



The Voice

WORDS FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

District 83 News & Events

DECEMBER 2020 INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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WORDS FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Leadership and You

By William Markert, DTM – District 83 Director

Hello Fellow Toastmasters leaders. Leaders? Some of you are probably thinking, "I'm not a leader." To that, I would respond that each and every one of you is a leader.



We are all leaders.

You may have a leadership position at work as a department manager, executive officer, or leader for a special project. Many of you have families and have leadership responsibilities to your spouse/partner, children or parents. I'll bet that a number of you volunteer time to other community organizations as well as Toastmasters. You may serve in a formal leadership role such as an officer for a community organization such as Kiwanis, Rotary or Lions. Maybe you serve in a less glamorous, informal leadership role such as volunteer at the local food pantry. Be confident that each and every role is important and affords you an opportunity to hone your leadership skills.

Preparation for effective leadership.

How does one prepare to be an effective leader? Some say that leaders are born, but I believe leadership skills can be **learned**. Where can you go to learn or improve upon your leadership skills? Certainly, many universities and colleges offer leadership programs. There is no shortage of training organizations such as Franklin Covey, John Maxwell and Dale Carnegie that provide leadership training.

Toastmasters International also provides leadership and communications training in the Pathways educational program. As with all things in life, there are cost benefit trade-offs that must be evaluated. There is one significant

difference between the training programs. The Toastmasters program is an **experiential** program. The skill development goes on week after week as you attend club meetings and work in your path. With the other programs, the learning stops after course completion or when you stop working with a mentor.

What's your plan?

In my article in the September issue of The Voice, I talked about leadership, specifically some of the qualities effective leaders possess, and the importance of **having a plan** with SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely) goals. Pause for a moment and reflect on how your leadership journey is going. *(Continued on page 2)*



Leadership and You *(continued from page 1)*

How clear is your vision?

Did you have a vision that was realistic and attainable? Did you and your team develop a plan to attain your vision? Was your plan detailed with respect to tasks, milestones and measurable results? If you had a clear vision and developed a plan, you're off to a good start.

The importance of listening as a leader.

Listening is another critical skill for good leaders. **Good listening** promotes trust and shows others that you care. It also helps you to be more mindful of individual needs in order to more effectively inspire and motivate team members. Listening requires much more than being quiet and lending your full attention. You need to be aware of the signals being sent with facial expressions, body language, mood and behavioral tendencies. Effective listening is a full-time job. Toastmasters practice their listening skills every time they evaluate someone.

Leaders reflect, review, and revise.

How then, is your leadership journey going? Now is a good **time for reflection**. Club officers, did you survey your members to learn what their expectations were for the coming year? Did you complete your club success plan? Did it incorporate your members' expectations and the club mission?

Recall, "the mission of a Toastmaster club is to provide a supportive and positive learning experience in which members are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth." Are you periodically reviewing progress to measure progress toward milestones?

Area directors and division directors, ask yourself similar questions. Your focus should be on mentoring clubs/area directors, visiting clubs, conducting club officer training and speech contests and supporting the division/district council/success plan.

Many of you are not district officers, but you are on a leadership journey, nonetheless. Is your vision clear? Did you develop a plan? Do you have an objective way of measuring progress? If you answered no to any of these questions, then it is a good time to review and revise your plan.

You are a leader.

By now, hopefully you realize that **you are a leader**. I've highlighted a few key characteristics of good leaders. While having a vision, making and periodically check progress of the plan, and listening to your team are all important, other traits will also contribute to good leadership. In my next article, we'll look at some common challenges facing club leaders and explore potential solutions. Until then, exploit your Toastmasters club meeting as your learning laboratory to see what works well for you and what doesn't. The skills you develop in Toastmasters **are** transferable to life outside of Toastmasters.

"Leadership is a series of behaviors rather than a role for heroes."

Margaret Wheatley, American writer and management consultant.



District Program Quality Director's Message

Reflect, Adjust, Adapt, Repeat

By Michelle Tropper, DTM

Reflecting back on the first half of this Toastmasters year, we've come a long way in terms of adjusting to our virtual reality. We managed to complete our major District milestones all online - from trainings over the summer, a full season of Humorous and Table Topics Contests, as well as the Winter TLI, and our District-wide Fall Recognition event. Planning for the District 83 Spring

Conference is underway, as well as the winter season of club officer trainings, and we'll soon launch our Spring Contest season.

We've come a long way with the Toastmasters online experience.

I've heard from many of you how much you miss being with each other in-person, and how meeting and competing online is just not the same. On the other hand, I've also heard from many about how you look forward to your virtual Toastmasters meetings as a way to reconnect with fellow members, and how meeting online has opened doors to visiting clubs around the world and learning new ways to facilitate group discussions. While we've lost a number of clubs and members due to our virtual environment, we're also gaining new members who have only known the online Toastmasters leadership experience. We will need to find ways to continue to engage and connect with these members once we have the ability to meet again in-person.

Virtual trainings are a hit.

Yes, our Toastmasters world experienced numerous changes over the last year. While many long to go back to what we used to do, or at least to have more frequent human-to-human contact, some of the changes we've experienced will have lasting impact. The record attendance at our online club and district officer trainings provided us with meaningful feedback from a much wider audience on how to deliver more relevant and valuable trainings. We're still learning from the experience, and it will take time to fully incorporate all the wonderful input that's been shared.

Virtual contest learning moments.

We had some hiccups during our fall contest season, but those helped us to better prepare for the more challenging Spring Contest season that we're about to embark on. Each contest brought about a new set of challenges and experiences to learn from and train new people on how to be webmasters and adapt to the online environment. We had to adjust to issues with bandwidth and understanding why audience cameras and microphones had to be muted in order to provide the fairest online experiences for our contestants.

Virtual District Conference planning underway.

