



The Voice

District 83 News & Events

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WORDS FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

The Price of Leadership

By William Markert, DTM – District 83 Director

"Be the Leader" is my theme for the year. I chose that theme because I wanted to encourage each of you to develop your leadership skills. Some of you volunteered for leadership roles; you are all in with your commitment. A few of you were probably drafted and still others just fell into leadership positions. There are a number of you who are concentrating on your communication skills and not focusing on leadership at this time. I promise you that there will come a time when you want to work on those skills.



Why Be A Leader?

To all of you serving in a leadership role or aspiring to be leaders, my question to you is why do you want to be a leader? Is it a necessary step for promotion at work? Will it make you more visible to your employer? Perhaps leadership enables you to control workflow processes to your preferred way of operating. Maybe you look forward to the perks associated with leadership. I can assure you that there are better reasons for accepting leadership.

My Leadership Journey

I must admit that when I started my leadership journey in the United States Air Force, I was motivated for personal reasons. My supervisors stressed the importance of professional military education, obtaining a graduate degree and command to advance through the ranks. I took their advice and accepted these challenges for personal gain. As the years passed, I realized that there were greater goals to be achieved. When I assumed command of the weather station at Fort Rucker, Alabama, I led a 23-person team of weather forecasters

and observers. I needed that team to work as a cohesive unit. Why was this important? This leadership experience was not just about me; it was about the risk of flight safety for helicopter student pilots resulting from inaccurate forecasts of adverse weather. I decided that I needed to improve my interpersonal skills.

Leadership gives us an opportunity to change business, communities, the nation and the world for the better. On the job, it may result in process improvement, cost savings, improved workforce satisfaction, etc. In the community it may result in social justice or taking care of the under-represented members in our communities.



Recognize reality, set the example, be consistent.

That leadership takes work and commitment is a certainty. In his book, “Leadership,” John Maxwell (an internationally recognized leadership expert) implies that people pay a significant price to be good leaders. The price involves recognizing reality, setting the example and the importance of consistency. Let me explain.

All leaders must recognize the reality of their situations and that reality is that everything worth doing requires a great deal of effort. Failure will be a part of that journey and you shouldn’t be afraid of it. Colin Powell, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of State said, “There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work and learning from failure.” What you are not willing to do, will deprive you of success more than what you can’t do. This concept was echoed by Jim Rohn, a self-made millionaire before the age of 31 who said, “Successful people do what unsuccessful people are unwilling to do. Don’t wish it were easier, wish that you were better.” Make no mistake, leadership is an uphill battle all the way.

Leading by example.

Great leaders must also set the example. All leaders see things before other members of the team. Leaders understand the bigger picture. What sets truly great leaders apart from other leaders is the fact that they initiate action before others. They must move out in front of others and blaze the trail, yet they must stay in sight of the team, so the team is able to follow.

Great leadership demands consistency.

Good leaders also need to be consistent. Bill Bradley, a basketball star and later US senator, understood the importance of consistency, and for that reason, he decided that there would be no off-season in his basketball career. Consistency provides security for your team members because your words, intentions and actions will all be aligned. Consistency helps establish your reputation. It sets you above the crowd and that is important for the people you lead to see. Consistency promotes your leadership skills. By staying involved, you will promote higher morale for your team. It will also keep you involved in whatever goal you are pursuing. Consistency will multiply your leadership skills just like compound interest multiplies your money.

The journey of leadership.

Leadership is not easy. The journey is a long, never-ending uphill climb. The reality is that you will do many unamazing things like studying, showing up, working hard and failing. Know that all of this is necessary to reach your full leadership potential. I encourage you to think about leadership as a challenge to bring out the very best you have to offer to improve the quality of life for all. Good luck!

“The true price of leadership is the willingness to place the needs of others above your own . Great leaders truly care about those they are privileged to lead and understand that the true cost of the leadership privilege comes at the expense of self-interest.”

Simon Sinek, American author and thought leader.



District Program Quality Director's Message Healthy Competition

By Michelle Tropper, DTM

It's Spring Contest time in District 83! That means that clubs have started to hold their International Speech and Evaluation contests in January and February. Area contests are being scheduled for March, and Division contests will be held in April. Our District Conference, April 29-May 2, will feature **all 4 of our District Level contests** (Table Topics, Evaluation, Humorous and International

Speech)!

Each summer, our District Trio (District Director, Program Quality Director and Club Growth Director) take stock of our District resources and plan for the coming year and events by creating a District Success Plan at the beginning of the new team's term. We're kickstarting the planning process for the 2021-22 Toastmasters year by seeking input from all members of District 83 on the topic of speech contest preferences. Please take a few minutes to provide our District leadership team with feedback on your interests and preferences regarding **Toastmasters speech contests**, by [responding to our member poll here](#).

Your poll responses and feedback will be shared with the incoming team to help decide how many and which contests to hold as a District for the 2021-22 Toastmasters year. It will also help the District understand why members/clubs are not always participating in contests. While an official vote is **not required** for the District to decide which of the speech contests to host as a District (Table Topics, Evaluation, Tall Tales, Humorous), we believe it's important to get input from all our members regarding how you'd like to proceed with contests in 2021-22. Please share the survey link with your club members and encourage them to respond. We'll also be posting this information on the District website, on our social media sites (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), and will share via our District emailing platform, Constant Contact. The survey will be open for responses through **3/20/2021**. We'll share the results of the survey at the District Executive Council Meeting on 3/29/2021.

