



"It's a small world — a beautiful world"

Forum 56

MESSAGE FROM MAX Looking Ahead to More Toastmasters Successes

by Max E. Rasquinha, DTM, District 56 Governor



With the District 56 Fall Conference carried out with tremendous success, we now focus on the Spring Conference scheduled for May 13-14, 2005. The conference flyer is already being circulated, and more than 60 Toastmasters have

already enrolled. We have an exciting program ahead of us – with more educational sessions, more dignitaries, more entertainment and more quality contests.

In the meantime, however, District 56 has many other goals to accomplish. Just two of the more immediate projects:

- Most clubs are electing new officers effective January 1, 2005. TLI officer training is scheduled for December 4, 2005 at the Sharpstown Community Center, and we expect a large group of club officers will be trained for their new assignments. Hopefully, all the incoming officers will continue the journey started by their predecessors with even greater enthusiasm.
- We are grateful to all the outgoing officers for their dedication to their individ-

ual clubs. We are planning an "Appreciation Day" for all outgoing club presidents on Saturday, December 18, 2004. The place and time will be announced soon.

We have many challenges ahead of us. Yet in true Toastmasters style, we shall achieve our goals slowly but steadily while having lots of fun.

This is a season for Thanksgiving, a time for sharing and caring. District 56 is blessed with some of the finest Toastmasters who devote their time and energy to helping one another enhance leadership and communication skills. We all work together to help our clubs, areas and divisions achieve distinguished status. With that kind of in-depth enthusiasm and support, District 56 should have no difficulty remaining distinguished.

I wish each and every member of District 56 and their families a happy and festive holiday season. My wife, Jessica, and I will remember all of you specially in our prayers and good wishes during this joyous time of family reunions, travels and year-end celebrations.

Max E. Rasquinha, DTM
District Governor



International Director Lark Doley, DTM and Houston City Councilman Mark Goldberg look on while Mayor Pro-Tem Carol Alvarado reads a proclamation from Mayor Bill White declaring November 6, 2004 Toastmasters Day in Houston.

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The information in this newsletter is for the sole use of Toastmasters members for Toastmasters business only. It is not to be used for solicitation or distribution of non-Toastmasters materials and information.

Message from Lt. Governor Education & Training

TLIs Train Club Officers, Area Governors

by Allen Prescott, ATM-S/AL



With the fall conference behind us, our next big training activity is the upcoming Toastmaster Leadership Institute on Saturday, December 4, 2004. This training for both club officers and area governors is an important opportunity to work together to keep District 56 distinguished.

All division and area governors have a special responsibility to (1) be sure their clubs elect new officers and (2) encourage those officers to attend the TLI. Training is especially important for officers of newly chartered clubs in order to successfully launch their clubs.

Area governors, please note that we have also arranged a special training program just for you from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm on December 4. This session, led by John Moffitt and John Martin, is designed to help you support your clubs more effectively as you guide them to distinguished status.

The TLI is part of our district's effort to enable every club to become distinguished. But having your officers trained does more for your club than give it a DCP point. Well-trained officers are essential to lead your club effectively and to support every member in reaching their individual goals. Sign up for the TLI today.

Central Houston TLI

Near Sharpstown Mall

December 4, 2004

**Saturday Morning
8:00 am to 12:00 noon**
OR

**Saturday Afternoon
1:00 pm to 5:00 pm**

Your choice of two sessions!

Sharpstown Community Center
6600 Harbor Town Dr.
Houston TX 77036

South Houston TLI

In the Clear Lake Area

January 11, 2005

**Tuesday Evening
5:30 pm to 9:30 pm**

United Space Alliance
1150 Gemini
Houston, TX 77058

North Houston TLI

At Kingwood College

January 22, 2005

**Saturday Morning
9:00 am to 1:00 pm**

Kingwood College
20000 Kingwood Dr.
Humble TX 77339

Area Governors – Join us on 12/4 for a special 2-hour training session just for you.

Register on-line at <http://www.toastmasters-d56.org/TLI>

If you are unable to register on-line, ask someone in your club to register for you OR contact Allen Prescott at LGET@toastmasters-d56.org or 281-685-3146.

Message from District Public Relations Officer

Getting the Word Out

by Diane Niño, CTM/CL



When was the last time you told someone about Toastmasters?

Coming from the District PRO, this question may sound like a set up. You might think I'm about to ask for volunteers for the PRO team. That's far from the truth.

