



TOASTMASTERS

INTERNATIONAL

# The Voice

*District 83 Newsletter*  
"Better You, Better World"  
March 2010

**The Voice** is dedicated to inspiring Toastmasters in District 83 to achieve their goals. Let **The Voice** be *your voice* by sending in your success stories—the way that Toastmasters has helped you either personally or professionally. Everyone has a story to share and your experiences can help others find *their voice*. Please send your submissions to Joanne Callahan, your District 83 Newsletter Editor, at [greenbriar206@yahoo.com](mailto:greenbriar206@yahoo.com). Photos are welcomed!

## Toastmaster, Grafton Dickson, Celebrates 54 Years! by Tony Figueroa

Grafton Dickson has been a Toastmaster for 54 years and he completed his 50th year of membership in Toastmasters during my term as the District 46 Governor. In May 2006, we had a special general session for him at the District 46 Spring Conference to celebrate his 50th year as a Toastmaster. The committee that helped set up that celebration was headed by Past District Governor Fran Okeson, DTM14. Grafton is a Past District Governor of the old District 46 (out of which the present District 46 and District 83 came from). He is also one of the International Directors who voted to accept women into Toastmasters membership around 1972-73.

Grafton's favorite New York Yankees player is Derek Jeter. We tried to get Derek to come personally but he couldn't so we used a life size cut-out of him to present to Grafton.

On a personal side, Grafton never failed to attend the Toastmasters District Conferences and the International Conventions, as far as I could determine, until he could not travel anymore. I started attending District Conferences in the fall of 1996 and International Conventions in 1999. I met Grafton during those District Conferences and respected him as a Past District Gov-

ernor and a Past International Director. However, it was at the 2002 Atlanta International Convention that Grafton and I bonded. We would eat breakfast together and would attend the same events. Since then we would make sure to coordinate our attendance at the Conventions. When Grafton received an International President's Citation at the 2006 International Convention in Washington DC, he asked me to join him on the stage, which I did.

Grafton's dedication to Toastmasters deserves to be emulated by all Toastmasters. In my speeches, especially before new members, I always mention him as my best example of what a Toastmaster should be.



Photo courtesy of



**Dear Toastie:**

How do we motivate members to give speeches? We have plenty of members and we also have a mentoring program but still we have problems getting people motivated to speak. What can we do? – signed *Speechless*

**Dear Speechless:**

Congratulations for having a mentoring program! This is something every club should have because new members need guidance and even some 'seasoned' members can get into a speaking slump and become de-motivated in no time.

A lack of speakers is something most clubs struggle with. It is difficult to motivate others to achieve their goals if the officers themselves are not motivated, or if officers fail to get the message across of the importance of being active in the club. Good speakers are not the result of people who fill chairs at Toastmasters Meetings. They are the result of people who get up, stand in front of the room, and face their fears. Teaching by example is one way to motivate. The other is to educate your members, and this can mean repeating the same message over and over until it sinks in. Going through the Leadership and Communication Tracks, showing DVD's of the World Champions of Public Speaking, or writing a motivating and encouraging newsletter are all ways to help inspire your club. Additionally, constantly reminding members of the goal of achieving President's Distinguished Club, and the awards you can win, can also help stir up some enthusiasm.

Some people are naturally self-motivated while others are not. The trick is to get these two groups of people sharing thoughts and ideas together so that your club remains successful.

Good luck!

**Do you have a question for Toastie? If so, please send your submission to**

**[greenbriar206@yahoo.com](mailto:greenbriar206@yahoo.com).**



**Success Story**  
**Bob Prince**  
**Area 15 Governor**

I expect my story is the typical run-of-the-mill tale of a 69 year old shy, inarticulate, socially inept man who joins Toastmasters . I did not join Toastmasters to improve my public speaking. I had never spoken in public. I did not join Toastmasters to improve my leadership skills. I had never been a leader. I did not join Toastmasters to help advance my career. I was ungainly unemployed. I was a quiet, monkish passably qualified techie. It was time to remake my self. It was time to learn who I am. It was time to learn who my fellow men are. Yes, overcoming my fear of getting up in front of more than one person and speaking articulately and coherently, rather than in dim, mumbled fractured phrases was a goal, however learning to be sociable was of paramount importance.