Did you know that the only contest Toastmasters International (TI) requires for Districts to host annually is the International Speech Contest? Why? This is the only Toastmasters contest that continues to the international level. All other contests end at the District Level. However, each one gives our members the opportunity to practice their speech competition skills and provides them with bragging rights for winning one of the other contests.

In 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, TI directed Districts to confer with their District Executive Councils (DEC) and determine whether to hold the International Speech Contest online. Districts that held contests pivoted and figured out how to hold online contests, and for the first time in Toastmasters history, the World Championship of Public Speaking was held virtually. For the 2020-21 Toastmasters year, TI mandated that all club and district-sponsored (Area, Division and District) contests must be held virtually as well.

Contest Resources & Training on tm83.org!

While our DEC voted not to hold a virtual District contest in 2020, we ramped up our efforts to host online contests in the Fall of 2020. The District provided a number of trainings and posted numerous resources on the [District website](#) about hosting online contests. Click here to access a recording of the [contest officials training](#) along with general contest information to help clubs, Areas, and Divisions prepare for these contests



These resources are still relevant as we plan for the spring 2021 contest season – [click here to access virtual contest resources](#) via District 83's website. We're excited about the upcoming contests. We encourage all of you to work with your clubs to host contests and send contestants to our Area contests. Each World Champion of Public Speaking starts out by winning their club's International Speech competition or by being appointed by their club to compete in their Area contest. When a club decides not to conduct a contest, and/or does not to appoint a member to participate in its Area contest, the club may not be allowing its members a chance to fulfill their dream to become the World Champion of Public Speaking.

Sometimes clubs just don't have enough members to pull off a contest on their own. When that happens, consider some of the following strategies that have worked well for others:

1. Team up with another club to conduct a "combined club contest". This works similarly to the combined Area contests. Each set of contestants only compete against their own club members. The two clubs share the contest chair, chief judge, judges, ballot counters, timers and sargeant-at-arms.
2. Bring in judges, timers and ballot counters from outside the club to assist when you conduct your own contest, but don't have enough helpers from within the club.

Area and Division Directors can assist clubs in finding helpers to cover contest official roles.

What does it take to compete in a speech contest?

Do you know the eligibility criteria to be a contestant or judge for the International Speech and Evaluation contests? If you're not familiar with the contest rulebook, [download and read the current rules from toastmasters.org for all the details here](#).

One of my favorite Toastmasters activities are our contests. I've participated in contests, either as a contestant, helper or official during my 23 years as a Toastmaster.

Participating in contests challenges us in a different way than we're used to in regular meetings. We also get to meet and compete with folks from other clubs as we progress through the different levels of competition. We learn different techniques and styles, and by competing against "the best" in our District, it helps us grow and develop more in mastering our public speaking and communication skills. In order for contests to be successful, we need to have contestants who are willing to take their skills to the next level and compete against other members. Mike Carr, the 2020 World Champion of Public Speaking's message was that ***"the victory is not in the result, the victory is in the try."*** What a powerful message! It's not about how you place in the competition that makes you a winner, **but the fact that you tried!**

As an Area Director and Division Director, I would often remark at speech contests, **"A contest is not a contest without contestants!"** This is because the most exciting contests to compete in and officiate at are those that have **multiple contestants. When we have more than one contestant in a contest, they push each other to deliver their best performance.**

Helpers and Audiences Make Contests Possible!

By the time this newsletter and article show up in your inbox, we will be into the Area contest level of competition in our District. Please support your fellow Toastmasters by assisting with contests whenever possible. If you're not a contestant, help out as a contest official, or by being an audience member. Follow the guidance and information about participation shared by the contest chair and chief judge to ensure the contests run smoothly.



Register to attend our virtual Annual Conference and support fellow members as they compete in the following District Contests:

- District Table Topics Contest – Thursday, April 29th
- District Evaluation Contest – Friday, April 30th
- District Humorous Speech Contest – Saturday, May 1st
- District International Speech Contest – Saturday, May 1st

Make your opinion count and matter – remember to [take our poll](#) to weigh-in on which and how many contests the District should conduct in 2021-22!

Did you know?

District 83 has the following incentives for the 2020-21 Toastmasters year to encourage member and club participation in contests.

Category	Deadline	Requirement	Award
Club Contest	10/31/2020 & 3/31/2020	Hold a club contest, send agenda and 3 photos of contest to Program Quality Director	1 st Place trophy for club use
Contest Participation	11/15/2020 & 4/15/2021	Send 1 Club member to participate in an Area level Contest (limited to first 100 clubs per cycle)	\$10 TI Gift Certificate for each contest

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

Let's Get Social

By Kristen Oliveri, DTM

The United States has one of the highest social network penetration rates in the world. In 2019, over 246 million Americans were using social networks to post pictures, like and comment on content by others, send private messages or find events and groups with common interests. With over 70% of the US population holding a social media account, these platforms and services have become one of the most popular online activities on the past decades. On top of that, many counties and cities have called upon residents to stay at home during the global coronavirus pandemic and subsequently, internet users turn to digital video and video-on-demand platforms to keep them entertained. (J. Clement, 5/19/20, "Social media usage in the United States – Statistics & Facts", www.statista.com)

With so many users, social media is an excellent way for Toastmasters clubs to extend their reach and market themselves to users, AKA, potential new members. Following are some of the more popular and effective platforms used by Toastmasters clubs, divisions and districts around the world, and some tips and tricks for the effective use of social media:

Facebook



Connect with friends, family and others. Share photos and videos, posts about club happenings such as achievements and anniversaries, post events for club meetings.

