

Renee Taylor, DL3 - Division A Director

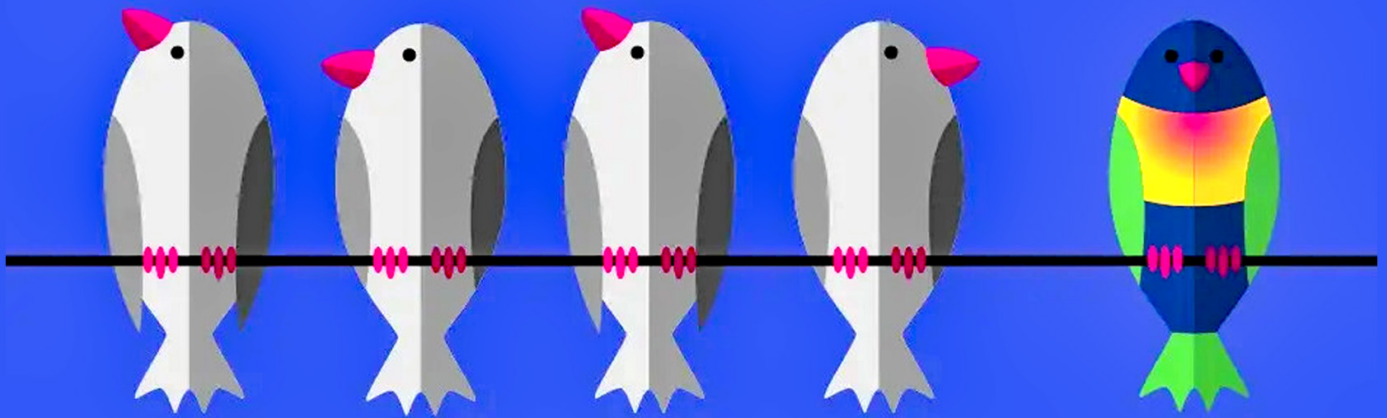
Rise to the Challenge

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My Most Unforgettable Character

Online | September 14, 2022 | 7:15-9:00 PM PDT



Feedbackers Toastmasters

feedbackers.toastmastersClubs.org

Our September session will shine the spotlight on characters that left an everlasting impression upon our lives. Maybe they were our heroes, or everyday people going about their lives or even our favorite comic character.

Three Toastmasters are invited to each deliver a speech about the most unforgettable character in their life. Each speaker will receive four evaluations of their choice. All evaluators receive a general evaluation.

You can expect to:

- Hear about unforgettable characters from our members' lives
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- Meet a group of fellow Toastmasters who are nuts about evaluations

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Are you interested in becoming a Speaker at Feedbackers? Contact VP Education, [Leanna Lindquist, DTM](#) for more information

Teamwork

Phyllis Harmon, DTM, PDG - Publisher/Editor

The new Toastmasters year is underway. Our District leaders are settling into their new roles, learning the ropes, and beginning to reach out to the members. I remember, as a new area director in 2010, that first day of directors training. I thought, with horror, "What have I gotten myself into!" It didn't take long to realize that I didn't have to eat that enormous, proverbial elephant in one meal. Yes, there were a lot of expectations to meet and tasks to accomplish, but they happened over time.

The same learning curve happened in each District role though I never repeated the initial epiphany of horror. As Division Director, I had four new area directors to help settle into their roles. Each had their own skills and challenges. I was their support system, mentor and coach. We collaborated on contests and area visits. We worked together to be successful. At year end, we were a well-knit team because of the work we had done together.

Stepping into the Trio brought new focus, a broader vision, and a new set of challenges. It was my role to support those who wanted to create new clubs, grow membership, and make District 7 Toastmasters a household name. It was a whirlwind year with a steep learning curve, plenty of membership and club growth, and success through teamwork. We chartered 13 new clubs, met all our District goals, and ended the year as a Distinguished District.

As Program Quality Director, educational goals were of paramount importance. The challenge was letting go of successful programs I implemented the previous year and focusing forward. Two conferences, two TLIs, follow-up Club Officer trainings, and webinars throughout the year kept my team busy meeting member, club, and District goals. At the end of the year, we realized we had accomplished what we set out to do, and we celebrated our team's success.

The District Director role taught me more about leadership than any other. It was about learning my own strengths and weaknesses, and applying those lessons to help my team be successful. I learned that teams need guidance not control. It was the end result that mattered—not the road to the finish line.

In Toastmasters we are never left alone to flounder or fail. There are always those who are willing to team up and guide us towards success. I truly appreciate the value of teamwork. It is the spine that supports the entire body of work required to be successful. Even though the year is already underway, it's not too late to reach out, become part of a team, and grow.



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VOICES!



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Renee Taylor, DL3

Rise to the Challenge

Phyllis Harmon, DTM, PDG

We return to a series done a few years ago where we introduce Division Directors to our readers. We begin this year with Renee Taylor, DL3 - Division A Director.

Why did you join Toastmasters?

It may sound odd, but for decades I wanted to join Toastmasters. I just never seemed to have a clear opportunity, that is until moving to Bandon, Oregon in 2019. After only a few months in our new home, I received a flyer inserted with our utility bill about an open house being held by the local Toastmasters Club, Myrtlewood Hootowlers. After just one Club visit I joined and finally, after decades, became a Toastmaster!

What has been your greatest Aha! Moment in your Toastmasters journey so far? Why?

I didn't join Toastmasters for friendship, but that's what I found. The camaraderie in our Club is very strong. When I joined



Myrtlewood Hootowlers in January 2020, their successful open house brought in many new members, but shortly thereafter, in April 2020, the covid pandemic descended upon the country, and we lost about 75 percent of our new members. I was one of only three new members who stayed.

The biggest Aha! Moment was a quick realization that to keep the Club in good standing, I would need to take an officer role in July 2020. Due to the pandemic, “everything Toastmasters” was pivoting quickly to online meetings. At the same time, I was just learning about the new online Pathways curriculum. The longtime Club members weren’t yet prepared to adopt the new system. This posed yet another Aha! Moment for me when it became clear I would need to provide leadership and Pathways support to the Club in making the transition. It’s

an understatement to say that my induction into Toastmasters was full-on challenging!

What do you do outside of Toastmasters -hobbies, interests, etc.?

When I’m not researching business trends and finance competencies or preparing to switch my career direction, I enjoy playing card games or listening to podcasts. My husband, Richard, and I have retired to Bandon, Oregon. Seeing our grown children and our amazing grandchildren requires us to travel. It’s easier for us to go to them than vice versa, so we often drive to the Medford area or far northern California to see family.

How does Toastmasters enhance your work career?

During the short few months of my new membership that preceded the pandemic’s “two weeks to flatten the curve,” my Club experience was already having a big impact by raising my confidence level when speaking in front of an audience.

Due to the covid pandemic, I retired from healthcare finance in mid-2020. Since then, I have been on the sidelines watching how the it has negatively impacted the healthcare field, which has seen a mass exodus.

You’ve been in Toastmasters since 2020. What are some of the highlights of your career so far?

My Toastmasters membership continues to strengthen my speaking abilities and enhance my interview skills as I seek work in a new

business sector. During an interview, I always mention my involvement with Toastmasters and how that commitment will continue. Most prospective employers are impressed and accepting of my volunteerism in Toastmasters.

As Division A Director, what is your vision for the Division this year?

Being an Area Director last year was a huge learning curve. I came into the role mid-year to fill a vacancy. I had no experience with speech contests and didn't have many established connections to help me. Fortunately, the few connections I had made were able to find others to help with roles, and everything worked out fine. For this year's Division Contest, I envision a smoother process that starts with supporting the Area Directors (ADs) with their contests, assisting them to have a smooth, successful process.

