



TOASTMASTERS AT PURDUE NEWSLETTER

February 2017

**Club #4685166
Toastmasters at Purdue
Executive Committee**

President
Gabriela Nagy

VP Education
Zhenhua Zeng

VP Membership
Kristyn Childres

VP Public Relations
Jennifer Merzdorf

Secretary
Jennifer Merzdorf

Treasurer
Cristina Farmus

Sergeant-at-Arms
Colby Vorland

Newsletter Editor & Designer
Jennifer Merzdorf

Contact Information

Jennifer Merzdorf
jmerzdo@purdue.edu

Gabriela Nagy
nagyg@purdue.edu

Toastmasters at Purdue Website
<http://4685166.toastmastersclubs.org>

Table Topics—a valuable exercise for growth

By Jennifer Merzdorf

Most people want to feel they have some level of control over the everyday situations in their lives. Unknown or unanticipated moments can often lead to a sense of dread or fear.

Often, though, we are called on to speak in front of others in

situations where we may not have time to prepare, such as in a meeting or classroom setting. “Spontaneous situations...where you are asked to speak off the cuff and in the moment...[are] much more common than planned speaking (e.g., presentations)” (Abrahams, 2016).

Table topics are an effective tool for practicing spontaneous public speaking skills. Take full advantage of the opportunity to plan, develop, and deliver an impromptu message. “If you look at impromptu speaking as an opportunity to explain and expand, you will interact with your audience in a more connected, collaborative way” (Abrahams, 2016), and be able to use this opportunity to build relationships and public speaking skills.

Read Toastmaster Mike Abrahams’ article, *Be Confident When Called On*, at: <https://www.toastmasters.org/Magazine/Magazine-Issues/2016/Aug2016/Confident>



Taylor Brodner leads a Toastmasters at Purdue club table topics session.

In This Issue

Table Topics—A Valuable Tool
President’s Corner—Gabriela Nagy
Quick tips for beginning Toastmasters
About Toastmasters at Purdue

Meet Toastmaster Zhenhua Zeng
Congratulations to our club members
Area speech contest on results
Toastmasters at Purdue officers training

President's Corner—February 2017



Fellow Toastmasters,

The area level International Speech Contest and Speech Evaluation Contest for areas G71, G72 and G73 took place on Saturday, February 18, 2017, in Kokomo, Indiana. Congratulations to our club members Jennifer Merzdorf and Zhenhua Zeng, who represented our club in the area level speech contests! Jennifer won the area G71 Speech Evaluation Contest, and Zhenhua won second place for Area G71 in the International Speech Contest! Very well done!

One of the most important events in the busy life of a Toastmasters Club is the annual officer election. With only four months left from this Toastmasters year, we start thinking about the election period and the new leadership team. We are seeking enthusiastic candidates for all seven officer positions for the period July 2017-June 2018. Each position comes with different responsibilities and offers many opportunities to develop and practice different leadership skills. I encourage every member of our club to seriously consider applying for one of the seven officer positions available. The current and former officers are the best people to approach if you would like to learn more about a specific position, level of involvement and officer duties. In addition to fulfilling their officer duties, club officers are expected to participate in Club Executive Committee Meetings on a bi-monthly basis, and to attend officer training twice per year (typically in July and January). Being a club officer is a very fulfilling and rewarding leadership role that helps you learn invaluable new skills, and practice them in a safe environment. We, the current officers, are here to help and support you in this new role.

Club officer elections will be held in May-June 2017; please contact any of the club officers to learn more about their role, and consider being part of the next leadership team, starting July 2017.

Gabriela Nagy

President

Toastmasters at Purdue



Join Us!

Toastmasters at Purdue is open to Purdue staff, students, faculty, retirees, alumni, and family members of these groups. We meet every Friday in Room 3059, Forney Hall of Chemical Engineering, on Purdue's West Lafayette campus. *Check our website to confirm location; at times we move our meetings due to room schedule conflicts.* Meetings are 12:00 to 1:00 p.m., and you are welcome to bring your lunch!

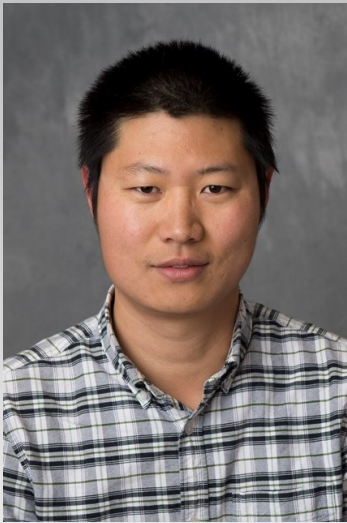


Quick tips for beginning Toastmasters

- ◆ Ask for a mentor, an experienced Toastmaster to help you with meeting roles and speeches.
- ◆ Use stories, examples and anecdotes to craft a speech.
- ◆ Don't overwhelm your audience with too much information.
- ◆ Practice speaking. Practice *often*.
- ◆ Begin and end every speech strongly.

