



MESSAGE FROM MAX

Communicating the Joys of the Holiday Season



by Max E. Rasquinha, DTM, District 56 Governor



What a joyful season for communicators. Families unite, business executives communicate freely, neighborhood communities gather together. Everyone is eager to express those precious words "I love you," "Thank you," "I miss you" and much more. What an opportune time of year for enjoying so many sweet memories, so many lovely stories and, above all, so many humble, simple gestures as people reach out and touch hearts far and near.

Our homes and communities have been blessed, particularly in the United States, in indescribable ways. Most of us have been fortunate enough to enjoy the love, friendship and respect that can awaken us to our purpose

and meaning in life.

We all can make a difference during this festive season. Most of us receive the season's happy tidings of peace and tranquility and share those greetings with those around us. But as Toastmasters we can do more. Thanks to our regular participation in Toastmasters, most of us do in fact make a difference for others through our enhanced leadership and communication skills.

During this happy season let me thank you all for your support and friendship. May you experience joy and peace. May you carry the spirit of goodwill and friendship into the New Year and beyond. My prayers and good wishes go with you for a successful year. Thank you once again for your friendship and cooperation. God bless.

Max E. Rasquinha, DTM
District Governor

Holiday Greetings to District 56

by Lark Doley, DTM, International Director



The holiday season is a time to reflect on the past year, to count the blessings of life, family and friends. One of the benefits of Toastmasters that we rarely mention is the GOLDEN blessing of friendship. Through Toastmasters we have the opportunity to develop a worldwide fellowship of friends. I have met members from around our beautiful world, and I count all of

them as friends. Our organization has the power to change lives, to create friendships, to positively change our small world, our beautiful world.

I am so grateful this holiday season for my friends in District 56, my home district when I joined Toastmasters in 1990. I wish all of you the blessings of the season and the gift of friendship in our organization. May you celebrate the holidays with joy, and may the New Year bring more GOLDEN blessings to you and your family

Lark Doley, DTM

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December 4, 2004 TLI	Supplement



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Message from Lt. Governor Education & Training

Club Officer Training by the Numbers



by Allen Prescott, DTM



The two TLIs on December 4th were a tremendous success. Here's the bottom line on the numbers game:

- 190 club officers were trained on December 4. The district has 134 active clubs. With 7 officers per club, this means we have 938 club officer positions. About 20% of these officers have been trained so far.
- 21 clubs already have at least 4 officers trained to earn their Distinguished Club Program credit. These clubs are now eligible for a special prize drawing at the spring 2005 conference:
 - Articulators (Area M-30)
 - Fluor Daniel (Area M-30)
 - Post Oak (Area M-31)
 - All Star (Area M-33)
 - TAFL (Area M-33)
 - Pride of Houston (Area N-21)
 - Unity (Area N-22)
 - Houston Uptown Professional Singles (HUPS) (Area N-22)
 - Talk of the Town (Area N-23)
 - Speaking Hart to Heart (Area N-23)
 - Westside (JPMC) (Area O-10)
 - Gulf Coast Gabbers (Area O-10)
 - Lunch Bunch (City of Houston) (Area O-10)
 - High Noon (Area O-12)
 - Dining Out (DOT) (Area O-12)
 - South Main Speakers (Area Q-50)

- Greenway (Area Q-51)
- Medically Speaking (Medical Center) (Area Q-51)
- Daybreakers (Area Q-52)
- AON Houston (Area Q-52)
- Seriously Speaking (Area Q-53)

- The areas leading in club officer training are as follows:
 - Area M-33 Governor Clarence Magee – a whopping 60% of club officers trained
 - Area N-22 Governor Stephen Siegel – 45% trained
 - Area N-23 Governor Sharian Brown-Taylor and Area N-21 Governor Richard Kummins – 40% trained
- The division statistics break down as follows:
 - Division N Governor Phil Potter – 33% of club officers trained
 - Division M Governor Cecelia Marlin – 31% trained
 - Division O Governor Richard Ruchhoeft – 27% trained

Two more official district-sponsored club officer training sessions are scheduled:

- January 11, 5:30pm to 9:30pm, in the Clear Lake area
 - January 22, 9:00am to 1:00pm, at Kingwood College
- There may not be any makeup trainings – don't depend on them. Register on-line for one of the two remaining TLIs today at www.toastmasters-d56.org/TLI.