During our recent District Conference Planning Committee Meeting, I challenged the committee members to think outside the box of what they're used to doing for conferences and consider the whole new realm of possibilities open to us in planning a virtual conference. Just because we used to do things a certain way for our in-person meetings, doesn't mean we have to follow the same structure in a virtual environment. In fact, we should expand our reach and bring our District Conference and Contests this Spring to more members than ever before. *(continued on page 4)*



Reflect, Adjust, Adapt, Repeat *(continued from page 3)*

In order to achieve this vision, we NEED to adjust and adapt to change. 2021 is the year to do it! Think about all the virtual meetings and conferences you attended for work or Toastmasters over the last year. What was done differently to accommodate the virtual environment? What worked well? What didn't? Do you have ideas to share for how we can provide a meaningful online conference experience in District 83?

As we get ready to unlock all the promises and possibilities for 2021, I'm excited to work with the following District 83 Conference Committee Chairs who have volunteered to take us to the next level with our upcoming conference:

- District 83 Chief Judge - Peggy E. Seymour, DTM
- District 83 Conference Chairperson - Juana Dannecker, DTM, Division B Director
- Education Committee Chairperson - Darlene Blanco, MS1, Area 42 Director and Training Coordinator

Get involved and make a difference.

There are still plenty of opportunities for you to get involved and add your name to this list! Please complete our [District Conference Volunteer Interest Form here](#) and/or our [District Contest Volunteer Form here](#) to be in the Zoom where it happens!

DID YOU KNOW?

**You're eligible to receive a free Pathways path
if you've renewed your Toastmasters
membership before December 31, 2020.**

*Please visit your Toastmasters.org profile, click the "Choose A Path" button,
and follow the normal path selection process to redeem your free path
before March 31, 2021.*



District Club Growth Director's Message

Cultivating New Club Leads

By Kristen Oliveri, DTM

As the global pandemic continues to impact Americans' daily lives, several clubs in our district and beyond have made the difficult decision to suspend their meetings while others have decided not to continue on. Some clubs will come back once they are able to meet again in person.

COVID or not, there will always be some level of club and member attrition. This is an important reason that we need to continually organize new clubs in the district, to keep us fresh, vibrant and active and ensure that we have a solid base of current and future leaders, and to introduce the benefits of Toastmasters membership to more members of our communities.

Are you the next District 83 Club New Source Research Chair?

There is a district leader position that is currently vacant that has new club leads as its primary function. The **Club New Source Research Chair** is charged with generating new club leads at the district level. This involves analyzing our current club footprint to identify geographic areas that don't have a club within close proximity, or types of clubs that may be underrepresented, such as clubs that meet on the weekends. In addition, the Club New Source Research Chair will take a look at corporations that have Toastmasters clubs in other parts of the country and/or the world and reach out to those companies if they have office locations in our district but do not have a local club, to explain to them the benefits that the program can bring to their employees. If conducting this type of research and performing outreach appeals to you, the Club New Source Research Chair position might be right for you!

Think about who you may know.

It is not only the responsibility of the Club Growth team to find new club leads, anyone can help identify opportunities for new clubs. How do we go about finding new leads? The answers may be all around you! You can find leads at work, in your community, among friends, and even within your family.

Many of the Toastmasters clubs around the world and in our district are sponsored by businesses or organizations. More than half of Fortune 500 companies have Toastmasters clubs. If your company doesn't have a club, your employer could be the next club sponsor! If you are interested in starting a club at your company, you can reach out to your HR or Learning & Development department. They may be excited to hear that Toastmasters is the most cost-effective way to learn, as compared to conferences and seminars, Toastmasters is ongoing and affordable. If your company is interested at the proposition and wants to learn more, you can let the Club Growth team know and we can schedule an informational session to let them know more.

Your church or place of worship could be a good lead. Other possible leads are colleges and universities and large government offices (e.g., Veterans Affairs) and military installations. Toastmasters currently has an alliance with Rotary International; potential sources include other special interest groups or associations such as insurance agents, chambers of commerce, realtors, and the Lions and Kiwanis Clubs. Your local YMCA is a potential lead for starting a community club. Remember that Dr. Smedley started Toastmasters International in the basement of a YMCA in Santa Ana, California! Club building is about helping people discover how Toastmasters will bring them value. We strive to continuously offer as many people as possible the opportunity to benefit from the Toastmasters education program. Organizing a new club can also help you with a terrific opportunity to develop and extend your own leadership skills! *(continued on page 6)*



Cultivating New Club Leads *(continued from page 5)*

*** REMINDER ***

Any new clubs that organize for the months of December 2020 or January 2021 and pay future renewal dues will have the charter fee (\$125 USD) and new member fees (\$20 USD per member) waived by Toastmasters International! To qualify, new clubs will need to fully complete the charter process, pay the \$45 USD membership dues for each charter member, and pay the prorated amount for the next renewal cycle (April 2021) by January 31, 2021. Members of clubs which charter in this time frame will pay the total amounts (at the time of charter) as follows:

Month	Membership Dues	Prorated Dues Amount	Total Amount
December	\$45 USD	\$30.00 USD	\$75.00 USD
January	\$45 USD	\$22.50 USD	\$67.50 USD

For any questions on starting a new club or the above new club incentive, or if you are interested in serving as the District 83 Club New Source Research Chair, please reach out to the Club Growth team:

Club Growth Director	Kristen Oliveri	tmd83kristen@gmail.com
Club Extension Chair	Dave Cragin	david1.cragin@gmail.com

If you have an idea for a new club in the district, please complete the Google form linked on the district website at:

<https://tm83.org/index.php/club-growth/new-leads>

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New Column for 2021

For the next issue of The Voice, any member can submit an answer to the 'quarterly question.' Email your answer to the editor of The Voice, Melissa Brown, at melissa@coachreadycontent.com and maybe you'll see your answer in the next issue! Answers should be approx. 100-130 words. Include your name, achievement designation (DTM, Path/level), club name and how long you've been a Toastmaster.

