

FORUM 56

District 56 2007-2008
 Celebrating Its 50th Anniversary!

Recognition Of Development Enriches Opportunities!



SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION

As we know, the ability to communicate effectively will account for most successes in life. As the communication age matures, we are becoming more and more dependant on being able to communicate and interact effectively with others. The ability to interact with other people effectively will determine success far more than a skill level in any field.

There are three primary forms of communication in business we may learn. How well these skills are developed will determine our progression in a chosen field. The first communication skill is the ability to communicate either one-on-one or by telephone with others. Many people never develop this ability to interact effectively with others and their careers suffer. The second skill is the ability to communicate well in writing, to express yourself in letters, memos, reports and e-mails. The third is the ability to speak in front of a group of people and give presentations.

The ability to speak on your feet, to communicate, to influence and to persuade other people to take action, that they would not have otherwise taken, may do more to help you reach success than any other single skill developed.

There is a big difference between knowing how to talk and knowing how to speak. Talking comes naturally, but speaking is a learned skill that requires practice and takes a good deal of time and commitment to develop. There are two options in life, to be influenced and persuaded by others, or to influence and persuade others. In other words, we may be powerless or powerful.

As the decision is made to overcome the fear of public speaking, the fear of rejection is short-circuited. The more confi-

dence one gains speaking in front of others, the more competent and influential a speaker becomes in one-on-one interaction.

To be an effective public speaker, a reason to speak should be identified. Is speaking for personal pleasure or for professional benefit? A personal pleasure speaker may learn to speak on any subject of interest. However, if professional speaking is the desire, expert status on a subject and the motivation must be clear as to why and what is to be accomplished.

Thorough preparation is the key to success. Preparation accounts for 90 percent of a good speech or presentation. It is imperative to know the subject well. People would much rather be entertained than educated. The talk should be enjoyable to hear, even if the subject is serious in nature. Support every fact with a story or quote for support and heightened interest.

The purpose of all public speaking is action, to motivate others to take action as a result of the speech delivered. The more clear and powerful presentation will achieve this goal. Public speaking will help career advancement. It will help overcome the fear of rejection that holds many people back. It will build self-confidence, and others will offer admiration and respect. Doors of opportunity will open virtually everywhere and enable a greater influence with other people.

My fellow Toastmaster, reach out to a friend or colleague during this holiday season. Invite them to hear you speak at your Toastmasters club meeting or holiday celebration. Ask them to support you. If they enjoy the meeting, they just might want to be a part of Toastmasters to have the fun you are experiencing.

I send my sincere and heartfelt wishes to each of you and your families for a safe and joyous holiday season.

Cynthia St. Dennis, DTM
 District 56 Governor



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50 YEARS IN HOUSTON & SOUTHEAST TEXAS!



Message from the Lieutenant Governor Education and Training by *Eddie Merla, DTM*

TOASTMASTER GOALS

The holiday season has begun and the new calendar year is just around the corner. As the new year approaches, you should consider your personal goals for the upcoming year. Toastmasters can help you achieve your goals because most likely your goals will require communications of some kind.

Toastmasters offers many opportunities for personal growth through its educational programs. Beyond the Basic Competent Communicator and Competent Leader manuals, you should consider some of the advanced manuals. If you need a different forum than your own club to deliver some of the longer projects, you

should consider one of the advanced clubs. Check the District 56 website to locate an advanced club. Most of these clubs will allow guest speakers from other clubs with enough notice.

Another opportunity for personal growth and advancement in Toastmasters is the High Performance Leadership (HPL) program. This program focuses on the ability to deliver a project. The project does not even have to be a Toastmaster project. You select a committee to provide feedback during the course of the project.

Have you advanced enough to start giving back to Toastmasters? Beyond mentoring an individual new member, you can also give back by leading a Speechcraft or Youth Leadership program. You can also volunteer to sponsor or mentor a new club.

If you are eligible, you should also consider competing in the Spring contests. The two contests in the Spring will be the Evaluation contest and the International speech contest. Winners of the District 56 International speech contest go on to com-

pete in the Regional contest with a chance to go to the World Championship of Public Speaking which will be held at the Annual Toastmasters International Convention.

As members of Toastmasters International, District 56, and your own club, you are challenged to grow and to achieve new levels of competence. What is your goal for the upcoming year? Competent Communicator? Advanced Communicator? What about a Competent Leader or Advanced leader award?

All of these goals are within reach – plan for them and achieve them. Look for educational opportunities provided by the District. In addition to educational opportunities provided through the Toastmasters Leadership Institute (TLI), and educational sessions provided at the District Conferences, we will be holding various types of workshops through the year to help you accomplish your goals. Check the [Events link](#) for educational opportunities throughout the year.