Let's get our club officer training statistics up to 60% or 70%. With two more TLIs in January, we can do it!



Message from Lt. Governor Marketing New Year's Resolution – Take Care of Club Members

by Pamela McCown, ATM-S/AL



In this season of caring and giving, take time to ask your club members what they want from their Toastmasters club experience.

Ring in the new year with a resolution to present the Toastmasters International program “Moments of Truth” from *The Successful Club Series* to give your club a check-up. Have a member present this module to earn credit toward the Competent Leader (CL) or ATM-Silver award.

Once you schedule this presentation, your Vice President Public Relations can advertise it. Invite members to come to the meeting prepared to discuss what they like best about the club and what they think could be improved. Getting members involved will motivate them to be a part of the success of the club.

Many clubs struggle to achieve the two membership goals on the Distinguished Club Program. Discuss ideas for increasing membership and implement those ideas.

Don't forget to tell your members about the “Talk Up Toastmasters!” membership drive from February 1st through March 31st. Encourage members to invite as many guests as possible during these two months. Consider conducting a special guest meeting – a regular meeting featuring specific discussions of the benefits members receive from participating in the Toastmasters program. Add five new, dual or reinstated members to your roster between February 1 and March 31 and receive a special “Talk Up Toastmasters!” ribbon for your club's banner.

Here's to success for your club and your members in the New Year.

The Perfect Gift

by Diane Niño, CTM/CL, District PRO



Searching for that perfect gift this holiday season?

Hoping someone special will give you what you've always wanted?

Like people everywhere, many Toastmasters in District 56 are hoping they receive a perfect gift for the holidays. Can you guess what gift is the most sought after?

If you guessed support and encouragement, then you're thinking like I am. One of the best ways to build confidence in our abilities as public speakers is to share a positive and encouraging environment.

For a newly chartered club the gifts of support and guidance are invaluable. New Toastmasters hope for outside encouragement when beginning to work on the Communication & Leadership man-

ual. They look to veteran Toastmasters from whose experience they can benefit.

Of course, seasoned Toastmasters also seek incentives to continue the Toastmasters journey. By giving of themselves, veteran Toastmasters not only share something positive, but also gain new experience in return.

Why not add an extra name to your gift-giving list this holiday? What about giving yourself something special that will help others as well as yourself throughout the New Year?

Become a club mentor, sponsor or coach. Share what you have learned and give something back to your fellow Toastmasters. You have the opportunity to witness the growth of a new club or the rejuvenation of a small club while gaining countless personal rewards.

Get in the spirit of the holidays and resolve to turn your talents and your time into the perfect gifts!

D56 Highlights December



- Over the past month, four new clubs have held charter ceremonies. Charter certificates are in hand for another six clubs, and their charter ceremonies will be scheduled soon.
- Johnathan Walton, host of “Walton's World” on Channel 11, visited the Daybreakers Club on December 9 and did a live broadcast about Toastmasters. It was five short segments for a total of 12 minutes. What grand publicity for Daybreakers as well as for District 56. (See page 7.)
- District 56 area governors completed a total of 126 club visits during the past 5 months. According to John Martin, District 56 DTM Mentor, this is the highest visitation total in the district's History. Congratulations to each and every area governor.
- Jim Key, the 2003 World Champion of Public Speaking, will keynote our District 56 contest workshop on Saturday, January 15. The FREE all-day session is at Sharpstown Park Country Club off Bellaire Blvd. (See page 7 for details.)
- Preparations for club spring speech contests should be well underway. Club contest chairs should inform John Moffitt of your contest dates so he can keep the district-wide schedule updated. Area and division governors will be available as keynote speakers for all club contests, and the district governor can speak at contests put on by clubs needing a motivational boost.
- Brian Tracy is once again presenting his one-day seminar in Houston during April 2005. Details to be announced. District officers and staff members will be invited to volunteer as staff for Brian's seminar. This will give us an excellent opportunity to promote Toastmasters to seminar participants.
- Watch the district website for other opportunities to participate in upcoming district activities.



