

World Championship of Public Speaking Comes to Connecticut!

It's the Olympics of oratory, the World Cup title of talk -- and the final bout for the heavyweight title of World Champion of Public Speaking! On Saturday morning, August 15, 10 articulate Toastmasters will vie for the World Championship trophy at the MGM Grand at Foxwoods, in Mashantucket, Connecticut. The speech contest is a highlight of Toastmasters' annual International Convention (Aug. 12-15), expected to draw nearly 1,500 silver-tongued members from all over the world.

Each year more than 10,000 members of Toastmasters International enter this speech competition. The contest begins at the club level with winners advancing to area and regional contests, and it culminates each August during the International Convention, where 10 finalists contend for the top honor.

The contest speeches are five to seven minutes long, with no restrictions on topic selection. Contestants will be judged on content, speech organization, voice quality, gestures and delivery. Last year's championship title went to Dallas resident LaShunda Rundles, whose speech, titled "Speak!" encouraged people to use their voices to change the world. Rundles is the first African-American woman - and only the fourth woman ever - to win this prestigious competition.

Through its worldwide network of clubs, Toastmasters International has helped more than 4 million people give presentations with poise and confidence. Since the organization's humble beginning in Santa Ana, California, it has grown to include more than 250,000 members in 106 countries. Despite the worldwide economic downturn, the organization is thriving and celebrates its 85th anniversary this October. Connecticut alone has 93 Toastmasters clubs; Rhode Island has 18 and the city of Boston has 23.

For information about local Toastmasters meetings, Convention events or the World Championship of Public Speaking, visit www.toastmasters.org or e-mail pr@toastmasters.org. The public is invited to register onsite at the MGM Grand at Foxwoods and attend.

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