Twitter



Live commentary, limited to 240 characters, shared with followers. Share similar content as Facebook, either as a tweet (permanent post) or fleet (tweet that disappears after 24 hours)

LinkedIn



Manage your professional identity. Build and engage with a network of professionals. Access knowledge, insights and opportunities.

Instagram



A simple, fun & creative way to share photos, videos & messages with friends and other followers.

YouTube



Post videos to share with friends, family, and the world. Can include club meetings, member testimonials, special events, and more!

Meetup



Helps people find others who share their interest or cause. Create a group for your club to meet people near you who share your interests.

SOCIAL MEDIA DO'S AND DON'TS

Do

- Complete and update profiles
- Share thoughtfully
- Post regularly
- Prioritize your networks
- Match the right content to the right network
- Interact with your audience
- Help more than you sell
- Avoid poor grammar and spelling
- Be visual – post pictures, videos

Don't

- Be a spammer
- WRITE IN ALL CAPS
- #Abuse #Hashtags
- Share the same message over and over again
- Share without researching first
- Obsess on the numbers
- Veer off brand
- Ignore questions, comments and messages from followers



Did you know...

District 83 is offering a Club Growth incentive for clubs that use Meetup to promote its meetings to the community and attract new members. The details of the incentive are posted on the District 83 website and are summarized here: The club must submit a marketing plan outlining how they will use the app for marketing their club and growing their membership to the Club Growth Director for initial reimbursement.

Continued reimbursement will be dependent on achievement of goals outlined in the marketing plan and will be assessed after completion of a progress report to be reviewed by the Club Growth Director.

Dates: July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021
Eligibility: Open community or corporate clubs with fewer than 20 members
Amount: Up to half of the cost (\$49.47) will be reimbursed every 6 months, upon approval by the Club Growth Director, until a total membership of 25 has been achieved
Contact: Club Growth Director Kristen Oliveri

See the district website “Club Growth Meetup Incentive” under “Clubs” for more information.

*** NEW CLUB INCENTIVE EXTENSION ***

Great news: Any new clubs that organize through **June 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 for clubs organizing through March or October 2021 for clubs organizing April through June) by June 30, 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
February	\$45 USD	\$15.00 USD	\$60.00 USD
March	\$45 USD	\$7.50 USD	\$52.50 USD
April	\$45 USD	\$45.00 USD	\$90.00 USD
May	\$45 USD	\$37.50 USD	\$82.50 USD
June	\$45 USD	\$30.00 USD	\$75.00 USD

For any questions on the Meetup incentive, starting a new club or the new club incentive, please reach out 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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Quarterly Question Column

Member 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 June 2021 issue:

Have you visited another club anywhere in the world since meetings are being held virtually? Write about your experience. Or has your club had members visit you from around the globe? Tell us what it was like to host a global visitor in your club's virtual meeting.

Question from the December issue of The Voice:

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.

Silver Linings by Su Brooks, DTM

Would you believe there are several positive silver linings I have gained by continuing my Toastmasters journey virtually?

I have been inspired to step out of my comfort zone with many of the Pathways projects that I previously would not have considered had we not met virtually, including Managing Online Meetings.

I have gained confidence in leading meetings on a virtual platform, especially getting members organized to begin

on time. My skills have carried over to my work environment when I had to fill in for my manager to lead our daily group meetings. He later joined the call and saw how I was doing. After that, he asked me to facilitate the meetings every day!

Su Brooks, DTM, has been a Toastmaster since 2000. She is currently a member of Frontline Speakers, Talk of Monmouth and What Exit? She has completed four paths in the TM education program as of January 2021.



District 83 Newest DTMs

Congratulations to District 83's Newest Distinguished Toastmasters-1st Quarter 2021

Kyle R. Krom, Frontline Speakers, Division D, Area 42
Oomadai Ramcharitar, New Heights Toastmasters,
Division G, Area 72

District Events

District Contest Dates

Please visit the District website at tm83.org to register and obtain specific times for each contest:

AREA Contests:

3/10 Areas 81 & 83
3/11 Areas 92 & 94
3/13 Areas 11, 12, 13 & 14
3/15 Areas 22 & 23
3/18 Areas 82 & 84
3/19 Areas 31, 32 & 33
3/20 Areas 43, 44, 45, 71, 72, 73 & 74
3/22 Areas 21 & 24
3/23 Areas 41 & 42
3/24 Areas 61 & 63
3/26 Areas 62 & 64
3/30 Areas 53 & 54
3/31 Areas 34 & 35
4/3 Areas 51, 52 & 55

DIVISION Contests

4/9 - A
4/10 -D * (awaiting date confirmation from Division Director)
4/12 - B
4/14 - H
4/16 - F
4/17 - G
4/19 - C
4/20 - E
4/22 - I

DISTRICT Contests:

4/29 - Table Topics
4/30 - Evaluation
5/1 - Humorous and International Speech



District Virtual Open House Events

District 83 will be holding two virtual open houses for individuals interested in joining or starting a club. If you have friends, family or colleagues who are not currently a member of Toastmasters and would be interested in learning more about our great organization, please forward them the registration link!