We wish you the best in your journey to success!



Message from the Public Relations Officer by *Kathy Miller, ACS, CL*

KEEP YOUR CLUB MEMBERS INFORMED

Happy club members are informed members. It is important to keep club members informed, not only of what is going on within the club, but of what is happening within the Toastmasters organization. To fully benefit from the organization and its efforts, it is important that the club member is aware of what is available for their taking. There are endless opportunities just waiting

for someone to grab them.

One of the responsibilities of the Club Vice President Public Relations is to keep your members informed. There are numerous opportunities to volunteer for district and community events and speaking engagements. These opportunities also include various club celebrations and contests. How do you keep your members informed? Here a few, but not limited to, ways to effectively do this:

- Periodically peruse the District 56 website for new postings on the 'Events' and the 'Members Area' pages.
- Remind your members to use the Toastmasters International website as a learning tool.
- Share Toastmasters International and district news received as VPPR with your club members.

- Keep the events section on your club website current.
- Include event opportunities in your club newsletter.
- Ask your Club President for announcement time during your club meetings.
- Develop a periodic email blast with current events.

Being a part of the Toastmasters organization allows you access to vast resources from all over the world. Every member learns and grows at a different pace. Your responsibility as Vice President Public Relations is to provide and inform your members of these opportunities. It is the club member's job to decide what to do with the information and to reap from the benefits.

Message from the Lieutenant Governor Marketing by Charlie Pitts, DTM

MEMBER ROUND UP

Toastmasters of District 56, the corral panels are busted and several of our most prized members have escaped. Fellow cowpokes, your District Deputies are organizing a membership drive and we are asking all y'all to sign up for this ride. We "spect" this ride will last for about 4 months (March 31, 2008).

Let's chat about how many have escaped. There are about 900 members that did not renew their memberships during the October dues renewal period. Some of these did not renew deliberately, but many simply forgot or got busy and are awaiting a Courtesy Call.

These are the ones we want to target. These are the ones that may be lassoed with a simple email or phone call letting graced members know that they are about to allow their membership to lapse.

Your district deputies are offering some incentives for rounding up members. We are going to have several "Shoot Outs." We will have a *Club Shoot Out*, an *Area Shoot Out* and a *Division Shoot Out*.

Club Shoot Out:

In the Club Shoot Out, there will be one (1) 1st place winner, Golden Nugget Winner, and up to six (6) 2nd place winners, Silver Bullet Winners.

Golden Nugget Winner:

The Golden Nugget Winner will be the one club in the district that achieves the greatest increase in membership over their July 1st base by March 31st, 2008.

The Golden Nugget Winner will be recognized at the Spring Conference, **May 16-17, 2008**, and will be awarded the following gifts:

- A *Timing Light*
- A *\$100 gift certificate to the Toastmasters International On-line Book Store*
- A *free pass to the D56 spring conference*

Silver Bullet Winner:

There will be up to six (6) Silver Bullet winners, potentially one (1) club per division. Every club that increases its membership by 20% over the July 1st base will be eligible for a Divisional drawing. Each club within their respective divisions to achieve this goal will have their names placed in a drawing. The Golden Nugget Winner will not be eligible for this drawing. The Silver Bullet Winner will be recognized at the Spring Conference, **May 16-17, 2008**, and will be awarded the following gifts:

- A *Timing Light*
- A *\$100 gift certificate to the Toastmasters International On-line Book Store*

Area Shoot Out:

In the Area Shoot Out, the Golden Nugget Winner will be the Area Governor who achieves the largest increase over the July 1st base for his or her area.

Golden Nugget Winner:

The Golden Nugget Winner will be recognized at the Spring Conference, **May 16-17, 2008**, and will be awarded the following gift:

- A *\$100 gift certificate to the Toastmasters International On-line Book Store*



Division Shoot Out:

In the Division Shoot Out, the Golden Nugget Winner will be the Division Governor who achieves the largest increase over the July 1st base for his or her Division.

Golden Nugget Winner:

The Golden Nugget Winner will be recognized at the Spring Conference, **May 16-17, 2008**, and will be awarded the following gift:

- A *\$100 gift certificate to the Toastmasters International On-line Book Store*

District 56 Team, I invite you to saddle up with me and blaze the trails of lost members. Members matter most as members are the heart and soul of our organization. Benjamin Franklin said that if we manage our pennies, the dollars will take care of themselves. If he had been a Toastmaster, he would have stated, "If we take care of our members, the Distinguished Club Program will take care of itself."

