



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

Forum 56

MESSAGE FROM MAX

Let Us Share in Celebration and Support of District 56

by Max E. Rasquinha, DTM, District 56 Governor



The theme of the month "Celebration" fits so appropriately because we are in a mood to celebrate accomplishments related to individuals, clubs, areas, divisions, and our district. Everything we have accomplished during the term has been commendable.

Much individual and group effort goes into the successful process of making things happen. Many willing hands joined together and many minds shared ideas. The desires of the group united us and made our dreams become possibilities.

We have touched so many lives, regardless of culture, color, religion and other differences. We have achieved our goals and aspirations one day at a time. The world is moving and changing so fast. It is indeed a small world – a beautiful world, where we as Toastmasters and leaders can make a difference.

District 56 has several strong leaders filled with limitless talents and abilities. Our Spring 2005 Conference was a rich display of talents and abilities, quality contests, and educational presentations. Most importantly, it was a proud demonstration of volunteerism with "I can do" attitudes. Every conference brings new lessons that we can carry forward for future progress.

Life is filled with new challenges and opportunities, but let the stories and glories of the past be the stepping stones for future improvement. Let a forward looking outlook and a positive attitude prevail at all times.

The month of May is a time for celebration. While we cherish our performance with a sense of pride and satisfaction, let us look forward to becoming a Distinguished District for the fourth consecutive year. The world of Toastmasters is watching our performance. We are in constant touch with the rest of the world because we are the energy capital of the world.

We need to do more to reach our desired goals, and we need many more new clubs and new members to achieve our plans. Many of our clubs need a few more members and a few more CTMs and ATMs to be distinguished. Our milestone of being distinguished can only be accomplished if we work together.

Let us help one another. Our District is known for extraordinary accomplishments. I solicit your support to help make our dreams come true this year. Each year can be a better year because everyone shares in it.

Thank you once again for all your friendship and your goodwill. May God bless each of you.

Yours sincerely,

Max E. Rasquinha, DTM
District 56 Governor



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Theme of the Month: "Celebration"



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Message from Lieutenant Governor Education and Training

Club Officer Training — Learn About TLI, DCP, and Other Acronyms

by Allen Prescott, DTM, 2005-2006 District Governor Elect



Planning for the June Toastmasters Leadership Institute (TLI) is underway! This TLI will feature educational sessions for new and veteran club officers. In fact, this free TLI is open to all Toastmasters and includes lunch.

The TLI will be on Saturday, June 11, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Marian Community Center, 11101 South Gessner, Houston, TX 77071. Directions: from the Southwest 610 Loop, get on Hwy 59 South. Exit Gessner and turn south. Cross Bissonnet, Brasewood and Creekbend. The Marian Community Center is on the left.

You're invited to stay the entire day. If you have to leave early, here's how you can ensure that your club gets Distinguished Cub Program (DCP) credit for club officer training. Upon arrival, you will receive a TLI attendance card. At some of the educational sessions, you will receive TLI attendance card stickers. After you receive the required number of stickers for your TLI attendance card, you will be guaranteed DCP credit. Make sure you drop off your TLI attendance card at the registration area before you leave.

How do you determine whether you are a new club officer or veteran club officer? If you've never held the club officer position or need a refresher, refer to yourself as a new club officer. If you've held the position previously and have held many club officer positions, refer to yourself as a veteran club officer.

New club officers need to attend the educational session for their club officer position and at least one of the following educational sessions:

- ◆ Toastmasters Educational System – What is a CTM, ATM, etc.

- ◆ DCP Explanation and How to Create a Club Success Plan
- ◆ Build Up your Club's Membership

Veteran club officers need to attend:

- ◆ Overview of ALL Club Officer Positions
- ◆ Overview of DCP

Remember, you must satisfy the above requirements to receive DCP credit for your club.

