



# Soaring Eagles Toastmasters Club

Vol. II, Issue 10 – April 2005 Newsletter

Soaring Eagles Toastmasters Club (#9647)  
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## MISSION

To provide a mutually supportive and positive learning environment in which every member has the opportunity to develop communication and leadership skills, which in turn foster self-confidence and personal growth.

[www.geocities.com/eagles\\_toastmaster/](http://www.geocities.com/eagles_toastmaster/)

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## WELCOME

Welcome to the fourth month of 2005. WOW! This year seems to be flying by faster than ever. As we step into April, just a reminder that club dues for the next six months are due. Please contact Cheryl Terry to either renew or sign up as a new member.

Since April is upon us we only 3 months before the end of the Toastmaster International fiscal year. With the new fiscal year comes a new team of club officers. Are you interested in getting your Competent Leader (CL) certification from Toastmasters? Then consider being a club officer. Contact any person on the leadership team for more information.

## CLUB LEADERSHIP

President ..... Mike Duerksen, CTM  
VP Education ..... Seth Cowand, CTM, CL  
VP Membership .. Renee Cantave, ATM-B  
VP Public Relations .. Walter Kelley, CTM  
Secretary ..... Cheryl Terry  
Treasurer ..... Cheryl Terry  
Sergeant-at-Arms ..... Tim Germer

## "EYE" SEE YOU

Ever wonder what your eyes are saying when your mouth is moving?

Simply put, strong, direct eye focus is a hallmark of straightforward, effective communication. It's one of the most important elements in building a relationship with your audience. Proper eye focus helps you to present effectively in a number of ways by:

- Initiating communication
- Inspiring trust
- Helping you to stay in control
- Helping control stage fright
- Putting others at ease



## CALENDAR

Please mark your calendars and try to attend the following activities:



13 Apr (SKY7: 1W38)  
Club Meeting  
1200-1300



27 Apr (SKY7: 1W38)  
Club Meeting  
1200-1300



7 May (see website)  
District 27 Spring Conf.  
TBD



11 May (SKY7: 1W38)  
Club Meeting  
1200-1300



25 May (SKY7: 1W38)  
Club Meeting  
1200-1300

Look at your audience - not at the walls or the floor or the ceiling, or beyond your audience at some distant place over their heads. Be careful not to limit your focus to just a couple of people - or worse, to just one person, who may wonder why you're staring at him or her.

Remember the basics. Adopt a neutral, pleasant expression. Rehearse every day leading up to your presentation, addressing an imaginary group if that's all you can muster. Effective eye focus is critical to the communication process.

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## **GOING BLANK HAPPENS**

It can happen at any time. You're sailing along smoothly. Then, all of a sudden, you go blank. You're up there alone, without a safety net and with no one to bail you out.

Forgetting momentarily is not an uncommon occurrence. It need not keep you from maintaining control. Going blank happens. The only question is how will you deal with it.

- △ Focus on one person for a few seconds with a neutral expression. It will probably look as if you're pausing purposefully, reinforcing your last point. This simple focused pause may be all you need to get back on track and is infinitely better than looking up to the ceiling in despair. Do not broadcast your blank-out by letting your eyes dash about as if you're about to be attacked by a thundering horde.
- △ If your focused pause doesn't do the trick, you can check your notes or your slide. If this is not an option, try repeating the last thing you said.
- △ Keep your notes nearby, in large enough font so that you can read them easily. The ideal notes are actually personal visual aids, large and simple enough that you can get what you need from them in a glance.
- △ Visual aids are for your audience, but may still serve you. If you do get stuck, you may be able to look to your visual aid for help, but don't fall into the trap of reading from it for the rest of your presentation. You're there to address the audience, not a screen with slides projected onto it.
- △ If all else fails, ask for help. In some settings, it is acceptable to ask the audience where you were; just don't do it repeatedly. It is also more acceptable if it follows an interruption of some kind such as a question or disruption.

To better help you prepare, REHEARSE. The more prepared you are the better you'll be able to deal with whatever situation may arise.

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## **INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE**

"The whole point of getting things done is knowing what to leave undone."

Oswald Chambers

## **STORYTELLING**

Stories in presentations bring to life abstract data. Far from diluting your message, stories can underscore and strengthen your points. Storytelling is a technique that enables your listeners to better hear, understand, and remember what you say. To pull it off, you don't need a degree in drama. All you need is know-how.

With well-planned stories, you can break down barriers and get closer to the emotional drivers of your audience. Studies repeatedly show that when you reach people on an emotional level, they hear, understand, and remember more of what you have to say.

Just as good communicators are made, not born, good storytellers can master the art. To get you started, use the acronym P.L.O.T. to keep you on track.

**P**lain. Keep it simple. Use eye focus, pauses, a strong voice, appropriate body language, and facial expressions to convey feeling.

**L**ight. Make sure your story is appropriate to your audience. The story you weave should connect to your content and overall purpose.

**O**bvious. Be clear and focused. At the end of the story, your listeners shouldn't wonder why you told the story or how it links to the issue at hand.

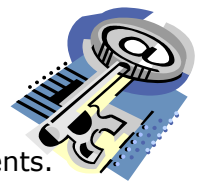
**T**ight. Keep it short. Rehearse the story so you can tell it easily and at a comfortable pace in just a few minutes.

Remember, storytelling is just good, basic communication at work.

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## **WEBSITE UPDATE**

Have you visited the Soaring Eagles website lately? The website is updated several times a month and has schedule items and announcements. Check back regularly to find out what's happening in the Soaring Eagles Club.



[www.geocities.com/eagles\\_toastmaster/](http://www.geocities.com/eagles_toastmaster/)