



# MESSAGE FROM MAX 'Tis the Season of Contests and Conferences

by Max E. Rasquinha, DTM, District 56 Governor



It's contest season, time to witness the enthusiasm among Toastmasters who gather to display their talents in tall tales and humorous speeches. Contests allow our clubs, areas and divisions time to interact with each other and enjoy the

fellowship of friendly competition.

The more participation we have, the merrier these events become. In addition to the contestants, numerous volunteers help make the contests successful and exciting. Contest time is a time to encourage club members to take on these roles, from judge to timer, from ballot counter to sergeant-at-arms. Each role contributes to developing leadership and communication skills. Every participant gains something during the season of contests.

Competition becomes an important part of the season. The winners from the club level go to the area contests, and those winners move on to the division level. Some participants take the process seriously, watching other contests so they can judge the level of competition and prepare for the challenge. Regardless of the outcome, however, everyone is a winner.

Contest season ultimately leads to our district conference on November 6, 2004. Conference chairperson Marcia Hudgens and her team have great preparations currently in progress (see article on page 4). We are also grateful to the Fountain of Praise Toastmasters Club for helping us secure their wonderful church facilities for our full-day conference.

## Join Our Family Reunion on Nov. 6

Think of our district conference as a family reunion. Most of our division governors, area governors and club presidents will have a chance to meet and exchange ideas and viewpoints for their mutual benefit. This is also a time to renew our own dedication to enhancing our personal communication and leadership skills and to supporting each other in achieving these goals.

The educational program at the district conference is one of the highlights of the season. We'll benefit from 12 educational sessions presented by our own Toastmasters. We're proud that these presenters have come forward to provide so many interesting sessions. Education is truly timeless.

Above all, we want each and every member to enjoy the best possible conference experience. Toastmasters members are our precious customers, and we learn so much from them.

The season of contests and conferences is our opportunity, as Toastmasters, to:

- Display our speaking talents.
- Share the spirit of friendly competition.
- Soak up the new ideas and input offered at our conference.
- Enjoy getting to know our District 56 Toastmasters family.

These opportunities and more can make our world, this "Small World – Beautiful World," a better place to live and prosper.

Max E. Rasquinha, DTM  
District Governor

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# Message from Lt. Governor Education & Training

## District Support Enhances Club and Officer Effectiveness

by Allen Prescott, ATM-S/CL



District 56 wants all the officers of every club to succeed in serving club members – while having fun and developing their own leadership skills. The district offers plenty of support for our club officers, but first your club must HAVE officers in place to benefit from this support.

Does your club elect officers every six months? If so, you need to form a nominating committee now. Hold your club elections early in November; then send your club officer information form to TI. Let your area governor know about your new officers, too. Also be sure to pass along the officer manuals, which are good for July 2004-June 2005, to your new officers.

### Trained Officers Are Your Club's Key to Success

Next, your officers have to be trained for their jobs. TI requires that all club officers attend a district-sponsored club officer training session every six months, even if they are elected annually. Club officer training, provided at the Toastmasters Leadership Institute (TLI) programs, is an excellent investment of your time for many reasons:

1. TLI is a good refresher on how to perform your officer duties effectively.
2. TLI is the place to learn what's happening throughout the district. You'll hear announcements and district news from all the district officers.
3. TLI is your best chance to network with other Toastmasters in the district, sharing tips, insights and lessons for improving your club.
4. Attending a TLI session gives your club credit on your Distinguished Club Program (DCP) when four of your club officers attend.

For the December-February club officer training period, District 56 has scheduled the following TLI sessions:

- Saturday, December 4, 2004 – Sharpstown Community Center, at Sharpstown Park Country Club, 6600 Harbor Town Dr., Houston, TX. – Your choice of TWO TLI SESSIONS: 8:00 a.m.-12:00 noon OR 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Come to whichever session works for your busy schedule. Directions: From Bellaire Blvd. between Fondren Rd. and S. Gessner Rd., go north on Harbor Town Dr., which leads to Sharpstown Park Country Club. (Please thank District Facilities Coordinator Jill Rowlands, DTM for finding this location.)
- January 2005 – Two additional TLIs for those who could not attend in December. One session will be held in the north part of Houston and one on the south side. Dates and locations to be announced.