Don't get me wrong. I'd welcome anyone willing to help me disseminate information to District 56 Toastmasters; however, right now I'm not trying to turn everyone into a public relations officer. I'm only pointing out that every Toastmaster is already a member of the PRO team, whether you want to be or not.

Think about the last club meeting you attended. Did you hear an interesting speaker? Did any of the speech topics strike a chord with you? Was there an inspirational message that made you stop and think? Perhaps the word of the day moti-

vated you to expand your vocabulary. Maybe you laughed a little too loud as the joke master reached his punch line. Or you may have picked up an interesting tidbit about a fellow club member during Table Topics or learned a new skill from one of the speech evaluations.

The more you attend club meetings, the more your potential for learning something new increases. This learning process can be very exciting and entertaining, filling you with the desire to share what you learned. As a result, without even thinking about it, you may find yourself telling your co-workers, family and friends a story or fact you heard at a Toastmasters meeting. Whenever that happens, you spread the word about Toastmasters, giving your listener the chance to learn just as you have.

I encourage each of you to share your Toastmasters experiences with others. You never know how much you can motivate your fellow Toastmasters and non-Toastmasters just by getting the word out!

Message from Lt. Governor Marketing There's No Place Like Home for the Holidays

by Pamela McCown, ATM-B/AL

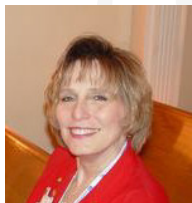


The District 56 Fall Conference at The Fountain of Praise Church was truly a wonderful celebration of both individual achievements and team achievements. This warm, friendly church gave us a warm welcome and shared our sense of pride in the accomplishments of our members. Attending the conference at The Fountain of Praise felt like coming home for the holidays.

For me, my Toastmasters club is home. In the three years since I became a charter member of my home club, I've celebrated my achievements and the achievements of my Toastmasters family. What a joy it has been to learn and grow in Toastmasters and benefit from the mentoring I've received. Now, I'm mentoring new members and helping them achieve their goals. This is like watching my family learn and grow.

Early to Rise, Late to Bed! The Active Toastmaster's Mantra

by Cynthia St. Dennis, DTM, Division L Governor



On a full 12-hour day packed with fall conference activities, "Early to Bed, Early to Rise" became "Early to Rise, Late to Bed" for this Toastmaster from the northern edge of District 56.

The routine was familiar for many Toastmasters for the weekend of our fall conference. The one-day event was a grand success with nearly 200 participants eager to see, hear and participate in the many educational sessions. In our fabulous contests, the 12 competitors in tall tales and humorous speeches made everyone's sides hurt from laughing.

I hail from Division L, the northern-most region of our beloved District 56. With the Houston freeways full of road construction and congestion as usual, the drive to the conference site on South Post Oak Road proved to be a challenge.

Think about what you can do to change a life, to make a difference in the way a person feels about his own achievements. I challenge you to invite someone in your extended "family" of relatives, friends and co-workers to a Toastmasters meeting. When you're wondering about the perfect gift to give this holiday season, think about sponsoring a new member. Give the gift of Toastmasters membership and change a life.

Sharing Toastmasters for the holidays is just one way of forever learning and growing in Toastmasters. You can also share by sponsoring, mentoring or coaching another club – and you'll earn points toward your Advanced Leader award. **Please contact me if you are interested in being a club sponsor, club mentor or club coach. Do it TODAY!** Send an email to LGM@toastmasters-d56.org.

Why do I fight the battle to drive 50+ miles on a Saturday just to spend the day with Toastmasters?

Because I reap so many benefits from every interaction with this organization. I enjoy my five clubs (yes, 5, each one offering different rewards), my involvement as a district staff member for the past 4 years and my participation in conferences and conventions (I've attended all levels, local, regional and international conventions). I feel that in some small way I make a difference in those lives I touch through Toastmasters. And I benefit because I always learn something new, meet new friends, make connections with others who share my interests, and I have so much fun in the process.

Early to rise, late to bed – sure it was worth it! What other organization offers so much to its members?

