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MICA (P) 262/06/2009

Newsletter of SIM II Toastmasters Club

Issue No. 3 June 2010

SIM II TOASTMASTERS CLUB

Toastmasters International District 80 – Singapore Division B – Area B4 – Club 5110
www.sim2toastmasters.com

*We can align our
Personal Learning Program
with the needs of our Club.*

*Have we extended our
A.R.M.
to uplift a fellow member?*



Two of our pioneers, DTM Law Chee Liang (left) and DTM Aileen Tan (right), continue to uphold the ideals of the founder of TI, Dr. Ralph C. Smedley (below)

“Let us *share with others* the benefits we have gained for ourselves.”

- Dr. Ralph C. Smedley, Founder of Toastmasters International



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Club Chapter Meetings
Held on the 1st and 3rd Friday of the month.
Venue: Singapore Management University
90 Stamford Road,
Singapore(178903).
School of Economics/Social Sciences
Room 2.1, Level 2
at 7.30pm

Our Champion



Chua Poh Suan, champion of Area B4 Table Topic Contest, was the proud bearer of our Club's flag at this term's area contest.

Editorial

Every June, the Club buzzes with excitement as the current Executive Council prepares to retire whilst the newly elected team plans for a fresh beginning and bigger things ahead. Amidst this buzz, we are privileged to publish this newsletter, the final issue for this term.

In this issue, we visit some of the basic principles of a Toastmasters club. As a 23 year old Club, going back to basics occasionally can only serve to hold us firm to the mission and the spirit of our Club, particularly when we have many new members on board.

It is our good fortune to have veteran members who continue to uphold the ideals of Dr. Ralph Smedley, founder of Toastmasters International. One of these ideals is to share with others the benefits we have gained ourselves. We are grateful to DTM Law Chee Liang and DTM Aileen Tan for keeping true to this ideal. We thank them and our new member, Ganapathy Subramanian, for their contribution of articles which contain a wealth of practical advice.

I hope that these articles will inspire you, particularly those who are new to the Club, to work towards your goals with more confidence. I also like to convey my appreciation to all who have contributed in one way or other towards making the work of publishing our Club newsletters, all three issues, pleasant and memorable.

Daisy Chung
Editor

*Congratulations to
Dr. Soo Wai Man, ACB
the new
President of our Club*

*We wish Dr. Soo and his
team a fulfilling year
ahead.*

Getting the Basics Right: Personal Learning Program

by Law Chee Liang, DTM

EVEN THE GREAT SCIENTIST ISAAC NEWTON admitted that he did not succeed on his own, but saw further because he stood on the shoulder of giants. Many people contribute to our success.

Our evaluators, “Ah” counters, timers etc. *play their critical roles in holding our beliefs, reflecting our weaknesses and facilitating our presentations.* Indeed, Toastmasters program is intended to help in this effort. We grasp and we grow. Have we ever pondered, how often we do take up various Toastmasters appointments willingly, if not voluntarily?

We begin our Toastmasters journey by setting purpose and goals. Our purpose is the end objective, and the most commonly cited one is “to become a better speaker”. Whether the form of our purpose is noble, sublime or mundane, that is the “push” factor for us to join a Toastmasters Club.

Once joined, we also have our goals which are the rungs on the ladder we will climb to achieve our purpose. Thus, we want to complete Project 7 by end of the year, to become a CC by mid of the following year, to participate in speech contest - and win that trophy. There is always the next goal beckoning you.

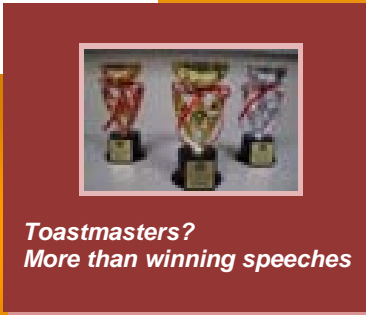
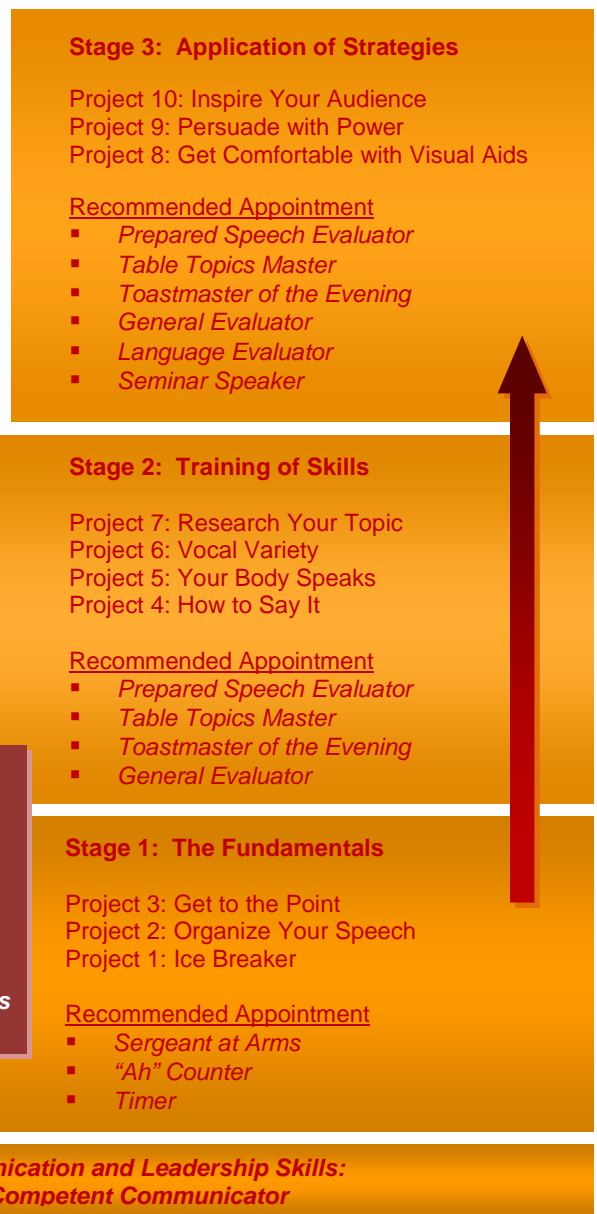
Wait a minute. The fact that we are able to run is indispensable from the group of members who always play their *critical roles in holding our beliefs, reflecting our weaknesses and facilitating our presentations.* They help us in achieving our goals; let us help them achieve theirs.

