



on the Horizon

New Horizons Toastmasters, #312, Area 27, Div. B, Dist. 60, Reg. VI September/October 2006



Good Grief!

Walter, the puppy, seems totally uninterested in the attention he's getting these days. Master and Toastmaster Debbie Long loves him just the same. See story Page 2.

First of a series

The Art of Speaking Well

In recent months, club members have been invited to participate in Table Topics Contests and Humorous Speech Contests. Few took advantage of the opportunity. However, there will be other contests.

In preparation, *On the Horizon* is initiating a series of articles on both subjects using material gathered from various

sites on the World Wide Web.

The article in this issue discusses Table Topics from the point-of-view of the participant as well as that of the Table Topics Master.

This article has been developed with material from MDI Toastmasters and Jibboom Street Toastmasters websites.

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Club workshops working well

By Fred Jones, President

Since June, the New Horizons Toastmasters Club has held four workshops, small, concentrated affairs at a venue other than our weekly gathering place. Two of the workshops centered on the theme of 'impromptu' speaking such as Table Topics. A third addressed the issue of effective evaluations. The fourth was an 'advanced speech' workshop.

All the workshops encouraged participants to become actively involved. Some members were able to give speeches; thus, sidestepping the crowded podium we often get on Wednesday evenings. There will be another workshop in November.

I have attended some of these workshops. I recommend them highly. They offer a more intimate environment to present speeches.

Usually there are 8-12 participants. Because of the small numbers in attendance, evaluations are more in-depth than at regular meetings, the feedback sharper. I also noticed more round table discussion. Each workshop is a refreshing opportunity to practice our Toastmaster skills at different venues.

I encourage everyone to attend a workshop. You'll find it an exciting and pleasant way to receive additional help achieving your goals.

I want to extend my thanks to everyone responsible for the success of these workshops and wish everyone the best in Toastmasters.

‘Good’ Grief

A Story of Recovery and Growth

By ClarieMartin

A few years ago Toastmaster Debbie Long (Miles was her married name) lost her son, Chris Miles. Due to a severe stroke in infancy, he was developmentally challenged. Doctors warned that he was unlikely to live past his second birthday. He died in his sleep at the age of 24.

Shortly after his death, Debbie joined the New Horizons Toastmasters Club. We asked Debbie if being a member of Toastmasters helped her come to terms with the grief that tormented her after Chris’s death. If so, we wanted to know in what way Toastmasters might have made a difference.

We already know, of course, that taking “action” through the Toastmasters program can bring about a “transformation” in a person; that is, it may encourage a timid person to become more confident, especially in front of an audience; it may turn an average speaker into a powerful one; it may help a disillusioned individual re-invent herself; or it may simply aid in self-

On the Horizon: In a speech you gave at the New Horizons Toastmasters Club some months ago, you handed out a brochure entitled “B.E.Y.O.N.D. (Believing & Embracing Your Own New Direction)”. Tell us about this organization and your role in it.

Debbie Long: After the loss of my son, Chris, I found my life completely controlled by the intense pain associated with grief. Not wanting to believe that pain was all I could look forward to, I sold my home and bought an RV. Over the next six months, I took that RV across Canada and the United States.

I went looking for people who, after the death of someone dear to them, had rebounded from terrible pain and re-discovered joy. In speaking to thousands of people, I learned that joy can always be found inside of us, but we *must* reach for it. I also learned that those who are unable to go ‘beyond’ their pain are prisoners of a terrible

guilt, whether real or imagined. And, sadly, I observed that there are insufficient support services available for those who need to grieve.

“Inadvertently, we created an organization that supports sufferers of grief.”

When I returned home, I approached people I knew who had suffered grievously, people who had come through “the valley of the shadow of death” and knew what it was to almost die after the unimaginable loss of a loved one. We began to meet steadily every month until two years had passed. Inadvertently, we created an organization that supports sufferers of grief.