[Register for Open House #1 March 23, 2021 @ 7 pm](#)

[Register for Open House #2 March 26, 2021 @ Noon](#)



District Conference April 29-May 2, 2021—Save the Date!





Message from District 83 Director- William Markert, DTM

Attention District Council Members

- Members of the District Council include club Presidents and VPEs, Area Directors, Division Directors, members of the District Executive Team (District Director, Program Quality Director, Club Growth Director, Administrative Manager, Finance Manager, Public Relations Manager and the Immediate Past District Director).
- The business meeting at our annual conference will be held on Saturday morning, **May 1, 2021 at 9:00 am**. During this virtual meeting, we will be electing new officers for the 2021 – 2022 Toastmasters year and approving the realignment of clubs in District 83. ***Per Toastmasters International, no proxies are permitted when meetings are conducted virtually.*** All members of the District Council are entitled to one vote at the meeting. If an officer is a club VPE and President from one or two clubs, that person can have up to two votes. Register for the business meeting by registering for the Annual Conference on the District website, tm83.org. Select business meeting as one of the events you plan to attend.
- An RSVP email will be sent to all members of the District Council from the District. Recipients must reply with “YES” to the RSVP email. Responses must be received by **midnight on April 30, 2021**, to allow time for the credentials committee to verify eligibility to vote. **If no response is received or a response is received after midnight on April 30, 2021, you will not be allowed to vote.**
- District executive team members may carry up to three votes and voting weight will be predetermined based on eligibility.
- Please check your email address on record with Toastmasters International. If it needs to be updated, please do so before registering for the conference. This is important because the credentials committee will verify eligibility based on email address on file with Toastmasters International. **If you are using a different address, the committee will not be able to verify your eligibility and you will not be allowed to vote.**

"There's no such thing as a vote
that doesn't matter."
Barack Obama, 44th U.S. President



Finish Strong

By Su Brooks, DTM 2



Many clubs place a high value on the Distinguished Club Program and the importance of finishing the Toastmasters year strong. How can clubs and members complete these goals by the end of June 2021?

These could include your goals, your club goals, or both. As Past District Director Lynda Starr, DTM says, “There are many paths to success.”

There are numerous Pathways projects members can choose to plan and facilitate either on their own or working with teams. If this includes HPL projects, members can begin now and still have a few months to complete them.

Get started

Not sure what to do or how to get started? You are not alone. Talk to your mentor or a club officer. Start to work with a mentor. Consider expanding your network by working with more than one mentor for different aspects of your growth. For example, you might have one mentor in your home club who you count upon for leadership advice. Another mentor might have experience delivering contest speeches and help you polish those skills. Your new mentor might have insight in best practices in Zoom or another online platform environment.

Membership

Does your club want to add more new members? Consider hosting a **Membership Open House**. You and your club can align it with a Toastmasters International membership drive.

Talk Up Toastmasters takes place February 1 – March 31 and the **Beat the Clock** program takes place May 1 – June 30. **Find out more here:**

<https://www.toastmasters.org/leadership-central/club-officer-tools/membership-building/membership-building-programs-for-clubs>

Speakouts/Speech-a-thons

Does your club provide additional speaking opportunities for members? Consider a speakout every so often as a special event. Members give speeches and receive evaluations. Other meeting roles such as Ah Counter, Grammarian, Invocation, Humorist, Listener, and Table Topics are omitted to allow the maximum number of speeches per event.

These can take place instead of a regularly scheduled meeting, at a different time or day, or even on a fifth week of the month. For example, one of my clubs meets on Saturdays. In January there were five Saturdays, enabling us to hold a speakout at What Exit?

Something new: different days and times

I spoke with Kathy Boyler and Peggy Seymour, DTM of Frontline Speakers, a corporate club. The club meets for a one-hour workshop once a month. Kathy and Peggy realized that not everyone can attend the meeting from Noon–1:00 pm on the third Friday of the month because of work meetings.

The officers took a poll of its members and decided to offer an additional workshop on the first Thursday of the month in the evening beginning at 5:30 pm. The first time it was offered in December 2020, only three people attended, and they did Table Topics. Kathy said, “I’m not giving up. The additional meeting needs to be promoted better. Finally, I want to complete my Level 1 in Pathways.”

She continued, “Another idea is to offer Pathways ‘Lunch and Learns’ for an hour or even a half hour in the evening instead of lunchtime. Some members have not fully embraced Pathways yet.”

Make it relevant

When you compare job skills and Toastmasters skills, people in the corporate environment listen up. As they progress in Pathways, employees will learn to become better public speakers, organize their presentations and develop leadership skills.



Peggy added, “Delegate and learn to let go. Projects (at work and in Pathways) do not always go well. Report on it. What went wrong?”

