



Talk of the Towers



District 46 Club # 5446

February 2003

Chris Bowcutt, Editor

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Talk of the Towers meets on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Tuesdays at 270 Park Ave.. New York. N.Y

Spotlight on Ji Qin – Vice President of Public Relations



Born in Beijing and arriving in the U.S. in 1997, Ji Qin has always been interested in leadership roles. Currently, she's Vice President, Public Relations for Talk of the Towers, a position she's held for the last six months.

The role of VPR is to advertise and promote the club to the public and to help bring in new members to the club.

According to Ji, the greatest reward of being VPR has been helping Talk of the Towers flourish after 9/11 by establishing our Web site.

"Because we relocated from downtown to midtown after 9/11, the meeting place became inconvenient for a majority of our members," she says. "We had meetings with fewer than 10 people. But by a joint effort, we quickly built a thorough Web site, which helped us become a stand-out club in the midtown area."

Ji likes the variety that Talk of the Towers displays.

"A lot of meetings are very interesting, such as the grab bag meeting and the backwards meeting. They provide a very open, creative and active atmosphere."

"What I like most about Toastmasters," she continues, "is that it provides an equal opportunity for everybody to speak in front of a group of people. What I like the most about Talk of the Towers specifically is that it's a very young, super energetic and very organized club with a lot of encouraging members."

Ji is working on her seventh speech.



Nelson Yip completes his icebreaker at the January 7 meeting.

Upcoming Dates:

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| Feb 25 | Members Only Meeting |
| March 4 | Regular Meeting |
| March 18 | Regular Meeting |
| March 25 | Special – Added Meeting |
| April 1 | The International Speech contest and Evaluation contest |

Members' Corner

New Members: Let's welcome our new members as of January 2003: **Debbie Lewis, Tracey Boudine, Misako Yamagishi, and James Wu**

Icebreakers: Nelson Yip, Debbie Lewis

A special appreciation to three of our outstanding members for their dedication, sincerity and true spirit that they have given to TOT:

- "Master Mentor," **Audrey Dagnachew**, DTM
- Director of Mentors, **Wen Chang**, CTM
- "Mr. Table Topics," **Ike Oraedu**, CTM

Get ready, get set...! **The International Speech contest** will take place at our April 1 meeting -- same time, same place. Please sign up at one of the February meetings or fill out the member sign-up form on our Web site! To participate, you must have six speeches under your belt.

Please submit your **renewal dues** -- \$56 -- at the next February meeting, or send it to:

Talk of The Towers
Canal Street Station
PO Box 2031
New York, NY 10013

Talk of the Towers earned the Leading the Way membership-building award from District 46. So far this TM year, we have brought in 13 new members and earned the Smedley award.



Talk of the Towers members at the 2002 District 46 Fall Conference (from left: Webster, Ji, Marquesa, Cameron, AnnMarie and Bob)

Speakers Bureau: We've decided to start the first Speakers Bureau at TOT. The Speakers Bureau is a fantastic way to provide members a variety of speaking experiences outside the club. You'll gain opportunities to use skills you learn in the club to address organizations in need of speakers. At the same time, speakers will be promoting Toastmasters within the community or corporation. More information will be provided at our members only meeting on 2/25, when the program officially launches. See **AnnMarie Perciballi** for more details.



From the Desk of Madame President

Special congratulations to TOT for taking our club to another level! We had an incredible six months. We've gained 13 new members, seven members earned their HTM, six members are a speech or two away from the big "CTM," two CL's were earned and, last but not least, two members are very close to capping their ATM.

Our club advanced to the Division Level with the Table Topics contest and the District Level with Humorous speech, thanks to Ginger Cox & Bob Share! Our members truly are dedicated to Toastmasters. At the district conference we took on top roles: Agyeno & Bob ran the book store, AnnMarie and I handled the Table topics contest and Ji, Cameron & Webster helped us out. We are truly a family.

Check out our Web site to learn more about our club's outstanding accomplishments. We've already accomplished 6 ½ of our 10 goals needed to make the Presidents Distinguished.

I want to thank all the officers for their hard work. It's like another job that we enjoy enough to do it for free.

