



THE VOICE

DISTRICT 83 NEWSLETTER

February 2015

District 83 Spring 2015 Conference The World is Better Because of You!



By Margarita Estrada, ACB, ALB; and Lynda Starr, ACG, ALB

Toastmasters' Power Couple to Visit District 83

A highlight of any District 83 conference is the keynote speaker and this Spring, we are fortunate to have Jana and Robert Barnhill, a Toastmasters super couple. Jana served as Toastmasters president 2008-2009 and Bob, 1996-1997. Furthermore, both Jana and Bob have received Toastmasters International's Accredited Speaker designation. Jana placed third in Toastmasters' World Championship of Public Speaking in 1993 and second in 1996.

Each International president chooses a theme for their tenure and Jana's was "The Courage to Conquer!" and Bob's "A Passion for Eloquence." These themes are near and dear to District 83's heart. Whether making an icebreaker speech, participating in Table Topics, competing in a contest or as an officer, Toastmasters helps its members to develop the courage to conquer our fears and why we do it, because we all love Toastmasters and have turned that passion into excellence and expression. According to Jana who took the theme from the Toastmasters Vision Statement, which concludes with the words: "...people throughout the world can improve their communication and leadership skills, and find the courage to change"; "...courage is all about being confident. And when you have confidence, you can do a number of things that aren't even related to speaking. It's an inner belief that you can do whatever you set your mind to."

Jana and Bob exemplify the expression, "if you want something done, give it to a busy person." Outside of Toastmasters, he is an attorney, certified public accountant, personal financial specialist, certified financial planner and adjunct professor at Texas Tech University in the Family Financial Planning Department. Together, they own L.I.V.E. Speakers, Inc., which offers seminars throughout the United States on management topics, including communication and leadership, team building, change management and personality traits. He is an author of over ten books covering a variety of estate, retirement and business issues. Bob is also a noted speaker covering team building, leadership development, employee benefits, retirement planning, estate planning and performance enhancement. Jana conducts seminars on team building, communication skills, leadership development, time and stress management and customer service. Jana works as a speech writer and coach for other professionals.



Bob introduced Jana to Toastmasters in 1984 because he enjoyed being a member. They attended their first conference together and she was hooked. Bob continues to be a successful Toastmaster and is the eponymous member of The Robert Barnhill PFP Toastmasters Chapter at Texas Tech University, which was named in his honor.

We look forward to hearing from and having time with Jana and Bob at the Spring Conference, May 30-31, 2015.

Go for It!

How would you like to have the opportunity to change a person's life with your words and win a free trip to Vegas? Fairy tales can come true; it can happen to you....but you have to work for it! Intrigued? Keep reading!

A new year always brings with it new potential for growth. Asking yourself the following questions can ignite the fire within you to begin your journey.

"Why did I join Toastmasters and am I serious about my objective?" "Am I willing to do whatever it takes to achieve my goal?"

Jersey Toastmasters member, Darnelle Richardson, DTM, offers this strategy for success: "If you want to achieve a goal, you

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"Energy and persistence conquer all things."

- Benjamin Franklin

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District 83 welcomes our two newest clubs!

Toastmasters of Wyndham (club #04413795)

chartered 1/1/2015 (Division B, Area 26)

Parsippany

Arch Toastmasters Club (club #04413724)

chartered 1/1/2015 (Division G, Area 72)

Jersey City

How to reach the District 83 Newsletter Co-Editors

Su Brooks: subrooksd83@gmail.com

Lynda Starr: lbstarr@optonline.net

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must set yourself up for success. Buy a binder, with dividers and a calendar, and schedule your speeches (even if you don't have a title for them yet), and go for it!"

"Am I willing to stretch myself by serving within (club officer or mentor) and outside my club (area, division, district officer, sponsor, trainer, conference volunteer, youth leadership organizer)?"

Those of us who serve as club, area, and division or district officers know that we grow through service, and that we must uphold the Toastmaster values of Integrity, Respect, Service, and Excellence. These values are at the forefront of what we do. This means that we attend training twice a year, read the requirements for the position we hold, make sure we get the necessary help to keep us on track, and bring new, innovative ideas that can spur those around us to action. We also make sure that we listen, with humility, so that we can have an open heart and learn; thereby, fulfilling our mission to empower those around us to go for it! As Benjamin Franklin said, "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn."

"How will I use my newfound skill as a speaker and leader to help others?"

There are many ways that you can use your newfound skills as a speaker and leader. For example, you can speak at other clubs, or at civic and professional organizations. You can create a youth leadership program, lead a conference or become a conference volunteer! Also, you can participate in the Humorous Speech and Table Topics contests held in the fall, or the International Speech and Evaluation contests held in the spring!

Remember that free trip to Vegas mentioned in the beginning of this article? Whoever wins the 2015 District 83 International Speech Competition that will be held at the Spring Conference on Sunday, May 31st at the Hyatt Regency in New Brunswick, NJ, will represent the district at the Toastmasters International Convention semi-finals in August at the Caesars Palace Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. Should you be the lucky person to win the semi-final round and make the final nine, you will compete for the Toastmasters International World Championship of Public Speaking! Last year, our representative was Toastmaster Kevin Moulton. This year, it could be you! Go for it!

It all begins at the club level contests; so, when your club president asks, "Who would like to compete for International Speech or Evaluation contests?," think of the impact you can make in a person's life by sharing your story and say, "I'm going for it!"

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The Voice will publish online and via email in August, October, December, February, April and June. We welcome your comments, contributions and suggestions. We will assign staggered deadlines prior to publication. **The final deadline for the April 2015 issue is March 21, 2015.**

We have included various flyers in this issue. Please contact subrooks@verizon.net if you would like print-quality flyers.

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Whether your 'it' is to obtain an educational award, to be a leader, or a competitor, you will encounter obstacles; however, I encourage you to be courageous, learn the lesson, and move forward!

As Thomas Edison said, "The most certain way to succeed is to always try just one more time."

Go for it!



Photo courtesy of Toastmasters International

You've got something to share! Be a workshop facilitator!

Have you ever attended a District 83 conference? If so, have you ever thought, "I'd enjoy attending a workshop on xyz?" Better yet, have YOU ever thought, "I can create a workshop on XYZ!" Then, why not submit a proposal to become a workshop facilitator at the Spring Conference? Those presentation and leadership skills you worked so hard to hone can now be expressed and used to educate your fellow Toastmasters and guests.

You have something to share, and the world needs to know about it!

So, what is the procedure to become a workshop facilitator? First, you must fill out the workshop proposal form (included as part of this newsletter, and also sent to all members in an email from District Secretary, Gary Couitt, and posted on Facebook and Twitter). Simply fill in your personal information, plus an outline about what your workshop is about. **The deadline is Monday, February 16.** Workshops are 35-40 minutes in length, including introduction, question-and-answer session, and closing remarks.

Let the Contests Begin!

Has your club set a date for the club contests? Club level competitions for the International Speech and Evaluation contests start this month (February); area level competitions take place in March and competitors advance to the division level contests in April. Those who win their division titles will compete at the District 83 finals taking place during the Spring Conference on Saturday, May 30, and Sunday, May 31 at the Hyatt Regency New Brunswick. Remember, whoever wins the International Speech Competition will represent District 83 at the Toastmasters International Convention being held in Las Vegas, Nevada in August.