D56 Highlights — November

- Fall conference, attended by nearly 200 District 56 Toastmasters, was a huge success. (See Supplement for details and photos.)
 - District 56 adopted a resolution endorsing John Moffitt as a candidate for International Director, 2005-2006.
 - Lark Doley, DTM, Region III International Director, gave the keynote address.
 - "George Washington" put in an appearance at lunch.
 - Pamela Lovett, President, Economic Development, Greater Houston Partnership, received the District 56 Communication and Leadership Award.
 - Mayor Pro-Tem Carol Alvarado and City Councilman Mark Goldberg presented a proclamation from Mayor Bill White.
 - Raphael Vallier, a member of Fallbrook Youth Leadership Club, gave his Icebreaker speech to a standing ovation.
 - Tall Tales Winners
 - Peyman Momeni, 1st Place
 - Jay Strickland, 2nd Place
 - Paul Ralph, 3rd Place
 - Humorous Speech Winners
 - Michael Plaks, 1st Place
 - Jim Hamilton, 2nd Place
 - Bill Murray, 3rd Place
- Charter Certificates for seven new Toastmasters Clubs have arrived. Charter ceremonies for these clubs will be an added attraction during the festive season.
- Appreciation day for all outgoing club presidents is December 18, 2004.
- Jocelyn V. Williams has been named Area N-20 Governor. She replaces Monica Alexander, who resigned for personal reasons.
- John Martin has been named webmaster for the Region III website, www.Region3tm.org.
- The TI president will visit District 56 during the spring conference 2006.

Speechcraft Q&A

Take Advantage of This Top Membership Building Tool

by Eddie Merla, DTM, Division Q Governor



Toastmasters International says the Speechcraft program is your club's #1 membership building tool. Yet during my session on Speechcraft at the District 56 Fall Conference, I was surprised to discover how little Toastmasters know about Speechcraft.

Whether your club is struggling to grow or ready to start a new club, consider conducting a Speechcraft program. According to Toastmasters International, "Clubs that conduct a Speechcraft program at least once a year have few membership problems."

What is "Speechcraft"?

Speechcraft is a program designed to teach public speaking skills to non-members. Participants present three to six speeches (depending on the number of sessions), respond to table topics, introduce other speakers and serve as evaluators.

Experienced members of your club plan, promote and coordinate the program, give educational speeches, and serve as advisors to the Speechcraft participants. Speechcraft brings prospective new members into your club to discover the benefits of Toastmasters. If the program is conducted properly, all participants should experience tremendous personal growth.

How does Speechcraft differ from the normal Toastmasters program?

Speechcraft is a seminar-style program offered in four, six or eight sessions. When participants sign up for Speechcraft, they do not become members of Toastmasters. Membership is, of course, offered to graduates of the program.

How does Speechcraft benefit the participants?

Speechcraft introduces public speaking skills in a non-threatening and supportive environment. Participants learn skills they can immediately apply at work and at home. The Toastmasters Speechcraft brochure states that Speechcraft will "improve performance in meeting the public, conducting business meetings, motivating people, interviewing for jobs, selling ideas or products, and solving problems."

How does Speechcraft benefit the club and its members?

In addition to attracting new members, promoting Speechcraft can raise awareness of your club in your community or company.

The program also gives members opportunities to use their communication and leadership skills. A Speechcraft coordinator can receive credit toward the ATM-Gold requirements. Educational speeches given by club members can help them fulfill their ATM-Silver requirements (using the Better Speaker series). Also, members experience personal growth by serving as advisors to the participants. As I once learned from a wise mentor, "the best way to gain knowledge is to keep giving it away."

How do you conduct the program?

Speechcraft can be conducted as part of your regular Toastmasters program or as a seminar outside the normal club environment. If you conduct Speechcraft within your regular meetings, you'll have to allow enough time for Speechcraft participants to get the full benefit of the program.

How many participants are in a Speechcraft program?

A single Speechcraft program has one coordinator and five or more participants. TI suggests that a Speechcraft conducted within the club should have five to ten participants. More participants can be accommodated outside the club. If enrollment is high, consider conducting concurrent Speechcraft programs.

What about fees?

Yes, you can charge a fee to anyone registering for Speechcraft. The program should at least pay for itself. In addition to the cost of materials ordered from TI, you need to factor in the cost of other supplies, advertising, refreshments and room rental. A Speechcraft program can also be used as a fundraising activity for your club.

However, please note that TI specifies that "no individual, educational institution or other organization may derive financial gain either directly or indirectly from conducting the Speechcraft program."

How do we get started?

Order the "Speechcraft Coordinator's Guide" (catalog no. 204 - \$3.00) from TI. This inexpensive guide tells you everything you need to begin planning and promoting Speechcraft. Any district officer should be able to help you get started.

You can also order a "Speechcraft Starter Kit" (catalog no. 205 - \$20.00) from TI. This kit includes 3 coordinator guides, 5 participant handbooks, advisor instructions, a receipt book, certificates and promotional material.

To re-energize your club with the excitement of a common project, start planning a Speechcraft program soon. You'll be able to convert Speechcraft participants to new members as soon as they experience the positive benefits of the program.