Note that **no makeup club officer training sessions are scheduled**. In recent years attendance at these makeup sessions has been very low. For example, more than 500 Toastmasters attended the TLIs in June and July, while only about 60 Toastmasters attended the five makeup sessions in August. Putting on this many makeup sessions for so few people is a strain on the district officers who go out of their way to staff and present these extra sessions.

### District Staff Set to Provide Ongoing Assistance

If you simply cannot attend a TLI in December or January, don't worry. Your area governor and other district officers are always willing to help out and answer questions. Some area governors may even conduct trainings one-on-one or at one of your meetings; however, this informal training does *not* count for DCP credit.

The district also has several mentors to help you:

- ◆ Bennie-Allen Brooks ([bennie.r.allen@irs.gov](mailto:bennie.r.allen@irs.gov)), the District ATM Mentor, is presenting a session at the fall conference on the communication track (ATM-B, S and G). Bennie is helping me track all potential ATMs in our district. In order to be a distinguished district, we must earn at least 59 ATMs this year. If you're planning to earn your ATM this year, please contact Bennie.
- ◆ John Martin, DTM ([andmore@alief.com](mailto:andmore@alief.com)) is the District DTM Mentor. John is coordinating the "50 by 50 for 56" Program, a massive effort to ensure that the district earns 50 DTMs by the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of District 56 in June 2008. If you plan to earn your DTM by then, contact John.
- ◆ Jill Rowlands, DTM ([GemsbyJ@aol.com](mailto:GemsbyJ@aol.com)), the District DCP Chairperson, is keeping track of our clubs' progress on reaching distinguished status.

So, get your club officers in place and make sure they take advantage of all the training and expertise District 56 offers to make their jobs easier and more fun.



### The Race is on for Distinguished Club Status

According to TI's September 30th Distinguished Club report, **Houston Uptown Professionals (HUPS) (# 7814)** has already achieved five goals making them the **first distinguished club in District 56!** In addition, they've added a whopping 16 new members this year. The following clubs have achieved four goals towards being distinguished: **Star Speakers (# 5831)**, **Speaking of Shell (# 4944)**, **Pride of Houston (# 3189)**, **Westhollow (# 5768)**, **Medically Speaking (# 5698)**, **H-GAC (# 6430)** and **Day-breakers (# 839)**.

# Message from Lt. Governor Marketing Clubs Chartering at a Record Pace

by Pamela McCown, ATM-B/AL



**FIRST CLUB CHARTERED FOR 2004-2005 GOES TO...**

Texas City Talkers – Club # 692602  
Charter Date: 07-23-2004  
Division P – Area P-1

Congratulations to Area P – 1 Governor Kenneth Woolridge, Janet Johnson and Cynthia

Wagner for working with this group of Dow Chemical employees in Texas City. Doris Wu and Sharon Sharp are the club mentors. This great group has already added 11 new members since chartering in July. That's two DCP goals for membership and a Smedley Award ribbon for their club banner.

## CHARTERED IN SEPTEMBER:

District 56 sent in charter papers with member payments for one new club in September 2004:

Talk Is Cheap Toastmasters, Kinder Morgan – Club # 720404  
Charter Date: 09-30-2004  
Division O – Area O-11

Area O-11 Governor Shannon Brown-Taylor was the driving force in chartering this club. She invited the Kinder Morgan employees to her Gulf Coast Gabbers Club meeting, and they were sold on Toastmasters. Lt. Governor Pamela McCown also helped close the sale for this club. Club mentors are Bonnie Reed and Tunisha Cooper from Gulf Coast Gabbers.