Quarterly Question for March 2021 issue:

What is a **positive** silver lining you've gained by continuing your Toastmasters journey **virtually**? Write about something you would probably not have achieved or experienced otherwise.



District Events

Fall Humorous Speech and Table Topics Contest 2020—Congratulations to the Division Winners

Division	Table Topics Winner	Table Topics Runner Up	Humorous Winner	Humorous Runner Up
Division A	Denise Washington	Charles Malaniak	Irene Freeman	Charles Malaniak
Division B	Sherri Rase	Vishwa Shah	Kimberly Chung	Michael Rutkowski
Division C	Anupama Rao	Saraswati Naimpally	Tanuja Deshmukh	Kala Sivasubramanian
Division D	Ally Bhuiyan	Alex Rogovin	Susan Matson	Kattlin Diaz
Division E	Alasdair King	Lorraine Campbell	Mona Valore	Jyotsna Narayanan
Division F	David Siegler	Susan Brooks	Paul Ireifej	Susan Brooks
Division G	Karl Freithaler	Mark Watson	Jenny Yin	Jana Velisakova
Division H	Edwin Park	Paul Lester	Justine Jensen	Greg Holden
Division I	Samantha Honhart	Kristen Koennemann	Margarita Estrada	Samantha Honhart



Down East Meets the Jersey Shore Networking Event

By Su Brooks, DTM 2 and Angela Chute, DTM 2



Hosted by Toastmasters clubs The Maine Thing (District 45) and What Exit? (District 83), the Down East Meets the Jersey Shore Networking event will take place on Wednesday, January 20, 2021, 7:00–8:00 pm (ET); 8:00–9:00 pm (AT) via Zoom.

Why network?

Networking for your personal, professional and Toastmasters interests and goals enables you to gain fresh perspectives and valuable resources. At this event, you will meet lifelong learners, meet new friends, stay curious and have fun!

Why District 45 and District 83?

In case you haven't yet discovered it for yourself; the smartest, funniest, most highly curious lifelong learners are Toastmasters!

Why virtual?

No expense or traveling required. During COVID-19, it is an excellent idea to meet others online in a supportive, safe and healthy environment. Oh, and masks are not required. *(continued on page 8)*



Down East Meets the Jersey Shore Networking Event *(continued from page 7)*

Why you?

You are smart. You have unique insights. You have a fresh perspective. You are funny. You are a lifelong learner. You add value.

Why now?

You have the time; we've secured the platform. Ditch boredom. Let's challenge the status quo!

Why not?

You've got a required Pathways networking project in Level 3 if you are working on Strategic Relationships. If you are working on other paths, challenge yourself and select "Make Connections Through Networking" as a Level 3 elective. This opportunity doesn't come around often.

You are expected to complete a pre-event questionnaire to gauge your interests and goals for the event. You will also be expected to prepare a brief (30-second) introduction to share with others to gain the most from the event.

When you register for the event expect to receive updated communications with additional details.

Ready to get started?

Join us and register here: <https://bit.ly/38bCKd3>

Questions?

Contact Angela Chute, DTM:
d45.angelachute@gmail.com



About the Authors:

Su Brooks, DTM 2, became a Toastmaster in 2000, has earned two DTM awards in the traditional education program and is working on her Pathways DTM. She currently serves as VPE at Talk of Monmouth and Secretary at What Exit? in

District 83. Her district service for 2020-21 includes: Staff Writer for The Voice, a Social Media Strategist on the PR team, as well as a member of the upcoming five-year district planning team.



Angela Chute, DTM2; joined Toastmasters in October of 2016. She has earned 1 traditional DTM and 1 Pathways DTM while serving District 45 as Area 14 Director and Division B Director (Maine). She was awarded 2020 D45 Division Director of Year.

Angela sponsored and is currently serving as President of The Maine Thing Advanced Toastmasters, which has members stretching from AZ to GA and New Brunswick to NJ, as well as Secretary of Kennebec Valley Toastmasters, a President's Distinguished Club. Angela continues to serve Div. B as Mentor to S.R.A.

*"Courage starts with showing up
and letting ourselves be seen."*

Brene Brown

*"Those that win in networking
give first, give generously, and
give often." Unknown author*



Member Engagement

By Su Brooks, DTM 2



In order to retain members in our clubs, we need to keep them interested in our programs and provide value for their time and money.

What is their “Why?”

Ask them. Do not assume you know what they

want from your club experience. Each club is different.

You can use existing Toastmasters forms or create a Google survey. Make it easy for your members to complete and return it. This makes it very easy to implement and refer to throughout the year. Give them a deadline by when you want it back. Do they want to serve as a mentor and/or protégé? What else?

Listen

As VPE, I ensure we conduct member-interest surveys to provide insights into new activities our members want to experience. **What is their “Why?”** You might be surprised. We are all members of Toastmasters clubs for different reasons. In addition to regular club meetings, we’ve enjoyed:

- Debate meetings
- Backwards meetings
- Multi-club or dual-club events
- Panel discussions
- Speakouts
- Theme meetings

Ask around; I’m sure you and your club members have other creative ideas for enhanced member engagement. This is a great way to spice things up, but not every meeting has to have a theme or be a special event.

One of my clubs, Frontline Speakers, listened to our members and decided to supplement our regular monthly workshop meetings with weekly Table Topics for

a half hour. In addition to engaging our members, this also provides a great opportunity for members to take turns facilitating a Table Topics session to receive credit for the Pathways project, “Active Listening,” required in a few paths and an elective in others.

Execute

Once we generate these ideas, the officer team places these ideas on the agendas.

Creative ideas help generate excitement to match program requirements with speaking and leadership opportunities.

