



The Electronic Newsletter of the  
Minnesota Chapter of the  
National Speakers Association

## January 2009

Edited by: Dennis Stauffer

Please send comments and feedback to [dstauffer@insightfusion.com](mailto:dstauffer@insightfusion.com)

## A Note from NSA-MN President



Happy New Year! This year this greeting has a different meaning than in the past. Many couldn't wait for 2008 to end, as opposed to looking forward to the new opportunities offered by a new year. In truth, neither is really true - times are what you make of them. As Shakespeare wrote in Hamlet "...for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." Our paradigm changed in 2008,

but opportunities still abound. Our customers and clients continue to have tremendous needs that we can fill. In many cases, speakers are the catalysts of change. In order to provide the biggest impact, however, in many cases we must change. A new year is the perfect opportunity to examine every area of your business to determine how we can provide more value.

Where do we start? Go back to the basics of being a professional speaker - the Four "E's" of the National Speakers Association.

**Expertise.** Are we truly an expert who speaks? Is our content relevant and fresh? What is the value provided by our expertise? What can we do to improve our expertise?

**Eloquence.** Do we continually improve our platform skills? How can we make our presentations more dynamic?

**Enterprise.** Do we run our business like a business? How can we improve our business management? What resources can we employ to allow us to focus on our unique genius?

**Ethics.** Do we choose the high road in all of our affairs? Do we share our knowledge with others in our profession?

This year offers the seeds of greatness for all of us. I challenge all of us to become our best selves as speakers and as people. I also ask your help to continue to make this Chapter strong and

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### NSA-MN Upcoming Events



**Mark Your Calendars! .**

**January 10, 2009**  
6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.  
Winter Social

**January 13, 2009**  
5:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

relevant, and for you to encourage and support your Board of Directors as we navigate this sea of change.

**Michael Roby, President**  
NSA-Minnesota  
[mike@michaelroby.com](mailto:mike@michaelroby.com)

## Janie Jasin Steps in to Speak at January 16, Fireside Chat, With Revised Format



Janie Jasin is a seasoned keynote speaker with 25 years of presenting to audiences totaling more than 3 million people. Motivational Humorist, Professional Speaker Janie Jasin is Author of the Best-Selling Book *The Littlest Christmas Tree* which Has Sold A Million Copies!

Janie says...

This program will not be the same as other Fireside Chats. It will be a new wrinkle on an old topic...*survival*. In a time of tough times we all need to see the opportunities for good speakers to be better and better.

Janie will speak on the art of speaking, coaching, and teaching speaking as it impacts the audiences to take action. What is it that audiences really remember? How does this impact marketing, sales and the career you desire and need to stay booked?

After the official Fireside Chat, Janie has offered to stay and have lunch with anyone who wants to continue the conversation. \*\*

*Note: Lunch is not part of the Fireside Chat and would be paid for individually, if you choose to stay for lunch.*

Bring questions - anything - to the fireside chat as well as the luncheon.

## Standing Out in the Crowd is Topic of January Chapter Meeting

**How To Establish and Maintain Your Celebrity Status in a Flooded Market**

*presented by Thom Winner, CPAE, CSP*

Tuesday, January 13, 2009

[Register Here](#)



In January, our very own award winning speaker and author, Thom Winner is going to share ideas and tools to help us stand out in a crowded market. This is a rare opportunity to hear a master like Thom share his expertise.

5:30-7:00 PM - Chapter Meeting & Dinner (NSA-MN Members Only!)

Chapter Meeting & Presentation  
How to Establish and Maintain Your Celebrity Status in a Flooded Market  
Thom Winner, CPAE, CSP

**January 16, 2009**  
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
Fireside Chat  
Guest Janie Jasin, CSP

**March 10, 2009**  
5:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
Chapter Meeting & Presentation  
The Write Way: Tools, Techniques and Tequila - Proven Strategies to Help You Become a Better Writer.  
Molly Cox

**April 24**  
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 am  
Fireside Chat  
Guest Kathy Brown, CSP

**May 14**  
5:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
Annual Gala

### Off Kilter

By: Molly Cox

### Talking Points



Our economy is circling the drain. President Bush has introduced yet another competency for speakers-shoe ducking, and senior citizens with little social security money will be staring at a fuzzy television picture next month. Times are tough.