TENTATIVE TLI AGENDA

9:00 a.m.— General Assembly (all)

9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Educational Sessions

- ◆ The Seven Club Officer Positions Training (new)
- ◆ Overview of ALL Club Officer Positions (veteran)
- ◆ Overview of the DCP (veteran)
- ◆ Explain the Toastmasters Educational Program (new)
- ◆ Toastmasters Trivia Game Show
- ◆ Ask a Veteran Your Club Officer Questions
- ◆ Handling Conflict Within the Club

12:30 p.m.–1:30 p.m. Lunch and Terrible Toasties Skit

1:30 p.m.–4:00 p.m. Educational Sessions

- ◆ Explain the DCP/How to Create a Club Success Plan
- ◆ Build Up Your Club's Membership (new)
- ◆ Dues Increase Discussion Panel
- ◆ Moments of Truth
- ◆ Better Speaker, Successful Club and Leadership Excellence Series Overview
- ◆ Club Contests Overview
- ◆ Judges' Training
- ◆ Toastmasters International (TI) Website Live Demonstration
- ◆ Meet Your Area Governor

Time to Celebrate!

by Diane Niño, CTM/CL, D56 Public Relations Officer



As Toastmasters we have many reasons for celebrating as the end of the Toastmaster year approaches. Most of us have had many leaders guiding us on our journey to better communication and leadership. Others have had friends supporting our efforts to achieve our goals. For some, there have been great rewards as they spread their wings to embrace new challenges. And for those few shining stars, Toastmasters has showered them with accolades for their achievements and service.

What will you be celebrating this summer? Everyone in District 56 has plenty of reason to commemorate the 2004-2005 Toastmasters year.

- ◆ We thank our club officers for their dedication throughout their terms.
- ◆ We acknowledge the educational achievements of our members who have contributed to the Distinguished Club Plan.
- ◆ We welcome new members who begin their Toastmasters journey.
- ◆ We support club members pursuing leadership roles in the District.

◆ We congratulate fellow Toastmasters who have been elected to office.

◆ We recognize the guidance our district leaders have given us throughout the year.

◆ And we look forward to rewards yet to come.

The Toastmasters year may be coming to a close, but there is still plenty of time to honor our fellow Toastmasters. Share your support. Show your pride. Spread your voice. Most of all, celebrate being a Toastmaster!

Message from Lieutenant Governor Marketing

Focus on Membership Building

by Pamela McCown, DTM, 2005-2006 Lieutenant Governor Education and Training Elect



TICK TOCK

Time is ticking to the end of another exciting Toastmasters year. Many District 56 Toastmasters have achieved individual goals and have shared their experience with others.

Many District 56 clubs are suffering from loss of members due to corporate mergers and employee relocations. As a result, we need to focus on welcoming back members who did not renew in April and inviting guests to join our clubs.

Individual Toastmasters who sponsor 5 new, dual, or reinstated members before June 30, 2005, will receive recognition from Toastmasters International and receive a unique "80 Years of Excellence" gold lapel pin. How do you receive credit as a member sponsor? All members of Toastmasters clubs are eligible and are encouraged to participate. Simply invite someone to become a new, dual or reinstated member and put your name as the sponsor on their Toastmasters application for club membership (Form 400) along with your home club number. Be sure to type or print information legibly. New, dual, and reinstated members count for credit; transfer and charter members do not. The new member's join date must fall within the July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005 timeframe.

BEAT THE CLOCK – May 1 to June 30

This isn't about finishing a speech on time. It's about finishing the year with a bang! Clubs adding 5 new, dual, or reinstated members during May and June earn a choice of one item from The Better Speaker Series, The Successful Club Series, or The Leadership Excellence Series. These training modules focus on speaking, club success, and leadership development.

Make earning the "Beat the Clock" award a club goal and formulate a club contest that motivates every member to get involved. Remember, individual members who sponsor 5 new, dual, or reinstated members will receive the individual "80 Years of Excellence" award mentioned above. Club will receive the training module mentioned above.