Adapt

We adapt our program to meet everyone’s needs based on member-interest surveys, officer meeting discussions and member feedback at meetings.

While each club has its own culture, members enrolled in more than one club can provide in-depth insights and recommendations for new ways to approach challenges and suggest opportunities.

We ask, “has anything changed?” Some of the ideas we have implemented include:

- Inclusion of the Listener role in our meetings
- Group evaluation huddle during the break
- Round robin evaluations
- Open to other new possibilities as we continue to navigate online meetings

A flexible agenda provides opportunities for more speeches if you’d like, or an expanded Table Topics session.

Any of the members, not just club officers, can plan and facilitate these meeting and events. This is perfect if a member wants to assume a leadership role for a Pathways project. *(continued on page 10)*



Member Engagement *(continued from page 9)*

Recently some experienced members have advanced in Pathways and presented Level 4 projects that involved Reaching Consensus. These interactive discussions serve to engage members in a number of ways. Facilitators make sure everyone is heard. Members have an opportunity to practice speaking and share their viewpoint.

Recent topics we discussed in my club meetings include mentoring; In-person and online meetings; and enhanced evaluations.

Show you care and do not assume everything is still the same. Have their needs changed?

Do they have a new job or a new position at the same job?

Are they looking to present a TED talk?
Do they want to improve their humor?
Do they want to become more confident using online meeting platforms?

Remember to serve the needs of both new and existing members to provide a great experience now and in the future as we look toward a bright 2021.

About the author: *Su is a regular contributor to The Voice. She works as a Proofreader at Lanmark360 in West Long Branch as well as a freelance Art Director/Graphic Designer and loves working on a Mac.*

She lives in Tinton Falls with her husband and is the mother of an adult son.

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“One of the most important things you can do on this earth is to let people know they are not alone.”

Shannon L. Alder, inspirational author



Making the Best of Your Online Presence

By Janette Markert, DTM



By now just about everyone has experienced using Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex, or another video conferencing platform. This includes kids as young as 6 years old! We've become proficient at this online meeting stuff, haven't

we? Or have we really? Most of us were thrown into the online meeting realm with hardly any preparation, learning on the fly as we went along.

How do you show up online?

How many of you have experienced any of the following at your online video meetings? Seeing a checkerboard of video rectangles, at least half of which are dim and so dark that all you can make out is a shadow figure. The only way you can tell who the figure is, is by reading the name that's at the bottom of the rectangle. There's also at least one or two who display as just the top part of a head. Good thing you don't need to lip read because you can't even see their mouth!

Another common occurrence is that you recognize the person, but they look a bit different; they're at an odd angle and you seem to be able to look right up their nose and you never noticed that large mole under their chin before.

What persona do you want to project online?

As we get more comfortable with being 'on camera' for the better part of a day, I have found that many are getting forgetful and lax about how they appear in that little rectangle. When it's with your friends or family, that's one thing but when you are in a work meeting or even a Toastmaster meeting, I'll argue that it is worth your while to make some effort toward how you appear.

You'd like to cast the aura of being professional and capable, yes? My suggestion is to take just a little time to

make periodic assessments of your own video appearance. There are several key areas that you should look at. Some of these may seem obvious but bear with me and truly see if any apply to you. You'll need to take note the very next time you find yourself online and look closely at yourself. If you can open your own meeting just to see yourself, this might actually be the most revealing.

How's your online lighting?

The first thing to note is simply the lighting. Are you one of those shadowy mole people? If you mostly find yourself sitting at a desk with your laptop, a small table lamp can become your best friend when video conferencing! If you think like a physicist, what makes your face visible online? It is just how much light is shining on your face and for some reason this simple fact escapes so many! Most people assume that if they are in a nice bright room with a large open window with the sunshine streaming in, this is all that's required. Wrong! The room seems well lit but if you sit with your back to the window, the light is streaming onto the back of your head. Therefore, you look dark and shadowy.

If you position a small lamp directly behind your screen or have a good overhead light directly above you, your face will be lit, and everyone can see your face along with all your expressions. In other words, it's better to **face a window** with your laptop. Another thing to avoid is any side lighting. This makes your face have a shadow down one side.

Psychologically, when everyone can see your face, they feel more engaged with you. It's easier to interact with you and when you speak, it will be more impactful. Don't overlook this very simple but important effect.

Camera considerations.

Another thing to consider is the angle of your camera. If you are sitting with a laptop on a desk, typically it is set more at a level for ease of typing on the keyboard, but this makes the camera look up at you. The result is that others see right up your nose and you just look odd
(continued on page 12)



Make the Best of Your Online Presence *(continued from page 11)*

because this is not usually how we see others when we speak to them.

Consider raising your laptop so that the camera is more level with your face. This is simple, you can just put a few sturdy books underneath your laptop to bring it up to the right height.

If you are using a desktop computer, be mindful of where you place the camera. I have seen where the camera is too high, and you see the tops of heads. One more thing about webcams on laptops, they have a wide-angle lens. This means the closer you are to it, the more distorted you appear so staying at least 18 inches away works best.

Have a look behind you.

Here's another tip to help you look better, use a plain and simple monotone background. The more "boring" the background, the better. This makes the viewer focus on you and not on what's behind you. A caveat to this is to have a tidy background. If your computer is enabled to allow you to use a virtual background, this is preferable to letting everybody see dirty laundry strewn about behind you. Not all computers enable virtual backgrounds so if you have one of these, take a few minutes to pick up around the area where you will be using the laptop.

A little effort goes a long way.

Tips specific for women: yes, wear a little make up, do your hair, and dress professionally. Tips specific for men: comb your hair, catch a shave, and dress professionally. It does make a difference when you make an effort!

Tips for both men & women: go with simple patterned fabrics, wearing a blazer gives you an instant expert impression, avoid solid white or black which tend to "blob" on camera, and use good posture when sitting. There is a setting in Zoom that helps smooth your appearance. Near the video camera icon is access to **Video Settings**, where you can enable a button to **Touch up my appearance**.