Chief Editor's Corner

Reflecting on 2004



by Shirley Gilbuena, DTM, District Chief Editor



Reflecting over the last six months, I have had a wonderful time preparing the *Forum 56* for District 56. I look forward to the next six months being just as enjoyable. I want to thank you all for the positive cooperation I have received.

During the next six months I look forward to seeing even more Toastmasters stretch their communication skills by writing articles. For topic ideas, see the August issue of *Forum 56* on the district website, www.toastmasters-d56.org, in the Document Center.

Don't forget that we're having a Club Newsletter Contest and Club Website Contest for the 2004-2005 term. Those of you who served only during the fall term (July-December) should put your entries together now.

- ◆ To enter the newsletter contest, submit three different issues of your club newsletter to Shirley Gilbuena, *Forum 56* Editor, 15818 Val Verde Drive, Houston, TX 77083, by April 1, 2005.
- ◆ Website competitors must contact Jerry Hobby, District 56 Webmaster, 713-341-3131, webmaster@toastmasters-d56.org, for instructions on entering your club website.

For complete rules of both contests, see the July issue of *Forum 56* on the District 56 website, www.toastmasters-d56.org, in the Document Center. The first and second place winners will receive plaques at the 2005 Spring Conference.

This last six months has been lively and exciting. Thanks again for your help and support. I wish all of you and your families Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year.

Two Right Things I Have Done in America

by Weihua Zhao, CTM, District Secretary



Time flies. I have been in America for three years. Looking back over these years, I think there are two big things I have done right.

Before I came to Houston, I was a physician in Beijing, China. I earned my MD and PhD degrees in neurology from Beijing University Medical Institute and worked at one of the top hospitals in China. Although I received a lot of clinical training there, my research training was relatively weak. I knew both clinical work and research were very important for a physician. Therefore, I came to work in neurology at Baylor College of Medicine.

My boss at Baylor, Dr. Stanley Appel, is a famous neurologist in this country with many great achievements in both clinical work and research. During three years under his instruction, I have learned a lot. This experience has been very valuable for my career. Deciding to come to the US to work in neurology was one of the things I did right.

Another right thing I did was join a Toastmasters club. I am a very shy person. Before I came to America, I didn't speak in public, even in Chinese. If I had not become a Toastmaster, I could not imagine giving a speech in English, my second language. After earning my CTM, I feel much more comfortable standing in front of a podium.

Now, I have taken another big step ahead to serve as district secretary. After being in this position for four months, I see why our Toastmasters organization runs so efficiently. I also see why the organization attracts so many people to work

for it. The staff members and officers all contribute their time and effort to make District 56 bigger and stronger. In return, they receive many good opportunities to practice public speaking and leadership skills.

I am glad to be part of this wonderful team. I am learning many new things and feel more and more self-confident. Practice makes perfect. The more I get involved in Toastmasters, the more I gain from it.

In two years I will go back to China. My experiences both at Baylor College of Medicine and in Toastmasters International will definitely make big changes in my future life.

District 56 Growing an Impressive Crop of CTMs and ATMs

by Allen Prescott, DTM

According to the TI website, District 56 has 97 CTMs so far in the 2004-2005 year. To be distinguished, we need 206 by June 30, 2005. The district has 31 ATMs so far. To be distinguished, we need 59. Here's the breakdown by division:

- ◆ Division L – 22 CTMs and 7 ATMs
- ◆ Division M – 13 CTMs and 1 ATM
- ◆ Division N – 17 CTMs and 7 ATMs
- ◆ Division O – 17 CTMs and 3 ATMs
- ◆ Division P – 14 CTMs and 4 ATMs
- ◆ Division Q – 14 CTMs and 9 ATMs

Reach for your educational goals in 2005 and help District 56 soar!