Before a workshop facilitator is selected, he or she must participate in an audition on **Saturday, March 7**. During the audition, you must create a 5-7 minute presentation that highlights what your workshop is about. This presentation must have the feel of your workshop. In other words, it is not a 5-7 minute speech. It is, in essence, a mini workshop! There will be 5-6 judges, including the conference co-chairs.

When you are called in to audition, walk in, smile, be sharp and be ready! You have worked hard for this moment!

The judges want to see:

- How you present yourself. You must show belief in your workshop.
- How you connect with them, since this will indicate how you will connect with your audience.
- How well prepared you are.
- Is your workshop interactive? Does it involve conversation between attendees and yourself?
- Will you provide handouts?
- Is it in line with the conference theme?
- Is the presentation focused on club, personal, or leadership development?
- If your workshop involves the use of visuals, such as PowerPoint, how effective are you in presenting them.
- Your energy. This is a very important factor. Energy will bring excitement and guarantees genuine interest in your workshop!

It is a long day, since others will be competing for a spot as well. However, it is also a very rewarding experience, because you will network with other hopefuls and exchange notes and ideas!

Once you have finished your 'mini-workshop' you must leave. You will be informed via email if you have been selected to present your workshop.

Provided you are one of the lucky ones who are selected to be a workshop facilitator, did you know that you can receive Toastmasters speech credit for presenting? There are numerous Toastmasters manuals on www.toastmasters.org (the Facilitating Discussion manual might be a possibility). Bring the manual and have someone give you a written evaluation. They will return your manual at the end of your workshop and provide a brief verbal evaluation.

The District 83 Spring Conference, "The World is Better Because of You!" will be held on Saturday, May 30th, and Sunday, May 31st, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in New Brunswick. There are nine workshop facilitator spots to be filled. You could be one of the presenters. You have something to share! Go for it!



TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT 83 SPRING 2015 CONFERENCE



PRESENTER APPLICATION

Application Due Date: February 16, 2015

Mandatory Audition Date: March 7, 2015

Conference location:

Hyatt Regency New Brunswick
2 Albany St., New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Saturday and Sunday, May 30-31, 2015

Conference Theme:

“The World is Better Because of You”

Biographical Information

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Phone: Primary _____ Cell _____

Club Name/Location: _____

Your TM Designation: _____ # Years as a Toastmaster: _____

Brief Biography: (You may also attach your biography to this form)

Presentation Information

1. There are three developmental tracks for the conference workshops. Please check the track your presentation will address:

Personal Development *Professional Development* *Club Development*

2. Title of your presentation and anticipated length (must be 35 minimum - 40 min maximum)

3. Have you presented this workshop before? If yes, when and where?

4. Have you presented this or any workshop at a Toastmaster conference in the past?
If yes, when and where?

5. Have you attended Toastmaster conferences before? If yes, which district(s)?

6. Briefly describe your presentation (outline and benefits of attending your workshop)

Title:

Purpose of workshop:

Further goals of this workshop are to:

Benefits:

7. Explain why you are qualified to present this workshop.

8. Audio/Visual/Equipment Requirements. Please tell us your needs (check all that apply)

Projector/Screen Flip Chart/Easel/Markers

You will be responsible for providing additional equipment and supplies, such as laptops, handouts or other workshop materials. The Education Co-Chairs must be informed of any changes in your Audio/Visual requirements no later than two weeks prior to the conference. Last minute changes will **not** be accommodated.

Regarding Promotions: No workshops may promote a business, products, or services. Absolutely no merchandise sales of any kind will be allowed during any workshop. Upon request, you may be provided a table for sales after the workshop session.

Suggestions for a successful workshop presentation:

- Be well-prepared, well-researched, and cite your sources.
- Have backups ready (handouts, etc., in case there are technical difficulties with audio/visual equipment).
- Give the audience your contact info ~ a business card is a wonderful and easy reference.
- Arrive early to ensure you and your proctor have time to set up the room.
- Have fun and enjoy the delivery!

Thank you for sharing your knowledge, experience, and enthusiasm!

**Please complete the entire form and submit as a Word doc or PDF
no later than the application due date to:**

Janette Alexander, Education Co-Chair

janette.alexander@solixinc.com

~Detailed information regarding the audition process and time slot will follow shortly~



First Timer!
Repeat Attendee!
Distinguished Toastmaster!
Workshop Presenter!
Keynote Speaker!
You are a Toastmasters Success Story!

**The World is Better
 Because of You!**



District 83 Spring 2015 Conference

May 30-31, 2015

Hyatt Regency

2 Albany Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

For \$135.00 you get:

- Keynote Speakers **Robert** and **Jana Barnhill***
- District Finals for **International Speech** and **Evaluation** Contests
- Choice of **9 Workshops**
- **4 meals** (Saturday: breakfast, lunch and dinner; Sunday: breakfast)
- **Networking**

\$135 through February 28, 2015

* Both Robert and Jana are Past International Presidents (PIP) Distinguished Toastmasters (DTM) and Accredited Speakers (AS)



WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

Two ways to pay!
 Download registration form and pay via check, or Pay Online!
www.toastmasters83.org

Registration Chair
 Lynda Starr, ACG, ALB
 lbstarr@optonline.net
 (973) 386-5949

For More Information, contact your Conference Co-Chairs!

Isaak Gelbinovich, DTM
mail@isaakprospeaker.com
 (201) 741-2227

Alex Volyand, CC, CL
ebheat@aol.com
 (917) 803-4356

TOASTMASTERS DISTRICT 83 2015 SPRING CONFERENCE

“The World is Better Because of You!”

www.toastmasters83.org

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, May 30th & 31st, 2015



Hyatt Regency New Brunswick

2 Albany St, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE ALL INFORMATION

Full Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Club Name: _____ Div: _____

Status (Check current designation)	<input type="checkbox"/> CTM	<input type="checkbox"/> ATMB	<input type="checkbox"/> ATMS	<input type="checkbox"/> ATMG	<input type="checkbox"/> CL	<input type="checkbox"/> ALB	<input type="checkbox"/> DTM
	<input type="checkbox"/> CC	<input type="checkbox"/> ACB	<input type="checkbox"/> ACS	<input type="checkbox"/> ACG	<input type="checkbox"/> AL	<input type="checkbox"/> ALS	

I would like to work on a committee for this conference () YES () NO

Circle any committee(s) you would like to volunteer for!

