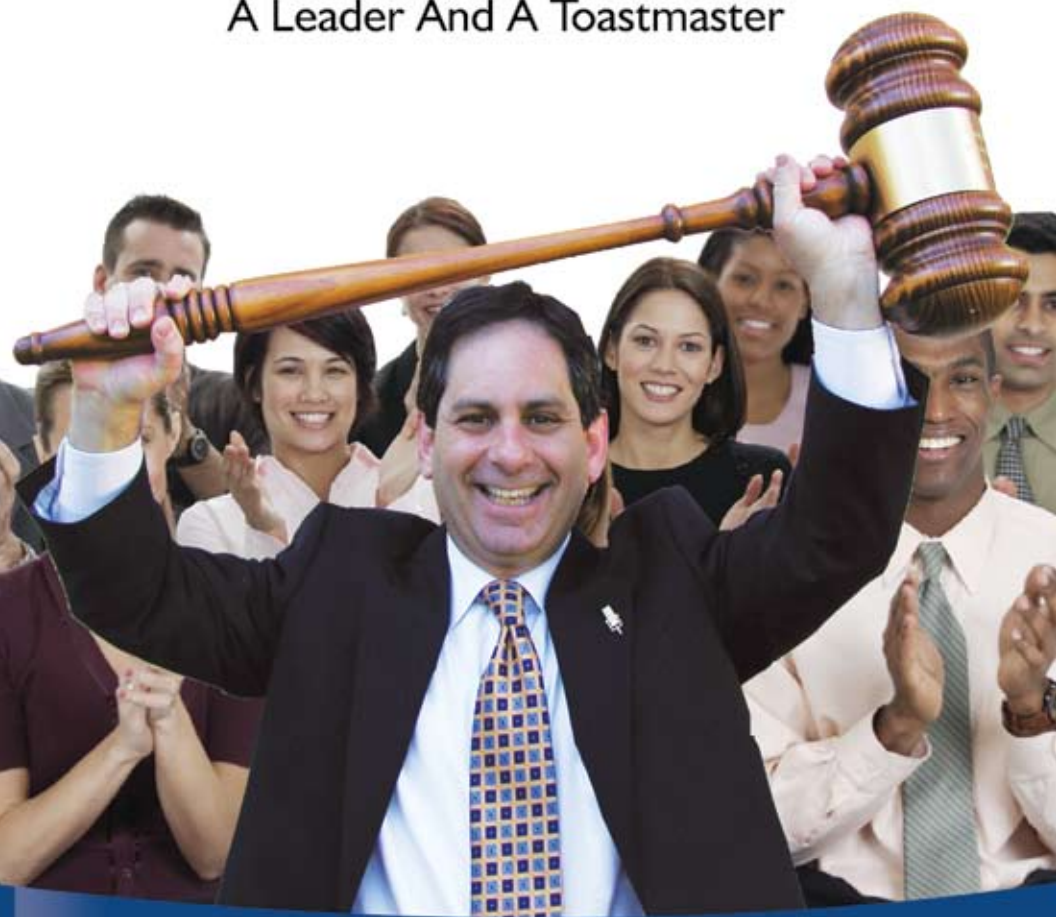


THE CONSUMMATE TOASTMASTER!

# GOOD, BETTER... BEST!

Fulfill Your Potential As A Communicator,  
A Leader And A Toastmaster



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# The Gavel That Led: A Toastmasters Fable

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## *How A Traveling Gavel Led one District to Become President's Distinguished Status*

### CAST:

The Speakers: Blah, Bla-Blah, Bla-Blah  
(Flapping of fingers onto thumbs)

The Leaders: Hear Ye, Hear Ye, Hear Ye!  
(Shaking and pounding their gavels)

CHORUS (World Headquarters):  
"Speakers are Leaders. Leaders are Speakers.  
Communication and leadership for all!"

### ACT ONE

Once upon a time, there was a Toastmasters district that lacked distinguishable qualities. Each year it found itself in the middle of the pack. It was anything but Distinguished.

In fact, this district hadn't been Distinguished in years. Like other districts, it had clubs, members and officers, meetings, contests and conferences. Yet each year it fell far short of being President's Distinguished. It fell short of achieving Select Distinguished. It didn't even approach Distinguished status. It just plodded along.

This district had its Speakers. And they spoke:

BLAH BLA-BLAH, BLA-BLAH. And their lips would flap.

And, it had its Leaders, a far smaller group, who led:

HEAR YE, HEAR YE, HEAR YE.

And their gavels would shake and pound, shake and pound,  
shake and pound.

Yet never the twain did meet.