For now, happy trails to you and yours. May you have a relaxing and enriching Holiday Season!

The GOLD RUSH is Coming!

Mark your calendars for the 2008 District 56 Spring Conference, May 16th and May 17th at the Northwest Forest Conference Center.

Don't miss the chance to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of District 56! Conference Chair Jan Poscovsky is already busy planning the event.

Interested in helping? Contact Jan at jan@stanjan.com for this great opportunity.



Successfully Speaking Members Shine at Fall Round-Up

by Jim Hamilton, ATMB

What an INCREDIBLE Fall Conference for members of Successfully Speaking Toastmasters! Not only were several members in attendance for this event, but they were also very visible.

Doyle Peake was recognized during the HALL OF FAME awards ceremony as the Outstanding Club Treasurer for January to June 2007 for going “over and beyond” the duties of a club treasurer.

Three club members were also selected to deliver education sessions during the conference. Kimaka Willis presented a session designed for “newer” Toastmasters, but brilliantly tied-in to anyone who wanted to move forward and make a difference in his or her life. Kimaka’s presentation skills and content kept the audience very involved and she even gave away three copies of her book *Change the Reel*.

Don Samp absolutely blew the audience away with his session titled, “So, you wanna be Prez?” This was NOT a lecture about rules and regulations on how to be a club president. This was NOT a reading of the manual a club president receives detailing duties of that position. Instead, Don presented a motivational, inspiring and incredible summary of his experiences and what it takes to be a club president.

Have you ever been in a room over-filled with people anticipating someone’s message? That was the scenario for the education session delivered by Chris Loomis. He presented his keynote message from his “Big Idea Guy” series and had the audience laughing, thinking, involved and remembering.

Successfully Speaking Club members were not just presenters in the education sessions, but also had a moment of recognition during the District Business Meeting. Fellow member and District Treasurer, Stephen Kane, was required to give a treasurer’s report as part of the proceedings, but ending up stealing the show! Oh yes, that part of the business meeting, that most people dread, was the funniest part of the meeting! That’s right, Stephen was able to deliver his message of District Accounting with a clever spin that could have easily been material for the humorous speech contest.

To top off the accolades for members of Successfully Speaking Toastmasters, both speech contest winners are current members of our club! Bob Kissner won first place in the Humorous Speech Contest. He had me laughing so hard it hurt. I’ve heard Bob do this speech before, but this time I was wiping tears from my eyes, because he was hilarious for 7 ½ solid minutes. What a performance!

I, Jim Hamilton, was able to take home the trophy for Table Topics. I believe I won first place because of my fellow members of Successfully Speaking Toastmasters. When I get “goofy” in the club meetings, I listen to your feedback. The table topics question we were given at the district contest allowed me to use that member feedback, combined with some impromptu goofiness, to pull together a winning answer. Thank you!!

Successfully Speaking Toastmasters really “rocked” the Fall Conference. Looks like Successfully Speaking IS the club to beat!

Committed to Excellence

by Michael Masek, ACS, CL

A recent visit to a HPD Toastmasters club meeting revealed a group of devoted members working to excel.

Sharon Head, an experienced club member, stepped up as presiding officer while June Frost served as Toastmaster for the meeting. For this small group of six members and three guests (including me), the meeting was a success.

Table Topics were the focus of the meeting and I was first to volunteer. I delivered my answer from the front of the room and the two speakers after me followed my lead. Apparently, answering table topics from the front of the room was something new for this club and was well-received. Everyone could see the benefits of this face-to-face time with the audience to increasing a speaker’s confidence and comfort level when speaking to a group.

As the visiting Area Governor, I was invited to make a few remarks. I provided a few tips on scheduling speeches, preparing for meetings ahead of time and mak-

ing a commitment to themselves through Toastmasters and sticking with it!

I closed my remarks with a reminder to the members to Prepare, Practice and Persevere as the basic tools for helping them increase the quality of their club meetings as well as their overall communication and leadership skills.

During my visit, I was greeted enthusiastically, very well received and invited to return for the next meeting. Club members even committed to continue meeting regardless of their small numbers. I appreciate the renewed commitment to excellence from members of HPD Toastmasters.

As with all of the clubs I have had the opportunity to visit as an Area Governor, I really enjoyed my time with HPD Toastmasters. I send my thanks to all of my clubs for their warm welcomes, their hospitality and their kind response to my visits with them. I am especially grateful that they continue to strive for excellence.