Contests	Credentials	Education (workshop proctor)	Repeat Attendees	First-Timers
Fundraising	Hospitality	Parade of Banners	Publications/ Programs	Publicity
Registration	Video/Photography	Volunteers	Facilities	Please contact me

Are you a first time Conference attendee? () YES () NO

Are you bringing your banner for the Parade of Banners? () YES () NO

Early Bird Special: \$135.00 through February 28

Meal Choices Chicken Fish Vegetarian

Mail Registration form & Payment to:

Lynda Starr, ACG/ALB

Spring Conference Registration Chair

48 Emily Place, Parsippany NJ 07054

lbstarr@optonline.net

(973) 386-5949

Should You Have Any Questions Contact:

Isaak Gelbinovich DTM / Alex Volyand CC/CL

Spring Conference Co-Chairs

mail@isaakprospeak.com / ebheat@aol.com

(201) 741-2227 / (917) 803-4356

Make check payable to: District 83 Toastmasters

Descriptions of Committees

Contests:

The Contests Committee Chair coordinates the International Speech (Spring Conference) and Humorous Speech (Fall Conference), as well as the Evaluation Contest (Spring Conference) and Table Topics (Fall Conference) contests. Volunteers for this committee will be lead by the Committee Chair to serve as judges, sergeant-at-arms, or ballot collectors.

Credentials:

The Credentials Committee Chair records and releases ballots and reports totals during the District business meetings (for both Fall and Spring Conferences). Volunteers for this committee will be asked to assist chair in registering Club Presidents and Vice-Presidents of Education.

Education:

The Education Committee Chair coordinates workshops that are educational, informative or entertaining, according to the goals of the current Lt. Gov. of Education and Conference Chairperson. Volunteers in this committee will be asked to Proctor (assist) the Workshop Presenter they are assigned to. (introduce workshop speaker, present appreciation certificate and/or gift, and collects feedback forms at the end of the workshop).

Facilities:

The Facilities Committee Chair makes sure all logistics function smoothly with the Conference facility. Volunteers in this committee will asked to make sure all equipment needed is provided and that room setups are planned. Makes sure all gavels, microphones, and signage is provided.

First-Timers:

The First-Timers Workshop Chair plans a special session for those attending the Conference for the first time, making sure that they have an enriching experience. Volunteers will be asked to assist in various activities, as assigned by the FT Workshop Chair.

Fundraising:

The Fundraising Chair encourages Toastmaster members to buy ads, either for their clubs, their own businesses or both, in addition to outside ads, for inclusion in the Conference program. Volunteers for this committee will be asked to provide leads to the Fundraising Chair that will raise funds for the conference.

Hospitality:

The Hospitality Committee Chair coordinates the greeting of guests to the conference by providing guidance to events, as indicated in the conference program. Also, the committee makes sure that guests have a place where they can gather during or in between conference activities. Volunteers for this committee will be asked to decorate the Hospitality Room, to greet guests when they arrive, and to be at key areas at the facility to guide guests to conference workshops.

Parade of Banners:

The Parade of Banners Chair makes sure all clubs that brings their banners are recognized (list of those clubs that are bringing their banners is provided by the Registration Chair) during the conference. Volunteers for this committee will assist in publicizing directions as to where to store and pick up banners, as well as directing participants where to hang the banners. Also, volunteers may be asked to help with line-up, and announcements, in a timely manner.

Conference Program Chair:

The Conference Program Chair is a one-person operation, coordinating with all chairs to make sure all necessary material for the conference program is provided. The person in this capacity must know printing computer software and must know printing terminology.

Publications:

The Publications Chair makes sure all announcements (i.e. Parade of Banners, Credentials, etc.) are provided to Registration Chair for inclusion in the Conference package.

Publicity:

The Publicity Chair assures that every club member is aware of the conference, and is motivated to attend. Also, that knowledge of the conference is disseminated through the District website, print media and social media. Volunteers for this committee may be asked to “spread the word” about the conference during area and division contests, as well as to anyone they feel would be interested in attending. They may also be asked to provide media leads to Publicity Chair.

Registration

The Registration Chair is the “bloodline” of the conference, providing information to all chairpersons regarding registrants to the conference, deposit fees, and check-in. Volunteers for this committee will be asked to assist in Check-in of First-time attendees, workshop presenters, walk-ins, etc.

Videography:

The Videography Chair assures that there is sufficient video equipment, and that it is running smoothly. Volunteers for this committee may be asked to make sure all equipment is set, since workshops run simultaneously.

Photography:

The Photography Chair makes sure key, as well as spontaneous pictures are taken during the conference. Volunteers for this committee will be guided by the PC, where needed.

Volunteers:

The Volunteers Chairperson (usually a one-person operation) finds out how many volunteers are needed by each committee chair. Registration Chair will provide list of those attending, then VC contacts those people to see if they would be interested in volunteering. Volunteer Chair must emphasize the benefits of volunteering, such as personal and educational growth

Educationally Speaking

In this edition, Fran Okeson provides us with two flyers on pages 10 and 11, "Are you a Cool Cat" and "Public Speaking 101." You may use these flyers or the content in your Toastmasters educational programs. Please credit Fran Okeson for her contribution.

Fran Okeson, DTM 17, is a Past District Governor of District 46. She currently serves as President of No Limits Toastmasters Club, Area 13 Governor 2014-2015 and has served as District 83's High Performance Leadership Advisor since 2008.

Club Newsletter Contest

Does your Club have a newsletter? If so, consider entering our Newsletter Contest! If not, consider creating one. You and your team may earn credit towards goals in the Competent Leader manual.

Criteria: Must use current TI logo.

May use TI templates from Brand Portal or create your own layouts.

Club must be in good standing with April 2015 dues paid to TI on time.

Issues dated between July 1, 2014 and March 1, 2015 are eligible.

Deadline for submissions: April 15, 2015.

Submit in pdf format to d83newsletter@gmail.com

Include correct Toastmasters branding standards (colors, use of logo, fonts, images, design devices)

Minimum of 2 pages; no maximum number of pages.

One club winner will be announced at the District 83 Spring 2015 Conference. \$50 in TI Gift Certificates will be awarded.

Your club cannot enter a club newsletter in 2014/2015 if:

- A member of the club is a contest newsletter judge
- A member of the club is one of the top six District Officers:

District Governor
Lt. Governor Education and Training
Lt. Governor Marketing
District Public Relations Officer
District Treasurer
District Secretary

are you a **Cool Cat?**

If you want to belong to the **COOL CAT CLUB** you can try some of these proven ways you can complete your first CC...and find some exciting ideas for subsequent ones.

First...you must make a commitment to succeed!

You didn't join your Toastmasters Club to sit in the audience and be entertained, did you? You joined because you had a need to improve your speaking and leadership skills.

Second...you must have confidence in your own abilities to succeed!

You are the best judge as to what you can and cannot accomplish. Rely on your fellow club members and your mentor to assist you in reaching your goals.

Third...you must concentrate on your objectives!

Plan each speech project as if it were the only speech you will ever give. Prepare and practice your speech until it feels comfortable to you. Research your subject to give it the extra impact it needs. Stay focused and you will succeed!

For more information contact:

Fran Okeson DTM 17

Area 13 Governor ~ Past District 46 Governor (2001-2002)

District 83 High Performance Leadership Advisor

(E) Frantotten@verizon.net (H) 718-984-1339

Public Speaking 101

*** Do you want to inform your audience about a certain topic? (public policy, current events, social changes)**

***Do you want to entertain your audience? (who is your audience? do you know anyone in the audience)**

***Do you want to become a paid motivational speaker?**

***Do you want to share your special interests with your audience? (hobbies, collecting, photography, writing poetry or stories, cooking, sewing, healthy eating)**

Then...

