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District 53
Toastmasters
International
district53toastmasters.org



Yankee Activator

A 2005-2006 Toastmasters International Top-5 Newsletter, serving
Toastmasters in Connecticut, Eastern New York, & Western Mass

The Experience of a Committed Toastmasters Team!

by Patricia D. MacLeod,
HANYS Toastmasters

*Inspired by direct quotes from members
of the Healthcare Association of New
York State's Toastmasters Club*

This is not a club for the faint of heart. It takes major commitment and drive to succeed.

Being a part of this group has taught us to think on our feet, be ready to give a speech at a moments notice, be more watchful of time limits for meetings, and be overall better listeners. Directly as a result of the tools that we have gained from Toastmasters, we are more alert in meetings and able to give instantaneous feedback, we remain topic specific and do not go off on tangents, we give honest presentations rather than read from notes or slides.

We have learned, through the various roles that we play in our club, to be respectful when someone else is speaking, to be better meeting facilitators, and have gained countless leadership skills imperative to success in the business community.

Our club started in April of 2006 as a result of many employee requests for further training in public speaking. Our Vice President of Human Resources, Joanna Blaisdell, and our Human Resources Administrator, Christine O'Grady responded to this call for growth. They worked with Will Ryan of Toastmasters International who assisted them with questions, introduced them to a meeting, and provided them with personal mentors for the club. We have been lucky to gain enormous insight from

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Why Compete in a Toastmasters Speech Contest?

by Nana Danso
BI (Boehringer Ingelheim) TM Club

Before I joined Boehringer Ingelheim Toastmasters in April, 2006, several people who had seen me give presentations said to me, "You don't need Toastmasters." They believed that I was already a competent speaker. However, I felt that I could improve and I was interested in meeting new people. Since joining the club, I have accomplished both.

One day I invited a colleague to a Toastmasters meeting. Before I could finish my inviting sentence, she responded with, "I don't have problems with public speaking!" "Really," I thought to myself. She, too, had room for improvement, but I didn't tell her that. Many people believe that Toastmasters is a club for people who wet their pants at the mere thought of speaking publicly. However, I believe that there are benefits of Toastmasters membership beyond keeping your pants dry during presentations.

In February, 2007, I saw an announcement for a club speech contest and I signed up without a clue of what I would speak about. I figured that signing up would commit me and I could always come up with a topic later. Participating in the competition would allow me to take full advantage of the benefits that Toastmasters membership brings, i.e. to practice the skills that I had learned during my regular club speeches and to receive even further evaluation from multiple club members. With or without victory, I envisioned three opportunities in competing.

1. Opportunity to use feedback from my evaluations. I thought the contest would be an excellent opportunity to exhibit learning from my speech evaluations - competition usually brings out the best performance in people. I had performed eight speeches from the Competent Leadership Manual before

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A Message from our *District Governor*

By WILL RYAN, DTM



Dare to Believe

This year's theme, "**Dare to Believe**," follows logically from those that have gone before. Two years ago, Paul Young encouraged us to "Mind the Gap" as we compared where we were in Toastmasters to where we wanted to be. Last year, John Lynch followed Paul with the theme "Lead with Vision" as he suggested we visualize our process as we build plans to meet our goals. I pondered these themes and thought about what else is needed. Almost instantaneously, my inner voice said, "**Dare to Believe**."

Much has been written about the concept of thinking as the starting point for all creations, inventions and accomplishments in life. What we think about expands. If we're experiencing negative self-talk like, "I don't have the time to be an Area Governor" or "I don't have the experience to be a conference co-chair," our future will not include closing the gap, even if we do so with vision. Therefore, what we all need to do is **Dare to Believe** that we can have it all.

By noticing our inner voice and letting go of energizing the negative, we can achieve our goals. A wonderful family life, an exciting business career and a Toastmasters life filled with personal growth experiences are all possible—even at the same time. These ideas flooded into my mind during numerous phone calls to our members as I recruited Area Governors. More often than not, members told me they didn't have the time for the job. Well, since we all have 1,440 minutes each day, my conclusion is that these Toastmasters had chosen to spend their time in other pursuits. Were they listening to negative self-talk?