Be considerate to other attendees.

A big no-no when on a video conference, if you need to

get something or leave the room momentarily, first turn off your video and mute your audio, before you go. Otherwise, you become an annoying distraction to others. It is very disturbing to have someone do this in the middle of a conference and it implies that the person is not interested in the meeting.

It's easy to pick up that you are bored if you continually roll your eyes and yawn while slouching. Quite simply, you need to PAY ATTENTION! One more pointer, before your video meetings, make sure that you tell your family, kids and spouse, and cordon off the space so that you don't have embarrassing noises or activities going on behind you.

Other considerations

As we become more experienced using online video conferencing, some are experimenting with standing up as opposed to sitting and standing further away from the camera. Just be aware that moving too far away prevents viewers from seeing your facial expression clearly.

Toastmasters International actually has in their video guidelines a recommendation to stay no further than 3 feet away from the webcam. This usually only allows you to show your body from the waist up. Try to set up a test meeting so that you can find the optimal configuration that works for you. A benefit to standing is that you can be more expressive with your gestures and allow your body to speak.

My hope is that you'll think about how you appear the next time you find yourself on Zoom or other video conferencing platform and try some of the suggestions I made. Video cameras can be your friend when you make just a little effort. Happy Zooming!

About the author: *Janette A. Markert has been a Toastmaster for more than 11 years. She currently serves as Area 21 Director and in the past has served as Area & Division Director, as well as District Administration Manager. Janette is currently working on her second DTM.*



How to Have a Successful Mentoring Session

By Lynda Starr, DTM, IPDD



In the September newsletter, I wrote about choosing a mentor and making sure the mentor and

mentee/protégé connection is a good working relationship. Much of what we read about mentorship focuses on the mentor, but it takes two to tango and the protégé plays a crucial role since he sets the goals and timeline and has to want to succeed. A protégé has several responsibilities to the relationship, which we will discuss here.

Mentees have responsibilities and obligations to the relationship.

Toastmasters has a useful module titled Mentoring, which was part of the Successful Club Series (Item 296A), which explains that

"If a mentor/mentee relationship is to be successful, mentees have responsibilities and obligations as well. To receive maximum benefit from the relationship, mentees should be:

1. **Eager to learn.** Mentees must be willing to take on new challenges.
2. **Receptive.** Mentees must be open to feedback, viewing it as an opportunity to improve themselves.
3. **Open to new ideas.** Mentees should be willing to see things from other perspectives.
4. **Loyal.** Mentees do not violate confidences or trust.

5. **Grateful.** Mentees appreciate the help their mentors are giving.

Confidentiality is critical to the relationship.

Mentees need to ask questions of their mentor and not be bashful about it. Any conversations should be considered safe zones and anything that is discussed should be considered confidential. If a mentee does not feel comfortable asking questions, that may be a sign that a different mentor is needed.

It's the mentee who ultimately sets the goals.

A mentee needs to set goals. While the mentor can help the protégé to refine the goals and design a strategy for reaching them, they are the mentee's goals, and not the mentor's goals for the mentee that are key.

While it is important to take feedback and constructive advice from one's mentor, in the end, it is the mentee's life and goals, and you should never substitute someone else's judgment for your own. No one knows yourself better than you do. While part of the mentor's role is to nudge the protégé and help the person to develop undiscovered parts of themselves, in the end, the mentee needs to make and live with any final decisions.

Mutual respect and responsibility.

A mentee needs to be respectful of the mentor's time. The mentor is there to help the mentee but is likely a busy person and like in any relationship, both parties must respect the other person's time. This means coming to meetings prepared with things to discuss, having completed any tasks, and having items that need reviewing ready to be shared.

When Manny Reyes, DTM was District Director (2018-2019), his theme was Proactive Empowerment. This is the idea that everyone needs to take responsibility for becoming their best and make a commitment to serving others and helping them to discover the best within them. *(continued on page 14)*



How to Have a Successful Mentoring Session *(continued from page 13)*

This is similar to the mentoring relationship. Both the mentor and mentee need to take responsibility for their improvement. Manny further explains that the aims of proactive empowerment are self-discovery and mastery of “who” many of us want to be in the short-, mid- and long-term. Both parties need to make changes that make