***Educate yourself. Prepare yourself for different kinds of audiences. Become able to respond to questions quickly and with conviction.**

***Do your research. The world abounds with places to discover new information. and confirm its current accuracy.**

***Try something new. Make a short presentation on CTV and review the tape to see how you can improve your skills**

For information on appearing on, “Toastmasters in the Community” winner of the 2013 NOVA award in Education, contact:

**Fran Okeson DTM 16, PDG (46)
Executive Producer/ Host
District 83 ~ Area 13 Governor (2013-2014)
High Performance Leadership Advisor
frantotten@verizon.net or 718-984-1339**

It's Back! Fifth Annual Staten Island Yankees Baseball Game... and Speakout!

By Su Brooks, DTM

Baseball and public speaking? Perfect together! The Staten Island Yankees will play the Brooklyn Cyclones on Sunday, August 9, 2015 at the Richmond County Bank Ballpark at St. George next to the Staten Island Ferry. There will be a "speakout" at 3pm before the game begins at 4pm.

What is a Speakout?

A speakout is a Toastmasters meeting where participants get together to present speeches and receive evaluations. That's it! Participants prepare a manual speech prior to the meeting and agree to serve as someone else's speech evaluator. Participants provide their speech information to the Toastmaster in advance so the speakout can begin on time. Upon arrival, members give their manual to another participant and discuss their objectives prior to the start of the speakout. One member serves as the Timer. Speeches are presented first, followed by evaluations.

Non-Toastmasters guests are welcome and can choose to attend the speakout or socialize and enjoy the ballpark with the

amazing views prior to the game. Last year, eleven Toastmasters gave manual speeches while we waited for the game to begin. We all enjoyed the camaraderie of members throughout our district who usually don't attend meetings on Staten Island. Please consider attending the game this August. I attended this event last year and had a great time. The tickets are \$50. If we have enough people, we will reserve two suites at the stadium this year. The price includes an air-conditioned suite, all the food you can eat and serves as the annual fundraising event for the No Limits Toastmasters club. To reserve your ticket, please contact Fran Okeson: frantotten@verizon.net.

Here is some more information about the Staten Island Yankees and the ballpark.

<http://www.milb.com/index.jsp?sid=t586>

You may copy the flyer included in this issue on page 13 if you would like to promote this activity to members of your clubs.

"There is a difference between listening and waiting for your turn to speak."

– Simon Sinek

Simon Sinek is the author of two books: *Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action* and *Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don't*. Although similar, to hear and to listen are not the same. Hearing is one of the five senses and a physical activity while listening is a skill that requires paying attention to verbal and non-verbal utterances and making sense of what someone is saying.

There can be a communication gap if one is merely waiting for the first person to take a breath or stop speaking and concentrating on only what the second person is about to say. Key verbal and non-verbal information may be missed. As Toastmasters, in our personal and professional lives, we need to listen and can take be in trouble if not paying attention. The term "active listening" turns listening from a passive to an active experience and is a useful skill whether one holds a line, staff, managerial or executive position or is called on to be a speech or general evaluator. Active listening includes asking questions and offering feedback at the appropriate time.



Staten Island Light
"Share the Light"

No Limits
Toastmasters
8011 - 83 ~ Area 13

Staten Island Yankees VS Brooklyn Cyclones

What: 5th Annual Summer Event

Where: Richmond County Ballpark ... 75 Richmond Terrace (Suite 18)
Staten Island 10301 - next to the Staten Island Ferry)

When: Sunday, August 9, 2015 (**air conditioned suite / all the food you can eat**)

Time: 4 pm ~ gate opens at 3pm Speakout from 3pm. (bring manual and pen)

Cost: \$50.00 per ticket (\$35.00 by March 1st and final \$15.00 by June 1, 2015)

Payable to: **"Women's Club of Tottenville"**

(7492 Amboy Road, Staten Island, NY 10307) **No Refunds**

To benefit the "Toastmasters in the Community" television show
Winner of the 2013 "NOVA" award in the category of Education
Speakers are always welcome.

For more information, contact:

Fran Okeson DTM 17, PDG (46) ~ District 83 HPL Advisor
(E) Frantotten@verizon.net or (H) 718-984-1339

Why Timing is Important

By Su Brooks, DTM

Timing is important both in the Toastmasters environment as well as in our lives outside of Toastmasters.

At Toastmasters meetings

It all begins with an agenda. The meeting should begin and end on time. Meeting participants should strive to keep within their designated time slots. If the meeting has a break built in, participants should respect the amount of time designated for the break and return to the meeting promptly. By doing so, you demonstrate that you respect other people's time.

Meetings outside of Toastmasters

Many of us attend meetings outside of Toastmasters. These might include Board of Education meetings, environmental commission meetings, meetings for your religious group, faith, Scouts or other community meetings, as well as meetings in an academic or business environment. A skilled facilitator, chair or moderator will keep the meeting moving. If certain topics need more time and attention, the chair might suggest a separate meeting at a different time or that a subcommittee to attend to the business at hand.

Multiple people on a program

When several people appear on a program, at a conference or on a panel, it is imperative that presenters stay within the specified time frame. If one person goes over, that means less time for the other speakers. If the events are delayed over the course of the day or evening, it could possibly result in one or more speakers missing their turn entirely. This also impacts the facilities—for how long was the room reserved? Is the hotel preparing lunch or dinner? If the event begins to run later than planned or advertised, you run the risk of your audience departing, leaving empty seats. Fewer participants could be awkward for the speaker if audience interaction is an important component of the presentation.

Contests

During a Toastmasters contest, the judges might decide that you have delivered the best speech, evaluation or table topics presentation, but if you do not reach the minimum amount of time OR exceed the maximum time by 30 seconds, you will be disqualified. Contestants should know the location/setup of the timing devices before the competition begins. They should also be able to recognize the signals from their speaking area. Accomplished presenters learn to pay attention to the timing devices during meetings and contests.

Learning to edit and speaking concisely

There are numerous ways speakers prepare their speech material. Many people have so many great ideas for any given speech topic and try to fit everything within their time slot. After the brainstorming session and rehearsal, the speaker must edit. What stays in? What comes out? What else is needed? What belongs with an entirely different speech? By



Photo courtesy of
Toastmasters International

going through these steps, the speaker becomes a better editor and a better writer, whether they realize it or not at the time. By planning and preparing in advance, the speaker will help ensure that the speech they deliver is within the specified time.

Role of the Timer

Many new Toastmasters feel comfortable and eagerly take on the role of Timer in a club meeting because they can present a brief report at the end of the meeting as they continue to gain confidence in their speaking abilities.

Some Toastmasters avoid the role since they feel as if they are missing out on the nuances of the speeches while focusing on the timing devices.

Toastmasters International has provided guidelines for the role of the meeting Timer. The following information was obtained from their website:

Taking on this role improves time management skills.

One of the skills Toastmasters practice is expressing a thought within a specific time. As Timer you are responsible for monitoring time for each meeting segment and each speaker.

To perform as Timer, you:

Acquire the timing/signaling equipment from the Sergeant-at-Arms and know how to operate it.

Explain the timing rules and demonstrate the signal device if called upon to do so.

