



CCTMC

A Newsletter from China Capital Toastmasters Club



New CCTMC Executive committee of Jan -Jun:
From Left to right: Kevin Lee (VP Membership), Connie Gao (Scheduler), Chris Drumgoole (President), Jessica Luo (Treasurer), Yann (VP Education), Selina Shi (Secretary), Hubert Lin (Webmaster), Joanne Wen (VP Public Relations). Not on this picture: Sally Li (Librarian) and Ben Wu (Sergeant-at-Arms)

Mission:

“The mission of our Toastmasters club CCTMC is to provide a mutually supportive and positive learning environment in which every member has the opportunity to develop and practice communication and leadership skills, which in turn foster self-confidence and personal growth.”

CCTMC is an inexpensive, interactive, friendly and supportive place you will learn to communicate more effectively, become a better listener, improve your presentation skills, increase your leadership skill. But CCTMC is not an English corner. For more detailed information about why and how. Visit www.cctmc.org

Achievements in the Past 4 Months:

Our members Yann, Sally, Yachan, Caesar and Ines have reached the Competent Communicator (CC) level by completing 10 speech projects. Our members Max, Joanne, Hubert and Charly are half way there as they have successfully completed 5 speech projects.

Ines Brunn has reached Competent Leader level by completing all 10 projects of the Leadership training manual. Congratulations to all of you!

A Warm Welcome to Our New CCTMC Members in Q1 2009:

Zhang Yongmei, Drew Bass, Sarah Cooper, Audrey Shangguan, Li Jiangbao, Zhou Wen, Jo Chen, Ingrid Yuan, Kevin Lee, Qiu Xiaokun, Han Mihye, Snow Wu



Name: Snow Wu
Profession: Marketing Research Specialist
Employer: British American Tobacco
Hobby: Art, Reading, Tennis

There are many Toastmasters clubs around Beijing, but I think this one (CCTMC) is the best. Everything is just well organized. In CCTMC, you will get to know a group of people who are dedicated to their personal growth and passionate to their life. It is a place to share your life experience and in return, be inspired and encouraged. Surrounded by warm and friendly fellows, you will gradually develop yourself, open your heart and relax from the crowded and noisy world.



Name: Mihye Han
Profession: Consultant
Employer: Plus8star
Hobby: Photography, reading, blogging, swimming

At the beginning, the reason why I joined the CCTM Club was just to improve my public speaking skills for my work. But now I am attending this club, because it's really fun and enjoyable. I love the warm and enthusiastic atmosphere at the club and the sessions are really helpful. I want to keep attending Toastmasters clubs - wherever I go!

Past Events:

Badminton Outing on December 27th 2008:



Special Training on February 28th 2009: “The Tone of Speaking”



Club Speech Contest March 19th 2009:



Picture of our brave participants.



Winner of the English
Speech Contest:
Hubert Lin and Winner
of the Mandarin
Speech Contest: Ben
Wu

International Toastmasters 2008 District 85 Semiannual Convention “Discovery Convention Guangzhou Nov 28th to 30th” (Article by Ines Brunn).

Chris, Hubert and Ines went there. Chris and Ines choose the environmentally friendly means of transport to get there: The train from Beijing to Guangzhou.

The convention started out with an inspiring workshop lead by World Champion Craig Valentine on “Remarkable Leadership”: Some notes from this speech: Exceptional leaders never blame other. They take responsibility. To get people to be open you need to SOFTEN:

S = Smile when appropriate

O = Open arm gestures, sit next to employees

F = Forward, lean forward

T = Territory, respect the others territory

E = Eye contact, it shows the truth, but do not stare

N = Nod, show your understanding

Change small but change often. Do not live in the “get set”. Do it. Relinquish old habits and old things, if they are not on your way then they are not in your way (get rid of them). Whatever gets measured can be improved, commit to life long learning and development

Visualize: Step on that stage for your speech 1000 times mentally before you actually do it. Imagination is the best nation in the world. If I can see it - I can be it! If I can view it - I can do it!. Write down your perfect day. You must be driven by that vision. Feedback needs to be SSIP (and do not read this backwards):

S = Specific

S = Sincere

I = Immediate

P = Personalized

Catch people doing something right and then recognize them for that. Giving praise: Walk to the person, give him praise and then walk back from where you came from. Show that it was worth that extra walk and you did

not do it as you were anyway passing by.

