and to award clubs and individuals for their achievements during the past year.

This meeting would turn out to be a resounding success for Dynamic Speakers.

First, **John** accepted the 10 out of 10 award for Dynamic Speakers. This award is given to the few clubs who attain all ten goals from the Distinguished Club program. During **John's** tenure, Dynamic Speakers reached this plateau. For more on the Distinguished Club program, and our current status check out:

<http://www.toastmasters.org/dpr/dcpReport.asp?dcpClub=457>



The second honor was received by **Mark** on behalf of the club. He picked up a ribbon for Dynamic Speakers for being the home club of the Division Governor. **Mark** was recently elected to this post and will move from being responsible for 7 clubs in the Area to overseeing the work of 6 Area Governors, who are responsible for the 29 clubs, in the Central Division.

The third honor was the first recognition of **Mark's** excellent work as Area Governor. He received a trophy for being a President's Distinguished Area. To be a President's Distinguished Area, the area must achieve all 9 of the following goals:

- Goals 1 & 2: 75% of dues on time.
- Goal 3: Average of 1.75 CTMs per club.
- Goal 4: Average of 1 ATM per club
- Goal 5: 60% of the clubs achieve Distinguished Club.
- Goals 6 & 7: Submit 80% of the club visit forms.
- Goal 8: Of the Distinguished Area Program requires 60% of the clubs in the area to be at 20-plus membership.
- Goal 9: Net growth of 1 club.

Arguably, the hardest goal is creating a new club, which **Mark** was able to do in helping found a new club at Sony.

The final, and most exciting, honor was when **Mark Kramer** was named Area Governor of the Year! **Mark's** hard work and dedication to Toastmasters has been very clear to us, but this recognition at the District level shows he is not just dedicated to our club, but to the goals of Toastmasters as an organization.

Words from the Pros

After the impressive show of skills at our recent competition, The Dynamo caught up with a few contestants to find out any tips they might have for would-be competitors.

Bruce Erloff suggests that a person wanting to write a humorous speech should "Find a topic that has given you personal pain. Not necessarily physical pain, but mental anguish, personal challenges, crap you have to deal with at work, and make fun of yourself."

Louis Rader had a bit more insight on the humorous speech writing process. "Writing a humorous speech is hard. My suggestion would be to start off by writing a serious speech and then employ some strategies to make it funny. The first and probably the easiest is to exaggerate something. Take any piece of advice in your speech and exaggerate it and then it becomes funny. For instance, the serious advice is to drink 8 glasses of water a day. By

exaggerating it -- you could say to drink 80 glasses of water a day -- it now becomes funny. Irrational or unexpected behavior is also funny. Fear of public speaking is so strong that, at a funeral, most people would rather be the guy in the coffin than the guy giving the eulogy. Since that's unexpected, it's funny."

Ben Le offers some simple advice "...be yourself. Choose a topic that would cause you to laugh. If you need help, watch America's Funniest Videos. If all else fails, just satirize yourself as it always work."

Ellen Czaika thinks the best way to cope with Table Topics is to just jump right in. "Once you're talking, it relieves your initial nerves and then you can form where you want to go. Everyone has an initial reaction to everything - just say the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the question stem."

All the contestants also reported learning a lot from their experiences competing. **Louis** reports learning not to underestimate himself. He did not consider himself very funny, but saw he was wrong by the laughs his speech received. **Ellen** is learning how to not blush when being applauded. **Bruce** learned that you can always do better. Finally, **Ben** saw the importance of slowing down, especially during a funny speech, to allow the audience to absorb the punch lines and foster more laughter.

Thanks to all our contestants for a great competition! Hopefully these tips and lessons will encourage *you* to compete next time...our International Speech and Evaluation contests are only about 6 months away!

August Meeting Recaps

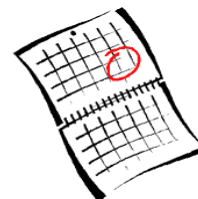
If you missed any meetings in August, here is a quick recap of the theme and speakers:

Date	Theme	Toastmaster	Speakers
08/02	Iraq Invades Kuwait	Rich Preston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terry Carlson - "Construction Project Proposals" • Holly Armstrong - "Franken Foods"
8/09	Singapore Gains Independence	Megan Steadman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tim Eddo - "America's Finest Attractions" • Ellen Czaika - "Talk to Strangers"
8/16	Rollercoaster Patented	Holly Armstrong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ben Le - "No More Pluto" • John Varenyi - "Introduction To Baseball, Part I"
8/23	Humorous Speech & Table Topics Contests	Monali Bhide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruce Erlhoff - "Software Development Lifecycle" • Ben Le - "Lessons In Life" • Louis Rader - "Five Steps to Feeling Great!"
8/30	Eiffel Tower's 150 Million Visitors	Doug Ernst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monali Bhide - "Hotel Alpina, Switzerland" • John Varenyi - "Introduction to Baseball, Part II"

Upcoming Events

Currently planned events:

- 9/06 - **Ellen Czaika** leads the meeting. Speeches by **Monali** and Professor of Baseball **John Varenyi** and Table Topics with **Tim Eddo**
- 9/13 - After a summer break, **Victor Garcia** returns to take the Toastmaster role. Speakers include **Tim Eddo** and **Rich Preston**. **Terry Carlson** leads his first Table Topics session.
- 9/16 - Area 16 Humorous Speech and Table Topics Contests. Come root local winners **Bruce Erlhoff** and **John Varney** as they compete against the Area's best!
- 9/20 - **Alina Kokovska** masters the toast, as Dr. **John Varenyi** presents part three in his baseball series. **Holly Armstrong** also gives a speech and **Rich Preston** serves as Table Topics master.
- 9/27 - **John Varenyi** serves as Toastmaster and welcomes speakers **Terry Carlson** and **Holly Armstrong**. **Victor Garcia** is our Table Topics quiz master.



- 9/30 - Central Division Humorous Speech and Table Topics Contests

September Membership Anniversaries:

- **Monali Bhide** - 1 year
- **Mark Pulis** - 4 years

Welcome Guests!

Dynamic Speakers proudly welcomes guests to visit our friendly and fun club! Every club in Toastmasters boasts its own personality. We suggest you visit our club as well as other clubs throughout San Diego until you find one that fits your personality and schedule.

Still not sure about us after your first visit? Come and visit us again!

We meet Wednesdays from 11:30am-12:30pm and are hosted by:

BAE SYSTEMS
10920 Technology Place
San Diego, CA 92127

For club information, directions, and conference room location, please contact our Vice President Membership, **Alina Kokovska**, at alina.kokovska@baesystems.com or 858.595.1910.



About Our Club

Dynamic Speakers was founded as "Dynamic Toastmasters" on January 13, 1953 as a company club for General Dynamics, now BAE Systems.

Our goals are aligned with those of Toastmasters International: To teach leadership, speaking, and listening skills and instill confidence in our members. We provide a fun yet professional atmosphere in our meetings and activities. We work with you to achieve whatever goals you set for yourself.

Visit us on the web at: <http://www.geocities.com/dynamicspeaker!>

About The Dynamo

The Dynamo is Dynamic Speakers Toastmasters club's monthly newsletter. It is published under the auspice of the Vice President of Public Relations, **Christopher DiLeo**.

Members are invited to submit original material for publication or ideas for articles they would like to see grace these hallowed pages.

Errors, omissions, comments, recipes and whatnot can be sent to chris.dileo@baesystems.com.