



On the Horizon

New Horizons Toastmasters Club Newsletter
February-May 2007

Club Number 312, Area 27,
Division B, District 60, Region VI

Always something to learn at your Toastmasters club

By Fred Jones, President

Toastmasters International President Johnny Uy, in the April edition of 'TOASTMASTER' magazine, tells us about an elderly member of some 30 years standing who never missed a club meeting. When asked to explain such enormous devotion, such incredible dedication, he replied: "Because I've never been to a meeting where I didn't learn something new."

When considering Toastmasters (and, yes, sometimes even after they join!), people think the organization is entirely about the art of speaking publicly. They believe they are going to learn about making speeches, period. While speechmaking is, without doubt, an important aspect of the Toastmaster's experience, there's a whole lot more to learn at your club, as the elderly gentleman, mentioned above, would tell you.

Do you know, for instance, how to organize meetings? Perhaps, you think you do. Perhaps, you could use some practice. Organizing meetings involves the preparation of agendas and the awarding of discussion time to specific items. It means establishing themes and objectives.

The time to learn about making-a-meeting-work is not when your boss tells you at noon to chair one for important clients at two o'clock. It's not when your school's parent/teacher council is

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"Hesling?"

Yassamin Gharai

"Glinessh?"

Le Vu



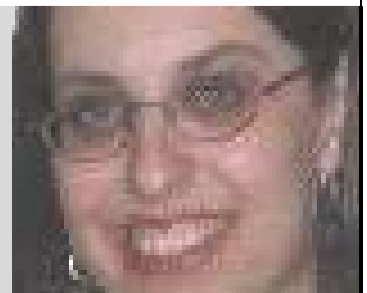
"Sheglin?"

Julia He



"Neghils?"

Julia Savitch



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In a Word “English!”

Toastmasters speak about the challenge of ‘making speeches in English when you’re NOT’

“Joining a Toastmasters club is one of the best personal investments you can make.”

Vadim Katcherovski

**Born in Minsk, Belarus (located in Central Europe between Poland and Russia).
Received BA in Computer Science in Minsk.
Came to Canada in 2002.
Works in the software industry; runs a company called Logic Software.
Told about Toastmasters by a friend.
Joined Toastmasters in January 2005.**



Vadim says that he joined Toastmasters because he couldn’t communicate effectively with his clients. He has now achieved his Advanced Communicator Bronze (ACB) and is working towards his ACS (silver).

He attributes much of the success he has achieved in his business to Toastmasters and fully intends to continue putting his “money where my mouth is”.

HOW DO YOU PREPARE FOR YOUR SPEECHES?

The first thing I do is prepare a draft. I read it aloud to see if it requires revision. I want my speeches to flow logically. I try to rehearse a speech three or four times.

DO YOU FIND IT INTIMIDATING TO BE MAKING SPEECHES IN ENGLISH WITH LIFELONG ENGLISH SPEAKERS PRESENT?

Yes. Actually, when I joined the club, there were very few ‘non-English’ members. I was really hesitant to join because I was afraid I might make a fool of myself by trying to deliver speeches to an audience of ‘native’ speakers.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO IMPROVE YOUR ENGLISH WRITING AND SPEAKING SKILLS?

I attempt to take on a role(chair, toastmaster, table topics masters, evaluator,

etc.) at each and every meeting.

WHAT COULD TOASTMASTERS DO TO HELP YOU THAT IT'S NOT DOING ALREADY?

Push me beyond my current comfort zone.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE THINKING OF

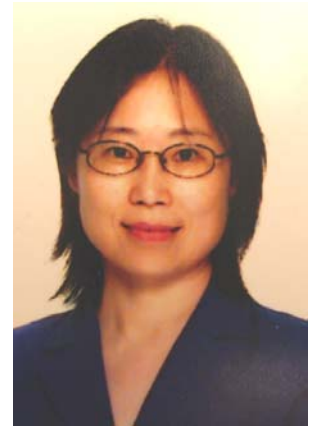
JOINING TOASTMASTERS? IF HE/SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH WELL? IF HE/SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH POORLY?

In both cases, I’d advise them to join as soon as possible! Joining a Toastmasters club is one of the best personal investments you can make.