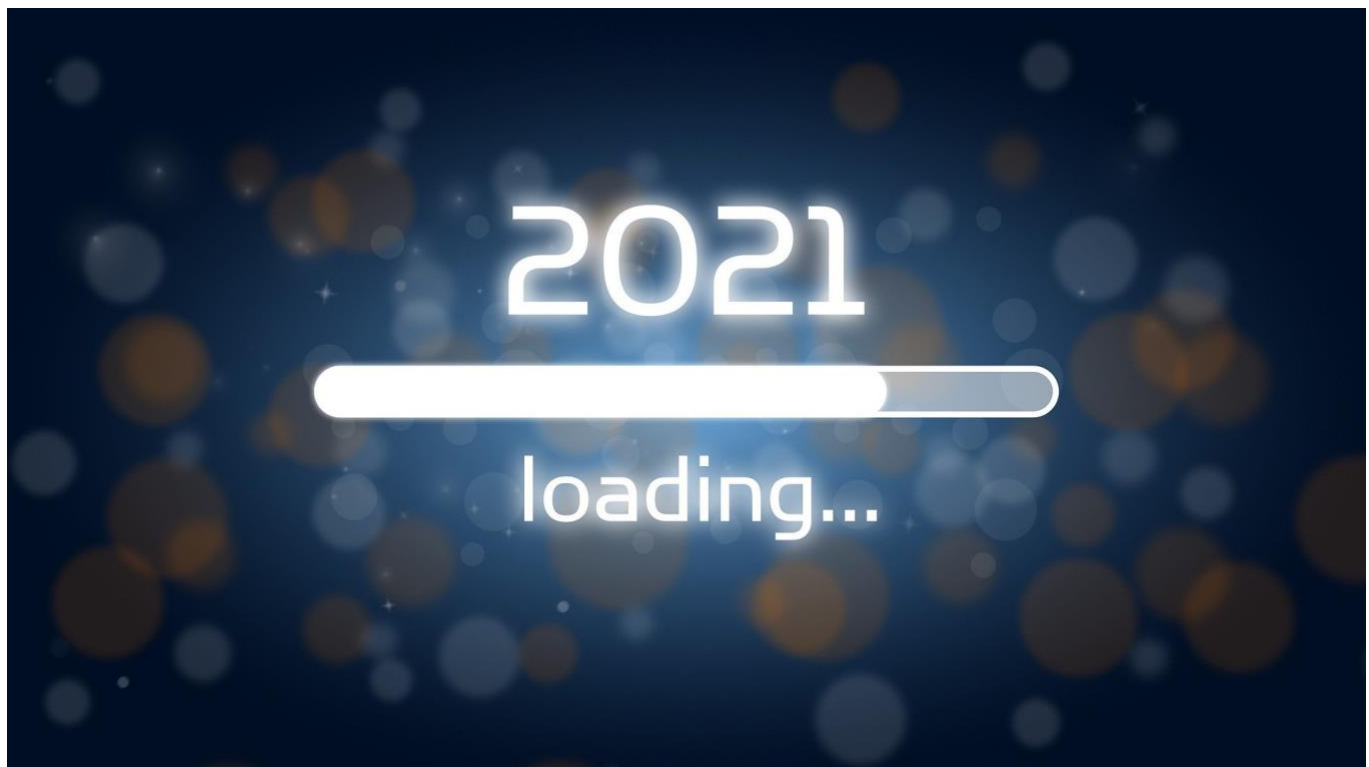
them a different person than the one they were when they started. The mentoring relationship is a two-way street and done right it can be a path to success.

About the author: Lynda Starr, DTM is our Immediate Past District Director. She is a member of Dining to Speak, Northern Stars Advanced, and What Exit Toastmasters.

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Happy New Year!

Have you set new goals for 2021 for your Toastmasters journey?
Be sure to discuss them with your VPE and your mentor!





Special Seasonal Article

Winter Holidays Around the World, Toastmasters Style

By Sherri Rase, DTM – Social Media Strategist



District 83 is blessed with an abundance of diversity in our members that makes every meeting a great time. Diversity in background, age, experience and beliefs opens up the world to us and with Toastmasters International embracing Zoom meetings, we now have an opportunity to host Toastmasters from around the world to get a taste of their experience as we give

them a heaping helping of New Jersey and parts of New York. Following are some of the Winter holidays celebrated by our friends.

Diwali fell in November this year and is celebrated by our friends who hail from the Global East. Diwali is a festival of light that is celebrated by Hindu, Jain and Sikh believers. It is viewed as a time of prosperity and families prepare their homes by cleaning and decorating. Rangoli, beautiful decorations made from very fine sand or colored powder, will often be made. Diwali itself may be a fusion of harvest festivals and some celebrants believe it represents the triumph of good over evil. If you found some neighbors put their Holiday lights up a bit before November 14, they could be celebrating this festival of renewal and light.

Hanukkah is also a festival of light. This year it is celebrated starting at sundown December 10 and runs through December 18. Celebrated by friends of the Jewish faith, the word Hanukkah means “to dedicate” and was originally held to celebrate when Maccabean Jews regained control of Jerusalem and the Second Temple from the Greeks, when Antiochus IV had invaded Judea and desecrated the Temple. After the Maccabees regained the Temple, it was rededicated and the lighting

of the Menorah symbolizes the miracle of Hanukkah when there was only enough consecrated oil to burn for one day, yet the oil lasted for eight days. A menorah has spaces for 9 candles – one for each night of Hanukkah and a shamash, or “attendant” candle. Each evening, a candle is lit for the day and the shamash is there to add to the beauty of the light. Whether the shamash is lit before the daily candle or after depends upon the practice of the family. The lighting of the candles is to illuminate the house so that passersby remember the miracle of the oil, rather than to create light within the home. Families eat fried foods like latkes to remind them of the miracle of the oil, as well.

Christmas is a holiday celebrated by many in the Christian community. It commemorates the birth of Jesus, whom the Christians consider to be the son of God. While the exact date of Jesus’ birth is not known, most Christians celebrate this occasion on December 25, which happens to coincide with Solstice in the Gregorian calendar. Eastern Christian Churches use the same date in the Julian calendar, corresponding to January 7 in the Gregorian. Classic figures who bring gifts include Santa Claus, whose appearance is generally a hefty older gentleman with a full white beard and a red suit. Also featured are Saint Nicholas, who was actually a Saint, Father Christmas, another apocryphal figure and Krampus who has something special for those who misbehave.

The combination of sacred and secular marks the Holiday, whose decorations often appear on the heels of Halloween. Secular figures include Santa, Rudolph (the Red-nosed Reindeer), Frosty the Snowman, Heat Miser and Cold Miser and more. Boxing Day, the day after Christmas, may be related to the placement of special collection boxes for alms placed in the narthex (lobby area) of Christian churches for St. Stephen’s Day which is December 26. You get special bonus points if you are humming “Good King Wenceslas” right now!
(continued on page 16)



Winter Holidays Around the World, Toastmasters Style *(continued from page 15)*

Kwanzaa is a more recent addition to Winter holidays, created by in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga. The celebration is based on harvest festival traditions from parts of West and Southeast Africa. The celebration was created to bring African Americans together as a community and celebrate their heritage. Dr. Karenga believed that a cultural revolution has the power to provide purpose, identity and direction and the Holiday's name comes from the Swahili, "matunda ya kwanza" – the first fruits of the harvest or first fruits. This celebration of family and tradition has a Kinara, a candle holder that has seven places – one for each tenet of Kwanzaa, also known as Nguzo Saba or the seven principles of African Heritage. These principles include Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics – build business that support the community), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity) and Imani (faith).