Throughout the meeting, listen carefully to each participant and signal them accordingly.

When called to report, announce the speaker's name and the time taken.

After the meeting, return the timing/signaling equipment to the Sergeant-at-Arms and give your timer's report to the secretary.

Get credit for your work

Serving as Timer helps individuals earn credit toward their CL (Competent Leader) designation. In Project 4, Time Management, participants need to serve as timer plus one other meeting role, choosing from Toastmaster, Speaker, Topicsmaster or Grammarian.

By remembering these points as you plan, practice and present your speeches as well as run meetings, training sessions and contests, you can keep things moving along on a positive note for all participants. By providing an environment in which people feel their time is respected, members and guests will want to return.



Vice President of Public Relations – The Fuel of the PRO Team!

Some of you have already attended training during Fall 2014, and for others, attending training this round will be your first time learning about this exciting, yet challenging role.

exciting, yet challenging role.

So, what is your job description? Referring to the Toastmaster Manual, 'Let the World Know!' the job description for you, as club VPPR, is:

You are responsible for coordinating an active public relations and publicity program in your club. By establishing and maintaining lines of communication between the club and its members, as well as between the club and the public, you will work toward increased awareness of Toastmasters through local news and social media.

Notice the emphasis of relationship between the club (executive committee) and members. Your club must be invested in your plan in order for ensure its success – it is an inward-outward circle. So, what happens after your VPPR officer training? How can you ensure the success of your clubs' outreach and communication within and outside your club?

This is where the **Forward Assault Strategic Tactics (F.A.S.T.)** plan comes in!

Since I believe growth comes from within, that will be the focus of the sample problem: Existing members have stopped coming to meetings.

Forward: Plan with the end result in mind.

Your vision is to keep existing members engaged so they attend meetings!

Assault: Employ a full-force approach!

No holding back! Use excitement, enthusiasm, and emotion behind every action taken.

Your research indicates that the reason for lack of attendance is that the meetings have become predictable.

As club VPPR, it is important to infuse energy! Your enthusiasm must be a positive contagion that encourages your club executive committee, to listen, to believe, and to act. Brainstorm!

Strategic: Create emotional investment.

Boredom breeds contempt, so change it up! Oscar night is coming up soon (February 22). Plan an Oscar night! Fun creates emotional investment! Give awards! The Table Topics can be the interview with the stars! Get those feather boas out! Have everyone dress up; then have the Table Topics Master ask, à la Joan Rivers, "Who are you wearing?"

Tactics: Implement your plan without fear, using the resources available to their utmost potential.

Talk up your event! Both word of mouth and media are important. Send out emails and group texts advertising the event! Send the information to the PRO (this year, that is yours truly at d83proestrada@gmail.com), so it can be posted on social media channels, then advertise on your club website, as well. Also, let the local media channels such as community websites know about your event. Take pictures to post (send to me also).

Afterwards, evaluate the result. What worked, what didn't work, and recalibrate. The fun is in the trying.

Remember, satisfied existing members will make the second half of your job, outreach to attract new members, much easier. The outside must reflect the internal truth.

Successful clubs transmute into successful areas, divisions, and District 83!

Serving you as your PRO has been very rewarding, and I know that, when my term ends, I will have learned much more from you. Enjoy your role as club VPPR! You are the fuel of the PRO team! Put your heart and soul into it, and who knows, one of you may be the next PRO!

**Margarita Estrada, ACB, ALB
Public Relations Officer**

Speaking of Love for the Valentines

Compiled by Su Brooks, DTM; Margarita Estrada, ACB, ALB; Anne Gilson, DTM; and Lynda Starr, ACG, ALB

In honor of Valentine's Day, the editorial planning team decided to reach out to some of our members who have Toastmasters in common with their spouse/significant other. Our participants were invited to answer two questions. Either or both members of the couple provided answers.

We asked:

1. Did you meet through Toastmasters OR how did your spouse/significant other convince you to join? (Or, how did you convince her/him to join if you were a Toastmaster first?)
2. The best thing about being Toastmasters together is_____.



Thank you to the following Toastmasters:

Jorge Aguilar, ACB and Brian Cort, ACS, ALB
Arlene Beroff, ACG and Howard Beroff, ACB
Janice Buffalow, ACS, ALS, and Dave Chapman, ACB, CL
Irene Card, DTM and Arnold Card, DTM
Emily Cohen, ACG, ALB, and Allen Cohen, ACG
Carla Gathers, CTM, CL and Rashard Gathers
Roseann Hood and Bill Hood, DTM
Paula Markert, DTM and Willie Markert, ACB, CL
Darryln Tarantino, CC and David Tarantino
Sharon Tu, ACB, ALS and Brian Lin, DTM
Emilia Volyand, ACS, ALB and Alex Volyand, ACB, CL

Jorge Aguilar and Brian Cort

1. We met long before Toastmasters - 23 years ago through mutual friends. Brian joined Toastmasters first – the Cosmopolitan Toastmasters club when it met at Alcatel-Lucent's Whippany, NJ office. I joined later, after Brian invited me to one of the meetings at which he was speaking.

2. Helping each other work on our speeches! We each have different strengths, and we complement each other in our speech writing process. Brian says I'm an amazing coach for when he's working on one of his contest speeches. He is great at helping me to organize my thoughts and put them with images in a speech that's illustrated with a slide show. Also because English is not my first language, Brian is a wonderful and patient language coach!

– Jorge

Arlene and Howard Beroff

Many years ago Arlene and I took the Dale Carnegie course in Human Relations and Public Speaking. When that course was over we joined the "Carnegians" which was an alumni group of Dale Carnegie graduates. Eventually, that organization dissolved, and we missed the activity, the camaraderie, etc. Then we found Toastmasters International. The rest is history.

The best things about Toastmasters are the stimulating meetings, the opportunity to develop skills and the camaraderie. We enjoy the conferences and International Convention – especially the International Speech Contest.

– Howard

Irene and Arnold Card

How did we both end up in Toastmasters together? "For over 15 years Arnold would occasionally get harping about why our church needed a Toastmasters club (he had been in a Toastmasters club until the company got sold). Finally, I had heard enough and I said, "pick up the phone and call International and find out how you start a club OR stop talking about it"! I was doing a lot of public speaking with my business so it just made sense for me to join too, especially since he won't go near a computer."

What is the best thing about being in Toastmasters together? It's a date night! Plus, we both understand how to help each other when one is doing a speech – we give each other good feedback, time rehearsals, etc.

– Irene and Arnold

Valentines continued on page 17

Valentines continued from page 16

Dave Chapman and Janice Buffalow

Dave and I met in December 2004 and have been together now 10 years. He wanted to find a program to help him improve his speaking techniques. A friend mentioned Toastmasters and he started researching everything about it.

He contacted Somerville Toastmasters, speaking with Kathy Schursky. He seemed very impressed and comfortable with their conversation. We discussed what he had talked with Kathy and we decided to go together as it would give us something we could do together.

Our first visit we became members; that was April 2006. Neither of us have regretted that decision.

We attend our meetings and as we drive home talk about the improvements each of us are making or what could have been better. We talk about the “high” we have after the meetings because of all the help we provide and receive. The best is the encouragement we give each other. We enjoy meeting new people, attending conferences and above all, helping people become better speakers.