I also want to support the District leadership in reaching their goals. By encouraging the ADs, I hope to get more Clubs submitting their Success Plans and Moments of Truth. I'd especially like the ADs to garner more Club support for Pathways.

What are your personal plans and goals for next year?

I want to increase my competency using the Zoom platform and to be as active as possible in support of the D7 Zoom Team.

This year will be my third year as the Myrtlewood Hootowlers' VPE. Last year I presented a Vice President Education (VPE) Officer Training for TLI and perhaps that opportunity will come up again this year.

What would you share with those who are interested in taking on a leadership role next year?

Don't be afraid to step up and become a Club officer. If you're like me, you'll have strong support from your Club members, and you will be happy to help your Club.

Because my fellow Toastmasters in leadership roles are very supportive and knowledgeable people, each of these leadership experiences has been rewarding.

The biggest take-away for me is that all Toastmasters are on the same journey of professional and personal development via camaraderie, support, and learning new roles. A leadership role in Toastmasters should be seen as an opportunity for additional growth and FUN!





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Toastmasters Leadership Institute

December 2 & 3, 2022
(Friday Evening & Saturday Morning)

WHY TOASTMASTERS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE?

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- Build Community
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We are all Storytellers

Tell Your Story!

Lorri Andersen, DTM - District 7 Director



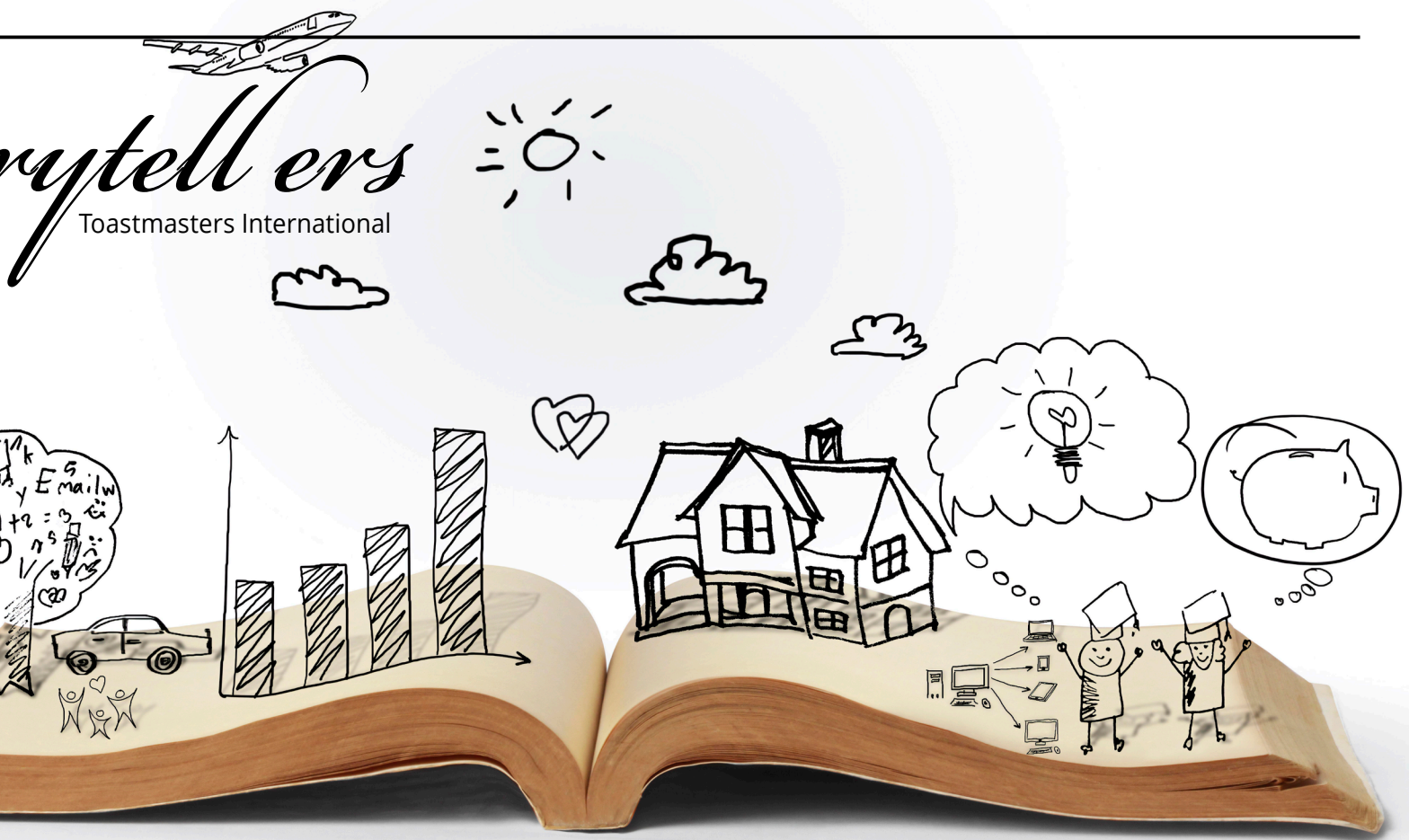
This year's International Convention Keynote speaker focused on storytelling. I love the art of storytelling and I have heard many applications of it within the workplace and at home.

When I joined Toastmasters there was a Club member who had to change jobs several times due to the changing economy. Within a few weeks he accepted a new job that was better than the one he left. What was his secret? He combined the art of storytelling with the Toastmasters Club staple—Table Topics. With a beginning, middle, and end, he answered his interviewer, followed up with a storytelling example in the center, and recapped it all at the end. I always admired his tenacity and perseverance to continue with Toastmasters when things got tough. He worked hard to improve his Toastmaster skills. By doing this,

he was able to sail through job interviews and sign his name on the acceptance form.

My family had many great storytellers. I have fond memories of my dad, aunt, and grandma telling stories about "back home" or "in the old days." They shared stories about people they knew and followed up with the moral to the story. Their smiles, laughter, and wisdom had a big impact on me. I always treasured the time I was able to spend with them. It became natural to use this style of storytelling to teach my children and my own family.

Recently, I read a book about using storytelling to make better decisions. Decide early on what your ending is going to be. Begin and follow through by making the right decisions to achieve that desired result. You



will be able to tell a better, truthful story and be remembered in a good light when someone retells your story.

When it comes to your Toastmasters Education program, are you working to finish your Distinguished Toastmaster Award? What ending do you want to share? Do you need to sponsor a Club, conduct a Speechcraft, or Youth Leadership program? Why not start a new Club? Send your ideas to Dave Bones, our Club Growth Director. You can become the new Club Sponsor. There are a plethora of ideas to consider, and brainstorming can give you lots of new stories to tell!

I am reading *The 12 Week Year*, by Brian Moran and Michael Lennington. The authors challenge the reader to write and tell their own story. The book walks you through a proven

step-by-step system for achieving more in 12 weeks than others do in 12 months.

I am intrigued by the authors do-it-now method and how it relates to Toastmasters. Our first quarter, July through September, is 12 weeks. Instead of setting your educational goals for one year, make them for 12 weeks. Consider each week a month and make each day count.

What are Clubs and Toastmasters doing right now in these first 12 weeks of the new year? They are finishing Club officer training, conducting educational sessions, Moments of Truths, Club Success Plans, and sending leads and ideas to our Club Growth Director. It's okay if you are just now setting a plan. Let's set our goals, develop a plan of success, and share ideas.