There is a Mkeka, a mat on which the celebratory symbols are placed, the Kinara, Mishumaa Saba (the seven candles), mazao (crops), Mahindi (corn), a Kikombe cha Umoja (unity cup) used for giving shukrani (thanks) to African ancestors as well as Zawadi (gifts).

Other items of meaning to those celebrating may be included such as African books or artwork. One ear of corn (vibunzi) is laid on the Mkeka celebrating each child in the family. If no children are in the family, 2 ears of corn are included to represent the concept that each person is responsible for the children in the community. In 1997, a special US Post Office stamp was issued, and President Bill Clinton made the first presidential declaration of the Holiday.

However you celebrate and with whom, be sure to be safe and healthy as you hold family and beloved friends close. Use your vast Toastmasters power to give people the flavor of the season and the love in your heart. Happy Holidays and Welcome 2021!

About the Author: *Sherri Rase, DTM, has been a Toastmaster since 2010. She began her road to DTM when she was in 8th grade, taking second in the Sunrise Middle School Spelling Bee and where she did her first Table Topics speech in Ms. Goga's English class. Since then, she has done her best to remember there are two ears, one mouth and how important it is to use them in that proportion. Sherri is a Charter Member of What Exit? Toastmasters and Northern Stars Advanced Toastmasters and serves as a Social Media Strategist and Newsletter contributor for District 83.*

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Congratulations to District 83's newest DTM

Dori Zarr, DTM 9/28/20



CLUB NEWS

SOMERVILLE TOASTMASTERS CELEBRATES ITS 55TH

By Sarah White, VPPR

Somerville Toastmasters Welcomes Somerset County Freeholder Brian Gallagher!

Just like it has done twice a month for years, the Somerville Toastmasters Club met on a recent Tuesday evening to celebrate its the 55th Anniversary.



September 1st, 2020, Our first Virtual Club Photo

Meeting virtually since mid-March, on the first Tuesday in September, Somerville Toastmasters held its club meeting. But this meeting was a very special occasion. With over 30 club members and guests in attendance, our club celebrated its Charter Day Anniversary. Somerville Toastmasters was chartered on September 1, 1965, 55 years ago.

To mark this significant milestone, Brian Gallagher, Somerset County Freeholder, was the keynote speaker. Including Somerville, most of the club's members reside in communities across the County that Brian represents.



Brian Gallagher presenting a citation to Somerville Toastmasters on its 55th Anniversary.

(continued on page 18)



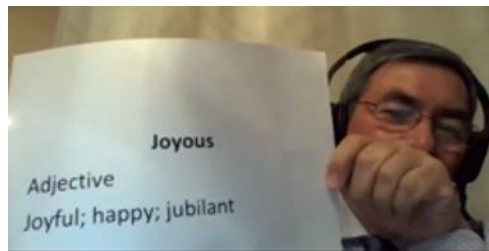
SOMERVILLE TOASTMASTERS CELEBRATES ITS 55TH *(continued from page 17)*

Uniquely, prior to his election as Freeholder, Brian served as Somerville's mayor for 13 years. Brian stressed the importance of clear communications with constituents and the ability to listen effectively, hallmarks of the Toastmasters program. He also gave his perspective on how to answer unexpected questions. Sounds a lot like Table Topics! Brian concluded by presenting the club with a citation from the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Leadership from District 83 was well represented by William Market, DTM, District Director, Michelle Tropper, DTM, Program Quality Director, Kristen Oliveri, DTM, Club Growth Director, and Hari Subramanian, EC1, Area 32 Director. On behalf of Toastmasters International, William presented a Club Anniversary Certificate jointly signed by Deepak Menon, DTM, International President, and Daniel Rex, Chief Executive Officer.

A community club, Somerville Toastmasters has a rich base of diverse members. That was reflected in the evening's agenda. Kathy Schurzky, CTM, member since 1999, gave an inspirational invocation recalling the early years of the club. Speeches were well balanced with Sarah White delivering her Ice Breaker; Noah Yamada, PM2, Janice Buffalow, DTM and Alok Agarwal, PM2 all continued making progress in their respective Pathways journeys.

"It's been a transformational period for everyone," said David White, Sergeant at Arms. "That's especially true for Toastmasters, which has traditionally relied so much on face-to-face contact."



Pictured here is Club President Rich Zarate, DTM on our Club's 55th Anniversary serving as Grammarian.



Alok Agarwal, PM2, Vice President of Membership, demonstrating a standing "in-person" view.

To properly present ourselves in virtual meetings, members adjust to deliver speeches via Zoom. Above, Alok Agarwal incorporates a large enough camera view to show hand gestures and the ability to professionally deliver his speech.

Club President Rich Zarate, DTM concluded our Charter Day meeting by inviting everyone back in 45 years to celebrate Somerville Toastmasters 100th Anniversary!



Old Bridge Toastmasters Celebrates 10 Years

By Rebecca J. Marzec-Young, DTM and Anna Orzel, VPPR

Old Bridge Toastmasters Club #1401391 celebrated our 10th anniversary on June 24, 2020. While the club did not meet in person due to the pandemic, we met on Zoom. We had a meeting in two parts—a regular club meeting and a celebration of our ten years together.

Rebecca Marzec-Young, DTM, presented the club with a path completion for Visionary Communication with her Reflect On Your Path speech. Tom Somers, DTM, PDG presented a short history of Old Bridge Toastmasters and told us how the club started. He was inspired to start the club while out running along Bordentown Road and seeing the “Welcome to Old Bridge” sign. We had an enjoyable Table Topics session, with a Toastmasters theme. After two fantastic evaluations, we celebrated the anniversary portion.

