

# Toastmasters International Newsletter

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This last summer, I was approached to be the District Public Relations Officer for the upcoming Toastmaster year. It sounded exciting, I talked with some people, I talked with Diane who has done a wonderful job this past year, I talked with my kids, I talked with my home club, and I even talked to the Rural Mail Carrier.

They all said, "You'll be great! Go for it!"

Well, all except for the kids: "Dad, the word is NO! Can you say that? It's not hard." "And when did you say you were going to retire?" "We'll never see you again!" "I thought you were going to keep miles off that new car!"

So, we're off on the start of a new adventure. A new year with all the wonderful Toastmasters in District 19. All the Contests! All the Training Sessions! All the meetings! All the events! And most of all, the Fun Times to be had when we get together.

Exciting times are on us. First, we are all pulling for Callista Gould at the World Championship of Public Speaking. We all know that she will make us proud. She has already!

Then there are the Contests coming up in August, September, October and culminating in the super Fall Conference, "Jazzin' It Up!" on November 9-10.

And as Diane pointed out, there is all the rest of what makes a good Toastmaster year. "You work with school kids, you work with prisoners, you start new clubs and advanced clubs, you mentor each other. You take on greater leadership roles over time and organize conferences with awesome speakers and workshops. You organize hundreds of behind-the-scenes details."

Thanks, Diane. You left a high standard that I will try to live up to!





## **Transforming Your Leadership Skills**

Toastmasters, I love this time of year. It's currently summer and soon we will be transforming to the school year and of course fall. It's the time of year for rebirth, growth and renewals before the cold winter months (I know my grass could use rebirth this summer). Seems fitting for us in this organization, doesn't it? Why did you join Toastmasters? To transform yourself of course. You, as a member in this great organization, also have the opportunity to grow/transform your leadership skills.

What leadership skills are you growing in Toastmasters? You are growing your dedication. Dedication to you. Dedication to your club. Dedication means spending whatever time or energy is necessary to accomplish the task at hand. A leader inspires dedication by example, doing whatever it takes to complete the next step toward the vision. By setting an excellent example, leaders can show followers that there are no one hour meetings once a week, only opportunities to achieve something great by signing up to give speeches, hold meeting roles and even volunteer for leadership positions in the Club, Area, Division and District. This is dedication to you.

You are developing your openness. Openness means being able to listen to new ideas, even if they do not conform to the usual way of thinking. Good leaders are able to suspend judgment while listening to others' ideas, as well as accept new ways of doing things that someone else thought of. Openness builds mutual respect and trust between leaders and followers, and it also keeps the team well supplied with new ideas that can further its vision. Openness can be as simple as hosting a TLI through the ICN link at local colleges across the state in the middle of winter. No more dangerous driving to gain education. You can be in your home town and connect with other Toastmasters via video across the whole state.

You are transforming to be a creative leader. Creativity is the ability to think differently, to get outside of the box that constrains solutions. Creativity gives leaders the ability to see things that others have not seen and thus lead followers in new directions. The most important question that a leader can ask is, "What if ...?" You demonstrate creativity when you evaluate your members and state "What if you tried . . . ." to help the member grow. You demonstrate creativity in building new clubs in new locations. Creativity is within you.

Of course there are many other leadership skills you are working on in each and every meeting you attend, each email you send and each phone call you make. With time being precious, mentioning these few will help engage your leadership creativity. Continue to grow your leadership skills to help you and your fellow Toastmasters during this phase of rebirth, growth and renewals.

## A word from Mark....

I have a lilac bush on the side of my house that my wife wants me to trim back. It's long and leggy and funky looking, but it's also big and blooms regularly. My wife, the gardener, wants to cut it back. She tells me it will bloom better and be a thicker, healthier bush if we would just do some trimming. Honestly, I can't imagine cutting back on something that seems to be growing just fine on its own. If I am honest with myself, what I'm afraid that if we cut it back that it won't come back at all.

Over the past few years, our district has been like that lilac bush. We've been growing and blooming well enough, but we might not have always been at our peak health. Last year, we lost some clubs. Toastmasters increased dues, and we lost members. Right now, 31 of the 90 clubs in the district are eligible for a club coach. Is there a way to be healthier now that our clubs and membership have been trimmed back?

I believe the answer is yes, and I have some evidence to support my belief. We have already seen some new blooms in the District this Toastmaster year. We are hoping to charter the Quad Cities Bank and Trust club prior to the International Conference. We assigned a club coach to the De Witt Toastmasters Club in late July. I have been maintaining a list of potential club coaches and am actively looking for places to use this team. I am following up with some clubs in the making, such as the potential Persuasive Presentations club in Cedar Rapids. Even within our drought, we continue our regrowth.