7:00-9:00 PM - Presentation

## Institute for Professional Speaker Development at Mid Term

By **Stuart Gray**, IPSD Coordinator  
[Stu@BlueCollarSalesGuys.com](mailto:Stu@BlueCollarSalesGuys.com)

What a blessing!

I had the gift to be part of the apprentice program on December 2nd. Our facilitators Gaye Lindfors and Chere Bork have put together a roster for the participants that is, in a word, Awesome!

The evening began with 2008 Cavett award winner, CSP, CPAE, Mike McKinley sharing his message that was tailored specifically to the audience of emerging speakers. After a brief break the stage was then taken over by CSP, CPAE, David McNally who talked about the importance of branding your speaking business. Both presenters took time to answer questions and share their expertise with our Apprentice program.

The Graduate program has been moving along quite well under the guidance of Stevie Ray. They have been reviewing websites and business plans as a class and it sounds like lots of healthy banter and great developmental feedback.

The Mentor program will be gathering for their Mid-Term review in January. I know that Amy Tolbert and her teams of mentors and protégés will be sharing exciting results this spring.

We have had one member step up and volunteer to assist in the design and implementation of an "IPSD Spring Event" for both NSA-MN as well as the folks that hire us. We are still looking for a few others to assist in this program. If you are feeling that calling please reach out to me at: [Stu@BlueCollarSalesGuys.com](mailto:Stu@BlueCollarSalesGuys.com) or 952-226-3878.

## What CEO Really Stands For

By **Susan Zimmerman**  
[susan@mindfulplanning.com](mailto:susan@mindfulplanning.com)

With all the recent market madness and economic bad news, I had to revisit an old true story.

When I was in 8th grade, our school introduced us to a cutting edge computerized assessment that promised to expertly predict our future careers. I remember the many pages of questions, filling in the circles perfectly with my #2 pencil, and then waiting weeks for the results. When the day came and our guidance instructors handed out the printed assessment reports, they were truly impressive looking! I scanned the thick, heavy pile of pages with excited anticipation to see what my future career possibilities would be. Finally on the last page, one lone answer was announced to me in just two words. I'll give you a hint, so you can share the anticipation with me for a few seconds. The first letters of the two word title were:

**E.O.**

What do you think E.O. stood for? Executive Officer, maybe? A

But, I remain optimistic.

Why? Because I'm a member of NSA- MN, an association that allows us to get dressed up, go to meetings and laugh and learn. We encourage each other to keep our doors open even though as a small business we will pay approximately fifty percent of what we make to taxes, twenty percent to bureaus and thirty-five percent to administrative and marketing.

Oh, and sixty-three percent to attend the annual convention.

As I contemplate the economy and the speaking business, I would like to share a few ideas that could help us to forge on and maintain our perception that we are in a fun and lucrative business regardless of the world spinning out of control faster than Britney Spears can make a comeback.

Here are some simple changes we could implement right now:

1. Speaking could be an all cash business.
2. The NSA- MN president's position could be open to the highest bidder.
3. The Mark LeBlanc Award could be an auction item at the "open bar" holiday party.
4. CSP medallions could be hidden in January and hunted for during the Winter Carnival.
5. The Next- Level Award could be given to all speakers who can make their car payments.
6. All NSA-MN

terrific guess, but no. My sole career destiny, according to this impressive computer science evaluation was:

### Elevator Operator!

My excitement plummeted like a crashing...elevator. This certainly didn't push any buttons for me! Images of asking, "Going up?" or "Going down?" all day long while stuck in a moving box flashed in my mind. It failed to elevate any hope in me, other than my passionate HOPE that I would not end up as an Elevator Operator!

These days, with the frightening economic headlines and wild ups and downs of the market, I chuckle as it seems the nightmarish questions "Going up?" and "Going down?" persist all day long. We might as well get creative to help us cope with the challenges. So, please borrow this CEO title: Chief Elevator Operator. Isn't it true that as professional speakers, we "operate to elevate" our clients' dreams, hopes, thoughts, behaviors, and results? I call it OPERATION ELEVATION and it's our job in both the delightful and the frightful times.

I actually had a dream about an elevator many years ago when my father was dying of cancer. In the dream, the doors wouldn't open unless I entered just the right sequence of buttons in the security code. If I gave up, the doors stayed closed and everything became more chaotic. If I kept trying, the doors opened and allowed me in to where I was needed.