A number of former members were in attendance, and they told us more about the history of the club. We also honored Tom Somers, who has been a member of the club since before it started. Ken Ward, (IP1) the club President, presented Tom with an engraved award from Toastmasters International.

We ended the evening by inducting the new officers for the 2020-2021 Toastmasters year. The new President, Kim Smith (CC), will be the first woman President of Old Bridge Toastmasters.

Immediate Past District Director Lynda Starr, DTM, District Director Willie Markert, DTM, and Club Growth Director Kristen Oliveri, DTM, joined us, as did PDG Pamela Winter and PDG (46) Neerja Purang, DTM.

Pictured here are Tom Somers, the Best Speaker for the evening. Pamela Winter won Best Evaluator and tied for Best Table Topics with former member Marlene Pederson.



Old Bridge Toastmasters has been President’s Distinguished every year since its founding. Here’s to another ten successful years!



Pictured above is the award shipped to Tom’s house after the meeting.

On the left is a screenshot of the meeting attendees.



MEMBER CELEBRATIONS Member Anniversaries – Fourth Quarter 2020

Date Joined	Last Name	First Name
35 YEARS		
10/1/1985	Shuler	Joseph
20 YEARS		
10/1/2000	Morrison	Marie
15 YEARS		
09/1/2005	Corbeski	Maureen
09/1/2005	Velante	Jason
10/1/2005	Engeman	John
10/1/2005	Grove	Kelly
12/1/2005	Mitrano	Patricia
10 YEARS		
09/1/2010	Brown	Sharon
09/1/2010	Rase	Sherri
10/1/2010	Boswell	William
10/1/2010	Crane	Judith
10/1/2010	Crum	Anita
10/1/2010	Khan	Aslam
10/1/2010	McCabe	Bob
10/1/2010	Paul	Sumanjit
10/1/2010	Shen	Bernard
10/1/2010	Severinean	Liz
10/1/2010	Sun	John
10/1/2010	Thomas	Jobin
11/1/2010	Chong	Donald
11/1/2010	Gilman	Suzanne
11/1/2010	Romanet	Carmen

5 YEARS		
	Last Name	First Name
9/1/15	Ding	Lu
9/1/15	Bloshuk	Angela
9/1/15	O'Connor	Kate
9/1/15	Payonk	Nicole
9/1/15	Vuono	Elaine
9/1/15	Edwards	Michael
10/1/15	Mainiero	Cassandra
10/1/15	Alexandre	Dieuafort
10/1/15	Brown	Nichele
10/1/15	Mishra	Arvind
10/1/15	ANNA	RAVI
10/1/15	Pat	Vihang
10/1/15	Brafman	Mendel
10/1/15	Portfolio	Jo-Rose
10/1/15	Virani	Adnan
10/1/15	Deshmukh	Tanuja
10/1/15	Crooks	Virginia
10/1/15	Tamayo	Isabel
10/1/15	Corsino	Susana
10/1/15	Gopal	Magna
10/1/15	Dsouza	Nandita
10/1/15	Kazmi	Kaloom
10/1/15	Mathew	Deepa
10/1/15	Gold	Ronald
11/1/15	Mitchell	Andre
11/1/15	Ratnasabapathy	Sivasankari
11/1/15	Goldberger	Mindy
11/1/15	Bonanno	Louis
11/1/15	Sundaravardam	Devarajan
11/1/15	Nagle	Megan
11/1/15	Goncalves	Catherine
11/1/15	Fuellemann	Angelika
11/1/15	Li	Jack
11/1/15	Brixius	Gerlinde
12/1/15	McKay	Regina
12/1/15	Fapohunda	Ayotunde
12/1/15	Pittalavenkata	Srikanth
12/1/15	Bartkus	Egidijus
12/1/15	Valente	Elsa



2021 Dates To Remember

11/1/20-2/28/21	Club Officer Training 2 nd round
1/20/2021	Down East Meets Jersey Shore Networking Event with District 83 and District 45
February	Club-level International Speech and Speech Evaluation Contests
2/13/2021	Winter Celebration
3/1/21-3/31/21	Clubs collect and submit member dues for DCP credit (deadline: 3/31/2021)
March	Area-level International Speech and Speech Evaluation Contests
April	Division-level International Speech and Speech Evaluation Contests
April 30-May 2	District 83 Virtual Spring Conference and District Contests



Contributors to this edition

William Markert
Michelle Tropper
Kristen Oliveri
Su Brooks
Janette Markert
Lynda Starr
Sherri Rase
Angela Chute
Rebecca J. Marzec-Young
Anna Orzel
Sarah White

Photo Credits

Pg 1 William Markert
Pg 3 Michelle Tropper
Pg 5 Kristen Oliveri
Pg 8 Su Brooks and Angela Chute
Pg 9 Su Brooks
Pg 11 Janette Markert
Pg 13 Lynda Starr
Pg 14 Pixabay photo
Pg 15 Sherri Rase
Pg 17-18 Sarah White (all photos)
Pg 19 Ken Ward (appreciation award)
Pg 19. Anna Orzel (winners photo)
Pg 19. Rebecca Marzec-Young
(screenshot of all attendees)



Your timely articles and club news are welcome!

**New column coming in 2021: Answer the 'quarterly question.'
See box on page 6 for more details.**

Send your newsletter submissions to:

Melissa Brown, ACG, ALB
melissa@coachreadycontent.com



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Submissions for the March 2021 issue are due **February 1st**

All submissions should include:

- author's name, photo (if desired), and achievement designation (ACB, Path.1, etc.)
- achievement designations of all members mentioned in the article.
- photos with captions and accreditation information.

District 83

TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL