



## **Scrambling with Humor!**

By Nancy Quinn Rummel, ACC

Years ago I was one of the worst public speakers on the planet and I have numerous public humiliation stories to prove it. Here's one. I was asked to give a speech to a large group of professional men. The topic was complicated so I carefully wrote the points I wanted to cover. The problem was that I neglected to number the pages so when I dropped the speech as I arrived at the podium, the pages became hopelessly scrambled.

I reached down and picked up the jumbled pages, looked at them fearfully and said, "What I hope to do is unscramble any confusion you have about xyz issues as quickly as I unscramble these notes." That "roll with it" attitude earned me a chuckle from the crowd and a few seconds to regroup so I could make it through the presentation. But I never again forgot to number speech pages.

Over the years, I have done a fair amount of public speaking and learned there is no real trick to it – there is only confidence. For me, I had to practice quite a bit and stop worrying about what people might think of me because people mostly think about themselves. They are focused on the content of a speech and how it affects them. I learned to speak to one person at a time and not let myself be terrified of the group.

Now we have power point presentations and those can go awry also. For any type of presentation it's good to remember that laughing at ourselves at the right times is generally perceived as confident and likeable. It says "we are human, trying to do our best, and sometimes bumbling happens." Openly admitting weaknesses can be a sign of great strength.