HUGS and KISSES – MAY 14 to June 28

In addition to the Toastmasters International Beat the Clock membership building contest, District 56 Toastmasters will recognize your new members with the Hugs and Kisses award. Make someone's day special by giving them a special "Hugs and Kisses" welcome to your club. Contact your Area Governor or the District 56 Lieutenant Governor Marketing with proof of payment by the new, dual, or reinstated member, and we will arrange for a special delivery of Hugs and Kisses from District 56 to welcome them to Toastmasters. Individual members who sponsor 5 new, dual, or reinstated members will also receive a special recognition gift from District 56 upon proof of sponsorship.

We want to share the benefits of Toastmasters with as many of our friends, relatives, colleagues, and people in our communities as possible. Read the "Toastmasters Promise" and invite a guest to every meeting. Invite guests to become members, and they will invite additional guests who will become members, and so on.

Why Did You Join Toastmasters?

For most members it is because someone invited them to attend a meeting. What about you? Have you done your part? Think of the people you know who should join Toastmasters. Make a list; speak with each one and invite them to your club meeting. Think of what Toastmasters has done for you. No need to be shy. **FIND YOUR VOICE— SERVE YOUR WORLD.** (Toastmasters International Presidential Theme for 2005-2006).

Tips from a Three-Time Winner

by Scott Adams, ATM, Region III International Speech Contestant.



The weekend of the District 56 Conference will be set aside in my memory as one of the highlights of my Toastmasters career. This is no small accolade when you consider that I have the

somewhat dubious honor of having been the District International Speech Champion for three different districts (D-25, D-55 and now D-56) over the past four years. (Yes, I have moved a lot recently.) This event, however, was more special

than any other because of the level of competition in both contests. The International Speech contest was one of the most competitive I have experienced.

One of the questions I am asked when I have been fortunate enough to win is, "Where do you get the stories?" This simple question has two answers, both of them simple.

First, I grew up in a small farming town where my father owned the only grocery store. Every week, all 548 inhabitants of that little town would pass through our doors, each with a joke, a story or a complaint. I have been a story-

teller-in-training since then.

The second answer, and most important part, is that we all have beautiful, meaningful stories. We just have to think about the stories of those special moments in our lives and ask ourselves, "What did we learn?"

Someone else needs to learn that lesson.

Have faith in your stories and teach us your lessons. Your audience will be grateful and your speeches will take on new weight and importance; and, before you know it, you will be the champion.

A Fantasy Vacation

by Linda Posey, CTM/CL

Many times my husband and I fill our vacations with so much sightseeing we barely have time to breathe, much less meet the local people. Our recent trip to Russia was no exception. Every day in Moscow and St. Petersburg was filled with visits to legendary museums and landmark churches and palaces – the Kremlin, St. Basil’s Cathedral, the Hermitage museum, etc., etc.

But this time we also made time to meet some very special Russian citizens – the members of Moscow Free Speakers Toastmasters Club, club #6386. Before our trip, I found this club on the TI website, emailed them and asked if I could visit. They, of course, said yes.



Linda Posey and her husband Lloyd Posey pose with some of their new friends from the Moscow Free Speakers Toastmasters club.

On Thursday, May 19, club president Vladimir Kovalyk, CTM welcomed my husband and me to the meeting attended by about 30 members and guests. The thriving group, one of only two Toastmasters clubs in Russia, meets twice a month, holding their meetings in English so the members can practice their English skills.



Vladimir Kovalyk, CTM, president of Moscow Free Speakers Toastmasters, accepts gifts from Linda Posey, CTM/CL— a greeting and a "small world" from District 56 Governor Max Rasquinha, DTM.

As Toastmaster for the evening, Vladimir opened the program with an inspirational story about the young boy who helps a butterfly come out of its cocoon. The boy thinks he’s saving the butterfly from a painful struggle, but without that struggle, its wings never mature and it never flies. Like the butterfly, we must experience life’s struggles – grief, disappointment, failure – in order to grow strong. Vladimir’s moving rendition gave me a new appreciation for its meaning as well as a huge appreciation for the speaker’s communication skills. The symbolism of the story is challenging to convey in any language, yet Vladimir did a masterful job.