Mentoring – A Quality Contributor



by Jocelyn V. Williams, ATM-B/CL, Area N-20 Governor



Most of us have probably been involved in some type of mentoring relationship, whether as the mentor or the mentored partner. Did you know that “Mentoring” is one of 11 modules in

The Successful Club Series published by Toastmasters International? That’s how important mentoring is in our organization. Effective mentoring partnerships enhance the quality of the Toastmasters club and the quality of the individual Toastmaster’s experience.

What Is Mentoring?

In mentoring, an experienced Toastmaster supports a new member in getting started on achieving his goals for joining the organization. This partnership is designed to facilitate the new member’s learning while fostering positive personal development for both parties. There should be no superior and inferior roles, and neither partner should be in control of the other.

Mentoring is not a static, one-size-fits-all program. Rather, it is a dynamic process, active, vibrant and continually changing because we are complex, unique individuals. Keep in mind that each partner brings different needs, skills, expectations, commitment levels and learning styles to a mentoring relationship. These factors also change over time with each individual.

Benefits of Mentoring

Mentoring offers these benefits:

- Expands and hones the skill sets of both partners
- Strengthens weak skills of the mentored partner
- Supports continued learning
- Enhances productivity
- Enhances collaboration and teamwork

Three P’s of Mentoring

Perseverance – Effective mentoring requires a commitment to the process, no matter how long it takes. It’s an opportunity to blaze a new trail with someone.

Patience – Mentoring requires patience. Mentors may find advice easy to give, but such advice may not be helpful. For example, if your mentee mentions a problem, you may be quick to offer a solution. Such an easy fix may: (1) disrupt the mutually beneficial relationship and (2) prevent your mentee from working through the problem himself.

Persistence – Improvements in confidence, public speaking skills and leadership skills don’t happen overnight. Mentoring requires constantly encouraging and even constructively reproving your mentee in areas where change is slow. You may have to revisit an issue several times.

Are you involved in a mentoring relationship? This kind of life-to-life exchange can help you discover your priorities and pursue your passions. Take the journey into the world of mentoring seriously. Remember to proceed with perseverance, patience and persistence. The rewards will be great for both you and the person you mentor.

Take Care of Your Greatest Asset

by Kenneth Woolridge, ATM-G/CL, Area P-1 Governor



What is your greatest asset? You may say your house, car or expensive jewelry. However, because the purchase and maintenance of these items take money out of the household, they are actually your greatest liabilities. Your greatest asset is YOU. Take care of yourself.

According to *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey, the habit that makes all the other habits possible is the seventh habit: “Sharpen the Saw.” This saw has four teeth, symbolizing the four dimensions of our nature that must be sharpened – the physical, spiritual, mental and emotional.

Physical – Take care of your body.

- Eat right.
- Get enough rest and relaxation.
- Exercise regularly.

Spiritual – Take care of your core, your center, your commitment to your value system.

- Read scriptures.
- Listen to music.

- Go on outings to get closer to nature.
- Take time for prayer and meditation. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “I have so much to do today; I’ll have to spend another hour on my knees.”

Mental – Take care of your continuous learning process.

- Expand your mind and cultural awareness through reading.
- Enhance mental clarity and context through writing.
- Exercise vision and focus through organizing and planning.

Emotional – Take care of your relationships with others.

- Communicate effectively. Stephen Covey said, “Seek first to understand; then to be understood.”
- Be able to compromise.
- Always help others.

Although sharpening each dimension is important, your life only becomes truly effective if all four “teeth” are balanced. Without balance you will not achieve optimal growth.

Remember the words of one unknown sage: “The things you do, that you do not have to do, will determine where you will be later in life when it is too late to do anything about it.” Start sharpening your saw today.