For more information and inspiration

There are excellent resources in the Leader Letter:

<https://www.toastmasters.org/leadership-central/the-leader-letter> or the Toastmaster magazine:

<https://www.toastmasters.org/magazine> to help you and your club finish strong and reach your goals by June 30.

Good luck!

About the Author:

Su Brooks became a Toastmaster in 2000, has earned two DTM awards in the traditional education program and is working on her Pathways DTM. In January 2021, she completed her fourth path. She currently serves as VPE at Talk of Monmouth and Secretary at What Exit? 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.

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“It’s not the first, but the last step in the race...the last shot in the basket, the last volley in tennis, the last swing of the bat that makes the lasting difference...for that is where the game is won and that is why you must always finish strong.” —

Gary Ryan Blair, aka The Goals Guy

“Small steps add up to complete big journeys.”

Matshona Dhliwayo, Canadian-based philosopher, entrepreneur, and author



The International Speech Contest and Contests During Pandemic Times

By Janette Markert, DTM



It's contest time again in District 83! One of the big skills tests for Toastmasters around the world is the speech contest. It challenges every contestant to test what they have learned at all the club meetings they've attended. Furthermore, a highlight of each

Toastmaster year is the International Speech Contest. It's the BIG ONE. Every finalist starts off at a club, progresses to the Area, then Division and District contest. If you win at this level, from here there is the Regional Quarterfinals, the Semifinals and finally the World Champion of Public Speaking held at the Toastmasters International Convention usually held each August. Whew!

Each contestant must meet **rigorous qualifications**. They need to maintain their club membership in good standing together with their club that also must maintain its good standing and meet an educational standard that a member must have completed at least six speech projects in the *Competent Communication* manual or earned certificates of completion in Levels 1 and 2 of any path in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience prior to the club contest. Additionally, some members are ineligible for competing if they hold or are campaigning for district or TI offices, along with anyone involved with presenting at conferences, chairing, judging or other involvement in any of the contests at any level outside the club. Each contestant certifies this prior to the contest. Finally, the contestant must also certify that their speech material is original while allowing for up to 25% of cited material from another's content. You can check the current year's Speech Contest Rulebook for complete rules (publication #1171).

Here's a **little history** for you. Toastmasters International was incorporated in 1932. According to Wikipedia,

Toastmasters speech contests began in 1938 but I could not verify that through Toastmasters International. Currently, each year more than 30,000 Toastmasters compete across 16,200 clubs in 145 countries, making it the world's largest speech contest!

The **pandemic has brought several changes** to speech contests to add still other challenging elements. Contests are no longer held as in-person events. This considerably changes the dynamic of contests, particularly between the speaker and the audience. As contests are now held on the Zoom platform, for entries beyond the district level all contestants must pre-record their speeches for submission to a panel of judges. This removes the audience feedback that many advanced speakers thrive on. At the District 83 contests, the audience will also be taken out of the equation because we will be using the Zoom webinar platform. This follows the recommended guidelines from Toastmasters International.

You might ask why is this recommended by Toastmasters International? The answer lies with the Zoom platform and the differing types of devices members and contestants use to participate in contests. With possibly hundreds of Zoom participants there was concern about keeping a level playing field between the contestants who may be accessing with devices having less than robust capability or slower internet connectivity. When audience members keep their cameras off, bandwidth is conserved and there is less chance of glitches, freezing up or cutting out.

In other words, contestants who might not be able to afford Giga-speed internet or the most up to date computer with the newest video and audio cards are not disadvantaged unfairly and can still compete. This is



technical but it can really affect a speaker's perceived performance before the judges. I suppose it would be most fair to have everyone compete using the same district device, over the identical internet connection, but this is near to impossible due to the logistics presented by the pandemic.

If your club held contests during the first season of competition and you were involved, you know that the preparation is different for doing it in the Zoom environment than in the in-person world we knew. There's no more worry or budget necessary for providing food at your event but this got replaced by technical issues.

If you were a contest chair or chief judge you know that your best friend becomes the **contest Zoom Master**. Having a good Zoom Master can determine whether your contest is a success or not. Often the Zoom Master acts as a super Sergeant-At-Arms, controlling who can enter or leave the contest and handling traffic into and out of break-out rooms. Please contact the District Program Quality Director if you need help getting Zoom Master training.

Some feel it takes longer to plan a Zoom contest than an in-person contest. Holding the contestant, judges and contest official briefings well ahead of the contest day is also highly recommended to save time at the actual contest. Holding a rehearsal of all the players a few days ahead is also a good idea.

[Toastmasters International](#) and the [District 83 website](#) have a host of helpful resources to help with online contests, as referenced in [Michelle Tropper's article on pages 3-4](#) of this newsletter issue. Reach out to district leaders and other clubs for additional help. Although online contests may seem daunting at first, the end result is still rewarding and a worthwhile experience for any Toastmaster. I hope all clubs take the opportunity to take part.

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.*

Virtual Meeting and Contest Tip Zoom Updates

Submitted by Michelle Tropper, DTM, District Program Quality Director

Zoom frequently provides updates to its desktop app.

If you haven't updated your Zoom desktop or mobile app recently, you may not be taking advantage of all the updated features and functions now available for virtual events.

Here's an easy way to check for and get the updates:

- o Be sure to have the [most updated version of Zoom](#) downloaded to your device
- o [Click here](#) for instructions about how to find out if you are up to date



Fixing a Troubled Relationship

By Lynda Starr, DTM, IPDD



Those of you who have followed this series of articles have likely realized that I feel that mentoring is beneficial. While many people

have found success through their mentoring relationships both as mentors and protégés, there are other relationships that have gone sour. By pointing out the potential pitfalls, perhaps the mentoring relationship can be saved.

Problem 1: Inadequate preparation

Both the mentor and mentee need to be prepared when working together. See if your club can provide tools to help the mentor and mentee, including an initial orientation that can help the relationship. The mentee needs to share necessary information timely so that the mentor can help them effectively. The mentor must make the commitment to review materials also in a timely manner. If the mentee wants help with a contest speech, they need to give the mentor ample notice of a meeting and then come to the meeting prepared. The mentor needs to clear their brain and time to focus during the meeting.

Problem 2: Lack of regular interaction

In Toastmasters, like playing a sport, or learning to play a musical instrument, in order to improve you need to work the program and be committed to making progress. In mentoring, it means having regular communication whether via phone, text, email or in person. Neither side should miss sessions without reason and **NEVER** stand up the other person, which is very disrespectful.

Problem 3: The mentor and protégé aren't right for each other

This one is tricky because there are multiple reasons why the pairing may not be the right one. Surprisingly, the two people may be too similar, such that they become pals and do not challenge one another. While we do want the mentor and mentee to be able to share different perspectives, if they are too different it may be as if they are speaking two different languages, one more technical than the other, for example. Also, if there is a large age difference, the younger person's experiences may not mirror that of the elder. While there are no hard-and-fast rules, it is important that the two people be compatible.

Problem 4: Expectations are not clear

When beginning the relationship, the mentor and mentee need to discuss goals, rules for engagement and to make sure that both parties are on the same page. Some mentees may expect the mentor to brainstorm, review speeches, help them rehearse while others may only want help when they ask for it. Both parties need to have realistic expectations for the purpose of the relationship.

Problem 5: Lack of status checkpoints along the way.

This issue may be more under the purview of the VP education or the mentoring coordinator for the club. This person should have periodic check-ins with the pair to see if there are any issues that need to be solved, such as those discussed in this article.

Like any relationship, the mentor/protégé may face some disagreements and obstacles along the way. When problems occur, it is always best to talk them out, evaluate the situation and adjust accordingly. Before abandoning the relationship, seek help from your VP education, mentor coordinator or other trusted, neutral advisor.

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.



Get A Job

By Sherri Rase, DTM – Social Media Strategist



Are you on the hunt for your next opportunity? Me too! One of the changes the COVID Pandemic has brought is higher unemployment. How do we compete? Whether you have just begun your career or if you are a veteran of the job hunt, one qualification sets you apart from other candidates - **you are a Toastmaster!**

I can hear you now - "Whoa! Wait up a minute, Sherr - how does Toastmasters help?" The answer resides in the Rule of Three.

First and foremost, as a Toastmaster you prepare for interviews at every single meeting. Whether you have prepared a speech, are taking a role or stepping up to speak during Table Topics, you are honing your speaking skills. You are thinking on your feet to get to the point, quickly and well. Thoughts are organized, there is development and often you can return to a previous answer to loop a new thread in a discussion to answer with further qualifications. Interviewers will be impressed.

Next, your listening skills are honed to perfection! Let's return to any meeting roles that active Toastmasters take in an agenda. Are you the Word Master or Grammarian? These roles are key as even when we sometimes speak perfectly, and sometimes not so much, we recognize how to correct less elegant constructions and call out the often-brilliant turns of phrase that show how our club members' minds work. When we evaluate one another, we listen to help ourselves improve as well as helping our colleagues. Listening and providing feedback that assures

growth and demonstrates that we have listened shows excellent management skills. Often as leaders of teams, it is necessary to give less-than-good news while encouraging people to do their best to overcome obstacles. Listening is a key skill in life, as well as work.

Finally, you are a networker! If you have not yet stepped up to compete in your club contest, sign up NOW! Through the Contest Season, whether you advance yourself or support club members who do, you have the chance to meet new people from around the District whom you may not otherwise have met. Further, you may find that you have friends or contacts in common. Remember the concept of six degrees of separation. This idea that we may connect ourselves to nearly anyone in the world with six intermediaries or fewer is no surprise to Kevin Bacon fans. Personally, my motto is "Be kind to everyone in your life, they may show up again."

Remember that you have three of the most important tools in your briefcase, messenger bag, cellphone – the ability to prepare quickly and well, top notch listening skills and major networking capabilities. These will put you ahead of the pack in your job search. When you land, feel free to shop your speech about how you did it to one of my clubs! We are in this together as Toastmasters!

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.



Pathways Motivational Strategies Project Level 4--Motivating Others

What Should I Speak About?

By Joyce Markowitz, CC, ACB, ACS, MS3



Clockwise from top left, **Joyce Markowitz**, CC, ACB, ACS, MS3; **Darlene Blanco** ACB, ALB, IP5, MS3; **Rose Proscia**, CC, DL2; **Vanessa Robinson** CC, EC3

Finding a Speech Topic:

It takes time to find a speech topic because our aim is to connect with, inspire, and motivate our audiences. Here are some ideas for discovering speech topics, remembering what to say and how to best present your ideas. I am also including tips for newcomers.