So, assume the roles of various appointments. You are not just giving – you are serving, and you will gain along the way. Participation will enhance our communication skills and polish up our leadership competency. For

example, the role of Sergeant at Arms (SAA) trains us to handle a meeting in a graceful manner, “Ah” counter trains us to listen attentively, Toastmaster of the Evening (TME) trains us to be in command of parliamentary proceedings, and evaluator trains us to convey our views in a tactful manner.

Of course, we cannot jump into the deepest side of the swimming pool straightaway. Guidelines are available for different stages of our progress. SAA, “Ah” counter and timer are suitable for those who have completed not more than three projects. We can swim to the deeper side of the pool, playing the roles of TME and evaluator when we are progressing from Projects 4 to 10. Nevertheless, a guideline is just a guideline, we know best whether we are comfortable with certain appointments or not.

We can align our Personal Learning Program – in both communication and leadership skills, with the needs of our Club. **Let’s get the basics right!** ■



**Towards Excellence in Communication and Leadership Skills:
From a New Member to a Competent Communicator**

Why Evaluate to Motivate?

by Aileen Tan, DTM

ONE OF THE GREATEST STRENGTHS in our Toastmasters training is the ability to analyse, recommend and motivate our fellow members as they progress in their toastmaster's journey. I often wonder how my evaluation could make or break a member's enthusiasm. At times, I felt like tearing my hair when evaluators made thoughtless or biased comments on novice speakers.

Why evaluate to motivate? I would like to share three key aspects on evaluating:

1. Analysis

Are we accurate and honest in our response to the presentation that was heard?

2. Recommendation

Will our suggestions help the speaker improve and what can the audience learn from our comments?

3. Motivation

Will the speaker feel good and be encouraged to move forward with our feedback?

In short, have we extended our **A.R.M.** to uplift a fellow member in his/her toastmaster's journey so that he/she could progress according to his/her speaking ability?

It takes many years of experience and skill to give a helpful evaluation. If speech evaluators give supportive and constructive feedback, all club members will benefit and feel motivated to move on in their prepared speech projects.

Conversely, a bad evaluation could be disastrous to the club's progress and cause it to lose its members. Even a well-intended evaluation could discourage a member who felt embarrassed by insensitive remarks.

For more than two decades, I benefited tremendously both as a speaker and evaluator from the suggestions given by my evaluators. The supportive learning environment is where our members feel encouraged and motivated to deliver speeches.

At club level, we are seeing that evaluators were often the few familiar faces among our members. Newer members were less enthusiastic about taking on the role of an evaluator.

Members may not be aware that evaluating in fact provides more learning opportunities as compared to delivering speeches. Evaluators have limited time to



prepare their feedback and have to use more of their impromptu speaking skills to work around a convincing evaluation.

Evaluating has enabled me to learn more about my own speaking ability – the do's and don'ts when making a speech. Often we are unaware of our nervous habits that were distracting to our audience. As a professional speaker, I would not want such issues to remain uncorrected. It is to my advantage that fellow club members help me to rid of any undesirable platform manners, e.g. timer fillers, nervousness, etc.

For this reason, I take to evaluating like a rare experience where I could test my limits within the test beds. Evaluations like all feedback are opinions. Whether they were right or wrong, they helped in one way or another in shaping our speaking style.

Verbal evaluation should be encouraging and it should allow the speaker to reflect on suggested areas of improvement.

No member should ever cringe when hearing their speech being evaluated by a fellow member. This is not what an evaluation should be. If a presentation was truly bad, the evaluator needs to exercise diplomacy and look out for at least one good point to highlight as an encouragement. Deliver it with a tinge of humour; it would avoid a hurtful evaluation. For example, if 2 out of three objectives were met in the presentation, it would be useful to highlight this aspect positively.