I continued to be impressed throughout the evening. Each person who spoke did so with skill, poise, and humor. The enthusiastic way these Toastmasters embraced TM ideals was inspiring. They jumped at every opportunity to speak. Vladimir had invited me to give my contest speech, and I was happy to oblige. After I spoke, the General Evaluator, president-elect Olga Zeleneva, led a round-robin evaluation. More than a dozen members and a few guests shared their kind opinions of my speech. I was impressed with the eloquent way they expressed themselves and with their grasp of my motivational message. During Table Topics, Topic Master Alla Oganova called for volunteers, and again numerous members came forward to answer the question of the day – with no pressure whatsoever from Alla.



Linda raises her glass as Alla Oganova, VP Education of Moscow Free Speakers Toastmasters, toasts her during the tea break at the meeting. Linda visited the club during her recent trip to Russia.

The meeting included a “tea break” complete with refreshments. To my surprise Alla led a lovely (and articulate) champagne toast to the club’s interna-

tional visitor (me). Of course, I had to respond. Unfortunately, with no advance notice, I didn’t have a chance to get my toast evaluated for credit as a manual project.



Linda offers her own toast to the Moscow Free Speakers, thanking them for their warm welcome, and complimenting them on their excellent command of English and their enthusiastic adoption of the Toastmasters' commitment to improving their communication skills.

Visiting the Moscow Free Speakers was a fabulous experience for both me and my husband – one of the highlights of this or any vacation. It was a genuine thrill to meet so many people from another culture who nevertheless spoke my language and shared my commitment to growing through Toastmasters and to enhancing communication and understanding around the world.



The Moscow Free Speakers Toastmasters club is 15 years old, as evidenced by their banner, giving their location as Moscow, U.S.S.R.

ExxonMobil Gives District 56 \$2000 Grant

by Jill Rowlands, DTM, District 56 DCP Chairperson

Most corporations have a fund for charitable and educational groups. ExxonMobil has a department devoted exclusively to grant applications and donations. For the second year in a row, D-56 has benefited from the ExxonMobil Volunteer Involvement Fund (VIF).

As an ExxonMobil retiree, I have assisted a number of nonprofits with ExxonMobil resources, including the VIF grant. ExxonMobil awarded my 2004 grant application for D-56. I proudly presented a check in the amount of \$2,000 to our District Governor at the Spring D-56 Conference Gala on May 14th in the presence of over 100 members. I'm honored to offer an Exxon-Mobil benefit to D-56 Toastmasters.

The ExxonMobil VIF grant requires that an employee, annuitant, or their spouse serve at least 20 approved hours in a given quarter to be eligible for a quarterly grant of \$500 on behalf of a certified 501c-3 organization. Now that I am retired, I am blessed with continuous benefits from the corporation and am able to share these benefits with others.

Toastmasters helped me transition through several life-changing situations during difficult times, including retirement. I feel compelled to give back to organizations from which I benefited.

Now I am able to use volunteer time to help Toastmasters through the ExxonMobil VIF grant. Out of the nearly 700 volunteer hours I spent in Toastmasters activities in 2004, I submitted 133 volunteer hours to meet the grant requirements.

This leads to another factor that moved me to apply for this grant — the needs of District 56. As a former two-term district treasurer, I know we are very limited on how we spend the money we get from Toastmasters International headquarters. The costs associated with any extra projects within the district have to come from donations.

Thanks to John Moffitt's efforts to attract world champion speakers to D-56, we started a trend. These champions are in demand by other districts. However, we cannot use normal TI funds for speaker travel and housing expenses. Few champions can afford to come here with-

out monetary assistance. Our district will use most of this grant money to bring former and current World Champions of Public Speaking to D-56.

