

# THE LANGUAGE CO

## Toastmasters put public speakers to the test

The Daily Yomiuri

**C**hika Hisamatsu, a company employee from Hiroshima, won the District 76 Toastmasters Japan Speech Contest in English at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center in Tokyo on Sunday with a speech titled "In One Second."

Eight speakers, including two native speakers of English, who won preliminary local contests throughout the country, competed in a contest that was for the first time attended by Toastmasters International President Jon Greiner.

Hisamatsu impressed the audience of about 230 with a speech that promoted global environmental awareness. Using props including a clock, she concluded her speech with the message that "your one-second consideration will save the planet."

Second prize went to Kenny Kawarazaki, a business consultant from Tokyo, with Tokyo teacher Tomohide Oshima taking third.

Victory means Hisamatsu is eligible to compete in the Interdistrict Speech Contest to be held at the Toastmasters International annual convention in Toronto, Canada, in August. It will be the first time for a representative from Japan to participate in the international contest.

Established in the United States in 1924 as a non-profit organization developing public speaking and leadership skills through practice in local clubs, the



Courtesy of the District 76 Toastmasters

**Toastmasters International President Jon Greiner applauds after presenting trophies and testimonials to prizewinners.**

Toastmasters organization now has more than 9,300 clubs and 195,000 members in about 80 countries. Last year, Japan became a full district, qualified to send a contestant to the international contest. There are now more than 60 Toastmasters clubs in the country.

Greiner, who attended a number of interdistrict speech contests, said that the key to successful public speaking was whether the speaker was able to touch people's hearts. Hisamatsu, it seems, more than succeeded.