

# Lawson THRILL Reader



Volume 1, Issue 7

Lawson Thrill Speakers - Toastmasters International

Club 7507 District 6



April 2004

## The Judges have decided!

Three members competed in our club contest for International Speech and Table Topics. Adam and Sarah shared their courageous moments for the Table Topics contest. Elle told us about how to Forgive and Live. Elle participated in the Area 15 contest and won 1<sup>st</sup> place. She will represent our Area at the Eastern Division Contest on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2004. CONGRATULATIONS ELLE !!



Elle, Adam and Sarah compete in the club



## President's Notes

Doug Petty

Welcome spring. With April beginning we look forward to turning our clocks ahead for longer days. As we think about leaping ahead this seems like an opportune time to talk about springing our club ahead. As we finish our second year as a club, we have an established base of members and continuously bring new people to the club. This is due to our ongoing membership activities and members telling their story to friends. This year hit our club hard again with

downsizing and life changes for our members. Despite these adverse conditions we are still at 20 members, the crucial number for President's Distinguished recognition. We will be launching a membership drive in the coming weeks to make sure we have plenty of members and continued growth to hit our goals for the Presidents Distinguished award.

As important as membership is, we also are doing well on the speech and administrative goals. If all goes as forecast we should complete our program before the end of the club year. This is a great testament to the diligence of each of you in the club. As we continue to give speeches and advance in the ranks of Toastmasters we will grow as a club and continue to attract high quality members. Let's build the best club in the area!

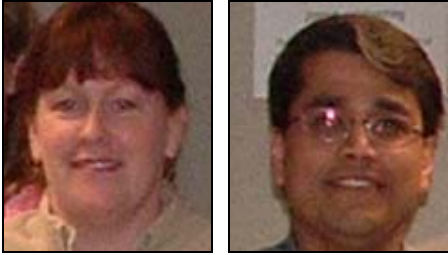
## Happy Birthday to US! LTS is TWO

Lawson Thrill Speakers celebrated with enthusiasm and pride on March 25, 2004.



See Page 6 for more photos

## Newest members of Lawson Thrill Speakers



Kathy

Sandeep

**Welcome** to our two newest club members: Kathy Dukinfield and Sandeep Chandak. Both work at Lawson Software at the corporate office in downtown St. Paul. They joined in with the club's birthday celebration too!



### VP Education Notes

Gabrielle Hamen-Kieffer

As membership renewal is upon us I want to take a few minutes to discuss the attendance and commitment of each member.

Remember when you first joined Toastmasters?

I do. I was part of the demo meeting before the group chartered. The room was filled with people curious about Toastmasters. When it came time to create roles for the first official meeting no one volunteered, except me. My heart was pounding, but I knew that to reach my goals to become a professional speaker would require me to jump in with both feet. And that's what I did! I have not regretted it for a moment.

Why **did** you join Toastmasters?

Since Lawson Thrill Speakers chartered I have personally benefited in so many ways. I learned the basics of speech writing and using my body more when I speak. With all the feedback I receive I gain understanding of my audience and learn from their

experiences, knowledge and expertise – not to mention the challenges I receive from everyone! LTS has offered me the opportunity to teach Speechcraft, which has increased my confidence and abilities to educate people. Being a part of the leadership team of officers has allowed me to work on my teamwork skills, which has never been strength for me. As the VP of Education I was able to test my leadership skills as the committee planned for the 2004 year. But the best benefit I've received from being a part of LTS is the friendship and steadfast support I receive from everyone. I would never compete in contests if I didn't receive the kind of professional, supportive and encouraging support that I do.

What **benefits** do you gain from being a part of Toastmasters/Lawson Thrill Speakers?

We all know that if there isn't a clear, motivating benefit people will not stay committed to **any** group.

According to our records the membership averages 53% attendance. That means only 53% of the time the meetings are attended by our full membership. Speakers need an audience, Toastmasters need people to lead, Evaluators need speakers to give feedback to, we all need to know about our grammar and filler words and the timer needs to keep us on track. Regardless if you are scheduled for a role or not there is learning to be had at each meeting. You are missing out if you are not attending.