On the second day there was an opening ceremony and some speeches. I liked the keynote speech by Toastmasters International Director Muhammed Murad "Toastmasters – A Life Changing Experience" who



spoke about how Toastmasters changed his life. I also enjoyed the workshop lead by World Champion Craig Valentine on "Get Them to Buy Your Message by Mastering Storytelling". Some notes from this speech: Sometimes the enemy of the great is the good. Don't let the good get in the way of the best. Your dream is not for sale. Craft your story: Tell a story and make a point. You need a foundational phrase: needs to be less than 10

words. That forces you to be clear. Delivery of your message: Invite people into your story. Create a vivid picture of the scene. An action in your story prompts your movement on stage. Or create a time line and walk from left to right. You can even do callbacks by going back to the points on your time line. Or frame your story. Speak to 1, but look at all (of the audience). Do not use phrases such as "some of you might be...". Tap into the mind of the audience with a question, tease them to want to know more and keep listening and then transport your message. Stay ready: practice every day. You might be on the right track, but if you just stand there you will get run over. How will you know how it is if you never go! Just do it.



After that the convention members broke down into smaller groups for three sessions of specific workshops. After that the Table Topic Speech contest and the Humorous speech contest began. From the North division we only had Lin Gao (the wife of our fellow member Hubert Lin) participate in the Humorous speech contest. The judges gave

her second place. Congratulations to her! I personally think she did the best speech.

We ended the night with a great dinner together. On the last day there was an officer training. I welcome any member to join the next Convention. It is a great experience, you can learn a lot. It is great a great place to meet other toastmasters members from all over China.

From Stuckmaster to Toastmaster (Article by Ben Wu)

I looked at my watch. It was 11pm. I was still in the office. It was my first time to be on call that night. Our team provided 24-7 technical support to customers in North America. The colleague on duty the day before ¹told me that he had received a call from a customer with Indian accent. "What?! Indian accent! Oh, no! I'm hopeless at understanding Indian accents." That night, around 2am, I received a call from the customer with Indian accent. You can guess what happened in the following moments. After asking several questions like "Pardon?" "I beg your pardon?" "Can you say that again?" I gave up and said, "Can we chat using Yahoo Messenger?" In the following year, most of the support calls I answered turned into Yahoo messenger chatting eventually. I got stuck with my English listening and speaking.

11 years ago, I got married. Do you know why my wife was willing to marry me? She felt that I could be a leader some day. After having been working hard for 16 years, now my title is -- Engineer. My wife often asks me, "Oh, darling, when will you be a manager?" I didn't know the answer to this question until I joined Toastmasters and read the Competent Leadership manual. The answer is -- I need to improve my leadership skills. I didn't even know the most important leadership skill - listening. You've got to listen WELL before you make ANY leadership activities. Now I understand why I always forget what my wife had said. Because while she was talking to me, I often did other tasks without listening carefully. I got stuck in my career path.

Two years ago, I joined Toastmasters. My initial purpose of joining Toastmasters was to improve my English skills. After attending several meetings of China Capital Toastmasters Club (CCTMC), I found that Toastmasters was not an English corner at all. In Toastmasters, you could improve your communication and leadership skills by three methods – taking stage time, providing evaluations and playing roles in running the club and weekly meetings.

In my first one and a half years in Toastmasters, life was painful. I hadn't delivered even one single public speech before I joined Toastmasters. You could imagine what it was like when I made my first several speeches: Not much confidence, not much eye contact and not much use of open body language. I even did not know where I should put my hands while speaking on the stage.