We have our ‘drop-in’ support meetings. These were successful from the beginning. Soon we hope to provide this service every night of the week, at least in the Halton/Peel Region. We also work with other



discovery, in a general sense of well-being, in the relief of social anxiety. Toastmasters International is a useful, and sometimes startling, organization.

Not surprisingly, we discovered that her son’s death had already transformed Debbie’s life before she uttered her first words at a Toastmasters meeting. Rather than succumb to the depression that follows such an occurrence, Debbie found the strength and courage to meet her loss head-on. In that process, she discovered a unique way to help herself as well as others overcome the debilitating grief that sometimes occurs when loved ones die.

Did Toastmasters play a role in her eventual “coming to grips” with a terrible loss?

Yes, she says, and tells us how in the conversation which follows. Yes, she says, and paints a picture of uncommon strength under tragic circumstances. Yes, she says, and invites us all to observe that the bowl of life is always full even at its “emptiest”.

service providers, spreading the word to those who want to go ‘beyond’ tears and accept specialized intervention.

We provide workshops where we introduce the bereaved to the medical, psychological and ‘metaphysical’ services available to them. And, of course, what would a Toastmaster be if she failed to mention that we arrange for speakers to address interested groups.

H: The brochure refers to the notion of “healing” grief. In your view, and that of your organization, is grief a form of “illness” rather than a natural process?

DL: Grief is a natural process with no time frame or boundaries; however, symptoms and behavioral patterns that occur as a result of deep grief *can* be healed. They are aspects of depression.

H: The brochure emphasizes the need for “understanding” in grief. How do

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ordinary people fail to “understand” in moments of crisis following a loved one’s death? Is it natural to be reluctant to “share” in tragedy?

DL: Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, the Swiss-born psychiatrist who has written about death and dying, made us aware of the five stages of grief. However, though books such as *Life Lessons* and *On Death and Dying* are excellent, too many people accept her view as the Gospel. They imagine that after you have traversed the stages of denial, anger, bargaining and so on, you really do accept your lot, that you are fine. This is untrue.

Each person grieves uniquely, as certainly as one’s fingerprints are unique. The length of time and severity depend upon many different factors. There is no clear-cut completion to grief. There is no logic to grief.

It’s unfortunate but society often invalidates one’s grief. We don’t like to see a person cry. I believe that if we were to accept tears positively and call ‘crying’ a productive tool, much that is wrong with our society would be altered.

H: You made reference to your departed son and the impact his loss had upon you. Would you describe some aspects of your son’s life and his too-early death and what happened to you as a result of this?

DL: Chris suffered a stroke when he was just 15 months old. As a result, he was permanently brain damaged. Intellectually, he functioned at the level of a nine-year-old. Physically, he seemed about six. I believe, however, that his primary purpose in life was to make people laugh.

Everyone who met him fell in love with him. He gave me my greatest joy and challenged me with my most important lessons. Just by being the person he was, Chris taught me to be patient, to be utterly accepting, to envelope him with

The New Horizons Toastmasters Club meets every Wednesday 7:00-9:00 P.M. at Toronto’s Edithville Community Center (on Finch Ave. W., west of Yonge Street in North York, Ontario). Guests are always welcome.

unconditional love, and to have in life the greatest tenacity.

H: How has becoming a member of Toastmasters International been a part of your “journey through grief”? Has public speaking helped you cope and given you strength? In what way?

DL: I gave part of the eulogy at my son’s funeral. Afterwards, many people told me I had a ‘gift’ for speaking. They insisted I ought to use this ability and that I ought not to waste it. Chatting over coffee with a friend about my ‘gift’ one day, she suggested that I investigate Toastmasters. So I came to TM, in reality, to heal. Proof of this? My first five speeches were about my loss.

TM, for me, was a safe place in which



Her grandson, Liam, has shown Debbie Long how to live and love again after a terrible loss.

a captive audience could share with me the experience of my son’s life and of his unfortunate death. At TM, I was able to ‘voice’ my grief. The experience gave me the confidence I need to execute the workshops I give in areas of grief management and, especially, in running the organization. B.E.Y.O.N.D. board meetings and support group meetings operate exceptionally well because of what I learned at TM.