I am glad we're on this journey together. Let's connect, share ideas, and talk.

A GREAT YEAR TO LEARN

Jim Robison, DTM
Program Quality Director

I am excited about all the opportunities to help members learn coming up in District 7. We will host many learning events throughout the year. Where can you find out about these? The [District 7 Events Calendar](#) on the District 7 website.

We have a tremendous group of Toastmasters who have volunteered their time to help pull all this together. Ayu Anantya, a member of 7 Clubs in District 7 plus more in other Districts, is our Education Chair. Matthew Douglass (PR Masters, Waffle Toasters and PMI Portland Toastmasters) is coordinating Learning Labs. Eldred Brown (Immediate Past District Director) is coordinating the Technology learning sessions. Bill Hernandez (West Beaverton Club and Sporty Speakers) is our Toastmasters Leadership Institute Chair. Phyllis Harmon (Wallmasters International, Tell Me A Story, Marylhurst Toastmasters, and *Voices!* editor) is our Annual Conference Chair. Patrick Locke (Early Words and Speakers with Spirit) is the District Contest Chair, and Tamsen Corbin (WE Toasted Toastmasters) is our District Chief Judge.

Learning Labs and Tech sessions will be offered throughout the year to focus on the needs of our Clubs. These events are planned to fit the specific needs of Clubs working to overcome obstacles. Look for notice of events

on the District 7 calendar.

The second Friday of every month will be "One Stop Toastmasters." If you are an experienced Toastmaster, join us to help answer the questions of other members. If you have questions about Toastmasters that you want to find answers to, then join us and ask the question. We promise to always have knowledgeable members on hand to answer any questions asked. If we don't know the answer, we will find someone who does.

CULTURE OF COMMUNICATION

Mark your calendar now for the Toastmasters Leadership Institute December 2nd and 3rd. Club officers are expected to attend officer training twice per year. One change we plan to implement this year is to ensure that officers who have previously attended training (or several trainings) will have opportunities to attend advanced officer training sessions. We want to build leadership skills, not just cover the basics.

SEEDS OF CHANGE: GROWING NEW LEADERS

Reserve May 19 and 20, 2023 for the District 7 Annual Conference. We will have a great lineup of presenters, including a keynote from Louisa Davis, Region 1 International Director.



New Horizons Toastmasters #1360

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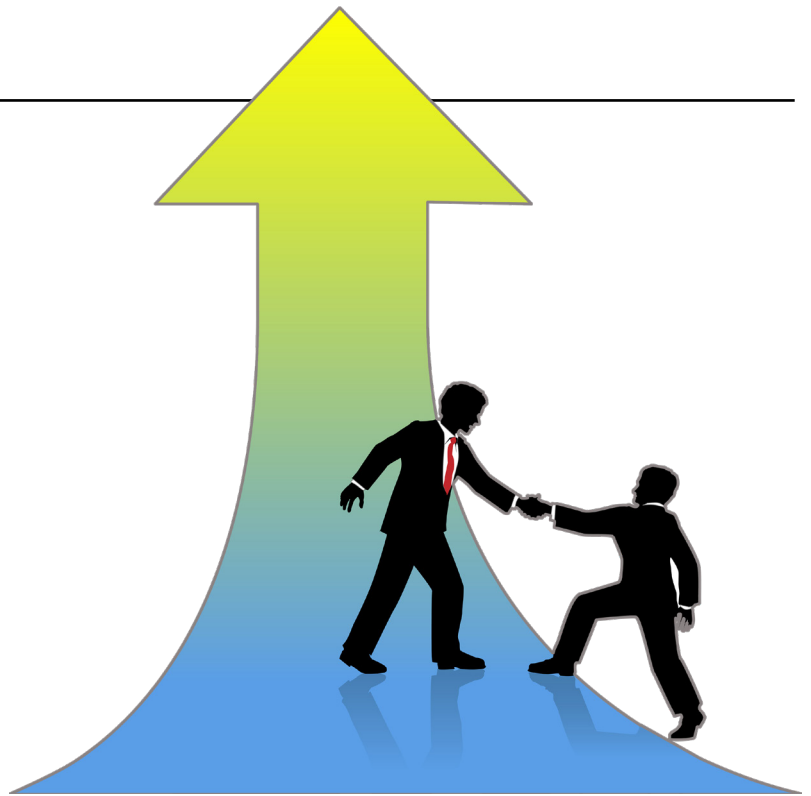
Zoom Link Meeting ID: 894 0261 6761 Passcode: 1360

In-Person at Marquis in Tualatin, Oregon

Contact & Club #1360 Info

Consider the Area Director

Dave Bones, DTM
Club Growth Director



I wonder if you can relate to the following scenarios with your Club, or someone you know: You have a brand new Vice President Education who is unclear how to keep track of member education process, and what it means to be a “Base Camp Manager” in Pathways. Or maybe the President is newer, and has questions about how to conduct Club Executive Committee Meetings. Finally, maybe you are in a more experienced Club, but just need general Toastmasters support.

The good news is that there are answers to all the above and much more. This is the relationship with your District Area Director (AD). The AD is the liaison between your Club, the District, and the Toastmasters brand. The foundation for this begins with the Area Director Club visit. In this article, you will learn more about the specific benefits of Area Director visits for your Club.

Here are three reasons to rely on your AD:

First, your AD is a trusted advisor. Each AD typically has experience as a Club officer and general knowledge of each role. When the AD does not have the answer to a question, they can help you find the answers.

Second, your AD can also be a mentor, coach or refer your question on as needed. An example could

be when your Vice President Education is unclear how to fulfill duties as a Base Camp Manager (BCM) in Pathways. Your AD could refer you to the [District 7 Pathways Learning Center](#). There is a 14.5 minute video that provides most of the information needed by new BCMs. Upon request, your AD may be able to conduct a general Pathways tutoring session or bring in another presenter.

Third, the AD can provide objective feedback during their Area Director Club Visit which happens twice a year, once between July and November and again between January and May. The AD's reports recognize what your Club does well and offers supportive suggestions on how to enhance the Club experience. These metrics are based on key factors designed to increase membership, augment member satisfaction, and retention.

If your AD hasn't contacted your Club yet, invite them to visit. Don't know who they are? You can find their contact information on the District 7 website by [clicking here](#). Consider your AD as a trusted advisor to help with your Club's needs. As with everything "Toastmasters," you are not alone. Your AD is there for you and to help your Club be successful.



ZOOM MASTERS NEEDED

Provide support at District Virtual events (Contests, TLI, Educational Seminars and more)

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zoom@d7toastmasters.org,
'Zoommaster Inquiry' in
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What Toastmasters Taught Me About

Eldred Brown

Where were you at 11:00 pm on Saturday, July 23, 2022? I was stuck inside an elevator in a hotel in Baltimore with no way to get out. It certainly wasn't the worst situation I've been in, but it had the potential to get ugly over time. Thinking back to that harrowing experience, what are some of the lessons I learned that night, and how do they apply to Toastmasters?

Lesson 1: Don't Panic.

I suppose I could have panicked if I wanted to. I probably would have if I suffered from claustrophobia. Expending all my energy breaking down the door with my bare hands? No, that wouldn't get me anywhere, except maybe to the hospital with broken and bloody hands. I needed to stay calm and consider all my options. Cut through the ceiling and climb up to another floor like Tom Cruise in *Mission Impossible*? Pry the doors open with my bare hands? I couldn't see any of those escape plans working. I did find an alarm bell I could ring. Annoy enough people with my noisemaking, and eventually they'll get me out.