Fortunately the friendly and supportive environment and many nice members in CCTMC encouraged me to come to the weekly meetings nearly every time and get stage time as much as I could. My painful experience in Toastmasters dramatically disappeared 6 months ago. Several CCTMC members went to Shanghai to attend Toastmasters Contest and bought some CDs and DVDs by some Toastmasters World Champions. I have to admit that these CDs and DVDs have changed my life. I listened to these CDs and DVDs every day while I was driving to work and home. I imitated Darren LaCroix's winning speech "Ouch!" and delivered my milestone speech "Stuckmaster" as my Toastmaster's opening speech in CCTMC. Some people told me that I made dramatic progress in my speaking skills after this speech.

In the Spring Festival, while I was wondering around a shopping mall with my family, I got a call from my old university classmate Yang. He invited me to join them for a reunion dinner. I haven't seen him for 16 years. I

was very excited and couldn't wait to see them again. After 16 years! We are almost at the age of 40. When I met them, I was not surprised that they became old. But they were surprised about me! They told me that I changed a lot and was getting younger. Oh, I was so glad to hear that. I asked them, "Have you ever heard of Toastmasters??"

Toastmasters helped me to get younger and find the spring of my life. In the spring season, plants begin to grow. In the spring of my life, self confidence is growing. People with self-confidence look younger, don't they? What happened in the spring of my working life?? Toastmasters helped me to make a career transition. Now, I can tell my wife that I finally became a so-called Scrum Master, sort of "project manager" in February. It's my first role as a manager, even though this role was volunteered, even though this role was open for every team member to take, even though this role requires me to attend a conference call every night. Do you want to know how I convinced my manager of my qualification for the role?? I just applied what I'd learned in Toastmasters to my work. In my daily work, I took stage time as much as possible, provided evaluations as many as possible, and took roles as many as possible. In addition, I asked Toastmasters International to send my CC certificate to my manager after I finished my 10th speech. Hey, that really worked out.

What happened in the spring of my married life?? Toastmasters helped me to get more attractive to my wife. Everyone knows that marriage is the tomb of love. Being attractive is an important part of love. So marriage is also the tomb of being attractive. In my wife's point of view, I have been keeping unattractive for 10 years until one day, boom, her husband joined Toastmasters. 2 years later, boom, her husband took part in a drama workshop. 2 months later, boom, her husband got involved in the Dirty Dancing performance. My wife was so impressed while she was watching her husband screwing up on the stage. At first, my wife thought going to Toastmasters is a waste of time. But now, she's willing to take care of kid so that I have enough time to come to Toastmasters. She found a new and attractive me!

Now my favorite role in Toastmasters is Toastmaster. I enjoy the time on the stage to provide a warm atmosphere to encourage fellow members to speak on the stage. Maybe I had been keeping stuck for so many years. That will make me enjoy my stage time as a Toastmaster even more...

My Toastmasters Life (Article by Charly Chen)

For years I was looking for an organization which can help me improve my leadership skills. Due to my hard work in my company, I was promoted from an engineer to a manager, and then to a director very quickly. But I had never received any professional training on leadership. How to delegate can be understood in one day, but the leadership development may take several years. Good resources and professional training can shorten that process distinctly. I had been dreaming to find a place to get such training until June 2008 when I finally I found toastmasters. I was very happy to join and start my toastmasters life.

Toastmasters exceeded my expectation as it also helps the members develop their communication skills. When I watched the excellent speakers' performances I realized what a big difference there was to my public speaking skill level. I started to give speeches and take roles in the toastmaster meetings and by doing so started to accumulate stage time. I started to pay attention to how to articulate my ideas in a systematic way in toastmasters, in daily life and also in my work with the skills I learned from the toastmasters manuals. Sometime I gave speeches that relate to my work - shooting 2 birds with one stone. I always research and write my speeches seriously. I try to choose a subject that can give the audience some useful message rather

than only telling a story to get the toastmasters competent communicator (CC) award. The award is not the reason why I joined toastmasters, I want to personally grow from what I learn. I wait to give a speech until I find some interesting topic I can talk about. Recently I have slowed down the speed with which I finish my speech projects as I realized I didn't yet master all the skills that I learned from the manual like body language, eye contact and vocal variety. I am taking meeting roles like evaluator, table topic master and toastmaster to work on those skills.