Let's Dance

Calling all dancers and wannabe dancers for an advanced Toastmasters club—one hour meeting, then one hour free dance lesson. Fun for all.

- ◆ Brenda Thorne, ATM-B/CL, eloisa911@sbcglobal.net
281-389-6246 (cell)
- ◆ Steve Siegel, ATM-B/CL, 281-546-9155 (cell)
- ◆ Renay Jacob, CTM/CL, jacobr@alum.rpi.edu
713-392-3308 (cell)

Gavel Clubs Add Communication Skills to Prison Ministry

by Jim Arnold, ATM-B



For more than four years I have been mentoring Gavel Clubs in prisons. Last year, 150 free world people visited the Central prison unit in Sugar Land with me. That night, the two prison-based Gavel Clubs put on a church service for us. Three men gave 20-minute sermons, four men gave personal testimonies, and the Spanish and English choirs sang.

On the way out, one of the visitors, a psychologist for Katy Independent School District, said, "Our pastor could pick up some pointers on delivering a sermon." She also said that the four men, in their testimonies, ministered to her. "I was able to resolve personal issues in my own life that I had never been able to resolve, no matter what books I read." How many of you would expect an inmate to turn your life around?

In addition to developing communication and leadership skills and building a positive community, the Gavel Club mem-

bers make very intelligent, cogent statements that other inmates and the rest of the world need to hear. Soon that will be possible. Last year, after meeting with Texas Department of Criminal Justice officials, I received permission to video the inmates giving their talks. A website featuring these videos is in the works. I'll notify Toastmasters when the site is up, so you can see what the Gavel Clubs are accomplishing in Texas prisons.

The one thing missing for these clubs is the Toastmasters magazine. Gavel Clubs don't receive subscriptions. If you belong to more than one club, you can contribute to the Gavel Clubbers' training by donating copies of *The Toastmaster*. Just take off the mailing labels and send your magazines to:

Skills for Life, Inc.,
P.O. Box 38553 Suite 113
Houston, Texas 77238

For more information about the Gavel Club Program, email arnojl@msn.com

Table Topics – Are You Ready?

by Jeannie Pullen, ATM-S/CL, Area P-3 Governor



You have three chances to prepare for Table Topics sessions. Here's how to use your participation in Table Topics to become a more effective speaker.

Before the meeting

1. **Read** – Read magazines, novels, newspapers, blogs, journals – read anything. Read as much as you can.
2. **Form Your Own Opinions** – Do you have a favorite color, a favorite season, a favorite holiday? How do you feel about current events, the war in Iraq, who won the World Series, your state senators or representatives? What do think when you hear the words "love," "honor," "lies" or "murder"? Decide how you feel about each of these topics with at least two reasons why you feel the way you do.
3. **Talk** – Talk about your opinions and feelings to your friends, family and co-workers. These conversations are practice Table Topic sessions. When someone asks you what the President should do now that he has been re-elected, you'll have an answer if you have read, listened and formed an opinion.

At the meeting, in your seat

1. **Think** – Listen to the question. Use the 10 seconds in your seat to retrieve information on the topic stored in your mind.
2. **Organize** – Aim at having two points. Which point will you give first? Do you have supporting reasons for this point?
3. **Plan Your Opening** – Do you remember a quote? Do you have a question? You can always repeat the Table Topic question you were asked.

At the meeting, on your feet

1. **One Last Review** – Use the few seconds while you're walking to the front or while you're standing up and saying "Mr. Table Topic Master, fellow Toastmasters and guests..." to review your organization. How will you open? What are your two points? Start formulating your closing.
2. **Deliver** – Give your opening. State your two points with support. Avoid rambling. Close and sit down.

Next time you will be even better.

Happy Anniversary



Congratulations to Lloyd and Linda Posey! The happy couple celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary on November 29th. How lucky they are to be married to their best friend. Linda, a member of Unity

Toastmasters, is associate editor of *Forum 56*. We are happy to have the Poseys in our Toastmasters family. A warm wish for many more wonderful years from the *Forum 56* team, the PRO team, executive committee and all Toastmasters whose lives you have touched.

How to Become a Competent Leader

Get Full Credit for Your Club Officer Position

by John Martin, DTM, District 56 DTM Mentor

Competent Leader (CL) is probably the least understood and easiest-to-achieve Toastmasters educational level. Anyone who is or has been a club officer can quickly achieve the Competent Leader award.

