



ROSTRUM

INFORMER

September/October 2011

Newsletter of Rostrum Western Australia

www.rostrumwa.com.au

End of year highlights and a taste of what's coming in 2012



■ Less than 10 weeks till Christmas – there's a scary thought – and to that time of the year when clubs start thinking about club awards, speaker of the year competitions and social get-togethers.

It's also that time of year for Rostrum WA – the second highlight of the Rostrum calendar (the first being

Convention, in case you'd forgotten!☺) – the final of the 2011 Arthur Garvey Speaker of the Year competition! From the heats and semi-finals I've attended, I can tell you the competition is *hot!* Read the speakers' profiles on pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter and be inspired to attend the final.

The AGSOY final is also the occasion where we recognise club achievements, with the Club of Excellence awards – the *R Alan Crook Award* for all clubs and the *David Price Award* for country clubs. I know of at least one club that's started preparing their submission and, with some lively new and revitalised older clubs, I'm looking forward to a challenging competition. If your club hasn't got a submission together yet, you'd better start writing because the closing date is Friday 4 November.

More importantly, get your club organised and book a table to attend the AGSOY final and dinner, whether or not you have a competitor in the final, because it's a great opportunity to catch up with other Rostrum members. Don't forget the date – Saturday 12 November! All the details are on the booking sheet on the back page.

In September we started the 2011 Critics' Training course, which runs until mid-November. We're trying a new format this year and, if the response of the attendees is anything to go by, we're on a winner. We started with a workshop from Fmn David Price '*Raising the Bar on Public Speaking*', on the basis that if you're going to tell other speakers how to improve, you need to be a reasonable speaker yourself. Our attendees really enjoyed themselves and were kept on their toes by David, as well as the cool temperature in the venue! The course continues with two further sessions in October and November (see calendar of events on page 4).

I was also pleased to represent WA at the Rostrum National Convention in Adelaide recently, along with Fmn David Price and Fmn Terry O'Meara. We had a great time! We attended a variety of presentations; two in particular focussed on marketing and attracting younger members, so we will be adding some of those ideas to our armoury. The whole event was professionally videoed and DVDs will be available for purchase in the next few weeks. I urge you to consider getting some to add to your club's resources.

The highlight on the Saturday was the Sidney Wicks National Speaking competition in which we were ably represented by Fmn Terry O'Meara. Unfortunately, Terry didn't win but I certainly thought he was one of the top speakers. The winner was Jenny Blain from Rostrum Victoria.

Sunday morning was the fun session with a light-hearted debate on the proposition that 'Wit is better than Wisdom'. I was the 3rd speaker for the negative team and am pleased to report that we won, with some vigorous and channelled support from the WA 'fan club' – my wife and Terry's friends and family! This was followed by a few tall, and not so tall, stories and some very clever limericks. All in all, it was a fun way to end a good weekend.

Finally – the taster for 2012. We will be having Convention next year. It will be organised by Fmn Terry O'Meara, with advice and support from Fmn David Price. It will probably be held in mid-March, so keep a few Saturdays clear!

I look forward to catching up with many of you at the Speaker of the Year final and dinner on 12 November. *Get those bookings in!*

Freeman Tony Lightman, President, Rostrum WA

Member survey

During September we invited all Rostrum WA members to participate in a survey. Thank you to the 100+ members who took the time to provide feedback, either online or by filling in and returning the form. The information will help us to understand better what members want from their club and the organisation, how well we're performing, and what we might do differently to meet members' needs to ensure Rostrum WA has a strong and vibrant future. As soon as the results have been analysed we'll develop recommendations and a plan to put them into action. Watch this space.

Marianne McAdam, Vice President and Director of Communications

Meet six of Rostrum WA's best speakers...

Wendy Wardell Club 50



During the day I'm a mild-mannered practitioner of the dark arts of marketing and business development for a biotechnology company. By night, and occasionally during my lunch hour, I'm a writer of satire – mostly for a bi-monthly column in a magazine for WA's doctors.

Over a year ago, on the strength of those articles, I was booked to give a keynote address at a national conference. It's possible that I didn't make it entirely clear to the conference organiser that I had no experience in public speaking, so getting 'up to speed' was the only honourable course of action. I recalled a friend who, some years before, had extolled the virtues of Rostrum membership and I joined in September 2010. I found Club 50 to be friendly, fun and supportive, quickly becoming a second family. Shortly afterwards my teenage daughter also joined, rapidly proving herself to be a speaker of considerable potential. Rostrum has become a significant part of both of our lives.

My non-working hours are spent looking at the funny and quirky side of life to incorporate in articles, my occasional blog and now, of course, speeches.

I entered the AGSOY competition to learn from other people's speaking styles and to convince myself that unfamiliar audiences aren't really that scary.

Dominic Faraone Club 2230

I joined Rostrum in 2000 specifically to learn how to chair meetings, a skill I needed as a member of the Australian Dental Association Council. Ten years down the track, what I enjoy most about Rostrum meetings is listening to other members' speeches and their personal stories.