“There’s someone there for you when you need help.”

Julia He

**Born in Dalian, China (Northeast China).
Came to Canada pursuing a Master’s Degree.
Studied at Acadia University.
Works in the non-profit sector, employment consultant.
Learned about Toastmaster on the Internet.
Joined Toastmasters in January 2006.**



Julia has completed eight speeches from the Communication and Leadership Program manual and plans to complete her CC (ten speeches) this May. She says good communications skills are beneficial to her work. She helps newcomers to Canada find employment, a job which allows her to interact with and speak to highly-intelligent, internationally-trained professionals. She feels it is her ‘mission’ to assist them with their new lives in Canada.

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Yassamin says she was in third-year university when she first learned about Toastmasters. A professor held a month-long workshop that taught her the basics of public speaking. She really enjoyed it.

Last year when her friend, Arian, told her that she had become a Toastmaster, Yassamin decided to sign up, too. She celebrated one-year as a Toastmaster this past March.

In that year, she says, “I have had the privilege of being the Secretary of our club as well as a participant at club speech and evaluation contests. These are things I never thought I’d do.”

She calls the New Horizons Toastmasters Club a good friend that has been supportive and encouraging.

“It has allowed hidden aspects of my personality (word-lover, actor, writer, and educator) to shine through and flourish.”

“How can you expect to improve if you don’t ask and don’t make mistakes?”

Yassamin Gharai

**Born in Mashhad, Iran (“the city of martyrs”), located 850 kilometers (500 miles) east of Tehran
Came to Canada with her parents after high school.
Received Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Toronto; Masters in Nutritional Biochemistry and Metabolism from Boston’s Tufts University.
Works as registered dietitian (RD) in Nephrology (the study of the function and diseases of the kidney).
Told about Toastmasters by a Toastmaster.
Joined Toastmasters in March 2006.**

HOW DO YOU PREPARE FOR YOUR SPEECHES?

Writing a speech is like writing a poem. I need inspiration. For that, I look carefully at the objectives. I try to think of a subject that would be a good fit. I spend days thinking about it and, usually, come up with an idea.

Next, I sit down to type, sometimes for hours, letting the words flow. When the thoughts come too

quickly, I’m forced to stop typing and resort to handwriting, just to get the words down. These speeches, the ones written in longhand and never typed up, are the best!

Many times, though, I find it difficult to continue. I get writer’s block. Then I bounce ideas off someone (usually my mother).

Discussing my ideas with someone helps me decide whether they make sense or not and whether something

“English!”



is missing. I also try to think of my speech as a good story that’s worth sharing. This makes it a lot easier to write and memorize.

In writing speeches, I believe we must “keep it simple.” Stay with one idea to keep on track. This will help one with time-management. I believe that “going overtime” during a speech detracts from it.

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Julia He

HOW DO YOU PREPARE FOR YOUR SPEECHES?

First, I carefully read a speech project’s objectives. Then I think seriously about what kind of topic could best help me reach those objectives. After deciding on a topic, I work out a speech outline on paper. I usually do this on the bus on my way to work. Later, I prepare the entire speech on a computer. This way I can see clearly how long it is and know how much time I will need to present it. Usually, I read the speech aloud to myself a few times after writing it. I also read it to my daughter to get help with word pronunciation.

DO YOU FIND IT INTIMIDATING TO MAKE SPEECHES IN ENGLISH WITH LIFELONG ENGLISH SPEAKERS PRESENT?

Yes and no. As a newcomer, I feel that I am at a disadvantage competing

with native speakers. However, this feeling doesn’t stop me – and *won’t* stop me -- from making speeches at Toastmasters meetings. I joined Toastmasters to improve my English communication skills so I see each speech that I make as a learning opportunity.

For me, it’s not competition. I appreciate that my fellow club members evaluate my speeches. I enjoy this opportunity I have to learn from “lifelong English speakers”.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO IMPROVE YOUR ENGLISH WRITING AND SPEAKING SKILLS?

In addition to day-to-day communication at work, the preparation of speeches to meet my Toastmasters goals is the best way to improve my writing skills. One-on-one counselling and group facilitation is part of my daily work routine and, for these purposes, I must use, intensely, whatever speaking skills I have. I am

also a book lover who finds reading essential to learning and mastering the English language.