Success Communication and Leadership Workshops

by Patricia Cotton, DTM

Are you interested in climbing the corporate ladder? Improving your effectiveness in the workplace? Becoming a better communicator or leader within Toastmasters or within your community?

Here is your opportunity!

The following Toastmasters Success Communication and Leadership Workshops will be presented from 6:00 pm until 9:00 pm on the dates below.

Nov. 28th	Working in the Team Environment
Dec. 5th	Parliamentary Procedure in Action
Dec. 12th	How to Listen Effectively
Dec. 19th	Art of Effective Evaluation

Each session comes from a module professionally prepared by Toastmasters Interna-

tional. All sessions will take place at the Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston, TX 77074.

Each workshop is limited to 20 participants. A \$5 donation will be requested. Each participant will receive a workbook and certificate of participation.

Presenters are experienced and seasoned speakers working towards their Advanced Communicator Gold awards.

For more information or to RSVP, contact Patricia Cotton at 713-837-7758 (work) or 281-235-6120 (cell). You may also reach her by email to: Patricia.Cotton@cityofhouston.net.

Mastering Evaluations

by Chris Loomis, ACG, ALB

Do you want to be a better evaluator? Has your stomach "knotted up" when you were assigned to evaluate?

When I joined Toastmasters, I loved to give speeches and do table topics, but evaluating caused me to be weak-kneed. With only minutes to prepare an evaluation, what would I be able to say that could help the speaker improve their next presentation?

Mine is not an isolated problem; many Toastmasters have the same challenges when doing evaluations.

Several months ago, Cynthia Wagner and Eddie Merla came up with the Big Idea for an advanced Toastmasters club for our District. That club became "Master Evaluators." This club meets at 4:00 PM on the first Sunday of each month at a different restaurant; meetings always seem to go better with food!

The format of a Master Evaluators meeting is unique. Each month a guest speaker gives a 5 to 7 minute presentation and 6 to 8 club members evaluate the speech. Here's the neat part... there is a master evaluator that

evaluates the evaluations of each of the speaker's evaluators. (That's a LOT of evaluating going on!).

You learn by evaluating the speaker, by listening to fellow club members evaluate the same speech and from the evaluation of the master evaluator.

Having served as the master evaluator, I realize how important good evaluations are to every club. Members of Master Evaluators quickly improve and become very proficient in their evaluation skills.

Did I mention that the Spring Contest season is almost upon us and evaluations will be one of the contests?

I encourage anyone, who is interested in becoming a proficient evaluator, to attend one of the Master Evaluators meetings. The next meeting will be at 4:00 PM, December 2nd at the Outback Steakhouse located on the northwest corner of I-45 and FM 1960. You may also contact Jan Poscovsky at: Jan@StanJan.com or Chris Loomis at: chris@chrisloomistexas.com for more details.

Division Trail Ride Reports

GET IN THE MOOD.....For Toastmasters!

Join the Team for the Region III Conference on June 13-14, 2008 in Houston, Texas. Help the Region III Conference Committee create a weekend that will make every Toastmaster say, "WOW!" Contact Host District Conference Chair, Pamela McCown, DTM, at pamelamccown@hotmail.com to volunteer.

The Region III Conference comes to District 56 once every nine years! Take advantage of early registration to ensure your attendance at this unique event.

Visit the Members Area of the District 56 website at www.toastmasters-d56.org to download a copy of the conference registration form. Submit your payment early by check or credit card. Details are printed on the registration form.



The District 56 Fall Round-Up Galloped Into Town!

By Jessica Frost, CC, CL and Carmen Melendez

The District 56 Toastmasters Fall Round-up was a hootin', hollerin' good time. This yer's festivities were held on Saturday, November 10, 2007, from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm at the E.B. Cape Center ner' 4501 Leeland. Cowpokes from all over the district rounded-up for this one-day event which included good schoolin', two high-flutin' contests, dancin', racin' and much, much more!

The day began with plenty of good vittles and an energizer (an activity to get yor' blood pumpin'), yor' very own 'WANTED' picture. Just what your mama always wanted. Other energizin' activities included dancin' the 'Hokey Pokey', stick pony racin', pin that there tail on the BULL, a real live 'Out House Relay' and line dancin' to the Macarena.

A Table Topics contest was the highlight of the mornin'. The question bein', "What is your next greatest role in life?" The audience was treated to spirited and movin' answers from the contestants Deborah Cerkovnik, Jaumarro Cuffee-Harris, George Gallamore, James Hamilton, Ola Joseph and Archie Faye Webster.

Winners included:

1st	James Hamilton	Div L
2nd	Archie Faye Webster	Div Q
3rd	Ola Joseph	Div M

Clubs were showin' their club spirit by displayin' their club banners in the Pitts Corral.