Travelling is a passion and, fortunately, my work has taken me overseas several times, including two trips each to southern India and South Africa to do volunteer work with an organisation called *Equal Health*. Based in Perth, this group is made up of professionals from different disciplines who provide free health treatment and education to communities in need.

I also enjoy cycling – seriously! In the past five years I've been on an annual overseas cycling holiday: 900 km along the Po River in Italy (2007); the South Island of New Zealand (2008); 1000 km along the Loire River in France (2009); 1100 km along the Danube from Augsburg, Germany to Budapest in Hungary (2010) and most recently from Toronto in Canada, to Montreal and down to New York City, a trip of 1400 km. It's a great way to see a country!

I enjoy a challenge, and the AGSOY is just that – public speaking with competition rules.



Joanna Whitney Club 11



I confess – I love to talk; the problem is, I often find it difficult to say what I feel without rambling! In October 2009 I decided to do something about it and joined Rostrum.

I am passionate about teaching and sparking a love of learning in young children. Because I spend all day talking to five-year-olds, it's great to go to a Rostrum meeting and talk with adults who listen without interrupting. I also enjoy and value the support, encouragement and company of the members of Club 11.

Recently I was recognised by the community and awarded the Pride of Australia Inspiration Medal – for the first time, I was lost for words and had no speech prepared.

In my 'spare' time I dream of travelling overseas with a limitless credit card, and try to organise my chaotic family, dishes, cooking, cleaning and endless washing.

I entered the AGSOY competition because I am always looking for the next challenge.

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*"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."*

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82)  
American essayist, lecturer and poet  
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...vying to win the Arthur Garvey Speaker of the Year trophy

Susan Broughton Club 1/2



I joined Rostrum Club 1/2 about two years ago on the recommendation of long-standing member and friend Aldis Purins. I joined mainly to improve my speaking skills for work presentations and general confidence but have found that, in addition, Rostrum has provided many opportunities to meet interesting people and to challenge myself.

I have a variety of interests and more 'spare time' than usual since my job was made redundant in August. I enjoy reading, having conversations, walking, eating and drinking, going to lectures, learning, spoiling myself with massages, yoga and spending time with friends.

In July I became a founding board member of Australia's first Ethical Advisers' Cooperative. This not-for-profit group was formed to assist Financial Advisers to provide advice in responsible investment, and to increase awareness and credibility of responsible investment for consumers.

I entered the AGSOY competition to stretch myself. I wasn't getting very nervous for my club speeches anymore and I wanted to expand my comfort zone. It worked because in the first heat I was a 'nervous Nelly' but had calmed down considerably by the semis – I even enjoyed them a little bit!

Frank Butler Club 50

I've been a member of Rostrum Club 50 since 2002. At the time, I'd been invited to become a tutor at the School of Philosophy in Perth. This school, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, teaches practical philosophy and self development. The Principal suggested I join Rostrum to build up the confidence I felt I lacked.

I saw Rostrum as a short-term fix of a year or so but, almost ten years later, I'm still at Club 50, still enjoying it and still tutoring, both at the School and as a Rostrum critic! What I like most about Rostrum is that I'm always learning from other people and I've seen so many new members similarly make 'a quantum leap' in their speaking abilities.

In my spare time I like to go to rock concerts – especially the Rolling Stones whom I've seen in action many times. I also enjoy hiking in John Forrest National Park with my wife, gardening, and travelling. We went to Europe a couple of years ago and have just returned from a trip to America and Hawaii, visiting Oahu and Big Island.

As President of Club 50 this year, I entered the AGSOY as an example to the other members, to encourage them to enter as well. I guess it worked!



Shilna Shah Club 42



My first introduction to Rostrum was when, as a uni student, I was dragged kicking and screaming to a Rostrum Convention by a good friend. As someone who has always watched good public speakers with fascination, I was thoroughly impressed and decided then and there to join when I graduated. So in March this year, on my birthday in fact, I joined Rostrum as a member of the wonderful Club 42.

I love talking but since no one ever listens to me, Rostrum is the one place where people are forced to listen, which I love.

I work as a Process Engineer at the BP petroleum refinery – and just want the audience to know that we sell the best petrol, so don't buy your fuel from the other guys!

I have a wonderful family. I was born in Kenya but am actually Indian, and I love Australia.

After slogging it at uni for four years I have a new approach to life, which is: 'take the bull by the horns'. That's why I entered the AGSOY competition. Plus, \$500 sounds like a pretty good shopping spree to me!

Dispelling the myths about eye contact

Good communicators know how to maintain eye contact and use it when speaking to anyone they meet. It's not a trick or technique, it's a powerful tool.

The moment a speaker makes eye contact with an audience member, the communication is no longer about what the speaker is saying but about how it's received, and the exchange of giving and receiving. Eye contact forces the speaker out of the 'canned' speech; he must take in what the audience member is sending back – interest, enthusiasm, boredom, confusion. In a way, it determines what the speaker will say next, and how he will say it.

Why then, if it is so powerful, isn't the world of public speaking brimming with commanding speakers who consistently deliver great eye contact? There are a number of myths about the use of eye contact which are part of the inner dialogue of many speakers that prevents them using such a powerful tool.