The ExxonMobil VIF grant will benefit hundreds of members who desire to become better speakers or leaders by learning from the champions. Many members spend their own money to go to the World Championship of Public Speaking and learn direct from the source. Those who cannot do this will benefit by both the education and money savings this grant brings.



Jill Rowlands presents a \$2,000 check to District 56 Governor Max Rasquinha.

Many D-56 members missed out on seeing David Brooks, the 1991 World Champion of Public Speaking, at the D-56 Spring Conference. The 2003 ExxonMobil VIF grant covered his room and board. The date for the next visit by world champion speakers is rumored to be sometime in January 2006. Stay tuned and be sure to reserve a spot.

The ExxonMobil grant will also contribute to the most successful educational programs ever conducted in the prison systems by bringing Gavel Clubs more Toastmasters educational materials. Also, more Youth Leadership modules will be available to help society's future leaders become effective communicators.

If you work for a corporation like ExxonMobil that has programs benefiting groups such as Toastmasters, you too can give back to our organization. Be sure to document your volunteer time and activities and fill out a grant application. I suspect that D-56 would be more than happy to supply the stamp.

D56 Highlights May 2005

- The District Spring Conference was our signature event in May. Organized with the help of dozens of volunteers under the leadership of Greg Hennig and Shannon Brown-Taylor, every program was carried out successfully. Our youth leaders also provided a wonderful program during the Spring Conference.
- Your District 56 Officers elect for the 2005-2006 term are:

District Governor –
Allen Prescott, DTM

Lt. Gov. Education and Training –
Pamela McCown, DTM

Lt. Governor Marketing –
Cynthia St. Dennis, DTM

Division Governors:

L – **Kashmira Sutaria, ATM-G/CL**
M – **Mary Spain, DTM**
N – **Jocelyn Williams, ATM-S/CL**
O – **Shawn Lacagnina, ATM-B/CL**
P – **Jeannie Pullen, ATM-B/CL**
Q – **Richard Kummins, ATM-B**

- As the current TM term comes to an end, we have many things to accomplish to make our District "Distinguished" once again. Teamwork is vital during June to achieve many more CTMs, ATMs, and DTMs. Each club is also asked to recruit at least 3 new members by June 30.
- During May, we chartered 4 new clubs, and plan to charter another six clubs in June. This is a record for new clubs in our district.
- The May-June Success Leadership series programs educate and provide incentives to members. Thanks to Eddie Merla for organizing these programs.
- Cynthia St. Dennis, DTM, Division L Governor, Lt. Governor Marketing Elect, is coordinating group travel arrangements for the TI International Convention in Toronto in August.

Inflation Is Inevitable

by *Rahseed Hooda, ATM-S/CL, Area L-41 Governor*



Toastmasters International (TI) provides education and life-changing benefits for less than \$5.00 per month. Where else can one get such benefits?

I pay more every month for watching the junk on cable TV than I pay to Toastmasters in tax deductible dues for one year. Need I say more?

Inflation is a way of life, and we absorb it. Consider the following 1992 statistics:

- ◆ The minimum wage was \$3.65. Today the minimum wage is \$5.35, an increase of 46.6%.
- ◆ A 970-square-foot apartment in the Greenspoint Area rented for \$225.

Today, the same apartment rents for \$465, an increase of 106.7%.

- ◆ Gasoline cost approximately 72.9 cents per gallon. Today, gasoline costs approximately \$1.99 per gallon, an increase of 172.8%.
- ◆ A 10-pound bag of chicken cost \$1.90. Today, the same 10-pound bag costs \$3.70, an increase of 94.7%.

In 1992, Toastmasters dues were \$3.00/a month. Dues remain the same today, even though the cost for providing services has gone up over the years.

Toastmasters International, a non-profit organization, has absorbed the increased expenses, with dignity and integrity, which is the mark of this outstanding organization and its volunteer leadership.

TI cannot continue to absorb the extra cost and provide the same services that it has been providing for so many years.