H: You appear to be an extremely busy person. What other activities beyond B.E.Y.O.N.D. occupy your time? Is keeping occupied an important aspect of recovery from grief? Why?

DL: I’m a new grandmother, for one thing. My daughter Shadrin and her husband Mike have given me Liam. He had his first birthday Oct 15. Liam and Walter, my new puppy, take up a good deal of

time and share the responsibility of opening my heart to love again.

Oh, yes, I have launched a singing career. I produced a demo CD and, recently, gave the world my first single, called “Heroes: Brett’s Song”. It is distributed in the United States through a non-profit organization. I wrote the song, called “Mother’s Brigade”, in memory of the son of the woman who established the organization.

As well as singing backup, I share some of my original songs with a spiritual musical group known as The Ruth Findlay Band; however, my grand design is to produce my own solo CD in February. I’m calling it “Sing, Mom, Sing” and, indeed, I do! Twelve to 15 songs full of hope for those who grieve. Look for a benefit concert next year, all proceeds to go to B.E.Y.O.N.D.

My “Grieving Mother’s Journal”, a book I wrote, ought to be available next spring, too.

As a Spiritual Life Coach, I try to help others overcome the blockages caused by fear, grief, anger, or their core values, which keep them from being happy again. I will become an Ordained Reverend of Spiritual Consciousness in June, 2007.

I facilitate workshops and retreats that empower others to become all they were meant to be and, as a speaker, participate at bereavement conferences in Canada and the United States.

And I still love to travel in my RV. To Maryland, for example – to take courses four years in a row.

Keeping busy for some is a positive part of the grieving process. Others, however, use it to avoid grieving. It’s a double-edged sword. For me, all of this ‘busy-ness’ has been life-transforming. None of it would have happened if my son had not died. My son’s life was a miracle. In death, he still works his miracles upon me.

H: “Time heals all wounds” is an old saying. The sense of loss and loneliness that accompanies the death of a loved one seems to lessen over time. Does the wound ever fully “heal”? Why or why not?

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DL: It depends on multiple factors. How close you were to the loved one, if you're still carrying any guilt, if you had an opportunity to say "goodbye", and more besides. Over time the pain's intensity diminishes. However, at any moment your tears can be triggered. Your feelings of loss and loneliness can instantly manifest themselves.

It's how you react or respond during these moments that will determine whether you move forward or whether you regress -- regress to a time of perpetual pain and painful denial. I don't believe, personally, the wound caused by losing my son will ever fully heal.

That being said, however, I know I have much to be grateful for. The scar on my heart due to Chris's loss is there forever, yet I have learned to be grateful for his life, *his* life that has given me *my* life and experiences I had no right to expect.

H: Back to this CD you're about to release. What is it about and how did it come into existence? What effect do you hope it will have upon listeners? What effect has it had upon you? How can one obtain it?

DL: I hadn't done any singing since I was 13 years old...some 37 years ago. One day a song just came into my head and I couldn't forget it. Then another and another and another. These songs are all supportive of those who are

"A very fortunate man"

A stroke at 15 months affected Chris Miles's speech and his motor skills. Though he could talk, many people were unable to understand him. He moved about slowly and ran awkwardly.

Though he could feed himself, he couldn't use a knife since he lacked fine motor skills. His greatest challenge was cognitive. Concepts of safety were a mystery to him as were time frames and notions we take for granted such as mine, yours and ours. He suffered from obsessive compulsive disorder and obsessed over negative issues.

In the eight or nine years before he died, Chris was a victim of depression, a condition that often made him unbearable to live with. He moved into a group home in his final year, the happiest period of his life. He was proud of having his own home, which he jokingly called "Chris Miles House". He loved it there, loved the other residents and the staff, and they loved him. He was, says his mom, "a very fortunate man."