Each member brings their own energy and life to the club. When you aren't there it is noticed and you are missed. How do you expect to grow and reach your goals when you are attending only part of the time? No goal is achieved by part-time focus.

We all know that work interferes, travel happens and family issues arise, but where do your commitments lie with Toastmasters?

I encourage each one of you to answer the questions asked in this article. Really take the  
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time to clarify your priorities and goals. List the benefits you receive from Toastmasters. By answering these questions the decision to renew your membership **and** commit to attending will be a no brainer!

## Toastmaster of the Year: Could it be YOU?

Every May, each club recognizes one member whose educational accomplishments, club service, dedication and enthusiasm are exceptional. The club winner is sent to the Area governor who selects one individual to be named Toastmaster of the Year for Area 15.

How is a member selected you might ask? The following is some criteria to consider when nominating an individual for this honor.

1. Enthusiasm – Does the member reflect enthusiasm for fellow members, for the club and for Toastmasters?
2. Dedication – Does the member readily and enthusiastically accept all assignments and willing contribute to the Club's well being?
3. Helping others – Does the member evaluate other's speeches with the purpose of recognizing achievement, fostering continued improvement and building self-esteem?
4. Consider awards and achievements such as:
  - Attendance
  - Club officer service
  - Educational awards: CTM, ATM etc.
  - Manual speeches
  - Contests: participation and winning
  - Outside speeches
  - Sponsor new members
  - Mentor new members

## Calendar of Important Events

- April 1, 2004: Eastern Division Speech Contest at Dakota Lodge
- April 23-24, 2004: District Spring Convention in St. Paul
- May, 2004: LTS Club Officer election and Toastmaster of the Year Award

*Check district website for registration information.*

## Officer Update – Secretary

By Sharon Miller

Do you know where to find the latest club roster, the club schedule or the club progress report? Do you want to know what goes on in the Executive Committee meeting? These documents and others are updated on a regular basis on our yahoo groups website <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/lawsonthrillspeakers>.

Check out the latest awards and photos or events on our club's home webpage [www.lawsonthrillspeakers.org](http://www.lawsonthrillspeakers.org). Or better yet tell a friend to visit our website.

The **Club Secretary** is responsible for Club records and correspondence. As Club Secretary I have custody of the Club's Charter, Constitution, and Bylaws and all other records and documents of this Club. I maintain the [Lawson Thrill Speakers](http://www.lawsonthrillspeakers.org) website and post all records to our members-only [yahoo group](http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/lawsonthrillspeakers).

On a weekly basis: the Yahoo group website is updated with the latest meeting agenda and club progress report. On a monthly basis: the club schedule and weekly meeting minutes are posted along with the monthly Executive Meeting Minutes. You can also find all weekly agenda's dating back to April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2002, the latest agenda template for our weekly meetings, and a detailed "Sergeant-At-Arms" list.

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The external Lawson Thrill Speakers web site is updated monthly with the recently published Newsletter and any other changes for our club. Check out the latest pictures posted in the Awards & Events section.

There's a lot of information on our website and kept by the secretary. Use it. It's there for you.

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### QUOTE *for the Month*

Duct tape is like The Force. It has a light side and a dark side and it holds the universe together.

Anonymous

## Table Topic Strategies

By Adam Palmer

Answering Table Topic questions is an exercise that simulates real life impromptu speaking. If you master responding to table topics, you will improve your ability to respond quickly to requests for information when you interact with others. This provides benefits in both social and business settings, where others view you as confident, capable, and coherent.

Try these techniques the next time you participate in table topics or with any impromptu speaking opportunity.

**Listen:** Listen to the entire question. Don't let your feeling of needing to respond interfere with truly hearing the question. Good listening earns you respect.

**Ownership:** Internalize the question as you formulate a response. Give a response that

matters to you. Everyone wants and expects to hear what YOU think about the subject. You have their undivided attention and must appear to communicate openly and honestly if you want credibility with the audience.

**Pause:** Pause before you speak. It will feel awkward at first, but only appears to the question asker and audience that you are giving the question your full attention.

**Repeat:** Repeat the question to communicate that you heard what was asked of you. Repeating the question out loud lets you internalize the question and helps you avoid giving a response that is not on point.