WHAT COULD TOASTMASTERS DO TO HELP YOU THAT IT’S NOT DOING ALREADY?

As an ESL student, I would like to learn more about the English language while developing speaking and presentation skills at club meetings.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE THINKING OF JOINING TOASTMASTERS? IF HE/SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH WELL? IF HE/SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH POORLY?

At Toastmasters, you can sharpen your English language communication skills. Personally, I like the supportive environment at our club. Whether you speak English well or poorly, there’s always room for improvement. It helps when there’s someone there for you when you need help.

Born in North Vietnam, moved to South Vietnam when she was 3-years-old, grew up in Saigon.

Came to Canada as a political refugee in 1974.

Studied accounting at University of Montreal, moved to Ottawa in 1987, to Toronto in 1994.

Works in the telecommunications sector, finance and sales operations support.

Joined Toastmasters in May, 2006, following an Internet search.

“We learn to be patient with each other here.”

Le Vu

Le says that Toastmasters provides her with an excellent opportunity to learn and practice speaking English; it also gives her a chance to volunteer and make new friends.

“I love the friendly environment at the New Horizons Toastmasters Club,” she says. “It’s like a family to me.”

She adds that she feels good when making a speech. Whether her effort is good or bad, she laughs, she always finds everyone encouraging.

“That,” she says, “is very important to me.”

HOW DO YOU PREPARE FOR YOUR SPEECHES?

I think about my speech topics well ahead of time before selecting one I feel comfortable with. I always research my chosen topic on the Internet or in the library before writing the speech. Then I practice and practice and, voilà! it’s ready for presentation.

DO YOU FIND IT INTIMIDATING TO BE MAKING SPEECHES IN ENGLISH WITH LIFELONG ENGLISH SPEAKERS PRESENT?

I don’t find it intimidating, maybe because I have lived in Canada for quite a number of years.

However, it is difficult for me to make speeches in English because, in my adopted language, I can’t always find what I want to say on the top of my head. This is what makes me nervous. It’s not because there are English speakers in the audience.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO IMPROVE YOUR ENGLISH WRITING AND SPEAKING SKILLS?

During my first few years in Canada, I used to attend classes (not ESL) at night on

different subjects, looking for opportunities to speak English as well as listen to other people speak it. At home, now, I still listen to language tapes and practice pronouncing words. The Internet is another source that helps me improve my speaking and writing skills.

WHAT COULD TOASTMASTERS DO TO HELP YOU THAT IT’S NOT DOING ALREADY?

The ‘grammarian’ role at meetings helps me improve my English speaking skills and is excellent. For evaluations, I think it would help to have the evaluation form ‘automated’.

If I were provided with a list of objectives that could be used when evaluating (as happens during club contests) that would be helpful, too. Putting an evaluation speech together in such a short time is really challenging for me. However, I’m testing a couple of new methods and will share them when they’re perfected.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE THINKING OF JOINING TOASTMASTERS? IF HE/SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH WELL? IF HE/SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH POORLY?

Because Toronto is multicultural, no matter where we go, we MUST deal with people from different backgrounds. Therefore, people who speak English well should appreciate our club because it gives them the opportunity to learn to communicate with this vast audience.

The ‘world’ of our club, because of the variety of members, actually mimics the real world. We learn to be patient with each other here. Anyone who speaks English poorly ought to join Toastmasters for the opportunity to learn and practice.



Yassamin Gharai

Proofreading and editing your work is important. Depending upon how much preparation time I have, I use different resources to help me. If I’m unsure about the usages of a particular word or phrase, for example, I’ll ask Google. If I have time, I might check a variety of English grammar books. There are a lot of these online, many of them very useful.

If doubt persists, I check my writing with colleagues or go to another trusted source, my brother-in-law Dr. Michael Twohey, who, besides speaking excellent English, is a scholar and English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher.

And, lastly, there’s practice. I practice behind the wheel on my way to work, focusing on timing (and driving). At home, I add the dramatic bits, practicing in front of a mirror and with a tape recorder. Then I present the speech to my family and to my colleagues at work. Their feedback helps tremendously.

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IF HE/SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH POORLY?