*"...until we meet in heaven,
I know what you want me to do:
Live my life with joy and laughter
Even though it's hard to do."*

"Dancing on Clouds",
lyrics by Debbie Long

Debbie Long has been a Toastmaster for three years. She is working on her ATM Silver.

grieving. They're spiritual, uplifting songs.

I hope through these songs to give those deep in grief some 'understanding', some appreciation of life, through the examination of my experiences and the experiences of others. This other 'gift' has also been transformational. It took a while for me to believe that my songs and my singing were worth listening to, but I know now that they have touched many lives. I feel they must be shared.

I will certainly bring some CDs to a Toastmasters meeting for anyone who wants to purchase one.

H: What plans do you have for the future? As a Toastmaster?

DL: I have a long-term vision. To open a 'spiritual wellness center' in support of those in pain, to help them find their own joy. Joy is always there when we choose to see it, when we decide to accept it.

As for TM, I will continue to be involved. It's a home to me. I am grateful that I listened to my friend's advice, good advice when I needed it.

H: What is the one thing that you would like the readers of this newsletter to "know" most of all?

DL: No matter what is going on in your life, no matter how bad it looks or feels, there is always a path to the other side, where peace and joy remain. The key is to go through it. Go through it! That is the easiest, the simplest way.

Notes from Speech Evaluation Workshop New Horizons Toastmasters – Sept. 4, 2006

By Fred Jones

The primary reason for sharpening our evaluation skills in Toastmasters is to help others improve. Since there are no instructors in Toastmasters, the speakers and everyone else benefit from effective evaluations.

As we learn to evaluate the speeches of others confidently and correctly, we are able to apply the same objective skills to ourselves. We teach ourselves communication skills as we observe others and offer our opinions.

You don't have to be a great speaker to be a good evaluator; however, unless you are a good evaluator you will never be a great speaker.

You should create your own list of what you look for during a presentation.

ATTRACTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

- Good speech structure
- Powerful opening
- Points well-made and supported
- Strong closing
- Engaged the audience
- Appropriate vocal variety
- Appropriate gestures and body language
- Spoken clearly and voice projected
- Good use of time allotted
- Proper vocabulary
- Effective use of pauses

DISTRACTING CHARACTERISTICS

- Poorly structured speech
- Weak opening
- Did not support points well
- Weak closing
- Lost the audience
- Monotone –lack of vocal variety
- Lack of appropriate gestures, etc.
- Difficult to hear and understand
- Poor speech timing--too long or short
- Use of slang, etc.
- Did not pause – rushed the speech

See next page

A Guide to Table Topics

Thinking and speaking on your feet

By Clarie Martin

The Table Topics segment of a Toastmasters meeting provides you, the Toastmaster, with an opportunity to practice thinking and speaking on your feet. Through Table Topics, you learn how to present your thoughts in a clear and organized manner with minimum preparation. You also learn to listen constructively and think flexibly.



A general topic might be “world wildlife”. You are asked to respond to the issue of the decline and near extinction of the Bengal tiger...from the point-of-view of the tiger.

As Table Topics Master, you lead the session. You are able to practice conducting this segment of the meeting. This exercise allows you to plan ahead. It allows you to make judgments about the degree of difficulty of the Table Topics you choose, to consider the experience and knowledge of all the members involved. You can be creative, even colorful. You can't be

confusing or cloudy in your explanation. You ought not to propose the impossible, but neither should you be too simplistic.

The weakest form of Table Topics is one where members have too much opportunity to reflect upon what they are about to say. Table Topics, for the speakers, ought to be impromptu, off the cuff, unprepared, unrehearsed, unscheduled, but not

undisciplined. The ability to think and speak on your feet is an important skill that could determine how successful you are in life. That's why Toastmasters developed the Table Topics segment of a meeting. Appreciate an opportunity to practice Table Topics, any opportunity.