– Janice



Emily and Allen Cohen

1. We had been married for many years when Emily joined Toastmasters as a retirement activity. Four years later she asked Allen to join because she needed a new member to mentor to help her earn her ACG. She promised him that he could quit after doing three speeches. However, he decided to continue.

2. “The best part of being in Toastmasters with my spouse is that it is an entertaining pursuit that we both enjoy, both separately and together,” says Allen.

The best part of being in Toastmasters with my spouse is that it is another interest that we share.

– Emily

Carla and Rashard Gathers

1. I joined Toastmasters in 1998, which was the year I met my husband. I was active in the PPG Chapter for 2 years before moving to the East Coast. With my move and career change, I lost touch with Toastmasters, but I never forgot how valuable the program was to me. Over the years, I looked for a chapter to

get involved with, and when I discovered Ainsley was starting a club (Dialogue Party Toastmasters), I knew it was time to come back “home”. This time, I decided to bring Rashard with me. Rashard is known for his articulate, confident, and powerful speaking style, but I convinced him that there were other areas for him to excel. For example, he was a little stiff when it came time for him to present a humorous speech. When he presented his Best Man Speech at our Toastmasters meeting, he learned techniques that ultimately lead to a very entertaining tribute to his brother at his wedding.

2. What I like about being in Toastmasters together is simple: watching each other grow. As working parents of two young daughters, much of what we do is either for our children, or for our jobs. Toastmasters is an investment in ourselves, and it is a pleasure to set our personal goals, and attack them together.

– Carla

1. Joining Toastmasters as a married couple provided us with an opportunity to bond in an environment that was away from the home. For me it has been more about following in my wife’s footsteps, as she was a very experienced Toastmaster, and this was my first interaction with the organization. My wife has provided me insights into how the organization works, and we have practiced speeches together with each of us rotating as a speaker and audience role. Additionally, we oftentimes must bring our kids to the Toastmasters meeting, and one of the benefits is that they can see how important it is to practice speaking.

“The couple that SPEAKS together, STAYS together.”

2. In summary, with relationships, it is important to find outlets for spending quality time and supporting each other, and that is what Toastmasters allows us to do. With that in mind, we believe that “the couple that SPEAKS together, STAYS together.”

– Rashard

Bill and Roseann Hood

1. I brought Roseann into Toastmasters when I was coaching William Patterson University Toastmasters. Roseann was already attending conferences with me as a guest, I thought it might be a good intro for her to join a smaller club that only meets once a month. She’s a brilliant evaluator but still a little shy when it comes to getting in front of a crowd.

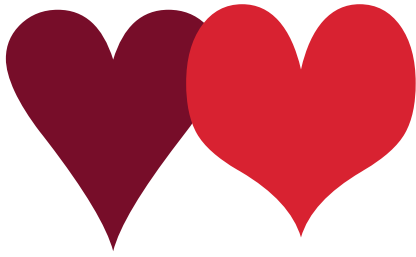
2. The best part of being in Toastmasters with my spouse is we are on a personal journey to step out of our comfort zone. We travel this road together of self improvement but at different paces and we’re highly supportive of each other.

– Bill



Valentines continued on page 18

Valentines continued from page 17



Sharon Tu and Brian Lin

1. We met at a trade conference. I did use Toastmasters skills to get Sharon's attention though. I bugged/begged her to join Toastmasters many times throughout our dating phase. She finally caved in after we got married, and when I was district governor and needed more new members. She enjoyed Toastmasters since then.

2. The best part of being in Toastmasters with my spouse is.....

- she understands why I willingly get up at 7am on a super cold Saturday morning to go to a meeting.
- we don't need to look for roommates at international conventions or district conferences.
- we have more effective speech rehearsals at home.
- two engines of motivation are better than one.
- we have more common friends and enemies to talk about.

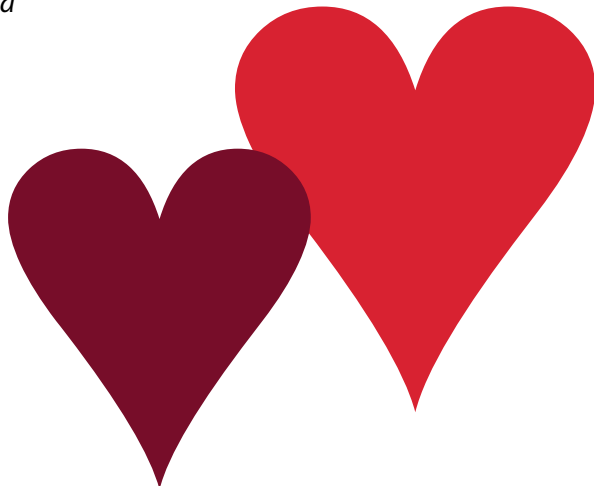
– Brian

Paula and Willie Markert

1. We both joined Toastmasters together, as charter members of the Open Door Toastmasters (Denville, NJ). We had heard a lot about the program from our friends, Arnold and Irene Card, and thought it would be a nice way to improve our speaking and to also meet new people. Neither one of us thought – 10 years ago – that we would still be involved.

2. The best thing about being Toastmasters together is that we spend time together; we have learned about each other through our speeches; we have learned how to evaluate each other and still be civil to each other.

– Paula



Darryln and David Tarantino

1. I was the first to join Toastmasters. My husband David saw the effect it was having on my confidence and public speaking. David has always been a good communicator but needed help getting rid of the filler words. I encouraged him to join the club at his company and he gave it a try. He liked his corporate club but the demands of his job made it hard to attend the mid-afternoon meeting. I was also between clubs and looking to reconnect with Toastmasters. When I heard about a new club starting at our town's library, I encouraged David to join with me.

2. The best thing about being in Toastmasters together is being together. We enjoying discussing the meetings, the speeches and our goals.

– Darryln

Alex and Emilia Volyand

1. Alex and I joined Toastmasters together. Our daughter Danielle was getting married, and Alex needed to make a father speech. He decided that Toastmasters would be a great place to learn. I had no interest in joining, but he begged me, and I couldn't refuse.

2. The best thing about being Toastmasters together that it brings us closer.

It gives us a chance to be together more often.

It helps us to communicate better with each other.

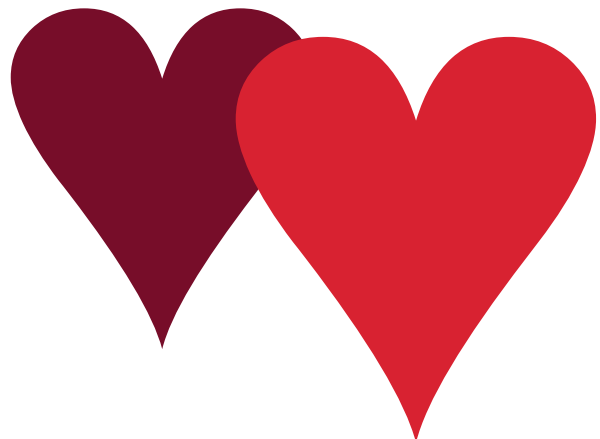
We also had our son join Toastmasters – now it's a family affair.