Marshall McLuhan is quoted as having said, "There are no passengers on Spaceship Earth. We are all crew." The same is true of our District ship. When we join Toastmasters, we typically have a set of

goals to accomplish. This leads to action plans related to what we plan to receive. On the other hand, we all agreed to the Toastmasters promises when we joined. They include commitments to give to the organization as well. In my two years as a member of the Senior Team, I've observed that less than ten percent (250) of our members volunteer for leadership outside the club. So why do so few members assume responsibility for leading and managing our operations, thus acting like passengers?

Maybe our members don't understand the benefits that can result from taking leadership responsibility? Last fall, when we began planning for the Spring Conference, we set a goal of attracting at least 200 attendees. This goal stimulated some to volunteer to be part of achieving this lofty goal, thinking "we can do it." Previous conferences had achieved between 140 and 160 attendees, so we knew a serious stretch was in order. Well, by now, you know we did it. We attracted 205 members to our conference. To understand the value they received, just ask people on our conference team. And, like the TV commercial says, you'll hear that it was priceless and one of the most fulfilling experiences they've had in Toastmasters.

Our ship launched on July 1 for another wonderful year together. I am delighted and deeply honored to be your District Governor. Unlike most previous District Governor elections, this year it was competitive, and I am gratified that you've elected me and trusted me to be on the bridge of our ship. I'm joined by Karin von Kaenel as Lt. Governor of Education & Training and Marsha Kiley, Lt. Governor of Marketing. Together, we'll mind our District gaps, we'll establish a clear vision for our leadership and we'll **Dare to Believe** that we can achieve Distinguished District for the third year in a row.

Will Ryan, DTM
District 53 Governor 2007-08



A Message from our *Lt. Governor, Education & Training*

By KARIN VON KAENEL, ACB/ALS



Happy New Year!

Here it is: A new Toastmasters year is upon us and with it the chance to plan for your best year ever!

Why should you plan your year ahead?

Goals and a plan are important: Goals and a plan keep you on track!

What are your goals for this upcoming year?

- Do you want to earn your CC or your next AC award?
- Were you just elected as a club officer and want to do an outstanding job?
- What other goals do you have in mind?

What is your current status?

- How many speeches have you presented? Do you know which manuals you want to work on?
- Do you have leadership experience? How well do you know your club's members?

How are you going to get from your current status to your goals?

- If you've given 3 speeches and want to attain your CC this year, you want to give 7 more speeches. Does your club's VPE know to put you on the schedule as a speaker once a month for the next 7 months? Also think of other creative ways to give those speeches. You can, e.g., participate in the Speech Contests this fall: Just ensure your contest speech incorporates the objectives of the manual assignment and another Toastmaster gives you an evaluation.
- If you're a brand new VPE, do you know what your club members' goals are? If not, ask them. Do you have a plan for their success, a plan that is effective at meeting the members' needs?
 - What are the obstacles? If you don't have enough speaking slots for everybody, can you come up with alternatives? Can you dedicate one meeting every 3 months to a

speech-a-thon, i.e., a meeting consisting of speeches (evaluations are in writing and discussed one-on-one during the last 5 minutes).

- What are your club's strengths? Do you have experienced members who can mentor new members? Do you have a lot of new members who are eager to stretch into new projects, who want to experience new things, e.g. a debate meeting?
- If you're a new VP of Membership, think about how to encourage your club's members to challenge old assumptions and reach outside their comfort zone to try something new.
 - To stretch their Public Speaking skills, encourage them to compete in the Fall contests or encourage them to speak in front of larger or unfamiliar audiences: To speak in front of a larger audience, club members can consider running one of the education sessions at the Fall Conference on November 3. To speak in front of unfamiliar audiences, club members can visit nearby clubs: Teamwork among different clubs is very much encouraged and we just instituted the Traveling Gavel to foster this kind of exchange (for more information, visit <http://www.district53toastmasters.org/travelinggavel.html>).
 - To stretch one's Leadership skills, encourage your club's members to take on a new role, e.g. to learn the logistics of advertising your club on the web, or to help others by being a mentor.

Once you know your goals and you have a plan, re-visit them often to help you focus on what is most important, to help you get back on track with executing your plan.