A keynote address and business meetin' were givin' by our very own cow bosses, Cynthia St. Dennis, DTM and the District 56 Executives.

An excitin' and heartfelt awards ceremony was presided over by none other than our very own past cow boss, Pamela McCown, DTM. Award winners included:



The top district officers conduct the fall business meeting from the front of the E.B. Cape auditorium.

Outstanding Club Officers Jan-Jun 2007

PRES - Sara P. Blumenfeld, CL Area Chamber of Commerce
 VPE - John R. Moffitt, Pride of Houston
 VPM - Yus Krisanto, Talk of the Town Toastmasters
 VPPR - Vivian Li, South Main Speakers
 SEC - Paul Bukowski, High Noon
 TREAS - Doyle C. Peake, Successfully Speaking
 SAA - Harry N. Patel, Southwestern Toastmasters

Top Awards for 2006-2007

Outstanding Area Governor of the Year was awarded to Susan V. Dixon, Area N-21 Governor. The Outstanding Division Governor of the Year was awarded to Jill Rowlands Moffitt, Division N Governor. Finally, the Outstanding Toastmaster of the Year was awarded to Richard Ruchhoeft, DTM

Some of the districts best cowboys and cowgirls provided some excellent schoolin'. With over 9 topics, there was no shortage of informatin', teachin' and learnin'. This yer's topics included:

"Here Come Da' Judge" presented by Carolyn Gray
 "Fireside Chats" with District Governor Cynthia St. Dennis
 "Oh, the Things a Toastmaster Can Do" by Kimaka Willis
 "Get Into Their Heads" by Scott Adams
 "Little Known Secrets of Advanced Toastmasters" by Jan Poscovsky, Aundrae Romeo and Eddie Merla
 "You Want Me to be Prez??!" by Don Samp
 "Members Matter" Panel Discussion with Successful Club Leaders facilitated by Charlie Pitts
 "7 Strategies to Reinvent Yourself" by Chris Loomis
 "3-D Living" by Patty Mayeux

A Humorous Speech Contest and plenty of good grub closed out the evenin'. Topics included menopause, monsters interviewin' for jobs, lottery winnins', raisin' chillen', agin' and catholic schoolin' from the contestants Carla J. Allum, Alan Asp, Robert (Bob) M. Kissner, Mary M. Spain, Randy Stubenrouch and Dorothy Visosky.

Winners included:

1st	Robert (Bob) Kissner	Div L
	<i>Speech Title: Your Sin Will Find You Out</i>	
2nd	Dorothy (Dottie) Visosky	Div Q
	<i>Speech Title: The Menopause Blues</i>	
3rd	Randy Stubenrouch	Div N
	<i>Speech Title: Cadillacs for Everyone!</i>	

We hope you did not miss out on this RODEO Round-up. If so, we hope to see all you cowboys and cowgirls at the Spring Conference – GOLD RUSH!

HONOREES



Susan Dixon accepts the Area Governor of the Year award from Pamela McCown, IPDG. Jill Rowlands Moffitt was unavailable to receive her Division Governor of the Year award in person, however, Richard Ruchhoeft was present to accept his Toastmaster of the Year plaque.



Jim Hamilton wins first place in the District 56 Table Topics Contest and poses with Contest Chair, Chris Loomis, (left) and District Governor, Cynthia St. Dennis, (right).

Bob Kissner takes first place in the Humorous Speech Contest and poses with Contest Chair, Jay Strickland, (left) and District Governor, Cynthia St. Dennis, (right).



SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Sincere thanks and appreciation to our *fabulous conference team* for their exceptional efforts in preparation and delivery of our District 56 one-day conference, the Fall Round-Up, held in Houston at the E. B. Cape Community Center. All efforts contributed immensely in making this our "best ever" conference, according to the many accolades we received from our delegates throughout the district that attended. We are still "basking in the glow of adulation." Thank you, Jessica Frost and Carmen Melendez, Fall Round-Up Co-Chairs!



Fall Round-Up Conference Chair Jessica Frost (left) and Co-Chair Carmen Melendez (right) pose with District Governor Cynthia St. Dennis.



ENERGIZERS!



Dominique Denton (at left) was in charge of the energizers throughout the Fall Round-Up.

This energetic Toastmaster kept everyone entertained during the breaks by encouraging conference attendees to take part in various activities to keep their blood flowin'!

Pin the tail on the Bull is just one of the many energizes in which conference goers could participate. Others included stick pony races, an outhouse relay, line-dancing and doing the Hokey Pokey.