I saw a Toastmasters flier in the Verona library. I considered: 'Toastmasters might be my path to becoming a social man. Being able to speak certainly seems to be an essential social skill. I will try Toastmasters.' In June of 2008 I tiptoed in to my first Essex Toastmasters meeting at the Verona library. I found the meeting to be warm and friendly. The meeting was devoid of confrontation, devoid of intimidation. There was not one harsh word of criticism for any of the evening's speakers, only encouraging support and kind suggestions for improvement. Eventually it became my turn to rise and speak to my fellow Essex Toastmasters. Astoundingly my butterflies were fluttering serenely. I did not speak well but nevertheless I spoke. In time I found I had a taste for Toastmasters meetings' supporting roles: timer, Table Topics master, presiding Toastmaster, etcetera.

Serendipitously a September, 2008 tick of a box in the 'future interests' section of a Toastmasters personal information card led to my surprising appointment as an Area Governor in June, 2009. So far, my muddling through as Area Governor may be muddy, but so far so good. As for myself, from day one, my Toastmasters experience has been one of steady growth. And with the advent of the June surprise, my Toastmasters experience has become one of wondrous growth. I have learned more about myself and more about my fellowman in the last three months than I had in the many, many preceding months. My pocket protector, stuffed with drippy pens and an ancient battered slide rule, has fallen away into the dust of the past. I am learning how to speak. I am learning how to lead.

Thank you Toastmasters!



## What is VALUE... and... WHO creates it?

By Donna Hook

According to one famous philosopher, "Human beings create value. In fact, he says, creating value is our very humanity. And by praising people for their strengths, we are actually acknowledging their ability to create value". Let me repeat that, "When we praise people for their strengths, we are actually acknowledging their ability to create value".

This quote intrigued me. And I pondered it for some time from a Toastmasters perspective. I wondered, could the idea of creating value be extended, not just to people, but to include organizations as well? In other words, can an organization like Toastmasters create value? As I look around the room I can see we are all in agreement, "Well, Yes, It Can.

My next question was, "What exactly is the value created by the Toastmasters organization and how is that value created?"

I answered these exact questions in response to a Medco Health Toastmasters guest. This guest told me, she had taken a couple of college courses in public speaking and, although she was a frequent guest at our TM meetings, she mentioned she could not see the "value" in joining Toastmasters especially compared to the money she'd have to spend on membership.

I was stunned. I knew the issue was not of monetary concern. If it had been, I would have ended the conversation right there.

Instead I got a lump in my throat and my blood started to boil. "What!" I screamed inside myself! What do you mean you don't see the value in Toastmasters? This club has changed my life. I have more hope, I am more confident, there's improvement, I have an amazing support center, there's encouragement here, there's feedback, the people are great, and there's a world of opportunity beyond my wildest dreams. What do you mean you don't see the value in Toastmasters, how can you not see it?

Luckily, I controlled myself and held back from responding in this manner. Because I realized that this question is really a very valid one... especially for someone just contemplating Toastmasters membership.

After all, who are we anyway? Maybe one or two of us are professional speakers but what about the rest of us? What possible value could we have?

When you look at it, the truth is, most of us came to (Wayne) Toastmasters to overcome our own fears and our own insecurities about speaking in public. So how then can we provide value?

And how about our pre-occupations when we first join the club? We're so busy learning the ins and outs of the meetings, what our roles are, understanding who the membership is, and solidifying our directions for introductions, as in, to my right is.... We're just scratching the surface to see the value of this organization. So how then can we expect our Toastmasters guests to see all the value that's possible here?