I'm looking forward to seeing all of you grab the opportunity, write down your goals, your current status, and how to reach those goals.

Let's plan for making this the best year ever!

Karin von Kaenel, ACB/ALS
Lt. Governor, Education & Training 2007-08

A Message from our *Lt. Governor, Marketing*

By MARSHA KILEY, CTM/CL



Exercise Your Passion!

Thank YOU for your vote at the Leadership Summit on May 19th! I am VERY excited to be your new Lt. Governor Marketing (LGM) for 2007-2008!

There are two things you need to know about me: I am VERY passionate about **Toastmasters** and **exercise**. Get ready to 'PUMP IT UP' this year as we do some major toning and build STRONG clubs in District 53!

I am true to Will's challenge, and 'Dare to Believe' that ALL of our clubs will have MORE than twenty members and that we will have MORE Toastmaster clubs throughout our district so that MORE people can benefit from this incredible organization!

How will we do this? My plan is to establish a Marketing Committee that will achieve the district's membership and club growth goals. It will continually build the 5 major priorities of the LGM: club coaching, quality clubs, new clubs, new members and retention.

If you would like to be a part of a dynamic team which will 'work out' to reach new heights, please email me at mpkiley431@aol.com or call me at 860-534-2174 (w) or 203-799-2640 (h).

Our Marketing Committee with its fresh ideas will then move out within the district and reach out to our Division and Area Governors and Club Officers to bring the message all the way up the line to the members to make sure we have quality clubs and programs.

To attract and retain members, you need to offer something that is needed for one's fulfillment that cannot be attained anywhere else. We have that in

Toastmasters! We will market our product and make sure the member is aware of all of its benefits.

We need to do a better job of RETENTION in clubs:

- find out why a member joined – what attracted them in the first place?
- start a relationship as a mentor or dedicated Toastmaster
- show you care – make a difference
- call them – make them happy so they want to be a Toastmaster! – they bring friends, the club grows and you do, too!
- keep it going through contests, conferences and district leadership opportunities
- ALWAYS provide an added value – it's a win-win situation!

We will maintain an effective mentoring program which is essential for robust membership in our clubs. This is an area that will receive repeated 'toning'!

An article in the May edition of Toastmasters Magazine said, "People stay with Toastmasters when they experience one of its ultimate goals: Improve yourself while improving the lives of others and you improve the world."

Fellow Toastmasters, **retention** IS my business! I am a Personal Client Manager by day – dedicated to my clients – and it does make a difference. It's not just service any more. If you want to stay ahead of the competition you need to stay actively involved so they 'want' to stay with you. The same principles apply to Toastmasters for a Marketing and Membership Team that continually moves forward. Oh, yes, there will be many rewards and one of them will be M&Ms to enjoy *after* each workout!

Join me and '**Dare to Believe**' that we can really 'PUMP IT UP' in District 53 and attract and retain more members than ever before!

Marsha Kiley, CTM/CL
Lt. Governor, Marketing 2007-08



*Attention Scrap-bookers &
VPs of Public Relations!*

The Golden Quill *by Ute Brinkmann, DTM*

The Golden Quill is presented to the Toastmaster Club and the VP Public Relations that creates and submits a Public Relations Scrapbook. The mission of this competition is to further the membership growth in all Toastmaster Clubs within our District 53.

Membership growth is a critical success factor for our district and for all Distinguished Clubs. Contest Period: The Club PR Scrapbook must be updated and maintained for the current Toastmaster year (2006-2007). Submission deadline: Fall Conference, November 3, 2007.

Golden Quill Contest Rules

Only ONE PR Scrapbook submission per club will be qualified for judging. Club PR Scrapbook submissions will only be accepted from the Club VP Public Relations or the Club President. Each Club PR Scrapbook Must Have: (1) Club Name / Club Number (2) Meeting Time and Place (4) Author's Name (usually club VPPR) (5) Club Contact E-mail Address for submittal acknowledgement.