I try to take a role whenever I attend a meeting. Sometime I prepare well, sometime not. But I want to try it. I understand that in real life both situations happen, we are not able to prepare everything well. We need get comfortable with both situations.

When I write my speech scripts, I always investigate on the Internet. I will compare the differences between my ideas with specialists' perceptions. I learned a lot from that comparison. The investigation helps me broaden my horizon. I also realized that I have been thinking deeper than ever when I read books since I joined toastmaster. I always pick up something interesting or useful and write it down for the future speeches. So I have a long list of speech topics. Then I fill some contents whenever I have time or ideas. Toastmasters also helps me ignite new ideas. I had not written an article for more than 15 years. Since I joined toastmasters, I am writing something every day. It is often not long, I just write down what I learned from reading, working, training and networking, etc.

Toastmasters also encouraged me to be more creative. I love to see the creative ideas from fellow members. Especially in the table topic session of each meeting I can try out my own creativity.

I firmly believe that toastmasters has a proven system which brings me success in leadership and communication. What I need to do is just to dive into it, learn and practice. I love toastmasters environment, it has a diversified members group, young and old, engineer and manager, Chinese and foreigners. People with different backgrounds from different industries share their viewpoint freely.

Video-recording Your Speech (Article by Hubert Lin)

I'm sure you have all at least completed the first speech of your manual. Maybe you have gone through 5 or even achieved your CC. But how many of you have actually seen your own speech on video? Your phobia is understandable. At some point in our lives, we have all heard our own voice in a recording, and squirmed in our seats as if we were having our toenails pulled out. And how much more painful it would be, when we not only have the sounds of the horror, but also the sight—and nowadays, in 1040i High Definition. Why would we ever want to look and listen to all our flaws in such magnificent glory?

Darren Lecroix, a champion of the Toastmasters International speech contest, said something that I would never forget. If you can't stand to look and listen to yourself, why do you want subject the audience to that treatment? That statement really drilled the truth into my heart. I was not a TM member at that time, was still mulling whether to join the club would add value to my boring life. 3 months later, when I finally found the Way and joined, and begin to deliver my speeches, I completely ignored the lesson I learned from Darren. Four speeches into my TM journey, I accidentally looked at myself closely in a video, and I was thrown into a whole new world of "self-realization"—I realized how bad I really was. Under the microscope, I discovered that I was like abandoned housing: On the outside, it appeared OK, but the roof leaked, plumbing didn't

work, and floor creaked. The list of house-repair work was endless. I have been scrutinizing my own recordings for a month now: not only at the club, but also my rehearsals at home. And I have learned the very important Do's and Don'ts of using this tool.

The benefits of recording yourself are enormous.

First, you can and must be your most truthful teacher. Frankly speaking, many of the evaluations we receive at Toastmasters club tend to be 'too nice'. Don't get me wrong: This is good for continued encouragement, so we continue to feel motivated to do the next speech. But the velvet gloves tend to shield us from the most obvious things that we should improve. This is what CCTMC is trying to improve, so as to add value to the members. But in the absence of powerful evaluations, through your video, you can be honest with yourself—unless your observational skills are out of alignment (but that's for another article). The flaws will be immediately obvious to you. There are also flaws that are not as obvious, and that's where the second benefit kicks in.

As you look at the video, you may come across a short segment which you find awkward. But you can't immediately pinpoint the reason. But you feel it in your heart. Then, you can rewind and relive that moment, again and again. For example, as I looked through my video at first, I found that my pronunciations were unclear for certain words. I rewound and replayed the offending places repeatedly and I was able to isolate the certain consonants that always cause me problems. Then I can home in and make specific improvements.