The Speakers said:

“We’re speakers! Hear us roar. We don’t want to lead!”  
BLAH, BLA-BLAH, BLA-BLAH

And the Leaders said:

“We’re leaders. See us lead. We don’t want to speak.”  
HEAR YE, HEAR YE, HEAR YE.

Yet from World Headquarters, a chorus was heard:

“Speakers are Leaders. Leaders are Speakers.  
Communication & Leadership for all!”

At every meeting in this district  
the Speakers would speak.

And the Leaders would lead.

But there was little cross-pollination.

Most members of the district wanted to speak.

So the contests were fierce, as were speaking slots in club meetings.

Their mouths grew tired.  
Speakers sounded tired:

“BLAAAHHHAH, BLA-BLAAAAAAAH, BLA-  
BLAAAAAAAH” they droned.

And a minority of the members of this district  
relished serving as Leaders. They led dutifully.  
And their shoulders sagged under the weight  
of the burden of leading for the entire district.

Leaders too sounded tired:

“HEARRR YE, HEARRR YE, HEARRR YE”  
they whimpered.

## ACT TWO

And then, one year, it all changed.

The district’s Public Relations Officer  
introduced an innovative program called *The Traveling Gavel*.

A giant gavel was given to the highest achieving club in the  
district.

As was a companion scrapbook they were invited to inaugurate, posting pictures and texts describing the secrets to their success.

And all the other clubs throughout the district were invited to visit this high achieving club en mass and capture the traveling gavel and its attendant scrapbook, containing said secrets to their success.

The visiting club bringing the most members and coming the farthest would capture the gavel at a given meeting!

Upon capturing the gavel from a club, the conquering club, now in possession of the gavel, would add its own proscriptions for success to the scrapbook and add its own club memorabilia too. Then this club too could expect visitors from other clubs intent on capturing this giant gavel they were now caretakers of.

From around the district, other clubs would visit their club, “capturing their gavel” and adding to the scrapbook’s lore. The scrapbook became a treasure-trove of best practices to achieve club success. Recipes for fun, blueprints for winning new members, achieving educational goals and much, much more.

### ACT THREE

The traveling gavel proved popular.

So much so, that top district officers worried it would distract clubs from focusing on their Distinguished Club Program and achieving critical success factors. Yet, in its own way, it fostered retention and growth, as well as educational attainments.

Remarkably, soon other interesting things were happening.

- ❖ Speakers at various clubs were organizing themselves, planning and strategizing to carpool to other clubs to capture the gavel. They were acting more and more like leaders!
- ❖ And Leaders were speaking about the importance of the Traveling Gavel program, motivating others to capture the gavel. They were focusing more on their speaking skills!
- ❖ And Speakers attended specialty clubs which focused on leadership and parliamentary procedure. They were learning to be better leaders.
- ❖ And Leaders started attending specialty clubs that addressed storytelling and advanced speaking skills.

They were becoming more persuasive and polished speakers.

And soon instead of a bifurcated district with rivalries and resentments between speakers and leaders, all Toastmasters members became well rounded and versatile in the developing of their communication and leadership skills.

They came to know what World Headquarters knew:

CHORUS:

Speakers are Leaders. Leaders are Speakers.  
Communication & leadership for all!

And soon there was competition for *all* the leadership positions, which was healthy and resulted in better leaders being elected.

- ❖ And speakers were giving speeches about leadership.
- ❖ And more Youth Leadership programs were being delivered.
- ❖ And more Speechcrafts were given by many more well rounded Toastmasters.
- ❖ And more specialty clubs arose.
- ❖ Members joined second and third clubs and achieved more for themselves and their clubs.

And soon every year clubs visited each other, and held joint meetings, and otherwise shared their successes at Conferences and TLLs:

- ❖ And that year the district was Distinguished.
- ❖ And the next year the district became Select Distinguished.
- ❖ And the year after that the district finally became President's Distinguished.

Now, the entire district was infused with new energy, new ideas and a sense of community as clubs really got to know their cohorts in other divisions.

## EPILOGUE

And then, one day, the gavel quietly disappeared, but by then the district's members were already cross-pollinating each other, infecting each other with new and novel ideas to achieve more, and the district had developed practices of success, raised its standards and was employing best practices found in the scrapbook without the need for this traveling gavel.

And so it was, that the gavel that led, became the gavel that fled. In truth, it went to find other districts to help them become President's Distinguished.

Now rumor has it, that splinters from this gavel have found their way to many middle-of-the-road districts to model the way to success. Indeed, these were the traveling gavels that wood and could, did and delivered. And a Distinguished world they did create.