



## **BREVITY**

By Cleo Lamping

“Brevity is the soul of wit.” Brevity is also the soul of Toastmasters.

This is not to say we talk in small bites, but we do pay great attention to getting our message across in as few meaningful words as possible because of "time."

Toastmaster meetings are supposed to start on time and close on time, which leads to much discussion as to exactly how many minutes each segment of the program can take, and with an action packed program, much lobbying can take place to increase a favourite segment for a few minutes, or even by one minute.

Toastmasters discuss "time" with the same fervour golfers discuss swings, grips and divots.

The reason, of course, for this devotion to "time" is to encourage Toastmasters to figure out what they are going to say, then say it and sit down.

A time limit wonderfully concentrates the mind.

The naturally verbose feel constrained by a time limit and the reluctant talker struggles to use up the allotted time, which is good. Each improves.

At each meeting the General Evaluator, as the word "general" indicates, briefly notes with a word of commendation or a suggestion for improvement, how each segment did, starting with, "Did the meeting start on time" and set-up of the room by the Sgt at Arms, and ending with the last person's contribution to the program because "contribution" is the keyword.

Every Toastmaster at that meeting who has contributed to the pleasure and enjoyment of that meeting deserves honourable mention.

The Toastmaster who has worked a week on just the right words for a Toast gets a glow of satisfaction when the General Evaluator notes "how apt" the Toast was and "remembered to bring his/her glass of water to the lectern with which to join in the Toast." (Something I usually forget to do.)

The Table Topics Master feels good inside when the General Evaluator notes "he/she called each person by name rather than number."

In this way, the General Evaluator draws attention to proper protocol, which keeps future meetings in line.

These comments can take seconds, not minutes and make each participating member feel "someone noticed, someone cared."

The General Evaluator is the hinge on which the doors of a successful Toastmaster meeting swing. How else are we to know how the meeting went and how we can improve?

Toastmasters meet each Monday at 7:15 pm at 236 Hall Avenue. On March 13<sup>th</sup> you will have the opportunity to hear 3 wonderful speeches and find out how well the Evaluators did in their roles as our General Evaluator comments on the meeting. The theme is, of course, St. Patrick's Day, so feel free to "wear the green". We welcome anyone who is interested in finding out more about Toastmasters. Come and find out what Toastmasters can do for you. For more information, please contact Fran at 649-2950, Lynne at 432-7557 or Wellwood at 432-7690.