The weakest Table Topics Master is one who has arrived unprepared. A Table Topics Master ought not to be developing a topic impromptu,

off the cuff, unrehearsed, and unscheduled. That would be undisciplined.

If you think that you might want to fill in for a vacated Table Topics Master spot sometime, have a Table Topics topic prepared and with you when you attend any meeting. It can then be brought out, to much acclaim, in much the same manner that a clever Toastmaster suddenly produces that amazing “hip pocket” speech.

Really, an off-the-top-of-your-head topic such as “How I spent my summer vacation” or “What would you do if you were President?” given at exactly the same moment to everyone, is dull and unconvincing.

The weakest form of Table Topics, as I said, is one where the same assignment is given to each participating member. Say the session last 15 minutes and there are 15 members. The first speaker plays the game as intended with little more than seconds to think of her response; the second, however, has a minute to think of his answer; the third two minutes and so on until the last member has some 14 or 15 minutes of preparation time. Not only is this undemocratic, it is contrary to the intent and spirit

Notes from Speech Evaluation Workshop *(continued from Page 4)*

Have your list available when evaluating. It may help you determine what you found attractive; that is, why the speech worked. It may also aid your observations, useful when the time arrives for you to give a formal evaluation that includes suggestions for the speaker's improvement and growth.

Build up a bank of suggestions you can use in evaluations. Make a list of challenges arising in people's speeches such as the lack of tonal variety, incomprehensible speech structure, and using of notes. Jot down recurring errors that may become suggestions for improvement when evaluating other speeches.

How do you present your evaluation?

If you can, talk with the presenter before she gives the speech. Ask what she would like you to observe in particular or what areas of speech-making she is working on at the moment. Read the speech assignment before you begin to evaluate. Discover the objectives and goals. Write the goals down on your evaluation note sheet.

An evaluation is a ‘mini-speech’ with an opening, a body and an ending. The opening is an introduction to the evaluation in which you set the scene. In the body of your evaluation you must

concentrate on ‘attractions and distractions’. The ending is a summary of the main points you have made.

Attractions or commendations have two components. In other words, you state what went well (speech structure, gestures, etc.) and you explain why they worked. Distractions or recommendations have three components. You state what issues could be improved (use of notes, eye contact, etc.); explain why they didn't work; and make suggestions for how they might.

The more proficient you become at evaluating so others can learn, the more you learn about good speech-making. The more you learn, the better your speaking engagements will be.

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As next speaker, you are told you are an inhabitant of an Indian village whose members have historically been ravaged by marauding Bengal tigers. You respond.

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of Table Topics. Why, one could write a speech in 15 minutes!

The Table Topics Master ought to avoid lengthy introductions when assigning a topic to a member or unnecessary and time-consuming remarks. He is not making a speech! His purpose is to introduce topics and guide the discussion. It ought to take no more than a minute.

Make sure, however, that members are clear about what's expected of them. "Your task is to take one slip of paper from the envelope when I call upon you. Read the instructions on the paper and tell us in one minute (or two minutes) how you would handle the described situation. Read the situation aloud." Repeat the instructions, if necessary. The envelope only advances when the member has finished speaking and has taken her seat.

It is courteous to listen completely to the previous speaker (and may be important to one's own comments) without rushing to get an advance peek at your own challenge. Club members who aren't



scheduled to give a speech or who haven't volunteered for a significant role at the meeting should be given first opportunity to participate. Try not to embarrass the speaker by providing him with a topic he knows nothing about. It is, of course, up to the speaker whether he is embarrassed by his weak response or is inability to come up with a response to a familiar topic. Table Topics sessions are imbued with potential pitfalls which we, by doing them, are attempting to learn to avoid. That's the nature of the game!

Take a stand

Introduce stimulating, realistic and useful topics that will generate discussion among participants.

An excellent approach, too seldom used at New Horizons, is to take a stand on community, national or international issues. The general topic could be "international politics", for example.