How does this apply to Toastmasters? When you get into a tight situation with your speech—you blank out on what you're going to say next, you say something inappropriate, etc.—don't panic. If you have the experience of already having given a lot of speeches, you'll




quickly figure your way out of the pickle. If not, you can use the pickle as a learning experience.

Lesson 2: Be Patient

Even as I rang the elevator alarm to catch the attention of those outside, I knew I was going to be stuck in there for a while. I had to

about Getting Stuck in an Elevator

, DTM, IPDD



be patient and find some fun things to do with nothing. I could follow the lyrics of an old Statler Brothers song and count flowers on the wall. (I didn't see any.) Even singing the song was fun. I could play solitaire with a deck of 51, or a deck of 1. I could play with the buttons on the button panel. I could practice my Morse code—SOS is easy.

How does this apply to Toastmasters? Don't get disheartened when you run out of ideas for your speeches. Be patient yet be constantly looking for new ideas. The ideas will come to you.

Lesson 3: There's a Speech in This Somewhere

While stuck in the elevator, I was constantly looking for the humor in the situation. I was thinking up jokes I could tell about my experience. I tried to see oddball connections I could play up for laughs. For instance, I could only laugh at

how some of those on the outside reacted to my situation. When they told me not to panic, I told them I wasn't panicking, though I was about to lose that game of solitaire I had going. When they ran and told my travel partner, a friend with whom I shared a hotel room every night of the weeklong church

council, they told him his wife was stuck in the elevator. MY TRAVEL PARTNER ISN'T EVEN MARRIED! Oh, well. We both got a good laugh over that.

How does this apply to Toastmasters? I've heard a lot of humorous speeches, especially back in the day when we ran humorous speech contests for our Fall conferences. Most of them are based on misadventures in which the speaker was later able to find some (or a lot of) humor. Being stuck in an elevator at 2:00 in the morning is certainly a misadventure, and I've already given speeches about it to two of my Clubs. It's even better when you can anticipate speaking about the experience and consciously gather from the experience all the details you need to make your speech compellingly funny.

Conclusion

I finally did get rescued from the elevator and made it home from Baltimore. I learned where the hotel's stairs were. I now also have a survivor's tale to tell. What about you? In your failures and misadventures, are you keeping your cool? Are you exercising patience? Are you looking for the humor you can share in your next speech? People love to laugh with you, so look for the humor to make them laugh.



Getting Cozy with Cozies

Leanna Lindquist, DTM

Several years ago, I had a brilliant idea. Yes, it happens occasionally. I decided to write a Cozy Mystery. If you watched Jessica Fletcher in *Murder She Wrote* or the *Hallmark Channel Mystery Movies*, then you have an idea what a Cozy Mystery is. In a nutshell, there is no violence, cursing, or adult situations. The murder takes place off stage. An amateur sleuth solves the case. Oh, and there are loads of quirky townspeople who add to the story.

Back to the why of writing a Cozy. Circumstances in my life turned me into a fulltime homebody. I needed to find something to occupy my time and stimulate my brain besides Toastmasters. Writing didn't interest me, and I didn't like to write. To be truthful, I didn't know how to write. To quote Sam, in the movie *Love Actually*, "a tiny insignificant detail." But I did love to read cozy mysteries and I figured I could learn how to write them too.

I don't know about you but any time I want to learn about something I Google it. There it was a book titled *How to Write a Cozy Mystery*. It was a step-by-step guide. For me it was the tip of the iceberg. I was excited at the idea of learning to write. I can't tell you how many books on writing I hauled home from the library, purchased from used bookstores, and ordered online. I was excited by the prospect of writing a Cozy. I joined Sisters in Crime, an organization that has 4,500 members in 60+ regional chapters worldwide, offering networking, advice, and support to mystery authors. I subscribed to the magazines *Writers Digest* and *The Writer*.

One of my great finds was MasterClass. MasterClass, a streaming platform where anyone can learn from the world's best. It's an immersive learning experience. The curriculum



for each MasterClass is designed by the instructor. Each class features about 20 video lessons. You move at your own pace, just like Toastmasters. Instructors on writing include David Baldacci, Dan Brown, Neil Gaiman, and James Patterson, whose class I am taking now.

I subscribe to loads of writing blogs, probably too many. Every day my inbox provides me the teachings and advice from authors, many who make a living by teaching others to write. Some offer free Zoom classes. The writing prompts are a great way to get the creative juices flowing.

Several years ago, I responded to a request to help form a writing group in my neighborhood. Seven or eight of us attended the first meeting, talked about our writing goals, did some writing prompts, and shared our writing with the group. It's several years later and our group has

comfortably settled into three of us who meet monthly to share our writings. Leeza writes nonfiction and has been published many times. Martha is writing the stories of four unique and fascinating women who meet in a nursing home. We call them her ladies. I have two cozies started. One takes place on the Oregon Coast. The protagonist is a retired nurse. The other is about two old guys who fight crime in their hometown.

My writing group is of great value to me. I trust these women to critique my work and offer suggestions to keep me moving forward. To offer course corrections. Their encouragement is welcome and gives me confidence. I look forward to reading their work and providing my feedback. No matter your pursuit, a good support group will help you achieve your goals.

Maybe this will be the year to complete a first draft. Stay tuned!

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I'm Reviewing the Situation

Paul C. Fanning, DTM

My mother had one constant delight in her life—and no, it was not me, but something else. One of the great English traditions has always been the stage-theatrical productions whether they be of the Bard himself, or the latest musical. I have a box in the hallway closet that contains at least two photograph albums or “memory” books containing the playbills from the Royal Theatre stage productions and ticket stubs for 1950’s movies shown in the posh movie houses. We had some 100 or more recordings, some on 78 rpm records but mostly the standard 33 rpm with colorful inserts and/or record sleeves and covers. Many an afternoon or evening we would play those records. I became familiar with all the “greats” of the 1950’s and 1960’s, such as *The King and I*, *Brigadoon*, and *Camelot*.

Ergo, I must beg your pardon and indulge in a little “play” myself by introducing this month’s column’s subject—membership renewal for October 1, 2022-March 31, 2023. Apropos to my theatrical theme would be the whimsical *Oliver*, from 1968, with its delightful melody of Fagan (the mastermind thief) contemplating “going straight” and becoming a respected member of society with his “I’m reviewing the situation” song. Spoiler alert—he doesn’t, of course, and ends up with nothing but his star pupil The Artful Dodger walking off together to be a new

in their “trade”.

“To renew, or not to renew, that is the question”! For me, this is where I began my aria, my song of contemplation, as I weighed what indeed does being a member of Toastmasters mean? I wrestled with the question. I agonized over the reasons both pro and con. Let me share with you a little of that process.

This past year has been a difficult and different life for me. At one point of time, I was a member of three Clubs: a traditional Club near my home, and two specialty Clubs—a storytelling Club and an evaluation-only Club. I have been reduced to only one Club, Feedbackers, a Club that was most beneficial to my growth and development as an evaluator the past four years but I have been to no more than two Club meetings and, as past president of the Club, one executive committee meeting in the past twelve months. I am now back to work, working three nights on and three nights off. I find myself unable to attend any meetings with the work, sleep, and reality of life after retirement I now find myself in. It is not that I do not want to go to Club meetings, but when one begins their work shift at 6:30 pm, I find I am my busiest at 7:15 pm when the Club meets. That also means that I get off work at 7:00 am and need my beauty sleep (yes, I admit that it is not working in my case!) and will be



up by 3-3:30 in the afternoon. I work about 3 out of 4 Saturdays a month precluding me from attending many of the District events. Logic should tell me that it is time to “move on” and be most grateful for the years I have already spent in Toastmasters. I have four Distinguished Toastmaster plaques on the wall, a District 7 Herb C. Stude Educational Service Award, Area Director of the Year, and dozens of pins and certificates for other educational and leadership positions. I have done and completed most of what I wanted to achieve in Toastmasters. I can rest on my laurels and walk away. BUT. . . I found I am still a resource to some individual Toastmasters and Clubs, even getting phone calls at midnight when I am available! Can I give that up? Not really. Plus, I get the nifty privilege of writing this column every month as well. No, I do not think I am ready for the rocking chair and not being active somewhere.

I also “reviewed the situation” with our beloved District 7 Toastmasters and the stats involved. When I joined Toastmasters back in 2009, there were over 180 Clubs in the District, and we had two Clubs in our small area with one more on the way. Today, with only one Club, that area is no longer in our District. Using the graphs

and information found on the Toastmasters International website under Leadership Central, I looked at Clubs and membership. From over 180 Clubs, we are down to 130 Clubs. Of those 30, 20 plus are in danger of being closed due to having less than 8 members—the standard for Toastmaster Clubs to be considered in good standing.

Fellow Toastmasters, I am concerned by what I see and the loss of 50 Clubs in a 10-year period. The trend is the same for membership. We have lost close to 50% of our members in the same period. I am a realist, and I know we have had at least two major hits on Clubs and members during that time. The first factor was the transition to Pathways and then 2 years of Covid-19 pandemic issues. Even so, we are only fooling ourselves when we accept these factors as the reasons for the drop in both Clubs and members. Other factors include distinguished Clubs in jeopardy, education awards and, the most telling of all, trained officers. That one bothers me the most as we have the tools and resources to train leaders through twice yearly Toastmaster Leadership Institutes, Division and Area officer make-up trainings, and Club level training programs. This is the first year I

have not attended any of the trainings or served as a trainer for one. Clearly, something must be done to begin the restoration of our Clubs and members, in addition to Clubs, making the commitment to attend training sessions. Oh, and I did not even mention the easiest of the Distinguished Club goals to achieve, Club renewals submitted on time.

Here is what I suggest (my wisdom to you all from a mentor). Begin now talking up Club membership renewals and have them ready to submit no later than September 1st. Remember that goal #10 allows you to receive credit by having a minimum of 8 members renew before the deadline of September 30th.

If your Club officers (minimum of 4) have not taken Club officer leadership training for the semi-annual year, then call your Area Director and tell them of your desire to achieve that goal. There are other tools that the District and/or division may have to help you be a distinguished Club for this 2022-2023 program year. Help is only a phone call away! See the D7 Toastmasters website for a complete listing of the D7 leadership team.

Now it is your turn. Are you renewing your membership for the next 6 months? Ask yourself what benefit you have or are now receiving by being a Toastmaster. Do you have an outside professional goal that Toastmasters can assist you in completing? Are you interested in developing and/or growing other skills that can be met by either the educational program or by the practicum of Club meetings? Perhaps you have a skill you wish to share with other Toastmasters? All these questions can be part of your answer with a resounding YES to renewal!

I believe I have said this before in this column, but I have never regretted the decision to join Toastmasters. Yes, it has been difficult at times, working on education awards that may or may have not made sense or ones that I perceived that I needed, but it is all good and valuable information that is rarely offered through other resources—especially at the price we pay for it. A good friend in Hillsboro gave a speech years ago entitling it “The best \$100 gift” of being a member of Toastmasters for a year. We have not really changed the membership renewal fee for years—it is still the best bang for your buck that is available. Other programs charge thousands of dollars, hundreds for their seminars, yet we seem to balk at \$45 every six months and \$20 for a new level.

We need to wake up and smell the coffee of a successful program, set at our own pace and achievable. In another organization I was a member of, I spent two years working on my certification which initially cost me hundreds to attend the initial training with months of follow-up and constant paying for this and that.

In any sales pitch, one must include the “sale,” the “commitment.” Here it is, plainly and simply stated: “to renew, or not to renew, that is the question.” Are you ready to renew? I have made my commitment to pay my Toastmasters membership fee and Club dues once again. And I will do it online with no fuss or fanfare. I’m reviewing the situation—and I will renew this month. “Et tu”?

Let’s turn the downward trend into something new and positive. Join with me now to rebuild our District and Clubs. It truly is a pathway to success, a pathway to the future.

Labor Day Legacy

Lee Coyne, ATMS

With Labor Day just around the corner it is not too early to think about life after retirement. Let us brainstorm about future options yet to be attempted. That is the essence of Planning.

1. Aiding your successors: Some lessons you learned on the job, why not pass them on? Very easy to do. Simply record an overview on the ten most vital lessons you absorbed throughout your career. Your employer can set up an orientation library.
2. Guiding young folks: You can likewise volunteer to address a high school class about your old occupation and offer insights.
3. Healthcare prep 101: Consult your doctor to learn of the most likely geriatric ills you may face. . . and means of prevention. Include in the genetic finding of diseases that your extended family had as well as death causes.
4. Monthly reunion: Plan a weekend gathering of your old colleagues for continued support. Retirement can be balanced out with retention. No need to burn your old bridges entirely.

Each of the above can develop a into a future speech as well as a stepping stone into this next phase of living life with a modicum of joy.





When A Club Fe

Jennifer Sch

I'll never forget Saturday, August 10, 2019. I left Vancouver, Washington at seven in the morning, and drove an hour to visit New Horizons Toastmasters in Tualatin, Oregon for the first time. What was unusual? I just decided to show up for the meeting on that day. What made me go? Mostly, it was the multiple website photos with people who looked like they were having fun. They also met on Saturday, which was a convenient day for me, a bonus.

When I arrived, I was introduced to the Club's president, Kamili Talley, who gave me the warmest welcome, and the best first impression. It was a fun meeting, I felt comfortable, and they announced they were gathering later that day at a local park for their annual picnic. I thought to myself, "well, maybe next year I could go," but they invited me to go

that day! "Wow, how nice, but should I really go?" I wasn't sure, after all, it was their annual Club picnic and I had only just met them.

Since spontaneity seemed to be my theme for the day, I stopped by to say "hello." When I arrived, I felt like a long lost family member instead of a stranger, as they greeted me with smiles and waves. After a while, a friendly Table Topics competition started, and the group encouraged me to participate. What stood out was the fact that no one cared they had just met me. I held my own with the various Table Topics and found I liked participating with the group. Strangers didn't exist here, only newly discovered friends.

Now it's been over three years since that day. I've had many adventures, including writing, and delivering speeches, participating in three





eels Like Home

midt, EH2

contest seasons, leading several meetings as Toastmaster and serving with President Maren Zieba as their first virtual Vice President of Public Relations. Fortunately, I also got to know: Maren, Leela, Penny, Kamili, Joe, Ralph, Bill, Ann, Barbie, Jennifer, Mary, Oksana, Misha, Cleon, Gwendolyn, Biju, Tracy, Angela, Mike, Marianne, Michele, Gloria, Kaushik, Jonathan, James, Yuki, Adrienne, Gabrielle, Tamsen, Michael, Patricia, Rodger, Matthew, Huei-Hua, Anil, Reebok, Valerie, and Jordan. So many people come, go, and come again through the open door of our Club to share their stories and often touch our hearts.

In retrospect, my decision to join New Horizons and choose them as my home Club was really based on that first day. I truly believe if any Club treats guests the same way I was

treated, membership would automatically increase. It left the following impressions that stayed with me for more than three years, including:

- Members were friendly and welcoming
- Participation was encouraged but not pushed
- Help was offered if I had any questions about their Club
- They showed me how their meetings and events were fun

What I especially appreciated was they were authentic and that's the same today. Over the years they have cheered my successes and were supportive when things didn't go well. The engagement and connections are real, just like a home Club should be, like home.



Rethinking False Assumptions

David Freedman, PM2

What happens when the things you believed to be true at an earlier age are later challenged and found to be false?

When I was younger, mathematics was one of my weaker subjects. In fact, I believed it was one of my worst subjects, along with science and perhaps social studies. Yes, I can remember occasions when that wasn't the case and I did better in class. But by and large, math was something that I simply thought I had no business doing. It wasn't uncommon for me to get Cs and Ds in Geometry and Algebra 2, with very few exceptions.

In college, I took one more math course. I believed it would help me with my class in statistics, a requirement for my Psychology minor—it didn't. I had to take the statistics class twice, barely passing the second time. Then something . . . well . . . weird . . . happened. I did surprisingly well in the math class, perhaps because I'd worked on many of the formulas before.

Even stranger, the instructor said he thought I was very gifted in math. What? I was stunned. No one had ever mentioned this to me in the past. My primary talents were in English, singing, and writing with forays into acting in high school, but math was definitely not one of those gifts. Yet here was someone who believed differently.

I'm pretty sure I thanked him, but I certainly didn't believe him at the time.

In a similar way, because I grew up with a number of disabilities, physical education was often a nightmarish experience. Being the smallest kid in the class with a lazy eye and clubbed feet didn't help matters. I struggled to get through P.E. classes, and was relieved when they stopped after my freshman year at Lincoln High School. However, Lincoln was only a stone's throw away from Downtown Portland, and I found myself walking there to shop, eat, study at the library, and explore.

One day, when I was walking home from the Sylvan bus stop in the West Hills, I noticed that my stamina had greatly improved. To reach home, after getting off the bus, we walked a half-mile mostly uphill. I hated that trip until one day, it suddenly dawned on me that I wasn't tiring nearly as easily as I used to. From then on, I loved walking, despite the belief that I was no good with most other physical activities. Years later, I attended Mt. Hood Community College to obtain my associate degree in medical transcription. Again, it was required that I take a physical education class as part of the curriculum. To my surprise, my activity level had improved enough that I got an A out of the class. The instructor



was very pleased, but once again I was relieved to have gotten through it.

These days, especially with the insights gained in my experiences through the pandemic, I've focused a lot more on self-improvement. I've wanted to take on new projects and challenge some old assumptions. To that end, I've already looked into the possibility of going online to the Khan Academy and taking their math courses just to see how well I understand the material. Thankfully, I've been going to the gym for over a decade. Even if I still don't feel very athletic at times, I can always claim I'm healthier than most folks my age..

Whenever a guest, let alone a new member, arrives at your Club, remember that they're laboring under the same misapprehensions as the rest of us. Namely, most people believe that they can't speak in public or handle being in

front of a crowd. It's not for nothing that public speaking is one of the biggest fears many people face.

While performers learn to live with the nervousness that comes with being onstage, the vast majority of people never learn to master their fear until they're given an opportunity to move past it by learning to perform themselves. Making sure that our guests realize that they'll have a strong support system in place so they can hone their skills and alleviate their fears is of paramount importance. Allowing them to be in a space where they can question their own assumptions before realizing that they can change their views is perhaps one of the best things we can do for them, as long as we allow them to do so at their own pace.

Let the **Challenge** Begin!

Ken Coomes, DTM

My original plan was to continue with the serial fiction discourse, switching from tips on writing serial fiction to a discussion about the various platforms where you could publish your serial fiction. But I'm giving you a break from the serial fiction topic, just for this month. I want to talk about writing contests—more specifically, about one contest in particular.

Maybe you've heard of the [NYC Midnight](#) series of writing contests, or perhaps not. They have been around since 2002, and have expanded their offerings. They now give writers the opportunity to participate in one (or more) of the following contests, billed as “Challenges.”

- 100-word and 250-word Microfiction Challenges
- Flash Fiction Challenge
- Rhyming Story Challenge
- Screenwriting Challenge
- Short Screenplay Challenge
- Short Story Challenge

Each challenge sets parameters for the contestants, and give them 48 hours to write a piece meeting the criteria. Authors submitting entries are placed in a number of groups. Now let me switch focus to the Flash Fiction Challenge in particular, since I am in the middle of competing in that one for my first time.

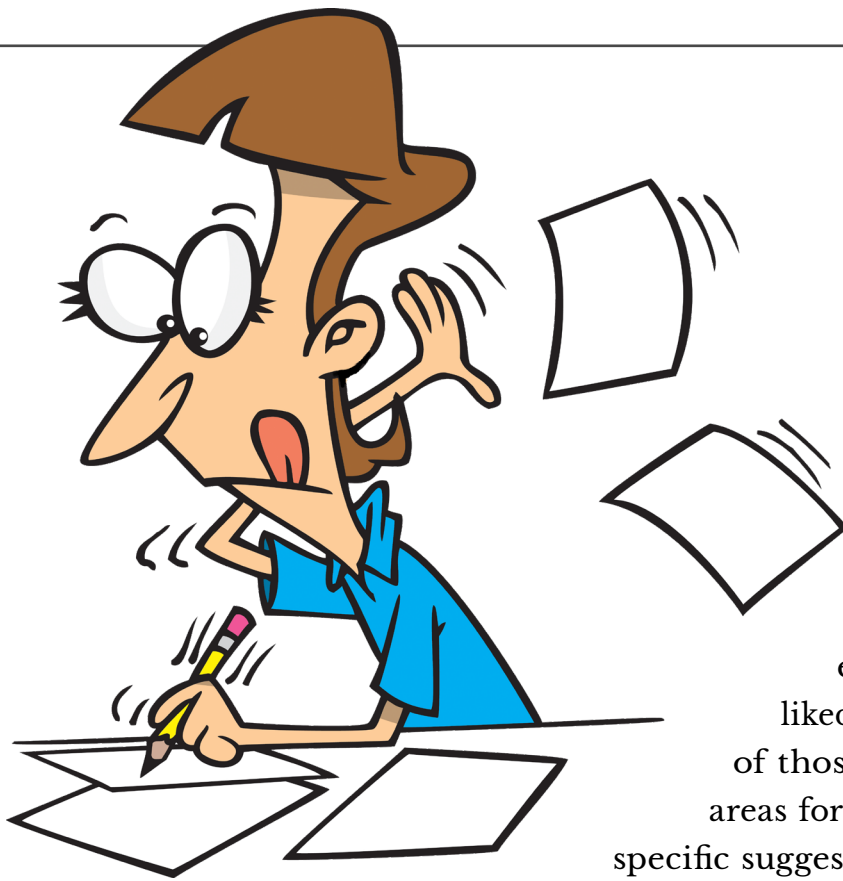
A friend of mine has been participating for years, and usually does quite well. I just found out about NYC Midnight earlier this year. While

I didn't think flash fiction was for me, my youngest son assured me he thought I would do well at writing short pieces. So I went for it.

Here's the potentially bad news: it isn't free. The Flash Fiction Challenge has an entry fee of \$62, or \$52 if you sign up before the early bird deadline passes (I didn't). There's more potentially bad news, if you're all about winning: there are four rounds, and only those who make it to the fourth and final round are eligible for monetary prizes.

Now for the GREAT news, and I'm not talking potential here. The really fabulous news is that you get useful feedback from three different judges for each story you submit. The feedback is specific and encouraging, very much like evaluations in Toastmasters. Added to that piece of good news, everyone who enters gets to advance to round two – you're halfway to the final round, even if you didn't even submit a story in round #1 (as long as you entered before the first round started.)

Again speaking for the Flash Fiction Challenge, entrants are given a set of three prompts: a genre, a location and an item. Your submission must take place totally, or at least primarily, at the specified location, incorporate the item and be in the form of the specified genre. Authors are placed in a number of groups, each group having its own set of three parameters. You remain in the same group for



the second round, but with a different set of three parameters. My group, for example, were required to write a romantic comedy, taking place at a blood bank, and involving an airbag in round #1. (I hated it; I've never written a romcom before, and I thought the blood bank and an airbag made it even more difficult. However, I came up with an entry, just under the 1,000 word requirement.)

It takes a couple of months for the judges to wade through all the submissions and score them. Then each entry is given a score, ranging from 0–15. The best story in each group is scored as a 15, second place a 14, down to 15th best for a one. All others in the group score zero for the round. Reminder: everyone gets to participate in Challenge #2, even with a score of zero. So you are guaranteed feedback on at least two stories (if you write and submit them), from three different judges. It's sort of like a micro Master Class in writing. I felt the feedback alone was worth more than several times the entry fee.

I scored a zero the first time. But each judge found some elements of my story they liked, and made specific mention of those parts. They each found areas for improvement, and offered specific suggestions as to why that could be improved. It was almost like giving a competition speech at Feedbackers!

My second story (just uploaded)? A horror story (again, not my usual genre), at a tennis court, with a statue. I wrote my story, trimmed it to less than 1,000 words, ensured I made use of all the feedback from the first entry, and shared it with a friend. He liked the read and the story, had one bit of advice. Using his advice I tweaked that part, and came up with a stronger ending. Maybe my score will be higher this time, maybe not. But I will get more excellent feedback, helping me to improve.

Time for another challenge. Try writing your own short story, 1,000 words or less, using either set of the prompts I shared from my Challenges (romcom, blood bank, airbag; or horror, tennis court, statue). To share with me, send a link or the story (or even your idea, if you have one but don't write it) to (lupusgnome@hotmail.com).

Next month we'll start exploring some of the serial fiction platforms. Whether you share with me or not, Just Write!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Club Name	Name	
Notary Masters	Alzyout	Tamzyn
Oregon State Toastmasters	Bai	Xlaoqin
West Coast Toasties	Begun	Kristin
Notary Masters	Brown	Monika
Capital Toastmasters Club	Cochran	Kyle
Capital Toastmasters Club	Davis	Robert
Toast Of Tualatin, Lam Research	Desai	Maya
Bend Toastmasters	Garcia	Annette
Advisors Toastmasters Club	Gauthier	Christopher
Toast of Corvallis Toastmasters Club	Gilliland	Ron
Professionally Speaking	Gunderson	Garrett
New Beginnings Toastmasters	High	Thomas
Early Words Club	Holaday	Ann
Downtown Public Speakers Club	Inglis-Drew	Tammy
Portlandia Club	Jones	Madeleine
Oregon State Toastmasters	Karambut	Dylan
West Beaverton Club	Kukushkina	Natalia
M A C Toastmasters Club	Lieber	Anika
Capital Toastmasters Club	McClinton	Dwayne
Capital Toastmasters Club	Merrihew	Cain
Capital Toastmasters Club	Miller	Robert
Capital Toastmasters Club	Morano-Morales	Antonio
Notary Masters	Neitzel	Jennifer
CareOregon	Newton	Jason
Toast to US	Olivieri-Harris	Irene
CareOregon	O'Neal	Janice
Capital Toastmasters Club	Ortega	Jose

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Club Name	Name	
Squawking Heads	Pajares	Alicia
Noon Talkers	Roberts	Michelle
Clackamas Stepping Stones Toastmasters Club	Russell	Kasia
Noon Talkers	Saiser	Jake
Capital Toastmasters Club	Stone	Anthony
AAA Towsters	Suchla	Lesley
Moser Community Toastmasters	Valenzuela	Edwin
Tualatin Valley Toastmasters Club	Yahnson	Seng

“When you talk, you give yourself away. You reveal your true character in a picture which is more true and realistic than anything an artist can do for you.”

— Dr. Ralph C. Smedley

HONORING EDUCATIONAL AWARDS

AWARD	DATE	MEMBER	Club NAME
PI1	7/13/2022	Abram Gallegos, PI1	Rose City Toasters Club
PI1	7/12/2022	Ahren U. Kretlow, PI1	Rose City Toasters Club
PI2	7/10/2022	Angela Stringer, PI2	Lebanon Toastmasters
LD3	7/20/2022	Bernadette Montes, LD3	New Beginnings Toastmasters
IP4	7/12/2022	Bettina K. Schempf, DTM	Corvallis Evening Group
PM3	7/11/2022	Bob Leach, PM3	Babble-On Toastmasters Club
PM4	7/7/2022	Brandon Marsh, IP5	Cedar Hills Club
PM5	7/7/2022	Brandon Marsh, IP5	Cedar Hills Club
DL1	7/21/2022	Brenda Dennis, DL1	Flying Toasters Club
PM2	7/2/2022	Brook Hagen, PM2	Bend Toastmasters
EH3	7/27/2022	Cate A. Arnold, DTM	Top DOTs
EH1	7/27/2022	Cate A. Arnold, DTM	Chanticleers Toastmasters Club
EH2	7/27/2022	Cate A. Arnold, DTM	Chanticleers Toastmasters Club
PM4	7/27/2022	Cate A. Arnold, DTM	Chanticleers Toastmasters Club
PM5	7/27/2022	Cate A. Arnold, DTM	Chanticleers Toastmasters Club
IP3	7/15/2022	Christopher Jeans, DTM	Sporty Speakers
EH3	7/9/2022	Crystal Clark, DTM	Siuslaw Tale Spinners Club
VC5	7/20/2022	Curt Nichols, VC5	Washington Street Club
IP1	7/12/2022	Dallas Jannett, IP3	Corvallis Evening Group
PM2	7/7/2022	David Arbow, PM2	Speakeasy Toastmasters
PM2	7/20/2022	David Sessum, PM4	New Beginnings Toastmasters
PM3	7/20/2022	David Sessum, PM4	New Beginnings Toastmasters
PM4	7/20/2022	David Sessum, PM4	New Beginnings Toastmasters
PM1	7/31/2022	Diane Nelson, PM1	Yaquina Toastmasters
EC5	7/28/2022	Donna Stark, DTM	Downtown Public Speakers Club
EH3	7/28/2022	Donna Stark, DTM	Downtown Public Speakers Club
EH4	7/28/2022	Donna Stark, DTM	Downtown Public Speakers Club
EH5	7/28/2022	Donna Stark, DTM	Downtown Public Speakers Club