## CHARTERED IN OCTOBER:

Space Explorers Toastmasters – Club # 714164  
Charter Date: 10-04-2004  
Division P – Area P-3

Area P-3 Governor Jeannie Pullen and Allen Prescott were instrumental in bringing this one to charter. Club mentors are Tamara Grosko and James Mulberry.

Four more clubs are on the brink of chartering:

1. Speaking from Hart to Heart Toastmasters, Hartman Management – Division N – Area N-23 – Max Rasquinha brought this lead in, Jill Rowlands closed the sale, and two division governors stepped up to be mentors, Eddie Merla, Division Q, and Richard Ruchhoeft, Division O. Charter fee and member dues were mailed October 14, 2004.
2. ABSolutely Articulate Toastmasters, American Bureau of Shipping – Division L – Area L-43 – Cynthia St. Dennis made sure all the I's were dotted and T's crossed here. ABS is paying the charter fee and member dues. Club mentors are Area L-43 Governor Kashmira Sutaria and Brenda Gayle.
3. JHJ Elite Toastmasters, TSU – Division Q – Area Q-53 – John Martin picked up the ball on this club. Club

mentors are Ola Joseph and Area Q-53 Governor Kent Harris.

4. What Are We Talking About Toastmasters – Division M – Area M-33 – Fiona Robinson led this effort and has sent in the charter fee and received 20 manuals. The group meets on the first and third Fridays at Sharpstown Mall Community Room. Fiona, along with club mentors LaBrigida Patterson, Area O-10 Governor, and Lee Ivy, Area M-30 Governor, and club sponsor Clarence Magee, Area M-33 Governor, are all working diligently to get this club chartered.

As you can see, the seven clubs above represent one new club for each of our divisions and two for Division P. Our division governors and some of our area governors are set to achieve President's Distinguished status for 2004-2005 as long as they don't lose a club during the term.

I am very encouraged by the efforts of our area and division governors in bringing in these new club leads and following up to charter them. My challenge at the beginning of this term was for each area governor to add one new club. The area governors are off to a great start.

We still need a list of people who want to serve as club mentors and club coaches. Area governors can assist by inviting club officers to sign up for these opportunities to earn credit towards their DTM award. Forward the names and contact information to me at [LGM@TOASTMASTERS-D56.ORG](mailto:LGM@TOASTMASTERS-D56.ORG).

## Toastmasters International Region III Conference Austin, Texas June 2005

### HELP WANTED!

#### Educational Session Presenters

Our district governor has had a request for educational presenters for the above conference. If you have a session you would like to present, contact:

Max Rasquinha, District Governor  
Phone: 713-797-0371  
E-mail: [distgov@toastmasters-d56.org](mailto:distgov@toastmasters-d56.org)



# Join Our Beautiful World at District 56 Fall Conference

by Marcia Hudgens, DTM, 2004 Fall Conference Chairperson



We have a crisp, cool breeze in the air. But in District 56 activities are heating up for the fun of sharing our beautiful world at our fall conference. The time is near, Saturday, November 6, at The Fountain of Praise Church on South Main St. at Orem.

With the holidays approaching, we've kept the price low. Only \$40 (after November 1) covers the full day of activities packed with humor, education and friendship. Here's what you get for your investment:

- ◆ Our conference includes a session led by our Golden International Director, Lark Doley, DTM.
- ◆ You'll see Pamela Lovett, president of the Greater Houston Partnership's economic development division, receive our Communication and Leadership (C&L) Award.
- ◆ You'll enjoy two stellar speech contests – the district finals in humorous speech and tall tales – the district business meeting, and a dozen outstanding educational sessions including:
  - The Power of the Spoken Word
  - The Antidote to Rambling
  - Get Your Club Wired into the 21st Century
  - How to succeed on the Membership Building Merry-Go-Round
  - Turn Your Table Topics from Tepid to Terrific
  - And much more

- ◆ Continental breakfast, lunch and dinner are also included in your low conference fee.