You, as Table Topics Master, inform the first speaker that he is 'the Chinese representative at the U.N. You called upon him to explain a change in

Chinese policy. China now accepts North Korea's right to develop nuclear arms. You say (in English, please)..." Addressing the second speaker, you say, "You are Condoleezza Rice, the U.S. Secretary of State. You are asked by a reporter for the Wall Street Journal to comment upon China's declaration before the U.N. You respond..." Etc.

Again, a good topic might be, generally speaking, "world wildlife". You are asked to respond to the issue of the decline and near extinction of the Bengal tiger...from the point-of-view of the tiger. As next speaker, you are told you are an inhabitant of an Indian village whose members have historically been ravaged by marauding Bengal tigers. You respond. As third speaker, you represent the World Wildlife Fund. You must respond to the villager's comments. Etc.

If time permits, the Table Topics Master may provide a brief evaluation of the overall discussion or summarize the main points at the end of a session. However, avoid individual evaluations.

If members wish to comment upon the Table Topics Master's approach, be considerate. As with a speech evaluation, say what was good about the session and offer suggestions for improvement.

"Your execution of the table topics was really well-done; however, I thought that you might have taken

our unfamiliarity with Chinese politics into consideration." However, be conscious that your response to the Table Topics Master is not affected by your frustration at yourself for being unable to cleverly and quickly respond to a reasonable suggestion.

Afterwards, as Table Topics Master, graciously thank the members for their participation and turn the meeting back to the Toastmaster.

Table Topics Tricks

A Table Topics response doesn't have to be accurate nor truthful. It doesn't have to be an answer to the question asked. It's fun, sometimes, to expound at length, if you have no idea what to say.

You might try explaining why you were really hoping you wouldn't be called upon or what fears you had about answering the question.

A simple technique that works is not to worry about it. Don't 'over think' or prepare; just relax, and if you're called on, stand up and start talking. This may sound ridiculous, but worrying about it is sometimes counterproductive.

After a time you will have developed a warehouse of material to draw upon. You may even begin to catalogue material in your mind to "save" for Table Topics.

With an arsenal of maneuvers at your service, you'll soon start having fun at Table Topics sessions. You may even look forward to being called upon.



As third speaker, you represent the World Wildlife Fund. You must respond to the villager's comments. The tiger speaks again through the fourth speaker!

Some Table Topics you might try

You might have each participant pick a fortune cookie from a jar and use the "fortune" as the table topic. Ensure each member receives a different fortune. Afterwards speaking members can be treated to the fortune cookie. You might choose the general topic "food". Surprise each participant with a query related to the topic. Speaker #1: Your most memorable meal? Speaker #2: Your least favorite food? Speaker #3: Strangest food you've ever eaten? Speaker #4: Strangest place you've ever eaten? And so on.

Winners all: Education Ambassador Erna Brusch (Contest Chair) and VP of Education Michelle Wei, backed by Division Governor Stuart Segal, convened club members on September 27 for a special meeting, one in which enterprising speakers had an opportunity to participate in contests. Julia Savitch, Clarie Martin and Anoop Kelsi stepped up to the podium to give ‘humorous’ speeches and Yanzin Zhang, Julia Savitch and Clarie Martin tried their hand at ‘table topics’. The winners at club level took on the winners of other area clubs on October 5. There, unfortunately, other contenders stopped New Horizon competitors in their tracks. Those contenders, however, went on to the Division contests on October 17, in which seven areas and 32 clubs competed. Congratulations to all who participated (especially New Horizon winners Anoop Kelsi and Clarie Martin) and to everyone else who contributed.

More contests: The Division C Humorous and Table Topics Contests kept Area 50 Governor Josef Stetter busy on October 19, the area contest on October 12. Josef would like to thank all who participated as judges, timers, ballot counters, etc.