Awards Criteria

The Golden Quill Award judging criteria are guided by the role/responsibilities of the Club VP Public Relations as defined in the "When You Are the Vice President Public Relations" manual. The PR Scrapbook should present evidence of an active and on-going Public Relations program by showing the content and resulting media coverage of the activities of the Club and individuals within the Club. Activities that receive media coverage should highlight the communication and leadership goals of Toastmasters International and District 53.

Publications can be in the national press, local press, radio/TV talk shows or radio/TV PSAs, internal company publication (for closed clubs) and any other media events. In all cases, reference must be supplied as to when and where published or aired, with supporting documentation.

Each PR media event will be evaluated relative to the goals and objectives of the Toastmasters International including speaking, communication, leadership and the awareness of club, area, division, and district events.

A successful PR scrapbook will demonstrate the existence of an effective public relations program that maximizes public and member awareness for Toastmasters International and the Toastmasters Club.

Please submit your scrapbook to:

Ute Brinkmann, District 53 PRO, 84 South Orchard Street,
Wallingford, CT 06492 - ute@cshore.com
Or bring it to the District 53 Fall Conference on
November 3, 2007.

YA



Capture the Traveling Gavel! *by Ute Brinkmann, DTM*

What's a Traveling Gavel? I'm glad you asked! It's a bit of a strange, fun, and wacky way to encourage intercommunication between our clubs! How?

When the Traveling Gavel is held by a club, it can be "captured" by another club when 3 or more members of the club that's seeking it visits the club with the gavel (and of course, they should call ahead to announce their visit!) The visiting Toastmasters must participate in the meeting in some way. When they leave, they take the Traveling Gavel with them to display in their own meeting, until another club's visitors capture it for their own.

So we all know who has the Traveling Gavels (there are several of them), those who "capture" the gavel must email the D53 webmaster so the webmaster can post the current location of the Traveling Gavels. This allows the next Traveling Gavel raid team to visit, retrieve the gavel for their own, notify the webmaster, and bask in the glory.

Why do we encourage this slightly wild and crazy activity? Well, of course, Toastmasters will be encouraged to learn more about each others' clubs, and in the process, will share best practices, leadership skills, and even extend their knowledge of Toastmasters. Yes, it's fun, give it a try, and see if you can see your own club as a holder of the Traveling Gavel!

*See details (and who's got the Traveling Gavels) at
<http://district53toastmasters.org/travelinggavel.html>*

Be the Leader You Can Be

by Andrea Isaacs, ACG,
Patroon Toastmasters Club

Are you already the leader you want to be? Or is there another leadership attribute you'd still like to develop? Maybe it's confidence, patience and understanding, or having the facility to talk with ease to a variety of different kinds of people.


For myself, since I was terribly shy for most of my life, being Area Governor, or AG, was just the stretch I needed in my leadership development.

Visiting clubs and speaking with people in more walks of life than I would ever encounter in my own life was a great opportunity to use my growing Toastmasters skills and expand my leadership style.

Giving clubs feedback made me realize how much I knew not only about Toastmasters but also public speaking. If I didn't know the answers to their questions, it was a great excuse to get in touch with our Lt. Governors Karin von Kaenel or Will Ryan, or our District Governor John Lynch, who would know or find out for me. I value the friendships I now have with Karin, Will and John, friendships which wouldn't have developed if I hadn't been AG.

Darren LaCroix, 2001 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking, says there are three things that contribute to making a good speaker great: stage time, stage time and stage time. Being an AG is another way to get it.

Be all you can be; be an AG.


Andrea Isaacs, ACG, ALS, is the 2006-2007 Area F3 Governor and IPP of the Patroon Toastmasters Club in Albany, NY. She conducts trainings in Emotional Intelligence and Leadership. 

The Tallest Tale

By Christina VanHoesen
DTM, Bethlehem Toastmasters Club

What happens to an outgoing area or division governor? Do they get swallowed by a shark? No, but they may make up a speech about it and make it into their tall tales speech for the upcoming year. Although ineligible to compete for the year they are serving as governor, most are more than prepared to compete again once their term of duty is over.

Collecting bits of story ideas, inspiration drives them to compete with the best of them. The amusing stories get exaggerated even more as the competition continues to mount. But why stop there? Hear some of the legends, the far-fetched ideas and create your own tall tales speech. A daring adventure, an indescribable feat of courage or cowardice, that keeps the audience on the edge of their seats, wondering what will happen next.