This conference wouldn't be possible without the hard work of the following dedicated committee chairs:

- Church Contact – Doris Brooks, DTM
- Registration – Greg Hennig, CTM
- Bookstore – Richard Ruchoeft, ATM-B/CL
- Program Design – Stephanie Troutner
- Hospitality – Vicki Clakley, ATM-S/CL and Stephen Kane
- Building Guides – LaBrigida Patterson, CL
- Certificates – John Martin, DTM
- Chief Judge – Kerry Magee, DTM
- Contest Chair – Brenda Thorne, ATM-S/CL
- Credentials – John Moffitt, DTM
- First-Timers – Shirley Valenziano, ATM-G/CL
- Donations – Maria Garcia, CL
- Publicity – Diane Nino, CTM/CL
- Signage – Richard Lehman, ATM-S/AL
- Sergeant-at-Arms – Vinicio Tapia

In addition to these leaders, many members and their spouses have volunteered to greet and serve you. Their goal is to make our conference memorable.

See the document center at our district website for a registration form. Please join us on Saturday, November 6 to share our small world and make it more beautiful.



## Toastmasters Success Story Houston Chronicle Features Speaker's Survival

by Linda Posey, CTM, Associate Editor, Forum 56



president Shawn Lacagnina about the benefits of Toastmasters membership.

Cathy shared how she became self-conscious about speaking in public. Her reluctance started the first time she heard her voice on tape during an elementary school reading exercise. Sound familiar?

Next she moved from her native West Virginia to Louisiana, where kids

teased her about her accent. This history of unpleasant speaking experiences made Cathy a reluctant speaker.

College speech classes did little to put her fears to rest – she still “wanted to die” when she had to face an audience. Recently laid off from her job, Cathy was even afraid to present herself at job interviews.

To overcome her fear, she joined Cy-Fair Super Speakers. She cited the lack of pressure and the help of fellow club members in improving her confidence as a speaker.

According to Shawn, the first time Cathy spoke in the club, she gripped the lectern and wouldn't look up. Four

speeches later, she has learned to make eye contact and use gestures.

Shawn mentioned some of the many reasons people attend Toastmasters. “Some want to do great office presentations, others want to be better at conducting meetings, and some just want the ability to converse better,” he says. “It's amazing to see how people progress with their speeches.”

“I have three goals when I give a speech,” Cathy says. “If I don't faint, die or throw up, I've been successful.” Clearly Toastmasters is working to help her meet those goals and a lot more. For the complete story, visit the *Chronicle* website, [HoustonChronicle.com](http://HoustonChronicle.com).

## District Public Relations Officer Be a Walking Ad for Toastmasters

by Diane Niño, CTM/CL



As your new District Public Relations Officer, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and invite you to contact me if I or any member of the public relations team can be of service.

A native Houstonian, I've worked in the field of respiratory viruses at a clinical research lab at Baylor College of Medicine for almost 15 years. Although my job does not require many formal speaking responsibilities, I joined Toastmasters in November 2000 to work on my nervousness. I am one of two charter members still active in Medically Speaking Toastmasters. I have earned both my CTM and CL while serving as the club VPPR for the past three years.

I hope to share my interest in keeping others informed by facilitating communication between the district officers

## Toastmasters Success Story Even Experienced Speakers Learn and Grow with Toastmasters

by Sara Campbell, President, Diamond Toastmasters

Everybody gets a thrill from seeing a success. When you're striving towards a goal, witnessing someone achieve the very thing you've set out to do can be a strong motivator. The Diamond Toastmasters Club is happy to share in the success of our first member to achieve CTM certification.

Communication is Isha Cogborn's thing. With a degree in broadcasting and a job as the employee communications manager for Dow Chemical's largest site, she puts her "thing" to work quite often. Even though Isha has had many public speaking opportunities, she finds her participation in Toastmasters both rewarding and educational.

"When I tell someone I'm a member of Toastmasters, they say, 'But you don't have a problem with public speaking.'" Isha says. "I try to reinforce that we always have more to learn." Among

and every Toastmaster in District 56. I invite the VPPR from each club to contact me at [dnino@bcm.tmc.edu](mailto:dnino@bcm.tmc.edu) so we can help you disseminate club and district news and share *Forum 56* and the District 56 website with your members.