The proposed 50% dues increase is less than the cost of inflation. While inflation has constantly made things more expensive, Toastmasters has continued to provide the same services without increasing the dues.

Toastmasters has proved to be an honorable and responsible organization with integrity. In light of the fact that everything else in the world costs at least 50% more than it did in 1992, a TI dues increase of 50% is not at all unreasonable. I wholeheartedly support the increase and urge everyone else to do the same. Tell your club members why it makes sense to support the dues increase.

Specialty Speechcrafts

by *Jill Rowlands, DTM, District 56 DCP Chairperson*



Goodwill Industries recently hosted a Speechcraft to assist students in job training programs. The program focus was to help prepare students for job interviews and to become better communicators. Since two board members of Goodwill are Toastmasters, they understood the value of Toastmasters training.

Danny Barron, who was looking for an ATM-G project, jumped at the chance to organize the Speechcraft. Ralph Stranahan and I assisted him.

The three of us brainstormed ways we could best help the students and work on our own educational completions at the same time. To lead the Speechcraft, we had to give instructional speeches and demonstrations. We easily fit our TM manual speech projects into the required Speechcraft subjects.

Instead of the traditional option of having Speechcrafters select their own topics, we assisted them with topic selections that targeted critical areas in the interview process. In the standard Speechcraft format, we built table topics around interview questions.

The participants' Ice Breakers were less creative than some Toastmasters, but answered the question: "Why am I the best person for the job?" This question is a critical element in most job interviews. Interviewees must get comfortable with self-revelations regarding occupational expertise.

Since students had different job aspirations, the speeches were diverse and interesting. When we got to the "Organize Your Speech" project, the suggested topic for the Speechcrafters was "Describe My Strengths." For the "Speak with Sincerity" project, many students selected the "My Dream Job" topic. A few students preferred topics regarding some aspect of social awareness.

Some students started with a reasonable level of communication skills. A few were on a very steep learning curve. Everybody finished the program with a greater comfort level regarding the interview process and more courage about revealing personal attributes. We left them with completion certificates and a list of about 20 clubs that would welcome them as new Toastmasters.

Goodwill Industries is in the process of relocating. When they resettle, they may want to hold more Speechcrafts. If

enough students and employees maintain interest, in the not-too-distant future the Goodwill organization might be a prospect for forming a new club. We have an increasing number of specialty clubs. Why not have one that focuses on the job search?



Toronto, Ontario, Canada

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL
74th Annual Convention
August 24 - 27, 2005



HOUSTON & SOUTHEAST TEXAS

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Lieutenant Gov. Education Training — Allen Prescott, DTM

Lieutenant Gov. Marketing — Pamela McCown, DTM

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Spring Conference Co-Chairperson — Shannon Brown-Taylor, ATM-S

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Associate Editor — Linda Posey, CTM/CL

Assistant Editor — Jocelyn V. Williams, ATM-S/CL

Webmaster — Jerry Hobby, CTM

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Journalists

Division M — Ola Joseph, DTM

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Division P — Patty Mayeux, ATM-B/CL

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Announcements! Happenings! Events! Achievements!

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

Contact:

Chief Editor: Shirley Gilbuena, DTM

editor@toastmasters-d56.org

Phone: 281-491-6356

Cell: 832-465-3514

Fax: 281-491-6356

www.toastmasters-d56.org

www.toastmasters.org

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



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

JUNE

June 5 — Area & Division Governor Training

June 11 — TLI/Club Officer Training

June 24-25 — Region III Conference
Regional Speech Contest
International Speech

June 30 — Club Officers List to WHQ

JULY

July 16 — TLI/Club Officer Training

July 31 — District Exec. Committee Meeting

District Staff Meeting (TBD)

AUGUST

Aug. 24-27 — TI Convention in Toronto

SEPTEMBER

Dues Are Due

OCTOBER

October 29 — District 56 Fall Conference
Sharpstown Community Center



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.