

Vital News



The newsletter of "Vital Communicators Toastmasters Club
Club 7056, Division A, District 74

April 2005

Editor's note ...

With only four months to go before the end of this Toastmasters year, it is necessary to reflect on the past year:

We had an excellent induction dinner in June 2004, with Jonathan Jansen receiving the Communication & Leadership Award. Then we had a successful humorous speech contest, and Susan represented the club at the Area contest.

During February the annual Tall Story Competition was held and during March we had the International, Evaluation and Impromptu contest. With Mavis, Marion and Ann winning in their respective categories.

Now is time to start thinking about our personal goals for this Toastmasters year. Will I complete those final speeches for my CTM, ATM or CL. With only eight meetings left, time is running out. Do take some time and reflect on your personal goals in the next couple of days.

It's been an absolute great year for Vital Communicators!

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Business Meetings

A very simple but GOLDEN RULE to remember in conducting any Business Meeting is the word: ONE

i.e. Only ONE matter can be dealt with at a time, and only ONE person can be standing and speaking.

The person in control of the meeting is the chairman irrespective of what position he may be holding in that particular organization.

He / she must control the meeting ensuring that discipline is maintained.

The chairman must be impartial and unbiased. If he/she feels strongly about a matter and wishes to discuss it he/she must ask another member to take the chair.

The main business conducted in a meeting is done by the proposal of motions.

A motion is proposed and seconded.

Motions should always be positive as opposed to being negative. Only ONE motion is allowed at a time. There is no contra motion.

If you feel very strongly that the motion should not be passed, speak convincingly against it, and vote against it.

A motion can be AMENDED; an amendment should be an extension to the motion, not a negation.

A motion can be amended twice only. As soon as the amendment is proposed and seconded, then only the amendment is discussed. For example, the motion is "Let us have a party", and an amendment "on Tuesday" is proposed, then only the day is discussed. If a second amendment "at 15:00" is proposed, then only the time is discussed. Voting takes place "backwards" i.e. first the time, then the day and then the main "substantive" motion, which may read "let us have a party, on Tuesday, at 15:00"

Every business meeting must have a secretary who keeps the minutes, and prepares the agenda.

An example of a simple agenda is:

1. Welcome
2. Establish whether a quorum is present, usually half the members.
3. Apologies.
4. Minutes of the previous meeting.
5. Matters arising from the minutes.
6. Office Bearers' reports.
7. Correspondence.
8. New business or general.

It has become customary of late for the chair to ask immediately after establishing a quorum, whether there are any additions to the agenda.

If that is the case, 8 fall away. The chairman must enquire whether there are any contentious matters. If there are any guests present they are asked to leave the meeting for a short while.

The conducting of business meetings is a very important function in any organisation, and can be very interesting and challenging.

Dual Gain

Susan le Roux

Youth Leadership Courses - that is for the sole benefit of the learners who participate, right? Wrong!!

The Toastmasters who present these courses, gain as much from it as the learners because:

- the Toastmaster gains confidence;
- the Toastmaster gains experience in presentation skills;
- the Toastmaster sharpens his/her leadership skills;
- the content taught to the learners, are basic Toastmasters' stuff, which the presenter makes his own as he prepares for his mini-lecture, so you get to know all the basics by heart;
- the Toastmasters who participate in the course as presenters, get to know one another better, which makes for better communication between members of a club, and which enhances the club's spirit;
- the satisfaction gained from assisting these young people to develop their communication and leadership skills, is something which you have to experience yourself before you can really appreciate it.

So member of Vital Communicators, would YOU like to experience all this and even more? Then come aboard and join the crew who are conducting a course at Centurion High School during April and May. You will be amazed at what it will do for YOU!!!

Competitions - be prepared!

Susan le Roux

I started to write my speech for the International Competition on the Saturday before the Monday meeting. It took till late Sunday night before I was happy that the speech had "jelled" and that the message that I wanted to convey, came over the way I intended. On Monday there were a lot of things to take care of, and time flew by. In the end I only had about an hour and a half to practice the delivery of my speech. As I found out on Monday evening, that was not enough - I forgot my words, although I knew it at home.

I have learned a few important lessons:

1. Begin to write the speech well in advance. I would say at least two weeks before the competition.
2. Make sure that you practice enough. This will vary from person to person. For myself, I would say that if I really want to deliver a flawless speech, I should practice at least the week before the competition. As Lilly Walters says: "It is not practice that makes perfect. It is perfect practice that makes perfect"
3. If it is your first participation in a contest of this kind, rather stick to the one competition only, and do not try to participate in all three the competitions (prepared speech, evaluation and impromptu.) The other competitions distract you from your main speech and in the end you stress more.
4. If you are not sure that you do now your speech well, keep your notes close by so that you can have a quick peep at it if necessary.



Ann Williams (left), Impromptu winner, Marion Poole (middle) - Evaluation winner and Mavis Mulaudzi (right) - International winner.

Profile on ...

Brian Tomlin

Brian has joined Vital Communicators during March 1990. He currently an ATM-b and is working towards achieving an ATM-s. Brian has served on the club executive as Secretary and Sergeant-at-arms.

Brian was born in Birmingham, United Kingdom, completed his education there as well starting his career there. He married his first wife in 1967, but sadly they divorced in 1974. He applied for South African citizenship during 1967 and immigrated to South Africa in 1969, arriving and the then Jan Smuts Airport in June.