All of these offshoots are starting to bud, but that doesn't mean we have reached full bloom. I will need your help to create new blossoms for our District. I am currently building a list of potential club sponsors, mentors, and coaches. Please contact me at [mark.latta.d19@gmail.com](mailto:mark.latta.d19@gmail.com) if you are interested in becoming involved in this regrowth of our District. When I hear from you, I will contact you about opportunities in your area to build new clubs and rebuild struggling clubs. Don't worry if you've never been a club coach or a club sponsor -- we will help. You are not alone.

The time for cutting back is past. Now is the time for our District to grow further. With your help, we will be able to bring our District into full flower. And won't that smell so sweet...



## Hollywood in the Heartland

The stars were out in Johnston for the Spring Conference. Although there were reports that Marilyn Monroe, Robert Downey Jr., and Harpo Marx were in attendance, the real stars were the presenters, District leaders, and Toastmasters.

Friday's educational sessions showcased the talents within and outside of District 19. Rich Hopkins gave us a new way to look at Toastmasters International and utilize it for personal and club growth. The members of Golden Speakers provided us with great information on how to market our clubs to increase membership. The District leadership gave us an insight into leadership lessons learned that can be applied to our clubs. And a certain IPDG who will remain nameless showed how blocking techniques can spice up a speech.

Friday night's entertainment, courtesy of the Quad City Advanced Club, combined acceptance speeches, Table Topics, and humor when they gave willing participants awards in categories you wouldn't expect could *have* awards!

On Saturday, the Five Seasons Leadership Academy taught us how important parliamentary procedure can be and how fun it can be, all at the same time! Shortly afterwards, District Toastmasters had an opportunity to utilize that knowledge during the District Business Meeting. Congratulations to the incoming District Trio and Division Governors! You will make us proud!

During the Communication and Leadership Luncheon, District 19 honored Jim Autry, a man of many talents, including communication and leadership. During his afternoon keynote session, he emphasized the importance of servant leadership.

Rich Hopkins gave a second keynote about his experiences in trying to become the World Champion of Public Speaking and the life lessons he derived from those experiences. Both keynotes were engaging and informative.

After such great speakers, it was time for the District's best speakers to rise to the occasion during the Table Topics and International Speech Contests. The contests were exceptional with great speakers from across the District giving their all.

The winner of the District 19 Table Topics Contest was J. J. Trotta from the Sunrise Marion Club.

The winner of the District 19 International Speech Contest was Callista Gould of Early Risers in West Des Moines. As a result, Callista gets to compete in the semi-finals of the World Championship of Public Speaking in Orlando, Florida.

Although there could only be one winner in each contest, a hearty congratulations goes out to everyone who competed at the District level. It took a lot of time, energy, and commitment to reach the summit.

The Spring Conference concluded with the evening banquet, and District 19 looked like it was at a Hollywood gala! Good food, great conversation, and a wonderful send-off to the District Toastmasters who were able to attend.

Thank you to everyone who attended and who helped conduct a fun, educational, and memorable Spring Conference.

See you in the fall!



## International Speech Contest and Table Topic Winners

Glam chicks Dayna Weltzin and Julia Venzke



"Incredible" Keith Nielsen



Here are the winners of those contests:

### International Speech

1st place--Callista Gould (Division D)

2nd place--Tamra Binder (Division E)

3rd place--Rick Boland (Division B)

### Table Topics

1st place--JJ Trotta (Division B)

2nd place--Benjamin Carter-Allen (Division D)

3rd place--Tamra Binder (Division E)

Ed Parker channels Harpo Marx.



## What Toastmasters is all About...

Pankaj Bhugra was a member of Los Oradores Toastmasters in Des Moines for about four years. Pankaj, who is known to Los Oradores members as Kenny, is originally from India. Earlier this spring, Kenny, who works for John Deere, transferred to a new job within the company which required that he and his wife, Preet Kanwal, relocate. Pankaj wrote the following note of farewell to his fellow club members. As Los Oradores member Dayna Weltzin says, the letter "speaks to what TM is all about."

Dear friends,

I still remember the day very clearly when a fiancée of a friend of mine suggested that I join Toastmasters. Her suggestion came from my request to suggest something that would not involve me sitting in a classroom setup and would still help me improve my communication skills. Next thing I know is that I looked up where all the clubs were held.

I found out the one in the Urbandale Library was closest to my home and fit my schedule. It would be my club of choice for years ahead.

I remember my first meeting as a guest. I was welcomed to the meeting warmly. It was a fun-filled meeting. Everyone supported each other as if they were all family members. Later that day, I was invited to be a guest member until I decided to join the club at my own convenience. I could never have imagined that a professional club would exude the level of warmth it did that day. That warmth is eternal, and that's exactly what we'll miss.

We'll miss the company of fine people who are like family. We'll miss the gatherings at Monterrey's. We will miss the open house parties. We will miss carefree jokes and laughs. We will miss valuable guidance that we received and benefited from.