I also envision every member playing a vital part in sharing the benefits of Toastmasters with non-members. Each one of us is a walking advertisement for the Toastmasters program. All we learn as we work through speech manuals and all the experience we gain in leadership roles is reflected in everything else we do. Any casual observer is sure to notice the difference Toastmasters makes in our lives.. Let's take advantage of the positive message we project and spread the District 56 message to our fellow club members and prospective members.

I look forward to working with everyone. It's a small world after all!

the things she's learned, Isha can write speeches much faster for herself and her clients, and she's become a more effective communication coach.

"When I joined Toastmasters, my biggest fear was evaluating. Now it's my favorite role. Before, if someone asked me for feedback, it was difficult to find concrete steps for them to work on. Now, it comes more naturally, which is a benefit to everyone I work with."

In addition to serving as our club's vice president public relations, Isha has been a wonderful mentor to our members. We appreciate all her efforts to make this club productive, supportive and a great place to learn.

Isha recently announced that she's moving on to Dow's corporate headquarters in Michigan. Diamond Toastmasters is proud of her and wishes her the best.

## D56 Highlights — October

- ◆ October was dedicated to the division contests. Fine performances in Tall Tales and Humorous Speech from all the divisions prompt us to believe that we shall have two quality contests on November 6, 2004.
- ◆ Semi-annual dues were submitted on time by 122 clubs. Nine clubs are still shown as "dues not received." We want these 9 clubs to submit their semi-annual dues remain part of the District 56 family. Each member and each club is a precious gift.
- ◆ District 56 Fall Conference preparations are in full swing. We have nearly 175 registrations so far and we can accommodate more in the beautiful facility at The Fountain of Praise Church.
- ◆ Five new clubs formed in October, with more prospective clubs in the pipeline. More new members, more new talents are all part of the Toastmasters excitement. We are in need more club coaches and mentors, as well as sponsors.
- ◆ Formation of Gavel Clubs in the Prisons is being seriously considered. This will be a priority after the fall conference is successfully.
- ◆ The Youth Leadership program is moving ahead smoothly. We have approached more than 30 schools about sponsoring our Youth Leadership program.
- ◆ As of October 15, 2004 we have achieved 63 CTMs, 20 ATMs and 4 DTMs in District 56. Congratulations to one and all.
- ◆ If any club president needs printed copies of the September *Forum 56*, contact the district governor.
- ◆ International Director Lark Doley, DTM has invited Richard Kummins to Speak at the 2005 Region III Conference.

# Youth Leadership

## District Youth Leadership Program Is in the News

by Magoë Johnson, ATM-S/AL, District Youth Leadership Coordinator



The Boeing Babblers Toastmasters Club is sponsoring a Youth Leadership Program on Thursdays at the Harris County Freeman Library in southeast Houston. All participants are home-schooled students. Bill McNicoll, CTM is coordinating the program.

After completing four of the eight sessions, each student has given one speech and is preparing a second speech. The young people have a great time with Table Topics. Rebecca Hall has enjoyed the lively discussion immensely and would like the classes to meet more than once a week. “Mr. McNicoll gives us advice on how to present our speeches so we don’t bore anybody,” Rebecca says. “He also helps us learn how to act during a speech with gestures and eye contact.”

“It’s a great program; I’m learning a lot,” says student Sam Purcell. Jennifer McNicoll adds, “This experience has definitely improved my speaking and leadership skills. I believe it will be very valuable to me now and in the future.”

“Speaking in front of others is a major fear in most people,” comments student Jonathan Ogletree, “and this program deals with these fears and helps you become more accustomed to speaking in front of people. This class teaches and practices how to remove fill-in words and unnecessary statements.”

The group is looking forward to the remainder of the program. They are actively planning to celebrate their success with an awards ceremony and banquet.

