

Hot contest on the back of tiny topics

On Thursday night, Parramatta Toastmasters held its annual Table Topics contest. It was an electric contest by any measure, with a massive fifteen contestants pitching for the title. The defining characteristic of this competition were the topics themselves. Each heat-contestant took the stage to be met by the Table Topics Master, Elizabeth Wilson, delivering a *single word* topic—not the *phrase* or *question* to which most Toastmasters are accustomed.

In a series of two heats, followed by a final, the topics to which entrants had to speak were *Achievement*, *Excitement* and *It's a Wonderful World*. It was a strategy that put the skills of the entrants very much to the test and made for a spectacle that won't be forgotten in a hurry—we watched intently as one Toastmaster after another took to the podium and wrestled their topic, with varying degrees of success.

There could however, only be one winner—David Griffiths took out the coveted trophy, and will go on to compete in the area competition.

Dave was very gracious in accepting his win, and acknowledged the efforts and skill of his fellow contestants. Dave has won this competition before, and travelled successfully all the way to Division. Dave hasn't succeeded in winning the Division competition yet, but we have a feeling this might just be the year.

The field of contestants—Ian Lipski, Wendy Nielsen, John Nichols, David Griffiths, Peter Steinhour, John Bright, Kirsten Linklater, Raj Velu, Barbara Beveridge, Alicia Denis, Ferdie Oosterhoff, Sam Ekinci, Laurance Nicolas, Kirisha Thanapalasantheram, Simon Chhoeu



In the Green Room—a grim-faced John Bright preparing to be called for his Table Topic, cheat-sheet in hand



Takes home the trophy—a triumphant Dave Griffiths, standing with Area Governor and Chief Judge Steve Thomson

Lipski leads second cohort

The first Speechcraft course for the new Toastmaster year was kicked off on Tuesday by coordinator Ian Lipski. This is Ian's second Speechcraft course as coordinator, and by all accounts it got off to a cracking start; we wish Ian and his group a successful and rewarding Speechcraft experience.

Catch the inside scoop at [Speechcraft Spot](#)—Page 2.

Read a [Speechcraft testimonial](#), *Upwards and Onwards from Speechcraft to Toastmasters*—Page 2

DON'T FORGET!

- **31 July—Tom Woods 50th Birthday Celebration**
- **August 19 — Humorous Speech Contest**

Postcard from Speechcraft

Ian Lipski

Dear Parramatta Toastmasters,

As you are reading this Speechcraft article we will have completed week 1 of the 6 week Speechcraft course (each Tuesday 20th Jul to 24th Aug) with a full complement of eager Speechcrafters.

This is the 2nd Speechcraft course that I have had the opportunity to coordinate and, taking that experience from the 1st course forward, I am really looking forward to enjoying coordinating Speechcraft for a 2nd time.

With the expert help of Parramatta Toastmasters we will, in 6 weeks, graduate a whole class of Speechcrafters who are more confident public speakers and more self aware.

Did you know that Speechcraft is an important part of our Parramatta Toastmasters Club in several ways:

- It provides an important and necessary revenue stream to our club
- Presents opportunities for members to improve their communication and leadership skills through their involvement in the Speechcraft course (including completing 'Competent Leadership manual' assignments)
- Attracts new members to our club
- Is an excellent vehicle for advertising our club
- Provides an important community service to the general public

It's a great feeling to give back for the help others have given to us. For those Toastmasters who are thinking of attending I urge you to take action by volunteering and participating, for 1, 2, 3 or for all 6 weeks, to help run the Speechcraft course. You will be entertained, challenged and experience a sense of achievement in being part of a team that helps transform the public speaking aspirations of ordinary people into reality!

To participate in the Speechcraft course please email or phone the Speechcraft coordinator.

Best regards,
Ian Lipski
Speechcraft Co-ordinator



Parramatta Toastmasters and guests, stand in honour of Gary Wilson's birthday



Birthday tribute to Gary Wilson—Elizabeth and Gary Wilson

Upwards and onwards—from Speechcraft to Toastmasters

Kirisha Thalapanasuntheram

It's a cold night, you've had a long day at work. You could be warm at home on the couch, watching TV but you're not. You're in a room full of strangers, waiting for your name to be called. You're eyes dart from one end of the room to the other. As you look around, you notice people in the room are from all walks of life. You wonder what all these professionals are doing here. Do they dread speaking to a crowd, just like you do? Suddenly, you snap back to reality. A topic is called out and so is your name. As you look down, your palms are sweaty and your throat is feeling dry. You hastily gather yourself and walk to the front of the room. Will the words come out or will you freeze?