In 1982, he married his second wife – a beautiful and well-educated woman with three children. Brian is extremely proud of his family and the three stepchildren are all married with children of their own.

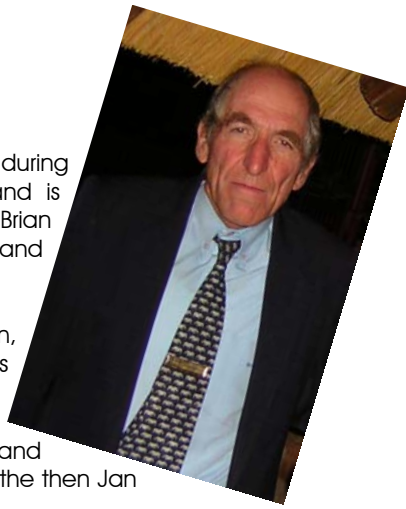
During his career at Nissan South African, Brian has experienced three changes ... from Datsun Nissan to Rosslyn Motor Assembly to the current Nissan South Africa. He still works at Nissan South Africa in the purchasing department buying all types of components and material. Brian hopes that he will still be working for Nissan for a long time.

Brian started his career at Joseph Lucas Gas Turbine Division in the UK as a production trainee. He filled several positions and shortly before he immigrated to South Africa, as an Assistant Buyer.

From 1975 to now, Brian has visited most parts of South Africa and did a stint in the South African Army. He spent about six weeks during his army days in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia).

Brian regularly competes in club competitions and is particularly fond of the Tall Story Competition.

Brian says that besides keeping his wife and dogs happy, he is a member of CUBC Bowling club, Virgin Active Health Club and Magnolia Running club. He says that a highlight of his Toastmasters career was when he gave a speech at the Oakland Toastmasters Club in the Unites States in 1997 as well as attending meetings a the now defunct Pretoria Prison Toastmasters Club.



Magoebaskloof Hiking Trip

Willem le Roux

We join Toastmasters to improve our communication skills, to develop our leadership skills and ultimately to have fun. We did all that and much more on our Magoebaskloof hiking trip.

Eight of our club members, two toastmasters from other clubs, family and friends (16 people in total) all started in trepidation. Most of us were novices and did not know what to expect.

The first afternoon was a relatively easy 1.5 kilometer hike to our hut in the bushes. We all enjoyed preparing our food around the fire, although many of us missed our electric lights, hot water on tap, microwave ovens and other everyday conveniences. That night many of us did not sleep that well, not being used to the hard beds and sharing dormitories with those that did know how to sleep well – snoring away lustily. At 4 O'clock Willem and Bill started the fire and one after another the other hikers started staggering out of the huts, gathering at the fire, eager for a hot cup of coffee and something to eat.



The Hike

Vital's sergeant called Bill
Took some members on a hike
He marched them up to the top of the Hill
And he marched them down again

And when they were up they were up
And when they were down they were down
And when they were only half-way up
They were neither up nor down

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Speech Preparation

The following advice from Steve Allen will stand you in good stead if you follow it with your next speech preparation:.

Rehearsing the speech (Steve Allen)

1. Read the speech over several times, silently
2. Read the speech several times aloud
3. Practice your delivery, including the entire address, standing in front of a mirror. This gives you the opportunity to observe not only your general attitude but also your gestures, posture, and facial expression
4. Read the speech into a tape recorder and listen to the results. Then listen to them again. At this stage you will make an astounding discovery. Things begin to become apparent to you at a second listening (or for that matter, a tenth) that had escaped your attention earlier.
5. If you have access to videotaping equipment, make a tape of your performance.
6. If you have co-operative family members, deliver the speech to them and ask for their honest comments. Don't make the mistake of welcoming only compliments and tuning out messages that are analytical or critical. If your spouse says something like: "I think it is quite good but you were talking too fast", don't argue the point, whether or not your ego will permit you to agree at that moment. Just absorb the message and let it bounce around in your internal computer.

Bill Connelly proofed his leadership abilities by not only being the best organised for the trip, but by sharing his expertise with all of us. He lends a supporting hand or advice when needed.

At 6 o'clock we started the trip through the forest in the Magoebaskloof valley. Two things quickly became apparent: Firstly, the trail goes through one of the loveliest areas I have ever walked through. The natural forest and the meandering stream provided us with awe-inspiring views of nature's beauty. Secondly, the trail was much more difficult than most of us expected, zigzagging over never ending up-hills and slippery downhill.

Early afternoon we arrived at the next hut at the edge of a stream facing a waterfall. We all had either a cold shower or a refreshing swim in the stream. We all enjoyed a relaxing afternoon and when the sun went down, prepared our food on the small gas stoves, which we brought. After much to eat, we gathered at where the fire was already burning brightly. Here we all really got to know each other better. We went to bed early and everyone slept like a log.

On the last day, we left our rucksacks at the hut, where our President, Susan, decided to go hiking with us. Susan counted crisscrossed the stream 15 times during this walk. The path through nature was once again managed easier as we did not have to carry our rucksacks. Lunchtime we were back at our cars – only to find that Frances and Jacques, Bertus' 10-year-old boy, were missing. Although they did not get missing at the same time, luckily they took the same wrong turn-off and Frances met up with a very panicky Jacques and brought him back to safety.

After roughing it for two days and nights, we were relieved to be back to motor transport, Mug & Bean and civilization. However, we had fun and unanimously decided we WILL DO IT AGAIN! On this trip, we learned to communicate, developed our leadership skills and had a lot of fun!