**Speak:** You are ready to speak after you have listened, paused, internalized, and repeated the question.

**Strategies:** Here are several strategies for answering table topics. One is no more correct than another and there are many other strategies that exist beyond these presented. As an exercise, use a different strategy each time you answer a new table topic question. Don't play it safe!

**Express an opinion:** State your opinion on the topic and support it with examples of why you believe what you believe. Only state the one belief but support it with multiple examples. You don't have time to support multiple beliefs. For that reason, don't address opposing views or worry that your opinion is not that of the audience.

**Discuss the Past, Present, and Future:** Organize the subject on a timeline. In the past, this was the way it was, now, this is the current state of affairs, and in the future, it will be this way. For the past and present you present facts. For the future, you state your opinion and support it with examples of why it will be that way. Avoid the use of weak language like "might" and "possibly". The audience knows this is your view and you don't want to sound like you're hedging.

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Simply state what you believe. Example: "In the future, people drive cars powered by hydrogen".

**Two Hands and Center:** Use this method to avoid giving an opinion. This is handy (get it ☺) if you are asked to answer a question that you either don't have an opinion for or can't think of where you stand quickly enough. Start out with "on one hand," people view it this way. Then cover the other end of the spectrum. Finally, state what the view is from a centrist position. This approach is well received because it makes you sound balanced. It lets you fill the time easily because you have three positions to state. This method requires that you carefully divide the time to support each position. Variations include stating the extremes and then where you fall in the spectrum.

#### Whatever you do...

**Don't Start Before Pausing:** Don't make comments before you respond such as.. "I knew you'd pick me", or "that's a tough one, let me see". Also avoid non-verbal communication such as sighing heavily. The audience started evaluating your response the moment your name was called and extraneous communication doesn't add value to your response.

**Don't Apologize:** Taking time to apologize or make excuses is annoying.

**Don't Ramble:** When you are forced to think on your feet, it's easy to resort to rambling. If you start to feel yourself rambling, wrap it up. Restate your original points and conclude.

**Don't Invent:** Toastmasters learn that bluffing during a speech is risky. Strive for sincerity rather than inventiveness. If you don't know how to respond, ask that they repeat the question and use the time to think.

**Ask Questions:** Don't hesitate to ask a clarifying question if you don't understand the

question. This tells the audience that you care about formulating a good response.

**Practice:** Each time you answer a table topic using a strategy, you improve. Make answering table topics a game by using different strategies. You will make answering more fun for yourself and the audience.



Club members - 2<sup>nd</sup> year birthday party

Lawson Thrill Speakers Toastmasters Club 7507  
Meets every Thursday at 12:00 noon at:  
Lawson Commons  
Skyway Level  
380 St. Peter Street  
St. Paul, Minnesota, USA 55102

Club website: <http://www.lawsonthrillspeakers.org>

District website: <http://www.d6tm.org>

International website: <http://www.toastmasters.org>

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# Celebration



Sarah started the birthday bash as Toastmaster



Waiting for the big moment...cut the cake and enjoy!

## Note from Andi McCreedy (Charter Member)

Thanks so much for the invitation (to the party). It's good to see that LTS is such an exciting, thriving club. I wish I could still attend the meetings, and I wish I could celebrate with the club in person. I'm so thankful that LTS came along when it did. Toastmasters has helped me tremendously. I used to experience major anxiety just from trying to leave voicemails for coworkers. Now I can easily speak in front of a group of 30, which I recently did as Toastmaster for the Area 53 contest. I know LTS is helping others with similar problems all the time and even helping some become professional speakers. Keep up the good work! Live long and prosper, LTS!



Blowing our own horns with enthusiasm

## Note from Keith Hardy (Club Mentor)

Hey, I'm still a mentor for the club, I hope (big smile)! I'm just "retired". Ha!

Tell everyone I am SO proud of what I hear and read that club members have accomplished. LTS has truly become one of the stellar clubs in District 6! The club has stepped forward in quality meetings, leaders within and outside the club, and top-notch contestants.



A tribute to all the achievements of our club members!



Celebration!