Most Toastmasters are familiar with the CTM (Competent Toastmaster) award. Complete the ten speeches in the Basic Communication and Leadership manual and you attain your CTM. Worldwide, most Toastmasters achieve their CTM within 18 months of joining Toastmasters. The Competent Toastmaster (CTM) award recognizes achievement towards fundamental communication skills.

What does it take to become a Competent Leader?

The Competent Leader (CL) award recognizes achievement towards fundamental leadership skills. If you're already a CTM, it takes exactly three things to become a CL:

1. Successfully complete a term as a club officer (6 or 12 months, depending on your club). During that term, you must attend executive committee meetings and work toward your club's success plan. Any club officer position can be used to attain a CL:
 - President
 - VP Education
 - VP Membership
 - VP Public Relations
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
 - Sergeant-at-Arms
2. Attend the district-sponsored club officer training (TLI—Toastmasters Leadership Institute) for that office. (See page 2 for information about the TLI sessions coming soon.)
3. Conduct any two scripted training programs from the **Successful Club Series** or the **Leadership Excellence Series**. (See list of topics in box at right.) These speeches are available for purchase on the TI WHQ web site. (Your club may already own copies; many clubs do.) These presentations contain information you and your club really need to know. As a presenter, you learn the material and then present

it to your club. What a great win-win situation.

That's it! If you have time to be a club officer, you have time to become a Competent Leader. There's no doubt that being a club officer is hard work. But once you commit to being an officer, achieving the Competent Leader award is easy. This is the way you receive full credit for all that hard work. Many people work on their CTM *and* their CL simultaneously during their first year in Toastmasters.

What happens when you file for your Competent Leader award?

1. You'll receive a certificate in the mail and you'll be recognized by your club for achieving a Toastmasters milestone. You'll be able to add the letters "CL" behind your name.
2. If you wish, a letter recognizing your achievement will be sent to your employer. Your human resources (HR) department will normally file this letter in your permanent employee folder. You're "on record" as having been trained as a leader by a well-recognized, worldwide educational organization.
3. Your club gets credit for a Competent Leader educational completion. That's worth a full point on your club's DCP (Distinguished Club Program). Each club needs at least 5 points, and a CL is one of the quickest and easiest ways to earn a point.

But remember, none of these three wonderful things happen just because you complete your officer term. You have to work on your club's success plan, attend district-sponsored officer training and give the two additional presentations.

Let's do a little math.

Each club can use two CLs to earn those two leadership points on the DCP. With about 130 clubs in District 56, we should have at least 260 CLs awarded each year. Last year we only had 109 CL awards. That means more than 75 District 56 Toastmasters clubs did not receive all possible DCP leadership points for their club's officer positions.

Presentations for CL Credit

The Successful Club Series

- The Moments of Truth
- Finding New Members for Your Club
- Evaluate to Motivate
- Closing the Sale
- Creating the Best Club Climate
- Meeting Roles and Responsibilities
- Mentoring
- Keeping the Commitment
- Going Beyond Our Club
- How To Be A Distinguished Club
- The Toastmasters Education Program

Leadership Excellence Series

- The Visionary Leader
- Developing a Mission
- Values and Leadership
- Goal Setting and Planning
- Delegate to Empower
- Building a Team
- Giving Effective Feedback
- The Leader as a Coach
- Motivating People
- Service and Leadership
- Resolving Conflict

What about your club? There is no easier way to add one or two points to your DCP total.

Let's look at it another way.

Each of the 130 clubs in District 56 has seven officers; some clubs have two sets of officers each year. That's about 1,000 potential Competent Leaders each year. Last year clubs in our district only received 109 Competent Leader awards. That means up to 900 Toastmasters did not receive full credit for their officer positions.

Don't miss out!

Toastmasters International is a worldwide organization that teaches communication and leadership skills. By getting both a CTM and a CL, you're working both sides of the educational program.

Don't miss out on your CL. Earn full credit for the work you've done. Get your Competent Leader Award!



HOUSTON & SOUTHEAST TEXAS

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

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www.toastmasters-d56.org
www.toastmasters.org

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



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

December

Toastmasters Leadership Institute (TLI)
Sharpstown Community Center

Central Houston

December 4, 2004 8:00 am to 12:00 pm

OR

December 4, 2004 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

January

Toastmasters Leadership Institute (TLI)
United Space Alliance

South Houston

January 11, 2004 5:30 pm to 9:30 pm

Kingwood College

North Houston

January 22, 2004 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

February

Club Contests
International Speech and Evaluation

March

Area Contests
DUES ARE DUE (\$18)



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.