In addition to the above program, District Youth Leadership Consultant Connie Barnaba and Toastmaster Rasheed Hoota are coordinating a Youth Leadership Program at the Fallbrook Church in the 1960 area. The classes meet on Saturday mornings at the church. The first meeting on October 16 was a great success.

We’re so excited about these active programs and the others that are being developed. District 56 Toastmasters are truly making a difference in the lives of our youth.

## Visiting Hours

by Patty Mayeux, ATM-B/CL



Visiting clubs is just one of the perks of holding a district office, but anyone can do it. I encourage you to check out a club near you, or suggest a joint meeting with your home club and a “sister” club. During recent visits I’ve learned a few things that make me want to keep visiting:

1. Visiting other clubs reminds me that the Toastmasters mission, vision and promise are what drive the success of clubs everywhere.
2. Education may be Toastmasters International’s middle name, but FUN should be its nickname. No matter which club I visit, they all achieve member and club educational goals by following an agenda and working their Distinguished Club Program – and they do it in a FUN manner.
3. After visiting a club just a few times, I feel like part of their Toastmasters family – getting to know

members through their speeches and Table Topics responses, as well as by observing them in various club and meeting roles.

4. Our home clubs can benefit from ideas we pick up from other clubs. For example, I love the way Pearland Toastmasters asks speakers to stand while being evaluated, placing them in a position of honor. Boeing Toastmasters votes for a “Best Chair,” encouraging the TM, TTM and GE to put their best foot forward. Several clubs have a toast or joke of the day.
5. The best reason of all for visiting other clubs is it gives us “public speaking junkies” an opportunity to do that in different settings with a new group of people all over our area, division or district.

So, when are “visiting hours”? Any time a club meets. Just show up. Open clubs welcome guests with open arms, ready and willing to invite you to join their “family” – if only for an hour or so.

### **DISTRICT 56 FALL SPEECH CONTEST November 6, 2004**

#### **CONTESTANTS**

**TALL TALES**  
Peyman Momeni  
Karen Pennington  
Paul Ralph  
Perry Ruthven  
Jay Strickland  
Tina Tate

#### **HUMOROUS SPEECH**

Louis Cioletti  
Jim Hamilton  
Scott McCleskey  
Bill Murray  
Michael Plaks  
Syed Zafar





## HOUSTON & SOUTHEAST TEXAS

### District Governor — Max Rasquinha, DTM

Lieutenant Gov. Education Training — Allen Prescott, ATM-S/AL  
Lieutenant Gov. Marketing — Pamela McCown, ATM-B/AL  
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DTM Mentor — John Martin, DTM  
Fall Conference Chairperson — Marcia Hudgens, DTM  
Spring Conference Co-Chairperson — Greg Hennig, CTM/CL  
Spring Conference Co-Chairperson — Cynthia St. Dennis, DTM  
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Sergeant-at-Arms — Vinicio Tapia  
Chaplain — Doris Brooks, DTM

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Division N — Sameer Pande  
Division O — James Mulberry  
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Division Q — John Martin, DTM

### Announcements! Happenings! Events! Achievements! What's happening in your Club, Area, Division?

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[www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org)

***"It's a Small World — a Beautiful World"***



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### November

Nov. 6, Saturday, 8:00 am to 7:00 pm  
District 56 Fall Conference  
The Fountain of Praise Church

Club Officer Elections for next 6 months

### December

Club Officer Training

### January

Makeup Officer Training  
Prepare for International Speech Contest  
and Evaluation Contest

### February

Club Speech Contests  
International Speech and Evaluation

### March

Area Speech Contests  
International Speech and Evaluation  
Area Governor's Club Visits



## The Mission of the District

The Mission of the District is to enhance the performance and extend the networks of Clubs, thereby offering greater numbers of people the opportunity to benefit from the Toastmasters educational program by:

- Focusing on the critical success factors as specified by the District educational goals and membership goals.
- Insuring that each Club effectively fulfills its responsibilities to its members.
- Providing effective training and leadership development opportunities for Club and District officers.