

St-Sauveur, Québec, Canada – It was the District 61 World Series of public speaking. It was the Olympics of oratory, the quarter finals bout for the heavyweight title of “World Champion of Public Speaking.” Who would win? Last April 30, in an hotel in St-Sauveur, a crowd of 300 Toastmasters from Quebec, Ontario and the north of New-York state cheered for their favorite speaker.

J.A. Gamache, a member of the French Toastmasters club "Les Dynamiques" in Laval near Montreal, Canada, emerged victorious and claimed the District 61 Title of the 2011 World Champion of Public Speaking.

His speech, “The Gift of Friendship,” described in a poignant story his friendship with Nellie, a 77 year old senior citizen whose friendship changed his life forever. His seven-minute speech went from laughter to tears and uplifted his audience by his motivational message, and as J.A. Gamache said afterward, “My speech had a powerful message. I hoped people would be moved by it and they were.”

This is not J.A. Gamache's first attempt to win the crown. He is the only Quebecer to ever win a podium (3rd place in the 2001) at Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking and was a finalist in that same contest in 2005 and 2007. Over 35 000 contestants participate in this prestigious event every year.

After winning in 2001, J.A. Gamache created his free weekly electronic magazine entitled : “Public speaking with J.A.” dedicated to giving back to his fellow members the wealth of information he gathered during his many years of competition. His tips, available at www.jagamache.com, are read in more than 50 countries around the world by over 3500 readers.

The World Championship of Public Speaking is a year-long process of elimination and will culminate at Toastmasters International’s four-day annual convention, which will be held August 17-20, 2011, at the Bally's Hotel in Las Vegas, U.S.A.. On Thursday August 18, eighty-two district champions will compete in nine semifinal contests throughout the day. The nine remaining champions will advance to the finals the following Saturday August 20. The finals will be broadcasted live on Internet. For more information visit: www.toastmasters.org .

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization that teaches public speaking skills through a worldwide network of clubs. The organization currently has over 200,000 members in 12,500 clubs around the world. Since its founding 87 years ago in October 1924, the organization has helped more than four million men and women give presentations with poise and confidence. For information about local Toastmasters clubs in the Montreal-Ottawa region, please visit www.toastmastersdistrict61.org. Anywhere else around the world visit www.toastmasters.org .