We are pumped for 2003 and we've started with establishing a TOT Speakers Bureau and putting special emphasis on educating all members about how to be an outstanding Toastmaster! And, I close by saying a very special thank you to Chris Bowcutt, Chief Editor of our newsletter, this is our 4th issue and it just continues to get better.

See you at the next meeting!

Marquesa Pettway
"Taking it to an even higher level"

Submissions for the Newsletter:

The Talk of the Towers newsletter is circulated bimonthly. Please direct items for the newsletter to cbowcutt@aol.com.

"Faith can give us the courage to face the uncertainties of the future." -- Martin Luther King Jr.

Special Feature: Q&A with Agyeno Zechariah

Agyeno Zechariah has been a member of Talk of the Towers since November 2000. He's a CTM, CL, past VPE, TOT Toastmaster of the Year and current Area Governor for Area 71 in Westchester. Here, Agyeno answers some questions about his experiences with the club.

What made you decide to become a Toastmaster?

I heard of Toastmasters before 2000, but I cannot say that I had a clear understanding of what Toastmasters was all about. My initial perception was more of formally dressed men and women, in a "formal" social environment, each with a glass of wine or whatever their preference might be, giving toasts throughout the evening. I am sure you can understand my disappointment when most of the Toastmaster clubs near where I used to work were afternoon clubs. But I decided to visit one, just to get a first-hand experience of what Toastmasters is all about. I chose an "open" club, one at the World Trade Center called the Talk of the Towers. Back then, the club met every Thursday from 12:00-1 p.m. I was impressed with the club during my first visit. I admired the structure, the quality of speeches, and the effectiveness of the Toastmaster of the Day - how they were able to pack so much into exactly one hour. Nevertheless, I took the advice of Toastmasters International to heart and visited four other clubs in lower Manhattan. Talk of the Towers won my heart hands down and I have been a member ever since.



How has Talk of the Towers helped you grow as a speaker and as a leader?

As a club, Talk of the Towers gave me every opportunity to participate. But more than that, I had wonderful mentors and leaders to guide and advise me in every aspect of my Toastmasters experience. Mentors such as Jan Myers Cook -- whom I admired as a speaker and a person. I asked her if she could serve as my official mentor after I witnessed one of her consistent, prize-winning performances. She agreed, listened to my speeches and attended all the meetings where I had a major role. And of course, there were other mentors too, like Audrey Dagnachew, who knew all the nuances of every Toastmasters role and is always willing and available to offer a useful suggestion.

What offices have you held and what have they taught you?

With Audrey's support, I decided to seek the position for Vice President – Education (VPE) in July of 2001. I decided on that role for two important reasons: 1) it was vacant and 2) I believed that I would have the pick of whatever role I wanted... just kidding, I thought it was one of the most challenging and important official positions in the club. As it turned out, serving as VPE was the most fulfilling thing I had done in a long time. It gave me the opportunity not only to know every member of the club but also to contribute to their Toastmasters experience and growth.

Talk of the Towers became more than just a club to me, it became my extended family. That was quite evident on September 11, 2001. By then, my office had relocated to Midtown, but I continued to attend the weekly meetings downtown. September 11 and the subsequent 48 hours were some of the saddest days of my life as well as one of the most anxious periods. For the rest of Tuesday, on 9/11, faces flashed through my mind, many of whom I had spoken with just the day before -- wondering if I would ever see them again. One by one, we reconnected, beginning with AnnMarie Perciballi. She was the first member of the club that I was able to reach. Actually, she called me. Simply hearing the voice of one of our members was one of the happiest moments of my life. By the end of the week, it was evident that the tragedy claimed a member of our club. As a result, some members traveled to Montreal to represent the club at the burial. It demonstrated how close Talk of the Towers members have become.

Have you won any awards during your membership?

I have received a couple of major awards from the club. The first was the "most improved" member and the other was the "Toastmaster of the Year" award. The first demonstrated to me why I needed Toastmasters. The second, I was simply doing my job as the VPE. Nonetheless, I appreciate both awards.

Do you have any closing thoughts?

Before I joined Toastmasters, I thought that I would simply join the club, get what I needed and get out. Well, I am still young as a Toastmaster, there's a lot more to learn regarding public speaking and about myself. TOT will always be my first love. TOT has given me so much, it will take a lifetime to give back.