Feelings of nervousness and anxiety are common when you are put on the spot and asked to speak to a room of people you do not know. Apparently, these feelings never go away but what matters is what you do with that adrenaline. A great outcome is when you can direct that energy to giving life and charisma to your speech. This is a skill that's learnt with practice.

I completed a Speechcraft course at the end of March 2010 and joined Parramatta Toastmasters not long after. What originally began as "professional development training" has resulted in a hobby, something I truly enjoy. I've found that my constant battle of nerves is calmed by the encouragement and I have received from the club. It is this nurturing environment that will keep me coming back.



I am my own Grandpaw—Rodrigo Lucero and his unusual family tree

Toastmaster defies laws of nature, genetics, and strong accent

Parramatta Toastmaster Rodrigo Lucero surprised all present by announcing that he was his own *Grandpaw*. In a tale that defied common-sense, he laid out the details of a sordid and confusing family history. This story involved the marriage of a young man to an old widow, that same man becoming the step-brother of his wife, and eventually becoming his own grand-father.

Many in the audience were drawn into Rodrigo's convincing performance, and believed that this story was *his* story—this was not the case, this was not Rodrigo's personal family history. This presentation was based on a novelty song titled "I'm My Own Grandpaw", written by Dwight Latham and Moe Jaffe, and in turn based on an anecdote of Mark Twain's.

Although the story was complex, the presentation itself was elementary—with enthusiasm and a clever use of props, Rodrigo did a fantastic job in turning this elementary presentation into a humorous and engaging performance.

Check out Wikipedia for the history:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I'm_My_Own_Grandpa

And here are the lyrics to the song:

<http://www.whitegum.com/introjs.htm?songfile/I2MMYOWN.HTM>

August 5 Theme: MY CHALLENGE!

Ex-president seeks to reclaim former glory

The previous edition of the Natta included an article about a 'stitch-up'. A ploy to flummox the outgoing president, as he served as Chairman II. We are not sure why, but Michael Said was not party to this devious ruse.

Michael made use of his 'Point of View' assignment last Thursday night to express his displeasure at this.

Michael went on to explain how a stitch-up "*should be done*", and went on to tell us about a stitch-up that he was responsible for. He also cleverly used this story to draw a distinction between an opinion, and a point of view.

Was this performance the wise teaching of a benevolent and fatherly ex-president, or was it the self-indulgent raving of man still not come to terms with the end of his presidency. There is at least one Toastmaster who dared to offer an opinion on this question—when questioned on his memory of Michael's assignment last Thursday, Demian offered the following;

"you may remember that as General Evaluator, I renamed the assignment: "Moments of Self Indulgence". It was a dissertation of disbelief about being left out of the previous meeting's business session stitch up. It's value was in its empiric verification that airing your opinions does not constitute a point of view."



Telling it how it is—ex-President Michael Said

Parramatta Toastmasters - Club 2274

Meeting Details

Parramatta Toastmasters meet fortnightly on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month, in the Linden Room of the Parramatta RSL.

6pm for a 6:30pm start

Dinner is available during the meeting
Guests and visitors are always welcome

Enquiries / Correspondence

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Speechcraft Spot

Do you suffer from human-kind's most common fear?

Public speaking is a fear held by many people. For some it is a mild discomfort, while others break out in a cold sweat at the mere thought of standing in front of an audience!

If you have decided it's high time to break free of the powerful fear of public speaking, Toastmasters may be an excellent place to get the knowledge and practice that will allow you to speak both confidently and competently in public.

Contact one of our club officers or enquire about a Speechcraft course to find out how!

Looking to advance yourself professionally or personally?

Public speaking is both a skill and an art form. Whether you are a novice speaker or a seasoned presenter, there is always something you can do to improve your skills.

Public speaking skills are always highly valued in the workplace, so if you're after a new job or seeking a promotion, it's a guaranteed way to separate you from the pack.

Toastmasters can show you new ways to invigorate your existing presentation style; to put that sales pitch over the top, help you nail that job interview, or make your daughter's wedding toast worthy of the tears and applause!

Do you enjoy sharing ideas and meeting new people?

Toastmasters may be the club you've always been searching for. Toastmasters are people from all walks of life, nationalities and professions who are working to better share their ideas with others.

Each meeting provides an opportunity for a wide range of perspectives on any number of topics, and give/receive positive, constructive feedback on how those ideas were expressed.

Start the ball rolling - come to a meeting or enroll in a Speechcraft course!
Enquiries at speechcraft@parramattatm.org.au