

## Toastmaster Cheyne named first runner up

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BURLINGTON - Mary Cheyne, a member of The Last Word Toastmasters in Burlington, bested all but one of some 25,000 contestants from 14 countries over a six-month period to earn a spot in the 2009 World Champion of Public Speaking finals last month.

Her speech, titled "Nelly," told the story of distinguishing and quieting the inner critic in our heads and going after our dream.

"Speaking on the World Championship stage is a dream come true for me," said Cheyne. "It is an honor and a privilege to share a message with 2,000 people." Cheyne did not take the challenge lightly, revising her speech 40 times before settling on the final version.

When asked if she was nervous, Cheyne said, "No. The hard work leading up to the contest prepared me for the stage. I felt more excitement than nerves."

However, that was not always the case. When Cheyne joined Toastmasters more than four years ago, she could not speak in public without getting nervous.

When asked what advice she had for people who face the fear of public speaking, Cheyne said "Being comfortable with public speaking is like a muscle, the more often you use it, the stronger it gets. Lack of use will cause it to atrophy. It also helps to find people whose style of speaking you like, and actively seek to learn from them. Some people may think you have to be born with it, but I believe you can master anything of your choice if you put your focus, time and energy into it."

For more information, visit [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org) or e-mail



Courtesy photo

Mary Cheyne, a member of The Last Word Toastmasters group in Burlington, was first runner up in the 2009 World Championship of Public Speaking. She is seen here with (left to right) Darren LaCrote, 2001 World Champion; Jim Key, 2003 World Champion and Mark Brown, 1995 World Champion.

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