

TOASTMASTERS ON TRIAL

- It looks like the roles of the Toastmaster and the Topicmaster
- We have a Toastmaster and a Topicmaster who perhaps aren't doing quite the right thing.

> PLAYERS IN THE SCRIPT TODAY ARE:

*Judge: _____

*Prosecutor _____

*Sargeant-At-Arms: _____

*Defendant #1: _____

*Defendant #2: _____

> LET THE PLAY BEGIN...

S - A - A: TOASTMASTERS, The court of self-improvement will come to order.

The court is now in session.

All rise for his/her Honor, _____.

JUDGE: PLEASE BE SEATED.

Sargeant-At-Arms, what crime has the 1st defendant allegedly committed?

S - A - A: Your honor, arrested for failing to abide by the guidelines pertaining to being a good Topicmaster.

JUDGE: Swear in the prisoner.

S - A - A: Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and tell the truth in a loud, clear voice, with good eye contact so help your Toastmasters training?

DEFENDANT #1: Yes.

JUDGE: Proceed.

Prosecutor: Your honor, the case against the prisoner is that - as a Topicmaster he failed to present a session in procuring the best of listening, thinking & speaking from his fellow club members.

DEFENDANT#1: I object. This session was all about making people think.

JUDGE: The prisoner will please refrain from interjecting at this time.

PROSECUTOR: [Say it so audience laughs]: Your honor. I'm not saying the prisoner did not try, but I ask you... Are mating habits of the YAKITY YAK an appropriate subject for table topics?

DEFENDANT#1: See, it got a laugh, just like then.

PROSECUTOR: Ah... But as your Honor will appreciate -- The idea is not for the Topicmaster to get a laugh, but the topic should be pitched at such a level that the members can give considered opinions, or themselves attempt humor.

JUDGE: That is a valid argument.

But is there any evidence that the defendant failed in these objectives?

PROSECUTOR: Yes, there is!

Firstly, the questions were too long-winded as the defendant tried to get laughs.

And then secondly, the act of the result was then a short & pathetic waffle.

I can now call as witnesses a number of members here who were embarrassed by the questions.

JUDGE: That won't be necessary.

I think this matter has wasted enough of the court's time already.

Has the defendant anything to say before I pass sentence?

DEFENDANT#1 Well, there's hardly much point, is there?

How was I to know that half the audience were ignorant - Toastmasters?

Anyway, this is all so much yakity yak - not like yak's mating name.

JUDGE: That's enough of that.

The Defendant has shown that as a club member, he/she has failed to consider the needs & feelings of his/her fellow club members while carrying out his/her assignment.

To enable him to find out better about these, I sentence him to 12 months hard labor. To be served as his/her club's next V.P.-----Education.

Case Dismissed.

Next Case.

JUDGE: Swear in the next defendant please, Sargeant-at-arms.

S-A-A: Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth with natural gestures & smiling often, so help your Toastmasters training?

DEFENDANT #2: I do...!

JUDGE: What crime has this prisoner committed?

PROSECUTOR: She/he failed in her/his duties as Toastmaster.

JUDGE: Proceed.

PROSECUTOR: Where were you at lunch time on January 12th this year?

DEFENDANT #2: I was in Denver, Colorado, at my regular Toastmaster's meeting.

PROSECUTOR: What was your assignment at the meeting?

DEFENDANT #2: I was the Toastmaster for the speaking program.

DEFENDANT #2: Well...Perhaps not. But I...

PROSECUTOR: And did you present your speakers in an original way with a combination of enthusiasm, earnestness, & good humor?

DEFENDANT #2 Well... Perhaps not.. But, I...

PROSECUTOR: Just answer the question, yes or no. Did you present your speakers with original & interesting remarks?

DEFENDANT #2 (hesitantly) No.

PROSECUTOR: Did you resort to trite phrases like: "There is no need for me to introduce the next speaker as we know him so well?"

DEFENDANT #2 (Pause) Ya.

PROSECUTOR: And did you indicate what manual speech the speaker was doing?

DEFENDANT #2: YA.

PROSECUTOR: How?

DEFENDANT #2: Well... I said "Someone was doing #4 speech."

PROSECUTOR: And do you really think that outlined the purpose of the manual assignment, so that the audience could understand the speaker's objective?

DEFENDANT #2: Yaa... Well, maybe... No. Ah... I don't know.
(in desperation) I give up!

PROSECUTOR: You give up what!

DEFENDANT #2: I give up all my procrastinating ways. I'm guilty!

I throw myself on the mercy of this court.

I'll work harder on each assignment in the future. I promise!

Oh please,... oh please... don't send me back to do another speech-craft course.

JUDGE: The Toastmasters court of self-improvement does not wish to be unnecessarily harsh or unjust.

(in a low voice...) Much.

We will put you on probation for a year during which you must attend the next 2 district conferences and sit through ALL the educational sessions!

DEFENDANT #2: AH.....(as in pain)

JUDGE:: Your fine will be to write the following 500 times:

"Preparation + Practice = A Proficient Performance"

CASE DISMISSED.

The Toastmasters Court of Self-Improvement is now
ADJOURNED!