Third, all the nuances that occur during the speeches are now easily detectable. There are some habits that we fall into subconsciously. We don't even feel it on stage. Has the the Ah-counter ever told you that you just hit 30 'AHs' in 2 minutes of table topics, but you felt that you were Mr. Smooth? For me, I never realized that I tend to strain my face, as if I just pulled my groin— even though this was pointed out by my wife—the most honest evaluator in my life. As I looked at my video, I was able to count how many times I improperly strained my face (when I was talking about a happy moment, why do I look like was in pain?). Once you see it, then it will gradually bridge the gap between the habit and your consciousness. When you're rehearsing, or on stage, you'll feel it when the habit kicks in. And it will be the first step to get it under control.

Finally, as you compare the speeches of your rehearsals, or the speeches you deliver at the club, you will know whether you have progressively fewer 'bad habits'. Normally, it takes patience to go through many rehearsals and speeches for you, and especially for evaluators to find visible improvement. And if you are only relying on the evaluator, you're in big trouble. With the video, you can be your own 'Ah' counter, or 'Look at the ceiling' counter, or 'rolling the eyes' counter. Scientifically measure your progress. Then you can feel confident that you're going in the right direction. Now that's encouragement on steroids. Keep videos of your formal deliveries, as well as your rehearsals. Evaluators at the TM meetings will not and cannot measure against your previous performance to the exact detail and see those small steps. Only you can do that, through the use of videos

On the other hand, I have also learned that this is not an easy task. If you're not careful, you might stumble so that you wished you never used this tool at all.

First, there is the danger of imperfection-overload syndrome. Through the first review of your video, you will find many repair work needed. You may want to fix everything at once. Otherwise, the entire house might just tumble down. Since it is not possible to make that dramatic leap into perfection, you must realistically plan your own improvement. Allow yourself to take baby-steps, that is, a specific area of improvement that you can easily handle. For example, you have a problem with frozen limbs throughout the speech. Then a valid baby step would be, add 2 points in your speech that allow you to make simple hand gestures. Look at the video to see if these "planned" body language appear natural. If you don't look like an out-of-synch robot, then add 2 more gestures and practice. If you do look like a tin man, then tweak the delivery of the gestures again and again until you appear human again. Working on 2 gestures doesn't sound that difficult does it? Quite doable. That's the beauty of videos. It is like batting practice, without playing a whole game.

But with so many things to work on, you might fall into the trap of 'technique-obsession.' That's what happened to me. I was so focused on improving my hand gestures and vocalization in a speech, that I lost my eye-contact with the audience. And what is the purpose of giving a speech? It is to let the audience receive my message, by talking to them, connecting with them. The extent of this connection isn't visible in the video. But it can be felt by the speaker, the audience, and the evaluator. Therefore, it is even more important to take only small steps, to focus on a little bit of improvement, so that your mind is not so distracted from the audience during the speech delivery. If you have connected with the audience, you will know. If you have only connected with your technique, you will know.

The video-recorder is truly a fantastic tool to improve your speech delivery. But in hindsight, it felt like a heavy sword, that if wielded by a beginner, will do more harm than good. If you're still a beginner, don't yet rely on the video-recorder. First, make the connection with the audience. Especially if you're a non-native speaker. You will feel it on stage, if you have connected with the audience. You have crossed the barrier, when you can look at the audience in the eyes and remember their expressions, instead of trying to remember what to say next, then you are ready for the video camera. And I promise that it will take you to the next level quicker than you can imagine.

Upcoming events:

Area Speech Contest (in Mandarin and in English) on April 11, 2009

International Toastmaster Spring Conference in Beijing on May 22-24, 2009.

CCTMC will have a Spring outing and a Training in April, City team building in May and a Summer Party in June

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