Myth #1: Some people don't like to receive eye contact. It frightens them and they feel put on the spot. This is more about the speaker's fear than that of the audience member. An audience member wants to be drawn in and be engaged, and offering eye contact is one of the most powerful ways to do it. The intent behind the eye contact needs to be consistent and clear: 'I want to connect with you and for you to understand why our topic is important.'

Myth #2: If you're nervous at the beginning of a presentation, don't look at the audience but look slightly above their heads! The blank wall at the back of the room isn't your friend; it will keep you talking to a void and cause your anxiety to increase because you'll gradually create a speech that isn't going anywhere. Find a friendly face in the crowd, lock eyes with the person, receive the eye contact and the anxiety will start to fade.

Myth #3: The best way to make eye contact is to consistently scan the room. This is what was taught 15-20 years ago and now only serves to show your age! Some scanning is desirable, but the fear is that the eyes will be tempted to race around the room as if the speaker were on speed. It's better to let the eyes settle on one person for the duration of a sentence or a thought, then move on to another person. Connect, move on, connect, move on.

Myth #4: If I don't scan, I won't be able to give everyone the impression that I'm including them. By looking at one person intently that individual will know that you are making direct eye contact with him. People sitting nearby will also feel like they're being spoken to. Sustained personal eye contact is the best way of addressing and engaging an entire cluster in your audience.

Myth #5: I can't possibly hold eye contact all the time. I have to look away when I don't know what to say. The natural instinct is to look away when faced with a sudden loss of words because speakers feel vulnerable when this happens. It's a challenge to connect with an audience member and at the same time create the next word, sentence, or line of thought, but the moment the speaker looks away—to the floor, the ceiling, wherever—that power is lost, and so is the audience. It's important to stay connected to a member of the audience even when the next sentence hasn't yet materialised.

Myth #6: In some cultures, eye contact is considered rude and offensive. I don't want to offend anyone with my eye contact. It's true that in some cultures it's impolite to stare at people directly, and a speaker should temper the frequency and intensity of their eye contact in such a situation. While it's important to be sensitive to the different cultural signals a speaker encounters, overwhelmingly in business scenarios the communication standard is uniform. Strong eye contact signals 'I care about you.' Violating this will, in the end, be interpreted as rude behaviour—not the other way around.

Myth #7: It's impossible to give eye contact in a darkened room, when I cannot see the audience. Some speakers prefer a darkened room because it allows them to deliver a speech as planned, without the distraction of having to

respond to the audience's body language. It's the speaker's responsibility to create the best possible conditions to connect with his audience. A dark room deprives him of that opportunity. In fact it sends a strong indirect message, 'Take a nap, because I'm not very interested in seeing you anyway'.

From *Power Speaking* by Achim Nowak
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## What's on in ...

### NOVEMBER

- 4 **Last day for AGSOY bookings and Club of Excellence submissions**
- 8 **Speak up Speak out course**  
6.30 to 9.30 pm  
Tom Dadour Centre  
363 Bagot Rd, Subiaco
- 12 **AGSOY Final**  
7 for 7.30 pm start  
Lake Karrinyup Country Club  
North Beach Rd, Karrinyup
- 15 **Copy deadline for December *Informer***
- 17 **Dais Board meeting**  
6.30 pm  
42 Newry St, Floreat
- 19 **Critics training – session 3**  
8.30 am to 12.30 pm  
Shenton Park Community Centre
- 25 **Dais Reps meeting & elections**  
6.30 for 7 pm  
Joan Watters Centre, Wembley

### DECEMBER

- 13 **Speak up Speak out course**  
details as for November

Information and course registration:

### NEW CONTACT DETAILS

Rostrum Information Centre  
PO Box 5547, Canning Vale South,  
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Phone 08 9463 6433  
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Informer Editor Rose Fogliani

Copy deadline for the last issue of the *Informer* for 2011 is **15 November**.  
Please send items to:  
[rose.fogliani@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:rose.fogliani@agric.wa.gov.au)

# 2011 Arthur Garvey Speaker of the Year Final

## Speakers

**Dominic Faraone**      **Shilna Shah**  
**Frank Butler**        **Susan Broughton**  
**Joanna Whitney**      **Wendy Wardell**

Saturday 12 November

Lake Karrinyup Country Club  
North Beach Rd

(NOT Gleneagles Reception Centre at Hamersley Golf Club on Marmion Ave)

7.00 pm for 7.30 pm start

\$70 per person

2 course meal, coffee and treats

Cash bar

Neat dress required

Plenty of parking

6 of our best speakers

Club of Excellence awards

Raffle prizes

Catch up with other members

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**Please use this form to book through your club by Friday 4 November**

Club number \_\_\_\_\_

Club contact name \_\_\_\_\_

Number of attendees \_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form and send it with your cheque (payable to Rostrum WA) and a list of the names of all attendees, including partners and friends. Please indicate if vegetarian meals are required.

Send to: **Sue Hart 52 Booker St Dianella 6059**

Enquiries (please keep to a minimum!) to [suehart@iinet.net.au](mailto:suehart@iinet.net.au) 0419 048 520

**Last day for bookings: Friday 4 November (earlier if possible)**