Where else can you get away with telling a tall tale. By competing, you may discover the hidden secret to improving your own speeches. Perhaps that funny group photo in front of King Kong or going over Niagara Falls in a barrel could become part of that speech. A little bit of bull (shark) can go a long way. 



D53 Online Quick Reference Guide

D53 Website: <http://www.district53toastmasters.org>

Webmaster: webber53@district53toastmasters.org

YA Editor: editor53@district53toastmasters.org

Yahoo! Group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/d53toastmasters/>

Post message: d53toastmasters@yahoogroups.com

Subscribe: d53toastmasters-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Unsubscribe: d53toastmasters-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

Contact District 53 Governor, LGET and LGM Top-3 Email:
Team53@district53toastmasters.org

Added Benefit

by Edward M. Cahill, CL
President, Bethlehem Toastmasters Club

When I initially joined Toastmasters my prime motive was to overcome my nervousness when having to speak in public. After talking with many other toastmasters, I've concluded that this desire to eliminate the fear of public speaking and the anxiety that it brings is almost universal. It is certainly one of the major reasons why people join a Toastmaster's club.

Based upon my own experience, Toastmasters is excellent at reducing the anxiety associated with giving a formal speech. While my heart would pound and my palms would sweat every time I gave one of my first speeches at my club, I noticed that after about the sixth speech, it was becoming noticeably more at ease with each succeeding speech. I wasn't anywhere near as nervous as I had previously been, and my speaking technique improved dramatically.

But this new-found confidence wasn't the only benefit I obtained from speaking in Toastmasters. Whenever I give a speech at my club, I want to talk on a subject that is of interest to me. What I found in preparing a speech was that the preparation helped me to gain a better understanding, and in many cases a mastery, of the subject matter. It reminded me of the old adage that if you really want to understand a subject, you have to be able to teach it. When giving a speech you have to present your ideas in a cogent manner using clear, concise language. Being able to do this forces you to achieve a better understanding of your subject.

So even today when giving a speech at my Toastmaster's club, I not only reinforce the confidence I've achieved in public speaking, but I also gain a better comprehension of a subject that is of interest to me. This improved understanding of the subject carries over into my daily life, especially in conversations I have on current events. I am better able to express my views and in fact I believe my opinions are better thought out because of the efforts I make in preparing a speech.



There's Still Time to Earn That CL / AL Award

by John Osborn, CTM, D53 YA Editor

As you probably know, a new Toastmasters Certification program was rolled out last year, where the Competent Leader (CL) and Advanced Leader (AL) awards were replaced with the Advanced Communicator Bronze, Silver, and Gold awards. Have you already completed some or even most of the requirements for the CL or AL under the *old* certification system? If so, don't despair—you still have time to earn your certification under the old system.

Since the change in leadership certifications was so significant, Toastmasters instituted a *two-year* grace period to complete CL and AL requirements under the old system. If you're looking to obtain these old certifications, you have until June 30, 2008.

For details, see the info on the TI website, at:
<http://www.toastmasters.org/artisan/member.asp?CategoryID=1&SubCategoryID=&ArticleID=364>



DG John Lynch presents Bruce DePrest the D53 Communication & Leadership Award at the D53 Spring Conference. Bruce was selected as one of approximately eighty outstanding leaders throughout the world to receive the Toastmasters International Communication and Leadership Award for 2007. Bruce DePrest, chief meteorologist, provides Connecticut's live weather updates and forecasts from the Doppler 3000 Weather Center every weeknight on Hartford's Channel 3 WFSB-TV. Photo by Don Logie.

S-T-R-E-T-C-H!!!

By Karin von Kaenel, ACB/ALS

Lt. Governor, Education & Training 2007-08

Are You ready to stretch yourself into a new Speaking Experience? Then join our Fall Speech Contests!

What? Table Topics / Humorous Speech Contests

When? Plan your club-level speech contests for the first meeting in September

Who? Any Toastmaster member in good standing, from a club in good standing ...YOU!

Why? Speech contests are a growth opportunity. All participants grow, become more polished, more effective.

Following are testimonials from 2 Toastmaster colleagues who have competed numerous times:

"I enter speech contests for three reasons. First, I LOVE competing. Competing in speech contests gives me the same adrenaline rush as competing in any other sport I've played. It drives me to do better than I've ever done before, which leads me to the second reason I enter these contests: The degree to which you improve during your preparation for a contest is far greater than during your preparation for a regular speech. I think David Brooks said this in one of his CDs. A contest environment creates such intensity and drive in me that I will do whatever I can to ensure I put the best product I can on the stage. Typically, for the many regular speeches that I give during the course of the year, I don't have that kind of time to give.

"Lastly, and most importantly, I cherish every opportunity to impact another person's life. In speech contests, because of the quality of the speech, you have the greatest chance to do that. When someone comes up to me at the end of a contest and says they enjoyed the speech, it makes sense, maybe I'll try that, etc., I feel like I made a difference. I'll be the first to admit, this doesn't always happen (actually, not often - still working on this), but when it does, it makes all that hard work worthwhile."

- Steve Gondek

"A great deal has been discussed about "competing" as of late in our Yahoo Group and I am pleased to have participated in many contests. The reason why competing is important is because it is just one more dimension of becoming a better speaker.

"A bicycle wheel is made up of many spokes and no single spoke is more important than the one next to it. It is the sum of all the spokes of the wheel and their contribution to the whole that gives the wheel its strength. Speaking works the same way. If one only speaks at their club then they will never gain the strength, confidence and courage

to develop their speaking to the level they could. Competing in contests offers a second spoke of the wheel. There are many others. The key is to identify them and then muster up the courage to "go for it". How many spokes of our speaking wheel has each of us developed?

"I have always kept in mind the sage advice of a speaking mentor of mine years ago. He simply said 'Doug if just one other person will listen to you in an elevator then speak to them. Anytime you have an opportunity to speak, then speak. Try to always look for opportunities to speak beyond your level of comfort. What makes you a better speaker is speaking.'

"I remember the first time I was asked to do a sermon at a large congregation. What I knew about religion and delivering a sermon could be summed up in one word: "nothing". With the advice of my mentor I took the role because it was beyond anything I had ever felt before. I was well beyond my comfort zone. The bottom line is when I left the church that morning I left with more confidence because I knew that I had instantly become a better speaker."

- Doug "Clydesdale" Comstock

To read more, go to the article 'Say Yes to Speech Contests' in the Toastmasters magazine:

[http://www.toastmasters.org/artisan/detail.asp?](http://www.toastmasters.org/artisan/detail.asp?CategoryID=1&SubCategoryID=10&ArticleID=369&Page=3)

[CategoryID=1&SubCategoryID=10&ArticleID=369&Page=3](http://www.toastmasters.org/artisan/detail.asp?CategoryID=1&SubCategoryID=10&ArticleID=369&Page=3)

Let your club make a quality statement by sending the best speakers to the Area contest! By doing so, your club makes use of the Toastmasters program, your club demonstrates that their members are encouraged to stretch, and that they have supportive peers who foster their growth process. A Toastmasters club that participates in the Area contest can stand proud and applaud their club members!

For more information on upcoming speech contests, visit <http://www.district53toastmasters.org/contests.html>



Get Published!

Sharpen your written communication skills by writing an article for the **Yankee Activator**! Articles for the

Fall Edition must be submitted to the editor at Editor53@district53toastmasters.org

by July 27, 2007

YA

On the funnier side...

Future Educational Sessions? Or Maybe Not...

by Roger Brown, DTM
D53 Webmaster

After the outstanding Spring 2007 District Conference in East Hartford, CT, it may be challenging to find new informative and enlightening educational session speakers.

Of course, as Toastmasters, we will rise to the occasion and put together a great Fall 2007 Conference. Let me offer some ideas:

- A spectacular interactive session on "Dynamic Speaking While Bunji Jumping" by Speech Coach, Hugo First.
- "Put More Punch in Your Speech" by the D53 Assertiveness Training Coach, Lois Steem
- "Understanding Your Audience" by the Division F Behavior Consultant Wyatt B. Hoovesia
- "Increasing Volunteer Spirit & TM Participation" by Area Apathy Study Co-Chairs Ben Thayer, Don Thatt
- "Surviving the Tough Table Topic Question" by the Immediately Past TT Contestmaster Gladys Over-with
- "Speaking Clearly" by the Division A Elocution Coach, Richard Shun (aka Dick)
- "Looking Good at the Lectern" by the Division B Fashion Consultant Natalie Attired
- "Speaking Without Verbal Crutches" by the Division E Grammar Consultant I.M. Shirley Wright
- "Getting Paid Big Buck\$ to Speak" by the D53 Treasurer and Director of Executive Committee Pay Increases Xavier Breath (assisted by Tony Von Thinkett!)
- "How To Attend the TI Convention in Phoenix ('07) or Calgary ('08) With Financial Support" by the Director of the Toastmasters International Rebate Program, Wendy Pigsfly



And to go along with all the great Educational Sessions (yet to be announced) we have expanded the Hallway Events (not the Hall of Fame) for all attending Toastmasters and their guests. The First-timers Activities Coordinator from Division C, Dewey Hafta, is taking charge. The D53 Statistician, Marge Innovera, is looking at the registration records and conference evaluation forms from recent D53 Conferences to help make the Fall '07 Conference "Better Than Ever" and the "Best Yet". And the Fall Conference Criers, Nina Clark and Alice Well, will keep you informed of developing Conference agendas.

Hmmmm.....

OK - GET SERIOUS FOR A MOMENT (removing tongue from cheek). The Fall 2007 District 53 Conference Committee will soon be accepting applications for educational presenters at our November 3rd, 2007 conference. The submission process is open to **all** Toastmasters Members.

When submitting your proposed educational session, please provide:

- * Proposed Session Title and Objectives (What should the attendee expect from the session?):
- * Abstract (What will be discussed during the session?):
- * Biographical Information (Relevant Credentials/Experience)

Watch the District 53 Website's conference page for more information and the announcement of the Conference Educational Chair, at <http://www.district53toastmasters.org/conferences.html>

Before You Jump To No...

By Roger Brown, DTM
Greater Hartford Toastmasters Club

At this time of officer transition the new Club President and the Club Executive committee are planning the new year. Part of that yearly plan is the two speech contests in August/September and two additional speech contests in January/February. Beyond setting dates for the Club contests, the challenge is to encourage participation. When more members are involved the outcome will be a successful contest with a large measure of entertainment value and fun.

As you lead "Be positive." You might be tempted to begin your quest for speech contestants with the question ... "Have you competed in a Speech contest before?" I bet a majority of our members will answer "NO", setting an immediate negative slant. Maybe, they would answer "NO, and you can't make me!", or simply, "NO, and that's my final answer."

I believe a better question to ask: "Are YOU ready to stretch yourself into a new Speaking Experience?" Speech contests are a growth opportunity. ALL participants grow and become a more polished and effective communicator.

Here is another positive slant to finding speech contestants. Let your Club make a quality statement. You must assert that "Our Club will send their best speakers to the Area Contest." Indeed, our Club uses the Toastmasters programs, we have grown, and are ready to demonstrate our abilities. In addition,

I believe all contestants make use of their club members and club environment to prepare for the next speech – a revised and improved speech for a speech contest. So a Toastmaster Club that participates in an Area contest can stand proud (with their club banner) and applaud their Toastmaster member that is showing the best product of their proud club. Say YES and speak up and out – showcase your proud Club.



Toastmasters at the CT Expo – Toastmasters from Stag, One State Street, Cedar Hill, Greater Hartford, SoFar, Cigna, Toast of Hartford, Prudential, and Southern Berkshire staffed the double booth at the CT Expo on June 7, 2007. We had many types of visitors at our booth: people who never heard of Toastmasters, people who flunked Toastmasters, people who are currently in Toastmasters, people who have been guests at Toastmasters and people who are very interested in Toastmasters. We had people stopping by who knew about us and recommend us to their employees – our silent recruiters. We can't thank them enough.

- Ute Brinkmann



Save the Date: D 53 Fall 2007 Conference!

Mark your calendar! Saturday, November 3rd,
Holiday Inn Fishkill, Fishkill, New York

Enjoy the District-Level
Table Topics & Humorous Speech Contests, hosted by Div A

Conference Co-Chairs:

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competing in my first International Speech Contest. One of my biggest challenges was connecting with all audience members. I had the tendency to stick to one side of the room. The speech contest took place in an auditorium with a raised stage, which served as a better platform to practice than the conference rooms in which I had previously performed. I tried to make full use of the stage and to establish eye contact with as many audience members as possible.

Since my first competition, I have brought home three International Speech Contest trophies with the same speech. It is simply amazing how my winning speech has improved since the first time I delivered it at the club level. I have taken full advantage of the mentoring and guidance of our Vice President of Education, who has attended all three contests. The support of our club members has been my greatest source of encouragement. In addition to their evaluations, it is very refreshing to establish eye contact with audience members and to see familiar, smiling, handsome and beautiful club members cheering you on.

2. Opportunity to share stories— Mark Brown, the 1995 World Champion of public speaking said, “Everybody has a story and somebody needs to hear it.” My friends will tell you that I love to tell stories. My wife will tell you that she sometimes has to tune me out after the tenth story of the day. What better platform to tell your story than a Toastmasters speech contest? At BI Toastmasters, I deliver one speech a month. Each week that I perform my speech is the most exciting week of the month for me. I enjoy the entire process – from the idea to the writing to the delivery of the speech. Performing at a contest allows me to put what I learn at the club level into practice beyond the club. It also gives me a wider audience to hear my story.

3. Opportunity to get out of my comfort zone— After performing several speeches at BI Toastmasters, I began to feel comfortable with the audience, because it was the same audience all the time. This type of platform often leads to a false sense of security. In their book, *The Seven Strategies of Master Presenters*, Dr. Brad McRae and David Brooks identify the first strategy as “Know Thy Audience.” Even though speech contest audiences generally comprise members of Toastmasters, I have gained from delivering my speeches to unfamiliar members of the organiza-

tion.

I have a video of my Area Contest performance, held on March 21, 2007. This was the first speech that I had ever given outside of my club. When I watch the video, I think about ways in which I can improve even more. We are our own best critics. I encourage everyone with a desire to improve in public speaking to record their performance, both in front of family members and Toastmasters friends, and in front of strangers. In addition to being fun, and sometimes embarrassing to watch, it provides a great resource for self-evaluation.

Phoenix '07, Calgary '08, or Mashantucket '09

The 2007 World Championship of Public Speaking will take place in Phoenix, Arizona. Will I be one of the ten finalists? Maybe. That would be a remarkable honor for a new member of Toastmasters. However, I am extremely proud of my public speaking accomplishments thus far. I look forward to telling another story to a captive audience at the 2007 Region VII conference in Philadelphia. Calgary and Mashantucket are ahead of me as well. Winning a Toastmasters speech contest is an exhilarating experience. However, merely competing has immeasurable benefits and I encourage every Toastmaster to compete at least once.



(Continued from page 1)

Andrea Isaacs, AC-G, CL, Area F3 Governor, and Jeff Raia, our club mentors. Through their guidance and HANYS' enthusiasm, our club was born.

The self confidence gained from the support of this team is unmatched by any other experience that we've had. We have learned to love applause! The friendly, professional, and supportive environment that Toastmasters offers has led to a greater trust and mutual respect for the way we offer and accept constructive criticism. Toastmasters has raised our confidence and self-esteem. We have learned to work better as a cohesive unit!

The most amazing thing about Toastmasters is how rapidly you notice change within yourself and your co-workers. From the very first meeting you attend, you have already learned at least two things: the various purposes for structure of time, and respect for the people you see rise to the challenge! What changes have *you* already seen in yourself?





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- Save the Date -
D53 Fall 2007 Conference
November 3, 2007
Holiday Inn Fishkill
Fishkill, NY

This issue's theme: Speech Contests!

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Yankee Activator is the quarterly newsletter of Toastmasters International District 53 and is free of charge to members. Your articles are wanted and needed! Photos, stories, best practices, tough questions, fun ideas – Whatever! Send articles and photos for the next issue to: John Osborn, (860)732-8587, or via email at:

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