See page 8 for more highlights and photos of the Fall Round-up!



FALL CONFERENCE SCRAPBOOK



The Fall Round-Up Registration Committee (at left) welcomed conference attendees with a great big "Howdy" and made sure they knew how to reach Bubba's General Bookstore (at right) to find their Toastmasters supplies.



Chow Time included a breakfast tacos, build your own baked potato lunch, and barbecue beef sandwiches for dinner.



Pitts Corral was the perfect place for Stick Pony Races (at left) and the Out House Relay (pictured above). Clubs were also encouraged to bring their banners to display in Pitts Corral.



Humorous Speech Contestants (l-to-r): Dottie Visosky; Carol Allum; Randy Stubenrouch; Alan Asp; Mary Spain; and Bob Kissner.



Conference attendees participate in one of the nine education sessions.



Carolyn Gray dons a judge's robe to present judges training during the Fall Round-Up.



Table Topics Contestants (l-to-r): Ola Joseph; Jim Hamilton; Deborah Cerkovnik; Jaumarro Cuffee-Harris; Archie Faye Webster; and George Gallamore.

District 56 TLI Club Officer Training

Any recently elected club officer taking office on January 1, 2008 and all officers who are serving an annual term (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008) are required to attend club officer training. The first opportunity for this winter is the District 56 sponsored Toastmasters Leadership Institute on Saturday, December 1, 2007 from 8:30 am to 11:20 am at the E.B. Cape Community Center, 4501 Leeland, Houston, TX 77023. The phone at the location is 713-928-4501.

This District 56 sponsored training is open to all Toastmasters in District 56 including those not currently serving as an officer.

Register on-line today at www.toastmasters-d56.org/tli

DIRECTIONS:

The E. B. Cape Center is centrally located at 4501 Leeland, Houston, Texas 77023, about two miles east of downtown and a half-mile north of the Gulf Freeway (I-45). From I-45, exit Lockwood inbound and Cullen outbound.

STOPPED BY A TRAIN? HERE IS A WAY AROUND IT. Traveling north on Cullen, turn left on Coyle. Travel two blocks to Milby and turn right. Take Milby to Polk and turn right on Polk. Take Polk to Lockwood and turn right. Take Lockwood to Leeland and turn left. Take Leeland to the first signal light (Lockwood) and turn left. The Cape Center's entrance is on the left.

Contact: Eddie Merla, DTM, District 56 LGET at lget@toastmasters-d56.org

WHO: All District 56 Club Officers

WHAT: District 56 Toastmasters Leadership Institute Club Officer Training

WHEN: Saturday, December 1, 2007
8:30 AM - 11:30 AM

WHERE: E.B. Cape Community Center
4501 Leeland
Houston, TX 77023
713-928-4501



HALL OF FAME - OCTOBER 18TH to NOVEMBER 28TH

COMPETENT COMMUNICATOR

Allen, Lawrence L.
Ball, James E.
Blackmur, Laurie A
Boyd, L. Colleen
Butler, Donna S.
Campos, Guillermo
Craig, James Martin
Demirors, Deniz
Dewhurst, David
Douglas, Kay
Garza, Sergio Eduardo
Haug, Lawrence A.
Holcombe, Chacondra Renee
Horan, Mary M
Mauldin, Glen L
McCreary, James G.
Pinard, Daniel
Reynosa, Frank
Smith, Mark F. (2)
Smith, Ricky R
Thompson, Christopher R
Thorsen, Cathy
Wilhite, Tamarsha R
Williard, John N.

ADVANCED COMMUNICATOR BRONZE

Haley, Kathryn Ellen
Schuster, Becky
Smith, Mark F. (2)
Thomlinson, Linda
Zajicek, Leslie A.

ADVANCED COMMUNICATOR-SILVER

Curtis, Lovie L.
Smith, Mark F.

ADVANCED COMMUNICATOR GOLD

Hooda, Rasheed

OLD COMPETENT LEADER

Brenza, William S.
Cantrell, Carol A.
Cerkovnik, Deborah L.
Direnzo, Hillary M.
Romeo, Aundrae Michael
Strickland, Jay J.

COMPETENT LEADER

Barrett, Katie Lynn
Brown-Taylor, Sharian L.
Douglas, Kay
Denton, Dominique
Hendrix, Nancy
Mikolas, Kim
Smith, Mark F. (2)
Stenvall, Harry C.
Turner, Sheila

ADVANCED LEADER BRONZE

Russell, Jeffrey

ADVANCED LEADER SILVER

DISTINGUISHED TOASTMASTER

Moffitt, Jill



Trailblazers

Accomplishments of Toastmasters in District 56



Closing Door

by Kimberly J. Muesse, DTM

What do you do when your club “closes its door?” First, do everything possible to keep this from happening.