“Workshop Ho!”: Education Ambassador Yollanda Zhang (preparing for her wedding but undeterred from her quest to help the club) continued to advance member interests on September 4 by providing yet another special workshop in her condo complex at Bayview and Sheppard. Fred Jones made a presentation entitled “How to be an Effective Evaluator” (see Page 4). Afterwards, the workshop allowed everyone an opportunity to put Fred’s advice into practice. They evaluated the efforts of four speakers. Yollanda (now newly married but still determined) has planned another workshop for November 20 at the familiar location. The theme of the meeting will be “How to be a Funny Speaker”. Area Governor Josef Stetter will present.

“Workshop Ho!” II: On September 23, Fred Jones organized an Advanced Speech Workshop in the meeting room of District Governor Stuart Segal’s condo complex. Fred’s says the efforts of advanced speakers were dynamic, especially the tremendous effort of Debbie Long, who is our highlighted Toastmaster in this issue of *On the Horizon*.

Up for debate: Members of the School Debate Club at Earl Haig Secondary School have requested a speaker from our group to talk at their school about debating or public

speaking. They hope for a 15-20 minute lecture. More information to follow. If interested, contact the editor.

Use the voice: Toastmaster Yassamin Gharai points out this surprising bit of information from the website of Dr. Andrew Weil, M.D: Public speaking helps prevent or reduce the effects of aging on the voice. We ought to use our voices more, writes Dr. Weil, to combat the affects that age places on voice quality and volume (pitch change, breathiness, hoarseness). Trained singers and public speakers often have stronger voices as they age, he advises.

Unicef speakers: In September (and this is something to watch out for), Renate Zorn, DTM, coordinator, District 60 TM Speakers Bureau, notified us that Unicef Canada needed speakers to support its national education program. *On the Horizon* is unaware of any club members taking up the challenge; however, such speaking engagements ought to be valued as excellent resource opportunities for members.

Moving on: Long-time member Steve Purwitsky has moved to another club after more than 10 years with New Horizons. He says the distance he must travel to Edithvale Community Centre and his work commitments make the decision necessary. His new club, he says, is just a few blocks away from his home in Thornhill. Steve Purwitsky: To be missed, for sure.

In the ‘Spirit’: District 60’s newsletter has a new assistant editor: Your own VP of Public Relations Clarie Martin. At the recommendation of District Governor Stuart Segal, Publisher Kathleen Wong invited Clarie to offer suggestions or help out with the September/October issue of *Spirit of 60*. You may have seen the result. Here’s how Kathleen expressed how she felt: “This is GREAT. Thank you SO much for meeting the timeline as set. Thank you SO much for helping out! You’re simply amazing!” Your *On the Horizon* editor blushes...

No boundaries: The District 60 fall conference occurs in Niagara Falls, November 3-5. The weekend’s theme plays with the notion of no boundaries: “The Sky’s the Limit”. Organizers are working to provide the “ultimate” conference experience for Toastmasters, full of fun and learning. A highlight of the conference will be the Humorous Speech Contest and Table Topics Contest where winners of the Division contests will compete.

The Final Word

How to organize an Impromptu Speech

In *How to Write & Give a Speech* (St. Martin’s Press, New York, 1984), author Joan Detz writes:

Decide what you want to talk about – fast

Commit yourself to that approach. Do not change subjects or reverse your opinion midstream.

Feel free to pause for a few seconds to collect your thoughts. The audience will not think you are stupid; they will admire you for being able to organize your ideas under difficult circumstances.

Do not ramble. Do not mumble.

Open with a generalization to stall for time, if necessary. “Deregulation is certainly an important issue right now” will buy you a few extra seconds to compose your response.

Or, **repeat** the question to stall for extra time. “You’re asking me about the changes that deregulation will bring to the banking industry.” Repeating the question has an extra benefit: it makes sure the audience knows what you’ve been asked to speak about.

Present just two or three points of evidence. **Do not** bore the audience with chronological details.

Wrap up your impromptu speech with a firm conclusion – a punch line that people can focus on.

Stop once you have offered what sounds like a conclusion; **just stop**.