

## **EXAMPLES OF CREATIVE CLUB MEETINGS**

We all know the importance of the various aspects of the normal club meeting, but to conduct the identical meeting, week after week, could cause the meeting to be boring and predictable. This document is a compilation of ideas for creating excitement in the meeting and to avoid "always doing the same thing". The basic meeting structure and tasks are kept, but variations are provided to "keep us out of the proverbial rut." These suggestions are provided as "food for thought" with the imagination of the meeting planner being the final authority as to how the meetings should be varied. Most of these meetings can be structured to provide the normal activities, including evaluations, table topics as part of the theme, timer, ah counter, grammarian, etc.

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS MEETING**

Devote the entire meeting to electing the club's officers - - nominating speeches, campaign speeches, and the actual voting. Great spirit can be had if candidates decorate the room with campaign posters, balloons, flyers, other gimmicks - - whatever it takes to get elected. Toastmaster members present can be involved in presenting nominating and seconding speeches, and campaign speeches. Some of this will be done in jest, but will also have serious content concerning campaign promises, goals, etc.

### **MICROPHONE MEETING**

At some time in our lives, we will need to perform using a microphone. If your club room does not normally provide a microphone capability, occasionally plan a meeting in a different location or have someone bring in a sound system, and require everyone to use the microphone during their presentation. An educational feature discussing microphone use would be a great opening event.

### **VIDEO TAPE MEETINGS**

Most of us in preparing our speeches do not practice in an environment where we can see ourselves. Therefore, we have no real knowledge of how we appear to the audience. The cliché "a picture is worth a thousand words" is a truism. Video taping table topic presentations provides more people to be taped in a meeting, so that is a good way to structure the meeting. Make sure that a monitor is available at that meeting so a playback of the tape can be given that same night; self or member evaluations are an important part of this exercise. Members can be very self-conscious and embarrassed over their presentation, so it is important to consider this when conducting the meeting.

### **GOURMET'S DELIGHT MEETING**

Plan a progressive dinner at member's homes with table topics at one, speeches at another, evaluations at another, etc. Compliment each stop and segment of the program with fine food and fellowship.

### **ICEBREAKERS ALL MEETING**

Assign old and new members to give talks about themselves. This is a good opportunity for members to know more about their fellow members. This could be the first speech in another Basic Manual for those who have achieved their CTM, and are working on their ATM; members should understand that they can achieve multiple CTMs, ATMs, and DTMs, working on more than one manual at a time.

### **CELEBRITY NIGHT MEETING**

Invite a well-known member of the community or company to speak before the club. Alert the news media and invite lots of guests.

### **DEBATE**

This can consist of prepared or extemporaneous speeches for the opening presentations, and then time provided each speaker for rebuttal. A moderator can be assigned and formal debate rules and speaking times used. (Reference the TI Debate Handbook) Evaluation of each of the participants by experienced debaters (if possible) is important to provide feedback to the speakers and to the audience about good and poor details about the debate. For extra fun, challenge another club(s) to a debate.

## **TOASTMASTERS ROAST MEETING**

Choose a "toastmaster" to lead a lively meeting by "roasting" one of the long time members or invite a District officer for his or her "chance at the spotlight", roasting done, medium, or rare.

## **DEBATE TABLE TOPICS**

Rather than single question table topics, select two members at a time to discuss a controversial subject, one affirmative and the other the negative. Provide two minutes max. each for opening statements, and one minute max. each for rebuttal. Time allotted for table topics can be expanded to allow all members to participate. This meeting really gets the member juices flowing, and generally discussions continue after the meeting.

## **COURTROOM CAPER MEETING**

Choose a member to be the defendant, real or imagined, and assign a crime to them (Santa Claus damaging a roof and causing a disturbance, for example). Assign members to be the judge, plaintiff, lawyers, and witnesses, and conduct a mock trial. Vote for or against acquittal.

## **LAFF NIGHT**

Hold a best one-liner or best joke telling contest. Conduct the whole meeting just for laughs. Use props and have funny skits. This could be a good meeting to hold the Tale Tales or Humorous Speech Contest.

## **HOBBY OR TALENT MEETING**

Have some of your members give talks and demonstrations about their hobbies or interests. As an alternative meeting, selected members can demonstrate their entertainment capabilities.

## **ROLE PLAYING**

Group acts out a situation; usually no script, and no set dialogue. Two or more members make up parts and develop a story situation on a designated idea.

## **THE PANEL** (consisting of moderator and panel members)

A formal panel of 4 to 5 members is introduced by the moderator. Members rise to speak on a single topic or phases of a topic. In an informal panel, discussion on a topic is channeled by the moderator and all remain seated. Use advanced manual "The Discussion Leader".

## **INTERNATIONAL INTEREST PROGRAM**

Table topics and prepared speeches can be developed about the culture, economy, and history of the countries of members' origin or of countries they have visited. Obtain and display miniature flags of many nations or travel posters. "Dress up" the meeting room to fit the occasion.