We have lots of common interests and common friends from Toastmasters.

Alex and I went to two international conventions together, both served on the committee for district 83 Conference, both were Presidents of Brunswick Toastmasters Club, both served as Area Governors, and we are both looking forward to achieving DTM this year!

I hope this will inspire other couples to do the same!

– Emilia



In the Limelight

My Toastmasters Story and Why I Stick with It

By Janice Buffalow, ACB, ALS

I walked into my first Toastmasters meeting on a Wednesday night in April 2006 with my fiancé/life-partner/husband, Dave Chapman. Dave wanted to enhance his speaking capabilities, did research on Toastmasters and found a local club that fit our schedules. We decided to visit the club with the potential to join together to give us something to do as a couple/team.

“Public speaking” immediately conjured up visions of me in high school, standing at the podium, white knuckled as I held myself still, staring at the back of the room with blind glances at my speech on the podium; 100% speechless for 3 minutes. For me, it was a reminder of my first public humiliation. These visions flashed through my head soon after we walked in and were greeted by Kathy Schursky with a hearty, friendly handshake and warm greeting, “We are so happy to have you visiting Somerville Toastmasters, welcome!” While meeting and mingling with other members of the club prior to the meeting, Kathy approached me with a piece of paper in hand and asked if I could do the invocation. “All you have to do is read this after I call your name. Shake my hand. Read what is on the paper. Shake my hand when you are done. That’s it!” I got cold; my palms started to sweat. Dave reassured that I would be fine. My invocation experience was not so bad; at the break, we joined the club.

In June 2006, Kathy asked if I would be interested in being the Vice President of Membership; sure, why not? What did I have to lose? The answer: Absolutely nothing! The real question is: What do I have to gain? The answer: Absolutely everything! I have held an office ever since, all but Treasurer.

One night, we had a visit from someone stating they were “some kind of Governor” who spoke about a conference where there were guest speakers, workshops, networking, and food for a nominal fee. It sounded like lots of fun; Dave and I decided to go and signed up. WOW! We met and heard Ed Tate that weekend ... F A N T A S T I C!!! We met so many people that weekend. Over the years, we may have missed a handful of district conferences but we try not to miss any! They are a great opportunity to network, meet fantastic guest speakers, attend workshops, contests, and of course, there is food; all well worth the money with a great return on investment.

As I write this article, I ask myself, “What’s in it for you?” Where do I begin? I am 7 speeches away from getting my DTM; yes, it has taken nearly 9 years but not a moment of wasted time. I have been an Area Governor, 2.5 times in Division C; participated in various roles at Spring and Fall District Conferences; Awards & Recognition Chair twice; sponsored two new clubs; mentored three new clubs; District Chief Judge, participated in demo meetings; organized Area and District Contests; mentored members (club members and others who asked for help); helped rebuild my second club after two major layoffs; participated in two taping sessions (4 shows) Staten Island’s CTV – No Limits Toastmasters Cable TV show and was



Immediate Past District Governor Cyndi Wilson, DTM3 (left), presents Janice Buffalow, ACB, ALS with the Toastmaster of the Year Award at the District 83 Fall Conference in November 2014.

Photo by Esmond Siew.

speechless and honored to receive the Toastmaster of the Year Award for 2013-2014. I am confident in myself; my meetings are well organized and timely; improved my listening skills; provide effective and well-constructed feedback and have been able to speak during club meetings with no filler words!

Some time ago, one of my former colleagues asked, “Why do you stick with Toastmasters? Haven’t you done it all?” My response: No, I’m not finished. There are people out there to be mentored; new members to bring in; new clubs to start-up; contests to host; and more learning opportunities for me to continue to improve my own skills as I continue to become a better communicator and leader. I always remind people, communication and leadership skills are not only for business but for all facets of life; dealing with family, other organizations in which you may be a member. My advice to everyone, make the commitment, take the time to complete your DTM but get it done, network and have more than one mentor, participate in district activities, participate as a contestant in contests and don’t give up. The reward of your efforts is priceless!

Toastmasters is part of my everyday life and it is stuck on me; try it, you’ll like it!

Editors’ note: Janice L. Buffalow is a member of Somerville Toastmasters, and Tower & Bridge Toastmasters.

The Road to District Leadership

By Lynda Starr, ACG, ALB

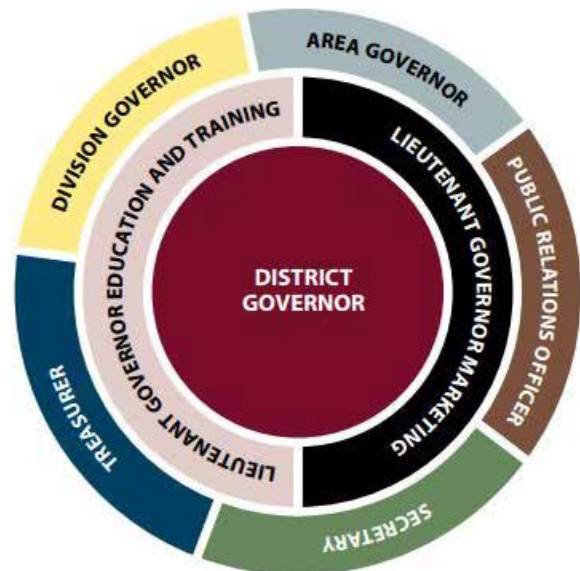
While Toastmasters is club and member-oriented, there are leaders at the area, division and district level with the purpose of supporting the members in the goal of becoming more effective communicators and leaders. Moreover, being a district leader benefits the individuals who take on these roles by offering the chance to develop leadership skills, practice teamwork, and meet one's own Toastmasters goals on the advanced leadership silver (ALS) and Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) tracks.

According to Toastmasters International, a district leadership committee as appointed by the current district governor serves as the nominating committee to select candidates for the district governor, lieutenant governor—Education and Training (LGET), lieutenant governor—Marketing and Membership (LGM), and division governors. This year, Lisa Pantano, DTM and past district governor (PDG) will head the nominating committee. According to Toastmasters bylaws, “no member of the committee can be nominated for a district office in the election at which the committee’s report is presented.” The committee is made up of members in good standing in clubs of good standing across the various divisions that comprise District 83.

If someone would like to be considered for a position, that person must either submit a written nomination form or can be nominated by another member. Each person nominated will be asked to attend an in-person private meeting with the nominating committee and submit a signed Officer Agreement and Release Statement. The results of the meeting and any voting by the committee are kept confidential and limited to involved parties.

This year, Toastmasters has instituted new names for the district officers although the responsibilities remain the same:

- **District director (formerly district governor).** At the time of taking office, the district director must have served at least six consecutive months as club president and at least 12 consecutive months as a lieutenant governor, division governor or a combination of these.
- **Program quality director (formerly LGET).** At the time of taking office, the program quality director must have served at least six consecutive months as club president and at least 12 consecutive months as a lieutenant governor, a division governor, an area governor or a combination of these.
- **Club growth director (formerly LGM).** At the time of taking office, the club growth director must have served at least six consecutive months as club president and at least 12 consecutive months as a lieutenant governor, a division governor, an area governor or a combination of these.