Once again, we are reminded that time doesn't slow down. It's time to say *bon voyage* to our Los Oradores family. We've been blessed to meet you and share your company. We hope and pray that you remain the lighthouse, a beacon of hope for families like us, who need families away from their own families.

Stay in touch,

Pankaj Bhugra

## To Be Recognized

By Kelly Nielsen, DTM

Distinguished. What does this word mean to you? Does it mean it's a word in the dictionary that starts and ends with the letter "d"? Does this word mean accomplishments, a goal achieved, a dream was met? To me, distinguished means I took another step in my development. It means I worked hard to learn a new skill. It means I was able to support a fellow Toastmaster member in his/her growth and development. I lived the Toastmasters value of service to the member.

You might be thinking, "So what?" Yes, so what? It's just one word with 13 letters. However, what if? What if? What if you decided to live distinguished?

What if you lived nobly impressive, special? What if you celebrated you? Think about it. You are a member of this organization. Are you living up to the value of service to the member to yourself? It's time to be honest. Do you always give a manual speech? Do you always get written and verbal evaluations? Do you bring your Competent Leadership manual to each and every meeting? Do you turn in your completed manuals into your Vice President of Education? Do you know what your next step on your development path is?

If you answered no to any of these questions, how can you be servicing you as a member in Toastmasters? I challenge you to put yourself first. I challenge you to focus on your development. Make your strengths stronger. Encourage your fellow club members to be stronger. Set the example. Set the bar high. Toastmasters, what if you lived distinguished?

## From Don...

On April 19, Gil Norris, John Maller and Don Wadleigh attended the annual East Moline Volunteer Appreciation Banquet in Hampton, Illinois. The event was sponsored by the staff of the East Moline Correctional Center honoring all those who volunteer in their various programs. Representatives from the Illinois Department of Corrections in Springfield attended and made a point to discuss the success the Hilltop Club is having at the East Moline Correctional Center. The Assistant Warden for Programs is even altering his schedule so he can attend meetings as schedule permits.

The banquet was a grand event, but it paled in comparison with the Hilltop Club meeting the night before.

Nathaniel George gave his Ice Breaker on second chances. He said second chances are rare for an ex-con, but Toastmasters is a tool that can help you recognize and seize them. Gary Weir gave his # 6 on changes and how you have to make *all* the changes in your life to avoid returning to prison. Gary talked about how he made many changes his last time home but not enough of them. With Toastmasters, he feels he has the necessary strength. He went home about three weeks later. Cruz Rivera gave speech # 10. He talked about choices and how many of his choices hurt his family, especially his father who stood by him so many times. His dad is now dead. In retrospect, Cruz sees what a caring parent his father was and he wants to honor that by making the right choices. Cruz went home in June with his CC and probably half way to his ACB.

Faheem also did project # 10. He urged listeners to pick up the pieces, rise up and fly. Faheem joined the club in December. He went home on May 2nd.

Chip Griffin went home in early April. He attended as a member for about ten weeks. He knew of Toastmasters before coming to prison, but when he came to his first meeting about 5 weeks before that, he sat sullenly in the back. He was called up for Table Topics and, not realizing there was a time limit, talked for five minutes. He had to be shooed off the stage. Two weeks later, he gave his Ice Breaker.

The club is having its growing pains. During the holiday season, attendance skyrocketed with 40 or more attendees. Over one three week period, 67 people came to meetings. There were several consecutive meetings where three or four Ice Breakers were given.

The club's Executive Committee, not us volunteers, asked the prison staff for help with the crowded conditions. They agreed that attendance should be limited to 25 persons. Only members and those who have signed commitments to contribute \$3 per month towards dues may attend. If the 25-person limit has not been reached, guests may also attend, but they must sign a commitment form, begin making their voucher



contributions, and fill out a Toastmasters Application within three visits or they may not return.

Currently, the club has 16 members. To be considered a member, the men must have completed three speeches. There are ten club members who are on the verge of becoming members, meaning their \$20 TI membership fees need to be covered. This all paid off as the Club made Select Distinguished after being off suspension for 15 months.

Inmates receive an average \$15 monthly stipend. There are three levels of job classifications, Worker, Clerk and Specialist, for which persons are paid \$20, \$30 and \$40 a month respectively. Inmates who do not have jobs receive a minimum of \$10 a month. Taxes are withheld in all cases.

The club is growing and having a positive impact upon many lives. I encourage you to support this club by contributing what you can. Send checks to Gil Norris at 2623 34th Ave. Ct., Rock Island IL, 61201.

Thanks to you all from Ramiro, Miguel, LaDural, Donald, Joseph, Juan, Shawn, Faheem, Chip, John, Joseph, Jevon, Samuel, Gary, Winston, Cruz, Matthew and, as always, Gil and John.

Don Wadleigh

Thomas Lindamann keeps out the paparazzi



Jamie Ward loves Dayna Weltzin's Carnaby Street Look