Try changing meeting dates/times to boost attendance. If membership is restricted, change it. Vote to change the club’s leadership if the club needs to be revitalized.

Second, if closing is inevitable, i.e. the club is corporately-sponsored (closed to outside members) and the company has a layoff, make sure that

all members (those affected directly by the lay-off and those remaining with the company) transfer their membership to another club. Remember that dues are paid for six-month terms (April 1 to September 30; October 1-March 30); other clubs are waiting to embrace displaced members.

Finally, if time allows, be sure to have members complete any outstanding manuals or projects before leaving the club. Keep the momentum going! You will inspire yourself and other members.

Do not despair! Starting a new job may give you an opportunity to start a new corporate club (good project for High Performance Leadership award or become a club sponsor; both count toward the Distinguished Toastmaster Award).

Joining a club near your home will give you a chance to have an influence in your local community. This could also be the time to join an

advanced club (like Dining Out Toastmasters, Storytellers, Dance & Toastmasters, etc.).

There is an excellent resource available on the District 56 website to aid you in your search for a new club. From the website’s main page (www.toastmasters-d56.org), click on Club Finder link (upper right) or just click here: <http://www.toastmasters-d56.org/clubfinder.asp>. Just insert your zip code and search away. You also have the ability to narrow your search. Remember “open to group members only” is closed to the public and “club is open to all interested parties” is a public club.

Kimberly Muesse is a past President’s Distinguished Area Governor and an Outstanding Area Governor of District 56 for the 2004-2005 term. She was a charter member and the only Vice President-Education of a recently closed corporate club (multi-year, multi-awarding winning). This article is based on her personal experiences. She is also a member of an Advanced Club, Dining Out Toastmasters.



A “Natural”

by George Gallamore

practice some more. No matter what your gift is, it has to be developed.

I am what many call a “natural” speaker. It comes easy for me. I have always had a gift for words if you will. I “play” my sport very well with ease and finesse, I am a standout among my peers and I truly love what I do.

Many have seen me in action and understand that what I say is not boasting nor inflating my ego, it is just a humble introspective. But what many don’t see are the hours upon hours that I practice, practice and practice some more.

You see, we can have a gift, but if we don’t know how to use that gift, it is a waste. Toastmasters is a venue that has helped me tremendously as a speaker, but more importantly as a master communicator. It has taught, and is still teaching me, how to harness the gifts that were given to me and how to make the best use of them that I can.

Toastmasters has helped me to become a Professional Speaker and have the confidence and ability to address a crowd of any size. I have traveled over 250,000 miles giving over 350 presentations to well over 35,000 people in my 3 year professional career and what most don’t see or know, I have spent over 6 years as an active Toastmaster. That is what I call the roadwork. You have to do the roadwork in order for the results to come.

No matter what your calling or gifts, the purpose for you to become a better speaker or the reason for your nervousness when called upon to speak, Toastmasters is an outstanding organization to help you harness your gift or just feel comfortable enough giving that presentation to your boss and the board!

George Gallamore is a member of Lunch Bunch Toastmasters. For more information about his experience as a professional speaker, please visit www.georgegallamore.com.

I have heard some athletes referred to as a “natural.” They just seem to be able to play their sport with ease and finesse, they are a stand out among their peers and they seem to truly love what they do.

We have all seen such athletes in action and we can understand why people would call them a “natural.” But what we don’t see are the hours upon hours that the “natural” or gifted athlete had to practice, practice and

How to Speak to an Audience

by Richard A. Lehman, DTM

Speaking to an audience could be very simple. Here are a few methods that may assist you.

Get the Audience on Your Side

Knowing your audience has to be one of the most important commandments in public speaking. For those, who have had the privilege to judge a contest, you know that one of the criteria judged is appropriateness and relevance to the audience. You must learn to relate to the audience that you are addressing.

Sam Levenson was a frequent guest on the Ed Sullivan Show and highly successful in nightclubs. He came across as an average person, just like the men and women in his audience. Sam established a relationship with his audience by telling them that he came from an average background, with a father who made it the hard way. He made his point visually by the way he looked with short hair, glasses, white shirt, thin bow tie and a double-breasted suit.

He'd tell his audience, "My father came to this country when he was a young man because he heard that America was the land of opportunity – that the streets were paved with gold. But when he got here, he learned three things:

1. The streets were not paved with gold.
2. The streets were not paved at all.
3. He was expected to help pave them.

His audiences, working-class folks, whose families had emigrated not many generations ago, were immediately on his side.