Take more ESL classes. Immerse yourself in the English language. You live in a world where English is the primary mode of communication so watch English TV, listen to English radio, and read, at least, one article from an English language newspaper every day.

Too many immigrants prefer to watch and listen to cultural programs in their native tongues and read ethnic newspapers. Be smart. Befriend someone who speaks English well and who’s willing to give you feedback and gentle criticism. Don’t be shy about learning. How can you expect to improve if you don’t ask and don’t make mistakes?

After your English has improved to a degree where you can converse in it with ease, come. Join the club

From time to time, the club could introduce and explain some of English idioms. I think understanding idioms is the hardest part of learning the English language. A non-native speaker who hears an idiom used for the first time is truly unable to understand its meaning.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE THINKING OF JOINING TOASTMASTERS? IF HE/SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH WELL? IF HE/SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH POORLY?

In both cases, I’d advise them to join! Native speakers may have fears about speaking publicly that they must overcome or they may need improvement in speech delivery; some newcomers may want to make the most of whatever English skills they have. The point is that, no matter what level of English comprehension or speech development you are at, anyone -- and everyone -- is able to improve!

in disarray because half the members have walked out and you alone can save the day. It’s not the day before your chapter of the Knitting Guild has learned there has been a terrible disaster in northern Europe and millions need warm clothes. It’s now!

Also, many speeches take time to write and prepare, but there’s another type of speech for which you have just minutes or, even, seconds to gather your thoughts. It’s called the “impromptu speech”.

It’s the one you have to give, suddenly, at a friend’s wedding when the best man suddenly comes down with food poisoning. Or the appreciation response you have to make during the surprise celebration your colleagues have thrown for you. Or the 60 seconds of unavoidable agony you have to endure thanking everyone at the church barbeque and social.

Your Toastmasters club can help you be a 60-second success story because the impromptu speaking portion of the meeting can prepare you

Always something to learn at your Toastmasters club

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for these types of eventualities Toastmasters makes you practice organizing your thoughts on your feet, shows you that you can keep your composure in a tight situation, and builds your confidence so that, when you have to, you *really* can communicate effectively.

Feedback goes both ways

As we give our attention to other speakers, we are also developing the important art of listening – of listening well. At the same time, many different points-of-view and new topics for our own speeches come to mind. And we quickly learn that we are improving our interpersonal relationships through communication that is effective

Then, at the club meetings, there are those so-very-important speech evaluations that we ourselves may have to give and, certainly, receive. The feedback that goes both ways, the constant feedback, is

so effective because it’s done in a positive manner

More? Yes, there’s more.

Your club offers you an opportunity to become a member of an executive committee where you work closely with other members responsible for the club’s operation. This is an opportunity to run for election, to give the self-promotional speech and, finally, the acceptance speech. Be a VP of Education or Public Relations, a secretary or treasurer and ‘wow’ everyone when similar opportunities come up in other walks of life.

“Wow” them even more when you boldly volunteer to lead or lend a hand because you have learned at Toastmasters how to organize workshops, social events, training sessions, and other sociable enterprises. You will be confident that you can share the many tasks involved and deal with the challenges that sometimes erupt in any organization.

Tired of being timid or shy?

A wallflower? Unable to make small talk or communicate with strangers? Get out of that rut by greeting visitors and guests to the club and making new friends. Share common goals while you hone your own individual skills. Encourage others to meet their objectives

Always something new

I’m just scratching the surface, just getting warmed up. I hardly even mentioned the depth of information available to the prospective leader or motivator or goal-setter. And all I’ve said thus far relates merely to our club! There are also area, division, district and international events, both conferences and contests, waiting your turn.

The more you participate, the more you learn just as that elderly member of 30 years duration said.

There *is* always something new to learn at Toastmasters.