Voice of Our Toastmasters Community

IRS Honors Bennie R. Allen-Brooks

Bennie R. Allen-Brooks, DTM, a customer service appeals officer with the Internal Revenue Service, was recently named the national EEO and diversity officer of the year. The IRS commissioner and chief of appeals presented the award to Bennie in Washington, DC. She was also named homecoming queen by her fellow alumni at Texas Southern University this year.

A member of Toastmasters since 1992, Bennie has served as area governor, divi-



Left to right: Mark W. Everson, IRS Commissioner, Bennie Allen-Brooks, and David B. Robison, IRS Chief of Appeals.

sion governor, district treasurer, district bookstore manager and almost every officer position in several clubs. She is presently serving as District 56 ATM Mentor and vice-president education of her home club, All Star Toastmasters.

Bennie said her ability to communicate and work well with her co-workers is a direct result of being a member of Toastmasters.

New Dance Club Opens for Business in January

by Renay Jacob

If you're interested in a new advanced Toastmasters club or in adding a bit of variety to the traditional club format, look no further. District 56 has a new club combining the love of dancing with Toastmasters – Dance and Toast Masters Club (DTM).

DTM is the brainchild of Area Q-50 Governor Brenda Thorne. Two of her passions in life are dancing and Toastmasters, so creating a club that combined her two interests was natural. South Main Speakers and Dining Out Toastmasters will sponsor the new club.

Most of the 21 charter members of DTM met on December 12, 2004 to adopt the club's constitution and by-laws. DTM members must have



Club officers left to right: Stephen Kane, Secretary; Kirit Modi, Treasurer; Brenda Thorne, President; Roger Pease, VP Membership; Steve Siegel, VP Education; Grace Hu, Sgt-at-Arms; and Renay Jacob, VP Public Relations.

achieved their Competent Toastmaster (CTM) award and belong to at least one other Toastmasters club.

Meetings will typically be held on the third Friday of the month at various dance clubs throughout the city. A one-hour Toastmaster meeting will be followed by a free dance lesson at the club. You may even stay for social dancing afterward. The dances vary from ballroom to country-western to Latin. Club dues include the basic Toastmasters costs. Food, drinks and any cover charges for social dancing after the meeting, however, are extra.

For information, contact Roger Pease at rpease@ti.com. You don't need to bring a partner. What are you waiting for? The first meeting is on January 21st at the Rumba Club. Come for a fun-filled evening of soliloquies and salsa.

Gabriela Armestar Loses Battle with Cancer

by Richard Kummins, ATM-B/CL, N-21 Governor

Gabriela Armestar, 45, a member of Daybreakers Toastmasters club for several years, passed away November 28, after a short but valiant battle with cancer. At her funeral, her parents, brothers and sisters, many nieces and nephews, and a crowded church of friends and co-workers attested to the impact she had on their lives.

After Gabriela joined Daybreakers, her ever-present smile, warmth and intel-

ligence delighted us. We learned so much about her native Peru, her family and her devotion to her faith and her traditions. Her speeches were all delivered in that wonderful Peruvian accent, and she always radiated a simple and unconditional love for all in her circle, even when it was apparent we did not understand the fine points of finance and investments that she knew so well.

We will miss Gabriela very much.



Our thoughts and prayers are with her and her beautiful family.



Walton's World Visits Daybreakers

by John Martin, DTM, Daybreakers Acting Public Relations Officer



On December 9, 2004 local TV personality and humorist Johnathan Walton visited Daybreakers Toastmasters Club and broadcast portions of the meeting live on Channel 11 KHOU-TV, the local

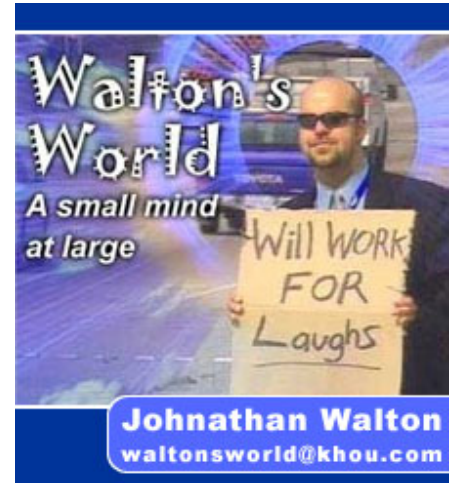
CBS station. Five different video segments were aired starting at 6:15 AM and ending near 8:00 AM.