The Value of Brevity

Have you heard the story about the English teacher that received a lengthy letter from a friend that ended with an apology? "Please excuse such a long letter," his friend said. "Didn't have time to write a short one."

It's not easy to be brief, especially on a topic you know a lot about. But in any kind of communication, it's always worth taking the time to boil down your messages to its essentials.

This emphasis on brevity applies even more when you deliver a speech. Abraham Lincoln knew it. His Gettysburg Address lasted less than five minutes. Did you know that he was preceded on that November day in 1863 by one of the most popular orators of the time, Edward Everett, who spoke for two hours? We all know which speech is remembered from that somber day.

KISS

Another important commandment in public speaking is simplicity. For those not familiar with the acronym KISS, it means "Keep It Simple, Stupid."

You must remember to not use fifty-cent words, no convoluted sentences, no technical terms. Some of the most notable public figures, that adhered to the KISS principle, were Winston Churchill and Yogi Berra.

At the Harrow School for Boys on October 29th, 1941, Winston Churchill gave the shortest commencement speech on record. His advice to the



graduating students was, "Never give in – never, never, never, never – in nothing great or small, large or petty – never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense."

In 1964, when Yogi Berra became the Yankees' manager, someone asked him to comment on the philosophy of life. Yogi's answer was, "When you get to a fork in the road – take it."

Getting the audience on your side, being brief and using the KISS method are just three of many simple methods to learn how you may sharpen your skills in speaking to an audience. Toastmasters International has many more tools and methods to help you achieve your goals. Just ask your mentor or the person that invited you to your first meeting. I close with the quote "How do you get to Carnegie Hall?" The answer is the same as how to give a good speech: "Practice, Practice, Practice."

Richard Lehman is a member of the Clear Lake Communicators and Spaced Out

The Story Behind Great Speeches

by John Mohler, Jr.

Bill Funchion is a Toastmaster, educator and successful speech coach. He coached the 2006 World Champion of Public Speaking Ed Hearn.

For all his experience and knowledge, Bill stresses one thing to power your speeches: structure. Have the best speech under your belt before you even rise for the lectern. A third-rate speaker can beat the strongest one, if he is delivering the better speech.

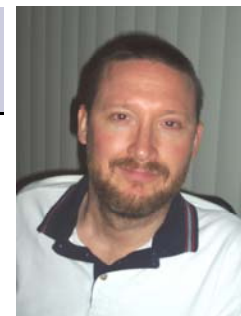
Sounds intimidating, but it's simply focusing on the familiar elements of a good story, the kind you like hearing yourself.

Think about your favorite movies, books or

jokes. At the beginning, there's a conflict that creates tension -- something's wrong and needs to be fixed. This conflict could come from any distressing situation, hardship or fear. The main character needs or yearns for something.

As audiences, we want the character to get what he needs. We want the conflict resolved. It's like hearing a scale without the final note -- do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti ... ti ... ti ... -- we want to hear DO!

Draw that tension taut enough to snap. Then, grant your listeners the ending they deserve. They'll love you for it.



Make a real impact on your audiences: don't deliver a lecture, tell them a story!

John Mohler, Jr., is VP Public Relations, Huntsville Noon Toasters, #1012269.

50 YEARS IN HOUSTON & SOUTHEAST TEXAS!

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Lt. Governor Education and Training Eddie Merla, DTM
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sisternino@yahoo.com or 713-560-2633

Mark Your Calendar

DECEMBER

December 1st - TLI/Club Officer Training
DEC Meeting
December 30th - Deadline to submit Club Officers List

JANUARY

January 11-12th - Region III Mid-Year Training
Top 3 District Officers
January 19th - District Staff Meeting

FEBRUARY

Club Contests - Evaluation and International Speech
February 23rd - District Staff Meeting

MARCH

Area Contests - Evaluation and International Speech
March 16th - District Staff Meeting

APRIL

Division Contests - Evaluation and International Speech
April 19th - DEC Meeting

MAY

Club Officer Elections
May 16-17th - District 56 Spring Conference
Northwest Forest Conference Center
50th Anniversary Celebration

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.

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ACKNOWLEDGE RECENT MEMBER EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

If you would like to recognize an achievement for the list on the Members Area of the District 56 website, send an email to:

publicrelations@toastmasters-d56.org
with a brief sentence including the achievement date, first and last name of the member, club number and very brief achievement phrase.



Recognition Of Development Enriches Opportunities!