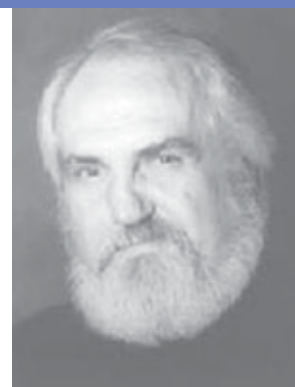


On the Fly...! Robert Alan Black on Speaking Worldwide

Speaking in Foreign-Language and Foreign-Culture Countries

by Robert Alan Black, Ph.D., CSP



[Editor's Note: Since earning his CSP, Robert Alan Black has spent much of the last two years traveling the world and speaking on his expertise, Creativity. Because he has been a frequent and popular speaker overseas for many years, we've asked Alan to share his experiences in a monthly feature, with a view toward preparing some of our other members for international speaking. Alan can be reached through his web site: www.cre8ng.com.]

Using a translator can be challenging. What I have discovered over the last 10 years is that it is best to “get to know” your



Robert Alan Black, CSP, posing with members of the Japanese Creativity and Communication Society in Osaka, Japan in March 2003. He was their monthly speaker, helping them to celebrate their 15th Anniversary. Generally serious throughout presentation, the participants became extremely relaxed and friendly afterward, over dinner and drinks.

translator beforehand as much as possible. In getting to know them:

- test out your material for their understanding of your points
- test out your humor and double-check with them what they believe may not work
- work toward getting to know them personally, so that you both can relax.

In Osaka, Japan, this Spring, I had the same interpreter twice. We met for a about half an hour before the first presentation and everything seemed fine. Simple points, simple message. Then, halfway through my presentation, she turned to me and said, “What does ‘what if’ mean? We don’t have that concept in Japan.” After a couple attempts, we let it go. That evening, we talked about it for about an hour before she seemed to understand. Then we talked before the second presentation for about an hour, covering that and other points until she understood, and the presentation went extremely well.