## **TIPS N TECHNIQUES MEETING**

A Toastmasters meeting is not complete without an educational speech. Plan a "How to" speech (3-5 minutes) at your next meeting. Topics may include club procedures, officer duties, committee functions, publicity, protocol, duties of members, by-laws, new member orientation, community programs, speechcraft, youth leadership, reading program, speakers bureau, etc.

## **THEME MEETING**

Every meeting should be a theme meeting. This type of meeting provides a thread to tie parts of the program together. Speeches, table topics, evaluation, opening, closing, etc., can be included in the theme presentations. When selecting the theme, strive for originality. The theme should be broad enough to permit the presentation of several pre-assigned speeches that are interesting and important enough to hold attention. Among the many topics around which theme meetings can be built are: historic events, patriotic occasions, business activities, civic affairs, personal topics, and international issues. A simplified approach to the theme meeting is to provide only theme-oriented questions for discussion during the table topics portion, with theme related comments by the Toastmaster during meeting transitions.

## **SEMINAR**

Invite an authoritative professional to present a talk on a topic related to his expertise. Provide for a question and answer period following the presentation. Advertise this special event to the community.

## **CIVIC PROGRAM**

Have a special theme related to some city, state or national event. Invite available city, county, or state officials to present information concerning the event. This could be used during election time.

## **BOSS NIGHT**

Show the "Boss" your professional group. Good opportunity for the group to "show its best" and get the message across about the importance of the Toastmasters Program.

## **TALK SHOW NIGHT**

Choose a host to interview speakers and evaluators. Don't forget to include lots of commercials. Meeting can be patterned after popular TV shows.

## **PLAN A PARTY MEETING**

Whatever your fancy, have your meeting around the pool, at the beach, at a clubhouse, at a luau . Have fun!

## **THE SKIT**

A short, rehearsed, dramatic presentation by two or more can be given during the course of the program to train or entertain.

## **GRAB BAG MEETING**

Take some pressure off with impromptu assignments drawn out of a bag. Each member takes a chance on drawing a lucky assignment. Speakers for the evening could be assigned previously and not be a part of the grab bag assignments.

## **BACKWARDS MEETING**

*.sdrawkcab gniteem elohw eht naIP* (Plan the whole meeting backwards.) Start with the closing thought, awards, evaluate the speakers before they speak, and end with the call to order. For experienced clubs looking for something different, you can't beat this way of breaking up the routine of an ordinary meeting.

## **EVALUATION VARIETY**

Try something different in evaluations, such as the following methods: (1) Panel evaluations - three or four people on a panel each look at one aspect of all the speeches. For example, one may focus on content, one on delivery, another on use of language; or one may focus on openings, one of the speech body, one on conclusions, etc.; (2) Open Forum - Each speaker is evaluated, not by a single person, or by a panel, but by as many in attendance as may wish to comment (good for speech contestants); (3) Dialogue - The evaluator has a two way conversation with the speaker, asking questions about the speech and suggesting alternatives (can include self-evaluation comments); (4) Video Tape Evaluations - Used with the Television Advanced Manual - Have the evaluator not hear the speech when originally given, but only a video taped version of the speech; then evaluate the video presentation.

## **SUCCESS LEADERSHIP MEETINGS**

Use the Success Leadership modules as a basis for the meeting, or for parts of the meeting for several weeks. This is good way to use the skills of the experienced Toastmasters in the club, provide the information in the modules to the club members, and receive credit for a Success Leadership Module.

## **COSTUME MEETING**

Dress up to represent a variety of work fields, or anything else. Use for table topics subjects, and use as speech material. An alternative to this is to wear hats, T-shirts (with writing), scarves, bring a coffee cup (with writing), etc.

### **MORTUARY MEETING**

Have eulogies for table topics. Concentrate on either personalities or the members of the club. Have a part of the meeting set aside for members to interview another member to get material for the eulogy.

### **THREE RING CIRCUS MEETING**

Table Topics, Speeches, Evaluation. Have a night at the circus with a "barker", props, and lots of clowning. Invite family and friends. Have balloons for the kiddies.

### **GUEST MEETING**

Plan a special demonstration meeting for prospective members. Use advertising and word of mouth to bring in the guests, and provide a program that explains the Toastmasters program.

### **ANNIVERSARY MEETING**

Celebrate your club anniversary each year by having a special recognition event. Present awards for those who were the best speaker, best table topics, and best evaluator the most times during the year. Present your Toastmaster of the Year award, best attendance award, club officer recognitions, mentor of the year, etc. Recognize past club presidents and members that are present. Make sure invitations are sent to as many prior members as can be determined. Find out from TI what your anniversary date is if that information has been lost. This meeting is a must at five-year intervals.

### **BRAINSTORMING MEETING**

After each of the elections, have a brainstorming session to plan the coming terms club activities: set goals for manual completions; plan membership campaigns; plan educational programs, and plan club events.