The elevator dream provided clarity to me and gave me hope that I could open the doors and be allowed in to discuss whatever topics were necessary. It's an image that still helps me today. It takes a special courage to find the right "security code" to open the doors of communication in difficult times. Our clients and every individual in our audiences all have their own unique security codes that we must discover in order to fully assist them.

As professional speakers, we are in perpetual "operation elevation" mode all the time with clients. We help elevate their chances of living a more fulfilling life, and much more.

It takes tremendous skill and courageous communication to do this work. So, regardless of what your official title might be, remember to add CEO (Chief Elevator Operator) every time you need a "lift." Thinking as chief elevator officer is also helpful as we ponder our business goals and decisions for the new year. Best wishes to you in Operation Elevation!

## As Our Future Turns the Corner, Another Year Passes

By **Lori La Bey**, Membership Director  
[Lori@SeniorLifestyleTrends.com](mailto:Lori@SeniorLifestyleTrends.com)

Although many of us have or are currently struggling with the economic state of our country, we must all stay focused on the blessings in our life. For me, I am thankful for all the wonderful friendships, support, and guidance I have received from our wonderful organization. I look forward to 2009, with the fantastic programming lined up and hope to personally speak to each of you at upcoming events.

Like all organizations, NSA-MN realizes and respects the

apprentices could be coached one-on-one by Wall Street icons-

\*Podcast from jail.

7. Fireside "Chats" could be open 24-hours for those who cannot afford their heating bills.
8. Upon inauguration, President Obama could approve an emergency bail-out of the entire speaking industry.
9. Randall and Hondo could teach us to turn our one-dollar bills into five-hundred dollar bills.
10. Volunteer positions, such as writing the humor column, could be paid positions.

While our official state motto is "Choosing a Senator-- What's the Rush?" that doesn't mean we should wait to take action. For instance, we can easily change our topics (especially for Washington bureaus) to what's hot, such as: "Back Away from the Ledge" and "Crap, was That Recorded?" And "Chin Up! You're not in Jail."

With just a few simple tweaks, our businesses should thrive in 2009. So, get out your wands, clown noses and fun-meters. Our audiences are counting on us.

Happy New Year!

importance of our members and we want to take this time to thank you all for your support and input this past year. The number of volunteer hours behind NSA-MN is astonishing to say the least. But as the saying goes, "When you give, you always receive more in the end." I appreciate our members not only understand that concept but embrace it as well. Kudos to all of you!

Before signing off, I do have one favor to ask of each of you. I would love your help in encouraging other professional speakers to check us out, or better yet, just jump in and join our great NSA-MN Chapter. We would love to grow our membership in 2009, building our network of professional speakers and expanding our business resources. If you have anyone who might be interested in NSA-MN, I would be more than glad to personally take time out to speak with them one on one. Feel free to pass on my contact information. Cell number 651-216-5413, or Email [Lori@SeniorLifestyleTrends.com](mailto:Lori@SeniorLifestyleTrends.com).

Thanks again for being a part of our great organization. Have a blessed 2009, and may all your dreams and goals come true!

## Know Your Board

By Mary McGrath  
[info@maryzmcgrath.com](mailto:info@maryzmcgrath.com)

### Amy Tolbert, CSP



Board member, Amy S. Tolbert, Ph.D., CSP, develops multicultural organizations and individuals by bringing them cutting-edge topics, such as multicultural and diversity initiatives, leadership competency development, managing to style, and creating breakthrough teams. She is principal of Effecting Creative Change in Organizations (ECCO International), which specializes in increasing individuals' productivity and organizations' profitability through e-learning, technology and facilitated learning. In keeping with her field, Amy holds the position of Vice Chair of the NSA Diversity PEG.

Amy serves on our Board as the President-Elect. She found NSA by a circuitous route. A friend from Minnesota moved to North Carolina. This person had attended two NSA national conventions and told Amy about the organization. Then Amy attended a convention as her guest. The final leg of her NSA discovery was finding our local chapter.

From her vantage point on the Board, as when she was a member, Amy now sees great benefit for all in getting involved in the NSA networking process. To her, chapter networking is not for gaining business but for mutual growth. When members engage in professional exchange all win.

She believes that the greatest benefit of NSA is the personal development available to members. To Amy, NSA is a professional organization that we can experience professional growth together.

Thank you, Amy, for your present Board work and in advance for your future service.

*Your Source for NSA-MN Information*

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