***Valentine's Day
at the Club***

From Left to right:

- Shahla Alaei**
- Yassamin Gharai**
- Fred Jones**
- Le Vu**
- Erna Brusch**
- Cheryl Dawkins**
- Vadim Katcherovski**
- Maria Vinette**

***St. Patrick's Day
at the Club***

- Lisa Depew**
- Le Vu**
- Yassamin Gharai**
- Erna Brusch**
- Yollanda Zhang**
- Shahla Alaei**
- Julia He**
- Stacey Richards**



***All Hallow's Eve
at the Club***

- Fred Jones**
- Julia Savitch**
- Andria Chui**
- Linda Leung**
- Vadim Katcherovski**
- Shahla Alaei**
- Clarie Martin**
- Yassamin Gharai**
- Yanjin Zhang**
- Steve Giagkou**



Winners all: Club members David-Paul Sip and Yassamin Gharai were victorious in our club's International Speech and Evaluation Contest this spring, but everyone who participated is an unacknowledged winner. David-Paul actually came in third at the District level with his fine speechmaking. Congrats all!

Y(e)LP: The Youth Leadership Programs (YLP) in which club members show young people the whys and wherefores (not to mention the skills) of speechmaking and club leadership went on unabated throughout the first months of this year. Again all coordinators, speakers and participants are to be commended.

New exec: On the evening of May 2, current club president, Fred Jones, let it be known (as prescribed by Toastmasters International) that the current club's executive is 'old hat' and faces eminent change. Indeed, a wonderful roster of dedicated members stepped forward. An election was held and here is the result. Your club's executive for the new year is:

President: **Erna Brusch**; VP of Education: **Yassamin Gharai**; VP of Membership: **Vadim Katcherovski**; VP of Public Relations: **Clarie Martin** (assisted by: **Yollanda Zhang** and **Sylvia Ley**); Secretary: **Erin McLaughlin**; Treasurer: **Julia He**; Sergeant-at-Arms: **Le Vu**; and Immediate Past President: **Fred Jones**.

The Final Word

By Yassamin Gharai

In Iran, in my grandparents' day, French was *the* second language; therefore, Persian (or Farsi) uses a lot of French words such as "tableau" or "merci".

In my parents' time, English became the second language and was taught from Grade 6 through high school.

Today, learning English is compulsory in Iran's schools. One can even hire private tutors and attend English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Also, it's very "cool" to speak English, if you're Iranian.

As a person who speaks Persian, French, and some Spanish and Arabic (with a little knowledge of Greek), I am able to say, with confidence, that English beats them all for ease of learning. You don't have to worry so much about gender. If there's a word missing, you can just make it up as you go!

The first time I heard English spoken at home, my parents were talking to each another. Apparently, they didn't

want their children to know what they were saying. This was a surefire way to pique a child's interest in the language!

I have my first memory of learning English at school in kindergarten. We had an American English teacher. I remember her showing us a picture of a chick and telling us to repeat the word "chick" as she said it.

In grade school, I dreamed about learning English since I wanted to be

*"If there's a word missing,
you can just make it up as
you go!"*

able to understand and sing all those wonderful songs from *The Sound of Music*, *Cinderella*, *Snow White* and *Sleeping Beauty*. I was also curious to know what my parents were saying that was off limits to us kids!

By taking advantage of tutors and attending many summer ESL classes

and putting in a lot of hard work, I was able to improve my vocabulary and grammar, but speaking English fluently didn't come easily. It happened only after my parents brought me to Canada.

We knew that getting me into university (one of the reasons we left Iran) meant that I must score high on TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). Therefore, I immersed myself fully in the language. I made as many as 800 flashcards, read everything that I could in English, watched a lot of TV and, most importantly, enrolled in a few courses at a high school near our house where I was forced to interact with 'native' speakers.

After enjoying every minute of my ESL journey, I can report that my efforts have paid off beautifully and that my dream about learning English has come true. My success, however, has come too late to help me determine what my parents were talking about in those early years.

Questions or comments?

Contact Clarie Martin, editor,
On the Horizon, by e-mail:
clariemartin@yahoo.com

Don't forget to thank your outgoing executive!

Fred Jones, President
Michelle Wei, VP of Education
Kitty Wan, VP of Membership
Clarie Martin, VP of Public Relations
Yassamin Gharai, Secretary
Maria Vinette, Sergeant-at-Arms
Stuart Segal, Immediate Past President

**The New Horizons Toastmasters
Club meets every Wednesday
7:05-9:00 P.M. at Toronto's
Edithville Community Centre, 7
Edithville Drive (south side of
Finch Avenue West, between
Yonge and Bathurst streets).
Guests are always welcome.**