HONORING EDUCATIONAL AWARDS

AWARD	DATE	MEMBER	Club NAME
PM2	7/28/2022	Donna Stark, DTM	Downtown Public Speakers Club
PM3	7/28/2022	Donna Stark, DTM	Downtown Public Speakers Club
PM4	7/28/2022	Donna Stark, DTM	Downtown Public Speakers Club
PM5	7/28/2022	Donna Stark, DTM	Downtown Public Speakers Club
PWMENTORPGM	7/28/2022	Donna Stark, DTM	Downtown Public Speakers Club
DL1	7/11/2022	Dylan G. Hogge, DL1	Rose City Toasters Club
PM3	7/28/2022	Elizabeth Linder, PM3	Banfield Barkers
VC1	7/12/2022	Enoch D. Bar Tzadok, VC1	Rose City Toasters Club
VC4	7/21/2022	Erik Bergman, DTM	WE Toasted Toastmasters
LD1	7/12/2022	Giovanni D. Beccaria, LD2	Rose City Toasters Club
PM4	7/6/2022	Greg Hawkins, PM4	Professionally Speaking
SR1	7/9/2022	Gwendolyn Avington, SR4	New Horizons Toastmasters Club
SR2	7/9/2022	Gwendolyn Avington, SR4	New Horizons Toastmasters Club
SR3	7/9/2022	Gwendolyn Avington, SR4	New Horizons Toastmasters Club
TC5	7/7/2022	Heather Randol, TC5	Sunrise Toastmasters Club #1492
PM2	7/24/2022	Isabel Ronlund, PM2	Coachmasters Toastmasters Club
DL1	7/12/2022	Jacob L. Singleton, DL1	Rose City Toasters Club
MS1	7/7/2022	Jacqueline E. Bakke, DTM	Noon Talkers
MS1	7/12/2022	James R. Kennedy, MS1	Rose City Toasters Club
PM5	7/6/2022	Jeanne Brooks, PM5	Professionally Speaking
EH1	7/24/2022	Jesse J. King-Zimmerman, EH1	Rose City Toasters Club
EH3	7/7/2022	Jet Anderson, EH4	West Beaverton Club
LD5	7/25/2022	Joan Miller, LD5	Civil Tongues Club
TC5	7/14/2022	Joanna Johnson, TC5	Flying Toasters Club
PM2	7/6/2022	John VanCamp, PM2	Professionally Speaking
TC3	7/9/2022	Jordan Burnett-Rainey, TC3	New Horizons Toastmasters Club
PI2	7/11/2022	Judah Smith, PI2	Professionally Speaking

HONORING EDUCATIONAL AWARDS

AWARD	DATE	MEMBER	Club NAME
EH3	7/20/2022	Judy Chan, EH3	New Beginnings Toastmasters
EH1	7/5/2022	Julia Fontanilla, EH2	Beachtown Toastmasters
EH2	7/5/2022	Julia Fontanilla, EH2	Beachtown Toastmasters
IP3	7/6/2022	Kamala Wymore, IP3	Noon Talkers
TC3	7/20/2022	Karen Brozovich, TC3	Bend Toastmasters
PM1	7/8/2022	Kate Tiernan, PM1	Communicators Plus
MS4	7/5/2022	Kathleen Tully, DTM	WE Toasted Toastmasters
PM1	7/31/2022	Kelly Greer, PM2	Yaquina Toastmasters
PM2	7/31/2022	Kelly Greer, PM2	Yaquina Toastmasters
PM2	7/1/2022	Kente' Bates, PM2	Vancouver Toastmasters Club
PM1	7/13/2022	Kermhee Moreau, PM1	Lake Oswego Toastmasters Club
LD1	7/12/2022	Kylen L. Wood, LD1	Rose City Toasters Club
MS1	7/13/2022	Lakeitha Ruffin, MS1	Blue Ox Club
LD1	7/12/2022	Mary Liu, LD1	Waffle Toasters
MS1	7/13/2022	Messiah A. Shakur, MS1	Rose City Toasters Club
PM5	7/8/2022	Michael K. Rosenberg, PM5	Toast Of Tualatin, Lam Research
PM2	7/15/2022	Omar Sheikh, PM3	Lake Oswego Toastmasters Club
PM3	7/15/2022	Omar Sheikh, PM3	Lake Oswego Toastmasters Club
IP1	7/2/2022	Paula Latasa, IP1	Bend Toastmasters
PM1	7/7/2022	Penelope Smith, PM1	West Beaverton Club
LD2	7/9/2022	Penny Jahraus, LD2	New Horizons Toastmasters Club
VC1	7/15/2022	Peter Abramowicz, VC1	Sporty Speakers
PM2	7/27/2022	PJ Kleffner, DTM	Babble-On Toastmasters Club
VC5	7/21/2022	Rachel Rodman, VC5	Downtown Public Speakers Club
EC2	7/14/2022	Raynette Yoshida, EC2	Tell Me A Story
EC4	7/7/2022	Robert Hall, DTM	Professionally Speaking
SR1	7/12/2022	Ryan Villemeyer, SR1	Rose City Toasters Club
PM3	7/27/2022	Scott Strickland, DTM	Babble-On Toastmasters Club

HONORING EDUCATIONAL AWARDS

AWARD	DATE	MEMBER	Club NAME
MS4	7/12/2022	Stephanie Stephan, MS5	Waffle Toasters
MS5	7/12/2022	Stephanie Stephan, MS5	Waffle Toasters
PM5	7/14/2022	Steve Mathis, PI3	Professionally Speaking
PI3	7/26/2022	Suzanne Loeb, DTM	Early Words Club
DL1	7/7/2022	Tamsen Corbin, DL1	WE Toasted Toastmasters
PM5	7/18/2022	Terry Helland, PM5	Cedar Hills Club
DL2	7/13/2022	Vineel Kiran Palla, DL2	Lake Oswego Toastmasters Club

Tell Me a Story Toastmasters Tuesdays - 7:00-8:15 pm Meeting Online

Share ideas through story—Learn how at Tell Me A Story Toastmasters
[Click here](#) for more information on joining us for an online meeting

TRIPLE CROWN AWARD PINS

Name	Number Earned	Awards
Allan B. Edinger, DTM	5	EC1 , EC2 , EC3 , EC4 , EC5
Brandon Marsh, IP5	5	IP3 , IP4 , IP5 , PM4 , PM5
Cate A. Arnold, DTM	5	EH3 , EH1 , EH2 , PM4 , PM5
Dallas Jannett, IP3	3	IP1 , IP2 , IP3
David Sessum, PM4	3	PM2 , PM3 , PM4
Donna Stark, DTM	9	EC5 , EH3 , EH4 , EH5 , PM2 , PM3 , PM4 , PM5 , PWMENTORPGM
Gwendolyn Avington, SR4	4	SR1 , SR2 , SR3 , SR4
Helen M. Grothe, DTM	3	EH4 , EH5 , PM5
John Anderson, DTM	6	EC2 , EC3 , PM1 , PM2 , PM3 , PWMENTORPGM
Julius P. Locke, DTM	11	DL5 , EC1 , EC2 , EC3 , EC4 , EC5 , PM4 , PM5 , VC1 , VC2 , VC3

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO AUGUST CLUBS

CHARTER DATE	YEARS	Club	CITY
8/1/1993	29	Silicon Forest	Beaverton
8/14/2014	8	Clack-Orators	Oregon City



B. Lee Coyne, ATMS



Ken Coomes, DTM



Dave Bones, TM



Leanna Lindquist DTM



David Freedman, IP3



Lorri Andersen, DTM



Eldred Brown, DTM



Paul Fanning, DTM



Jennifer Schmidt, EH2



Phyllis Harmon, DTM



Jim Robison, DTM

A stylized green plant logo with a thick, curved stem and several pointed leaves, positioned on the left side of the poster.

Call for Speakers

Seeds of Change ~

Growing New Leaders

May 19 - 20, 2023

Do you have a passion for inspiring your audience to take action? If so, we want you as a speaker at District 7's 2023 Annual Conference!

**CLICK HERE & TELL US ABOUT
YOUR PRESENTATION**

Submission Deadline October 30, 2022