



Sue Boe, left, and Frank Shea celebrated their recent nuptial with friend, family and Toastmaster members at Thai Sweet Basil on Tuesday.

Suitor makes his case for marriage in persuasion speech

By JESSICA BALANZA | The Tampa Tribune

NORTHDALE It was no different from any other Suncoast Toastmasters meeting.

Members and guests checked in and received name tags. The designated Toastmaster of the Evening, Sue Boe, got the Tuesday meeting started with housekeeping information and the agenda.

Then the club members got down to what the organization is all about: making speeches.

But what no one, except for a few in attendance, knew was one of those speeches included a marriage proposal and wedding ceremony for two longtime members.

About three months ago, Frank Shea, 69, and Boe, 65, decided they would share their nuptials with the club they have been a part of for about four years. The couple knew they would have their work set out for them to make it happen without anyone finding out.

Boe said the initial plan was to make the proposal and acceptance part of Shea's persuasion speech, which is one of the projects members participate in.

Other than the initial proposal and acceptance, the rest of the ceremony would be improvised by some of the family and friends who attended under the pretext that they were learning about the club.

Shea was the third person to speak during the meeting. His speech was titled "Number Nine for the Last Time." It wasn't until he began that members began to realize that it was no regular speech â€” he was actually proposing to Boe.

"I actually can't remember the first few lines of when he started proposing," said Diane Longstreet. "How the whole thing unfolded was hysterical. I was laughing and crying at the same time."

Once Boe accepted the proposal, the ceremony unraveled quickly. Shea's daughter, Linda Shea Pavlowsky, provided the marriage certificate, and attorney Diane Victor Kuenzel officiated the ceremony. Other wedding details were also provided, such as rings and flowers for the bride.

"It blew me away," said Joe Jones Jr. "Frank has given some outlandish speeches before. This was incredible."

The ceremony, including proposal and acceptance, took about nine minutes, which fulfilled the time requirement for a persuasion speech. It was followed with questions and evaluations of all the speeches. Shea received a ribbon as best speaker of the evening.

"We have known each other for 13 years and have been soul mates for six," Boe said during the meeting. "We are delighted to be able to share this with everyone."

After the meeting, all the guests went to Thai Sweet Basil for the reception.

Shea said, "It was wonderful. The best part was when she said yes."