- **Division director (formerly division governor).** At the time of taking office, the division director must have served at least six consecutive months as a member of a district council.

The committee nominates one or two candidates for each of the offices of district director and program quality director. The committee nominates one or more candidates for the office of club growth director and division directors. The committee chair will submit a written report to the district governor six weeks prior to the election, who in turn shares the report with the district council. This year’s election will be at the business meeting to be held during the Spring Conference on May 30, 2015. Nominations are due March 10.

At the business meeting, there will also be a call for floor nominations for each office and those who were not selected by the nominating committee and others may be nominated when the district governor calls for nominations.

The Leadership Roles

District Director: Oversees and manages the district’s day-to-day operations, finances, and human resources.

Program Quality Director: Responsible for all aspects of education and training within the district.

Club Growth Director: Responsible for all aspects of marketing, club-building, and member- and club-retention efforts within the district.

Division Director: Leads and supports the division through the supervision and support of the area governors. Coordinates division activities, sets division goals, and assists in the training of area and club leaders.

The terms of all district officers shall commence on July 1 at 12:01 a.m. and terminate on June 30 at midnight. The incoming district director will select the area directors, the remaining district officers and committee chairs.

Crossing the 5 – Family and Holidays

By Sherri Rase, ACB, ALB

In 2014, I spent Thanksgiving week at my sister's place in Huntington Beach, California. Huntington Beach is a bit south of Los Angeles and it's a very laid-back place.

If there is a time difference, as there is between East Coast and West Coast, the adjustment when you're headed out to vacation is to your advantage. You'll stay up a bit later; you'll get up earlier than the rest of the house (for the most part). Coming back, it's a like a two by four between the eyes. Allow yourself a weekend before resuming your regular schedule, yet know that you'll still experience the time hangover usually reserved for Daylight Savings Time.

Someone coming from the East Coast, like Yours Truly, has a ratio of activity I am accustomed to as well as a level of autonomy that comes from things like having my own car, my own schedule, and my own idea of what needs to happen when. When you're on vacation visiting family, abandon all hope of control. You may or may not have input into what is happening. If your family is like mine, they've already made plans for your visit. A lot of them. Using a slide rule for scheduling.

The biggest challenge you're likely to encounter is communication. We Toastmasters feel we're experts at communications. A good reminder is to remember our audience – to be as clear as possible. It might be something simple like needing to remind one another to take a breath so you can get a word in edgewise. Or it might be something more – um – important. Take my visit with my sister to her place of employ.

Deb and I drove to her office nice and early. I was encouraged to dress a bit more nicely than the shorts and t-shirt that had become my vacation uniform. I donned capris and a nice blouse. I had a cuppa with Deb in the pre-work stillness of the office, then confirmed the location of a shopping area not too far of a walk from the building. Then the trouble began.

I am an avid walker, averaging 12 to 15 thousand steps per day. That's about 6 to 8 miles of walking and the steps add up quickly. While at my sister's I walked to Huntington Beach pier from the house every day, and had recently gotten my best step-day ever at 26,000! I had no idea I was on the road to something nearly as accomplished.

Usually we cross "Ts", or eyes or even sometimes the Rubicon. I started out from the parking lot of my sister's office, and turned left at the end of the parking lot. I walked down the hill we had just recently come up, came to a light. I crossed the street then made a right turn, with Big Lots in mind.

I walked in the early morning sunlight, initially a little bit cool but becoming more comfortable as the sun warmed things up. Deb works in Laguna Hills and the temperature began in the high 50s, soon working into the low 70s. I passed a shopping center on my right, then one on my left but neither included my destination. I then saw I was approaching an overpass that went over a major highway.

Interstate Highway 5 is the main highway running North to South on the West Coast of the United States. It is a direct route connecting all of the state capitals of California, Oregon and Washington states and there I was walking across the overpass and listening to the susurrantion of the traffic, sounding like the ocean. When I had finished my crossing and saw no sign of the store I was seeking, I decided to call Deb and figure out where

I was.

"The 5?! What are you doing crossing the 5?!" This is where I knew I'd made a wrong turn, somewhere. But, WHERE? I'm a Toastmaster! Had I not been active enough in my listening? Had I not communicated clearly?

Long story short, I had said to my sister (TWICE), "take a right turn after leaving the OFFICE PARK, RIGHT?" She had replied (TWICE) "Yes," thinking I meant the Parking Lot, which is what she had meant. A blister and literally 12,000 steps later, we figured out

the gaffe in communication, during lunch. All told, it's small as far as communication issues go, but it's a good reminder that during all seasons and for all reasons, even a Toastmaster, make sure you understand one another before pursuit of separate activities.

Vacation spent with family is always a delight and though sometimes communications issues can cause a brief thunderstorm of agita; the sky always clears. After all, you're with your family who loves you just because. Yet, I will always remember my adventure in crossing the 5. And if you'd ever like to give it a go, I'll make recommendations on using the sunny side of the street!

Happy Valentine's Day!

We Toastmasters feel we're experts at communications. A good reminder is to remember our audience – to be as clear as possible. It might be something simple like needing to remind one another to take a breath so you can get a word in edgewise.

Munich Re Toastmasters Recognizes Annual Achievements

By John Connors, ACS, ALB

Munich Re America Toastmasters hosted its second annual Awards Luncheon on December 17, 2014. President Margarita Lopez began the program welcoming the guests and introducing keynote speaker and 2015 Communicator of the Year recipient, Carsten Prussog, President of Specialty Markets.

Mr. Prussog's speech entitled "The Power of Communication" reminded us that speech can be used for both good and evil purposes. In his address, Mr. Prussog spoke about his efforts to become a better speaker in his second language, English, and went on to compliment Toastmasters for its efforts to improve effective communication and leadership. Mr. Prussog's presentation was enthusiastically received by the attendees; it was one that any Toastmaster would have been proud to deliver.

During the luncheon, table talk centered about Toastmaster goings-on. There was much talk about past accomplishments, future programs and individual experiences as Toastmasters.

After a wonderful lunch, the "Year End Table Topics" competition was conducted. Table Topics Master, Robert McCleish, led the program that consisted of playing holiday songs followed by a related question. All the participants fared well. The winner, Dulani Williams, a new Toastmaster, expressed both joy and anguish as he described his lifelong love for the Philadelphia Eagles, an attraction that began when he was a boy in Bermuda.

Concluding the program, Maggie Rogers, VPE, presented awards to members for accomplishments during the year. The awards included recognition for completing Competent Leadership and Competent Communication manuals, completing at least five projects in the CL and CC manuals, delivering an Ice Breaker and an award for best attendance. Predictably the winner of the attendance award was unable to attend the festivities!

Noteworthy during the meeting was the camaraderie and eagerness displayed by the Munich Re membership. It was evident that this corporate club has the enthusiastic support of Munich Re management and the wholehearted commitment of the club's membership.



Above: left to right: Toastmasters Munich Re America club President Margarita Lopez, 2015 (Club) Communicator of the Year recipient Carsten Prussog, President of Specialty Markets and Ellen Hauser, CC, Toastmasters club Past President. Inset: Club awards.

Photography by John Reed