Meet Member Zhenhua Zeng

“Failing to Prepare is Preparing to Fail”



By Zhenhua Zeng

The quote above describes exactly what I have learned from my Toastmasters journey. In other words, what I have learned and improved most is not my presentation skills, but my preparation skills.

I just earned my Competent Communicator award in December 2016 by giving ten prepared speeches. For the first four speeches, I struggled for days on the “preparation” but still could not find a topic with which I was satisfied. To avoid giving up, I crowded the speech within the last 1-2 hours and then delivered it. Understandably, the speeches were disappointing, and I never won any speech award. Starting from the fifth speech, however, I basically have mastered the preparation techniques. Although I still did not win an award for that speech, I won several of the rest. Very recently, I developed a speech based on one of those topics and won the Toastmasters International Speech Contest at the club level.

The preparation procedures I have learned and used are: 1. selecting the topics that I’m good at, I know well and/or I’m interested in; 2. spending time on the practice (draft, revision, rehearsal); and 3. giving speeches often but not too often.

1. One way to develop a good topic is to have several possible topics. I usually wrote them down and then for each one, I would try to write at least three points that I can make. Most of the times I only can get one or two points for each topic, but I would work on it again and again in the next days until I get diverse topics with strong points.

2. I can edit a draft, but not a blank page. After deciding on a topic with a written outline, I would draft the speech. Then there would be circles of revision and rehearsal. Main revisions may be only once or twice, but minor revisions and rehearsals could be a dozen times or more. Eldonna Lewid-Fernandez, No. 68 Toastmaster Accredited Speaker said she practiced her presentation at least 200 times until it became a part of her DNA. It may be a question of it is worth doing. It would largely depend on whether the topics and ideas are worth spreading.

3. Better than a thousand hollow words is one word that brings peace. Better than two speeches is a well-prepared one that speaks. Instead of giving too many speeches, I have tried to reduce the quantity but increase the quality. Giving a speech is like muscle exercise, we need to do it often. My criterion for “often” and “too often” is whether I give a “satisfied speech” or merely a “speech.”

It still takes me a lot of time to prepare a speech. But I can do it now. I have started working on my Advanced Communication Bronze. One manual is to give five technical presentations. My goal is to develop a TED talk based on these presentations, and I have been preparing so that I may reach my goal.

The International Toastmasters Mission

We provide a supportive and positive learning experience in which members are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth.

Be sure to visit the Toastmasters at Purdue website! <http://4685166.toastmastersclubs.org/>

Check out the photos, free resources, newsletters, and more!

Congratulations to Toastmasters at Purdue club members



Congratulations to Toastmasters at Purdue club member **Zhenhua Zeng, CC**, on winning the club-level International Speech Contest. Zhenhua (*right*) receives his certificate from Toastmasters at Purdue President **Gabriela Nagy (left)** on January 20. Second place went to **Phil Conrad, CC**.



Congratulations to Toastmasters at Purdue club member **Jennifer Merzdorf** on winning the club-level Evaluation Contest. Jennifer (*right*) receives her certificate from contest chair **Phil Conrad, CC (left)** on January 27. Second place went to **Taylor Brodner**.

Attend the Division Contest

Toastmasters at Purdue member **Jennifer Merzdorf** will represent Area 71 at the Division Speech Evaluation Contest on March 18 in Kokomo. Everyone is welcome to attend and support Jennifer's efforts!



Zhenhua Zeng, Jennifer Merzdorf compete at combined area contests



Toastmasters at Purdue club members Zhenhua Zeng and Jennifer Merzdorf competed at the recent area level International Speech Contests and Speech Evaluation Contests for G71, G72 and G73 on February 18 in Kokomo.

Our club president Gabriela Nagy served as Contest Chair. Club members Arun Giridhar, Division Director, and Korina Wilbert, Area Director, also helped organize the contests.

Zhenhua took second place in the Area 71 International Speech Contest, and Jennifer won first place in the Evaluation Contest. Jennifer advances to the Division contest on Saturday, March 18 in Kokomo.

Pictured left to right: Arun Giridhar; Gabriela Nagy; Jennifer Merzdorf; Korina Wilbert; Zhenhua Zeng.

Toastmasters at Purdue club officers attend Toastmasters Leadership Training in Indianapolis

On January 21, 2017, several Toastmasters at Purdue club officers attended the Toastmasters Leadership Training in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Pictured from left: VP Membership Zhenhua Zeng; VP Public Relations and Secretary Jennifer Merzdorf; Sargent –At-Arms Colby Vorland; President Gabriela Nagy; District 11 Division Director Arun Giridhar; Area 71 Director Korina Wilbert; and Treasurer Cristina Farmus.