Several Daybreakers members had featured spots during the broadcast, in-

cluding Richard Kummins, Connie Barnaba, Dotti Visosky, Max Rasquinha, John Martin and guest Pamela McCown.

More than 10 minutes of Toastmasters video aired that day and more than 350,000 television viewers saw just how the Toastmasters program works ... and how great a club Daybreakers is!

Daybreakers has a special page on their web site celebrating the event, including still photos and video clips. Stop by the site at www.daybreakers.info and watch the video clips.



Contest Workshop Features World Champion of Public Speaking

by Jill Rowlands, DTM



On Saturday, January 15, 2005, District 56 Toastmasters who are interested in competing in 2005 speech contests will have the privilege of learning from the best. Our district is sponsoring a workshop for all prospective spring speech contestants and judges.

The workshop leader will be **Jim Key**, the 2003 World Champion of Public Speaking. This FREE workshop will include a light lunch, panel discussions for contestants and judges, plus a certified judges workshop. Sign up today by contacting Jill Rowlands, gemsbyj@aol.com or 713-728-4912.

Date and Time: Saturday, January 15, 2005
9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Location: Sharpstown Community Center
Grand Ball Room
Sharpstown Park Country Club
6600 Harbortown

Directions: From South Highway 59, exit Bellaire Blvd. and go west. (You'll drive past Sharpstown Mall.) Cross Fondren Rd. and turn right on Harbor Town Dr. This will lead you into the Sharpstown Park Country Club. The Sharpstown Community Center is there.

Schedule:

- 9:00-10:15 DVD of 2004 World Championship of Public Speaking
- 10:15-10:25 Break
- 10:25-12:05 **Jim Key**, 2003 World Champion of Public Speaking
- 12:05-12:30 Break — light lunch provided
- 12:30-12:45 Quality Contest Session - John Moffitt, DTM
- 12 45-1:25 Contestants Panel — Ola Joseph, et al.
- 1:25-1:30 Break
- 1:30-2:20 Judges Panel (Evaluation and International Speech) — Jill Rowlands, DTM, et al.
- 2:20-2:30 Break
- 2:30-3:30 Certified Judges Workshop — Assistant Chief Judge Stephen Siegel, ATM-B/CL



Please note: RSVP required to Jill Rowlands, gemsbyj@aol.com or 713-728-4912. Tell her which segments you plan to attend so she can have plenty of handouts, refreshments and other materials available. There will be no charge for this function.



HOUSTON & SOUTHEAST TEXAS

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 Spring Conference Co-Chairperson — Cynthia St. Dennis, DTM
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 Chaplain — Doris Brooks, DTM

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 Division N — Sameer Pande
 Division O — James Mulberry
 Division P — Patty Mayeux, ATM-B/CL
 Division Q — John Martin, DTM

Announcements! Happenings! Events! Achievements!

What's happening in your Club, Area, Division!

Contact:

Chief Editor: Shirley Gilbuena, DTM
 Phone: 281-491-6356

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

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



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

January

Toastmasters Leadership Institute (TLI)
 United Space Alliance
 South Houston
 January 11, 2005 5:30 pm to 9:30 pm

Kingwood College
 North Houston
 January 22, 2005 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

February

Club Contests
 International Speech and Evaluation

March

Area Contests
 International Speech and Evaluation
DUES ARE DUE (\$18)

April

Division Contests
 International Speech and Evaluation

May

Spring 2005 Conference
 May 13-14, 2005

Election of Club Officers



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.