Being respectful and encouraging in an evaluation does not mean making flowery comments which do not help the speaker improve. We can be honest while being polite, supportive and yet not gloss over any constructive criticisms.

All members who truly want to improve wish to receive concrete evaluations. If our speaking flaws are not

corrected, they could hinder our effectiveness as a speaker. Constructive criticism is a springboard to becoming competent speakers.

In analysing the best performance of a fellow member, an evaluator should first ask:

1. Am I accurate and honest in my response to what I heard and saw during the speech presentation?
2. Will my suggestions be of practical help to a fellow member and the audience who are hoping to learn from my comments?
3. Have I provided the support that allows the speaker to feel good about his/her effort and encouraged to present again?

We all know that evaluating project speeches pose a great challenge to our listening and analytical skills, not

to mention that it requires a strong dose of diplomacy to ensure the speaker could take the feedback positively. The best evaluation with many positive statements could be easily erased by a single negative remark if not delivered well. Sometimes it may be so hurtful that a member could drop out of the club as a result of feeling “humiliated”. This is because a negative remark stays with us for a long time whether or not we deserve it.

How should we evaluate? As a speaker we should stick closely to the speech objectives in the manual. Keeping to the objectives would also allow us to acquire the desired skills set out in the manual. Often it is more substance than delivery style. Evaluating within the speech objectives will show the speaker that you are evaluating to motivate him/her.

Give it a go whenever you get the chance! ■



The Words of Our New Member: **GANAPATHY SUBRAMANIAN (SUBBU)**

While I had heard about Toastmasters Clubs a few years ago, I had never seriously considered joining it till I met Mr. Nick French, Past President of our Club, at a meeting in Singapore Institute of Management in 2008. Nick told me about how he had benefited as a member of the Club. I then took a decision to join the club sometime in the future.

I attended my first meeting in the last quarter of 2009 and then formally became a member of our Club. Since then, I have ensured that I attended all the meetings without fail as long as I am in town. I am fully convinced that I have taken the right decision and now I wish that I had learnt about Toastmasters Clubs much earlier! I could have benefited more from the exposure and experience - but then, I take a view that it is better late than never.

I consider Toastmasters Club to be a great platform for learning because of several reasons:

- The primary objective of the club, which is to assist members in improving their communication and leadership skills;
- The professional manner in which the club meetings are conducted;
- The friendly atmosphere which is so conducive to learning;
- Excellent materials given out by Toastmasters International;
- The thorough process adopted for giving feedback to members on their project work; and
- Above all, the fun that all the participants derive out of participation in the Club activities.

I would like to thank all the club members for the supporting and encouraging environment provided. In particular, I am grateful to Nick French who, as my Mentor, makes it a point to give me detailed feedback on every one of my speeches. He has also been giving me useful inputs to assist me with the learning process.

Inspired by the Toastmasters Club, I have pioneered a Learners’ Forum at work. We meet once a month to provide a platform for public speaking and making presentations and to learn from each other. I intend to continue actively participating in the various projects and activities of the Club, and do my bit to make it a vibrant and healthy forum for the members to learn and improve themselves – in a fun way! ■

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Title Abbreviations:

CC: Competent Communicator
CL: Competent Leader
CTM: Competent Toastmaster
ACB: Advanced Communicator –
Bronze
ALB: Advanced Leader - Bronze

THE DISTINGUISHED CLUB PROGRAMME: RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENTS

S/N	Goals	Date Achieved	Progress and Achievers
1	Two CCs	Dec 09	Soo Wai Man and Kelly Lim
2	Two more CCs	Jun 10	Pavol Zamborsky and Philip Chan
3	One ACB, ACS or ACG	Nov 09	Soo Wai Man
4	One more ACB, ACS or ACG	Mar 10	Katherine Choo
5	One CL, ALB, ALS or DTM	Oct 09	Gabriel Leong
6	One more CL, ALB, ALS or DTM	Mar 10	Prabhu Deva
7	Four new members	Sep 09	Sukumar, Fong Sufen, Johann Lim & Philip Chan
8	Four new members	Feb 10	Alison Chan, Lim Eu Jin & Khor Lee Chiang & Ganapathy Subramanian
9	Minimum of four Club officers trained during each of the two training periods.	Jan 10	Both sessions completed
10	One membership dues renewal report and one club officer list submitted on time.	Oct 09	Dues and list submitted

This annual programme runs from 1st July to 30th June and aims to recognise clubs that are committed to continual improvement in the educational and membership areas. Toastmasters International recognises clubs based on one of three levels of achievements:

- Achieve 5 out of 10 goals - Distinguished Club
- Achieve 7 out of 10 goals - Select Distinguished Club
- Achieve 9 out of 10 goals - President's Distinguished Club

SIM II Toastmasters Club has achieved these many times in the past thanks to the efforts of its members. We appeal to you to continue in these efforts by bringing guests to our chapter meetings and supporting both your project progress as well as that of your fellow club members.

Disclaimer: The information in this newsletter is for the sole use of Toastmasters members and for Toastmasters business only. It is not to be used for solicitation and distribution of non-Toastmasters materials or information.