Generating Speech Ideas:

Vanessa opens an interesting book to get inspired. She also looks at the objects in her home environment and thinks about her daily activities to discover a speech topic.

Rose keeps a notebook next to her bed to write down any sensational ideas. She also looks at her photo albums of people and places visited. She states, "A picture is worth 1,000 words." Rose also considers audience interest like sharing little known facts about their community.

Darlene recommends visiting the Topics Mill website:

<https://topicsmill.com/speech/toastmasters-speech-topics/>

She says, "There are so many great topics listed on this website!" Darlene also suggests asking another club member. In addition, she says, "They will usually reference a snippet she may have shared from a previous speech!"

When thinking about a presentation topic, I often start by searching the links below to find a topic I am enthusiastic about.

<https://ssutoastmasters.tripod.com/800-ideas-page.htm>

<http://www.speech-topics-help.net/toastmaster-speech-topics.html>

Remembering What to Say:

Vanessa finds it helpful to talk about topics with which she is familiar: hobbies, work, family, and major life experiences. Telling a compelling story with sincerity helps to connect with your audience.

Rose finds it helpful to use index cards containing key words as memory jolters. She memorizes the opening and closing lines.

Darlene creates an agenda highlighting two to three key points and uses keywords that will jog her memory. She creates vivid imagery to illustrate main points.

My cousin, Doreen Stern, a former Connecticut Toastmaster, recommended writing a speech outline. She also suggested drawing a little picture or writing a small note on the back of my audience illustrations. Now that we meet virtually on the Zoom platform, I can keep hidden notes taped to my computer!

Tips to Present Your Best Speeches:

- Additional tips from Doreen include starting the speech with a question and occasionally ask a question during the speech to keep the audience engaged. Asking the (Who? What? Where? When? How? and Why?) questions can add pizzazz. The body of the speech should answer these questions.
- Words paint pictures. However, I show lots of pictures anyway.
- Repetition is a powerful audience memory jogger. That is why we remember song choruses.
<https://thgmwriters.com/blog/speechwriting-tip-power-of-three/>



- Rose recommends using vocal variety to strengthen speech delivery.
- Vanessa has discovered, "The Quick and Easy Way to Effective Speaking" by Dale Carnegie to be a successful guide for crafting speeches. She declares, "I am good at creating audience involvement by asking questions and using prompts."
- Darlene encourages members to be confident when sharing their talents and true selves with others. "It makes speeches easier to remember because each speech is truly an extension of YOU!"

Awesome Tips for New Members:

- Darlene advocates trying not to memorize speeches. Toastmasters, she says "is a non-threatening environment and a fun way to build up your confidence...No one is perfect...and we are all here to continue to learn and improve our skills." She also suggested visiting the link below to Toastmasters International. It has insights to find speech ideas as well as public speaking tips. What should I talk about - Toastmasters International!
<https://www.toastmasters.org/magazine/magazine-issues/2017/nov-2017/what-should-i-talk-about>
- Vanessa suggests adding an informal flare or touch - "Add facial expressions to your speech such as eye-rolling and sprinkling humor into speeches by

sharing personal details, silly expressions, and nicknames."

- Rose suggests practicing and timing your speech in advance. She also stated that it is helpful to seek out a friendly club member to be your Toastmaster mentor. A friendly club member should be able to furnish advice.
- Doreen introduced me to the "Power of Three." She explained that every point you make in your speech needs 3 ideas to explain. Here is a link to get you started: <http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/rule-of-three-speeches-public->
- Here is a guide to writing speeches. It breaks down the 10 parts of any speech into 10 short speeches. <http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/toastmasters-speech-0-competent-communicator/>
- Visit YouTube to watch videos of Toastmasters giving speeches from each of the 11 paths.

These are our ideas for finding speech topics, remembering your lines, delivering awesome presentations and new member tips! What has worked for you? Ideas can be shared on the New Day Toastmasters website. Here is the link.

<https://statenisland.toastmastersclubs.org/>

"Speakers who talk about what life has taught them never fail to keep the attention of their listeners."

Dale Carnegie, author of 'How To Win Friends and Influence People'



Member Article Submission

Are You Listening?

By Tom Grady, MPA, DTM



*"The biggest communication problem is we do not listen to understand. We listen to reply." —Stephen R. Covey, management expert and author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.*

At Toastmasters, we listen for "filler" words such as "ah", "um", and "you know." Outside of Toastmasters, we may hear questions such as "What?" Or, perhaps, we may hear a more informal, "Huh?" We may even see the visual act of cupping one's hand over one's ear as if to ask, "Say again?"

This is evidence that your communication partner is not listening.

Toastmasters is thought by many as a public speaking group, which it certainly is. What many may not realize is that members of Toastmasters practice and develop the art and science of active listening, a skill that is arguably just as important as speaking.

What is active listening?

According to a Psychology Today article written by Dr. Dianne Grande Ph. D. entitled, *Active Listening Skills: Why active listening is important, and how to do it*, active listening is a way of listening that involves full attention to what is being said for the purpose of understanding the speaker.

Active listening entails listening without judgement but for the speaker's point of view. To do this, the person on the receiving end of the communication can allow the speaker to finish thoughts without interruption. Another way to listen, and gain an understanding of your communication partner, is to ask questions and repeat what you heard to ensure accuracy. Beyond repeating, one can give a short summary to ensure understanding. This tactic would be most effective when the speaker has clearly finished what (s)he has said. At this point, one may choose to share similar situations that they experienced.

What compromises active listening?

There are several indications that active listening is compromised. This includes:

- Interrupting a sentence
- Lacking eye contact
- Rushing the speaker
- Distractions (intruding thoughts, minor details, making jokes/sarcastic comments, losing focus)
- Changing the subject abruptly
- And most notable—listening to decide what your reply should be

What are the benefits of active listening?

According to a *verywellmind* article written by Arlin Cuncic entitled, *How to Practice Active Listening*, active listening can result in:

- The speaker feeling validated
- Understanding the speaker and responding with empathy (this is useful when a person is in distress)
- Understanding problems and finding solutions
- Demonstrating patience
- Meeting and getting to know people (which can result in new acquaintances, friends . . . or even a spouse)

If we don't listen actively, we may miss the main message of a person's communication and the benefits of building a connection. How do you feel when you sense someone is listening to you? Connected? Respected? Understood? How do you feel when you sense the opposite? Disconnected? Disrespected? Misunderstood?

There is a way to sharpen your active listening skills ... Toastmasters!

As a Toastmaster, a member automatically begins developing their active listening skills. We assume the role "Ah" Counter to listen attentively to the aforementioned "filler" words. There are also opportunities to develop this skill set by being a speech evaluator or by offering comments to a prepared speaker. A Toastmaster can further develop active listening skills by being a general evaluator for a meeting where (s)he observes and comments on various elements of the meeting.

Active listening is just as important as public speaking, one that would benefit a Toastmaster. One can start by keeping one habit from the aforementioned book in mind. The book is *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* and the habit is: **"Seek First to Understand, Then Be Understood."**



CLUB NEWS

MEMBER CELEBRATIONS Member Anniversaries – First Quarter 2021

Date Joined	Last Name	First Name
55 YEARS		
01/1/1966	Card	Arnold
25 YEARS		
01/1/1996	Jackson	Karen
02/1/1996	Joel	Richard
20 YEARS		
02/1/2001	Weibel	John
03/1/2001	Figueroa	John
15 Years		
02/1/2006	Schulz	Michelle
02/1/2006	Mitzen	Cynthia
02/1/2006	Dokes	Carol
03/1/2006	Pollock	Jeanmarie
03/1/2006	Epple	Betty
03/1/2006	Parmeale	Charles
10 YEARS		
01/1/2011	Jarney	Pauline
01/1/2011	Zhao	Daoli
01/1/2011	Ocasio	Oscar
01/1/2011	Sivadas	Rohit
01/1/2011	Antela	Javier
02/1/2011	Kaiven	Gerard
02/1/2011	Coniglio	Philip
02/1/2011	Coviello	Ralph
02/1/2011	Reyes	Vanessa
03/1/2011	Saud	Jose

5 YEARS		
	Last Name	First Name
1/1/16	Hawkes	Zuzana
1/1/16	Patel	Kanan
1/1/16	Gupta	Nitika
1/1/16	Menon	Ravi
1/1/16	Ferris-Waks	Arlene
1/1/16	Glock	Judy
1/1/16	Veliz	Dicla
1/1/16	Malaspina	Raymond
1/1/16	Narayanaswamy	Nagarajan
1/1/16	Chablani	Somesh
1/1/16	Mercado	Ivan
1/1/16	Smith	Claudine
2/1/16	Gellman	Mara
2/1/16	Alter	Laura
2/1/16	Limbach	George
2/1/16	Morgan	Clive
2/1/16	Lesko	Olha
2/1/16	Qiu	Yun
2/1/16	Lee	Mark
2/1/16	Kalra	Aashish
2/1/16	Biedron	Jean
2/1/16	Baker	Yolonda
2/1/16	Desai	Dipali
2/1/16	Vevurka	Diane
2/1/16	Radhakrishnan	Vivek
2/1/16	Punukollu	Shivaji
2/1/16	GAFFNEY	PATRICK
3/1/16	Nair	Sreevidya
3/1/16	Sherman	Kayma
3/1/16	Coppola	Katharine
3/1/16	Bhuiyan	Ally
3/1/16	Kim	Chee
3/1/16	Abrams	Craig
3/1/16	Barris	Michael
3/1/16	Louis	Christina



2021 Dates To Remember

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 29-May 2	District 83 Virtual Spring Conference and District Contests



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Pg 16	Lynda Starr
Pg 17	Sherri Rase
Pg 18	Darlene Blanco
Pg 20	Tom Grady



Your timely articles and club news are welcome!

**New member column in 2021: Answer the ‘quarterly question.’
See box on page 8 for more details.**

Send your newsletter submissions to:

Melissa Brown, ACG, ALB
melissa@coachreadycontent.com



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Submissions for the June 2021 issue are due **May 1st, 2021**

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