The truth is new comers can see only perceived value as can be heard in their words, such as "I believe this club will help me achieve my communication goals". There's little or no consideration for helping others achieve their goals, there's little or no consideration for helping our club achieve its goals, and there's little or no consideration for the vast opportunities available through Toastmasters.

So isn't it reasonable for someone first considering Toastmasters, to question the value of the club?

After pondering the topic of Toastmaster value I decided to reply to the guest via e-mail. And in my reply I used an analogy. I described the Toastmasters experience like looking into a Kaleidoscope. When you first look into a kaleidoscope the image is blurry. Then, as you start to make simple vertical rotations in the viewfinder, the image changes, and eventually, you get an amazing picture of clarity and intrigue.

One might even question how a kaleidoscope does that; As one might question through their Toastmasters experience, how did I get from Jokemaster to Toastmaster?

Isn't it true, through our participation in club meetings and through the feedback we receive we start making those same simple vertical rotations in our very own kaleidoscope? Don't we see things clearer now than when we first started in this group? I know I'm constantly amazed at the progress.

When I first joined Toastmasters I was petrified of giving speeches. As a matter of fact, I waited an entire 6 months to give my first speech. And after that, I waited another 6 more, before giving my second speech. I could not have reached this point without rotating the viewfinder in my kaleidoscope and clearing my path for success.

There's a great story going around the internet. And it's related to rotating a point of view. The story is called "The Brick", and it goes like this:

There once was a young executive cruising down the road in his brand new silver XJS Jaguar. He was driving a little fast yet was conscious of the fact that children could dart in and out of the cars parked along the side of the street. He slowed down when he saw, what he thought was a child, running in the road. The next thing he hears is a loud BAM. He slams on his brakes and stops the car. He realizes a brick was just hurled at his brand new pride and joy. Fuming mad, he backs the car down the road and comes to a screeching halt in front of a boy, who obviously through the brick at his car.

With steam coming out of his ears, the man rushes over to the boy, grabs him by the collar, and practically drags him over to his dented vehicle. "What is the meaning of this" he demands. "Don't you know this dent is going to cost a fortune to fix"?

The boy had tears in his eyes and said, "Mister, please, I didn't know what else to do". "It's my brother, his wheelchair rolled off the curb, and he's hurt. I can't lift him up, I need help and no one would stop. Throwing the brick was the only thing I could think to do".

Without hesitation the man runs over to the fallen child. After lifting him back into his wheelchair and dusting off a few scrapes and bruises, the man assures all will be ok.

The grateful boys thanked him spiritually, saying “May G-D bless you” and went on down the road.

The man got himself together. It was a long, slow walk back to his jaguar. His vehicle was visibly dented. He signed a deep sigh pondering the events that were laid out before him. He wondered why someone had to throw a brick at him to get his attention.

The story goes on to say this man chose not to fix his jag. Instead he kept the dent to remind him of his valuable lesson.

Like the dented Jaguar, can a dollar figure be associated with the positive feedback we receive from Toastmasters? In other words, if I calculate my club dues since first joining Wayne Toastmasters in October 1999 and Medco Toastmasters in January 2000, then add up all the costs, can I put the same a price tag on the support and encouragement shown me through this club? Absolutely not!

Obviously, we cannot measure the value received here as a financial return on our investment. Perhaps, then we might be able to measure the value in terms of our own self-worth.

That’s why motivational speaker Zig Ziglar, in his tape series, “You are a Natural Champion”, describes improving your public speaking skills as his #21 of 24 ways to improve your own self-image. He says by learning to speak effectively in public we are actually boosting our self-esteem. And by boosting our self-esteem we boost our self-image, our self-confidence, and our self-respect. And in doing so for ourselves then we can do the same for others.

I have read in many self-development books, and one common theme in these books is the idea that in order for us to get what we want we have to help as many people as possible get what they want. And it’s through this sheer act of helping others that we actually help ourselves.

Now isn’t this what Toastmasters is all about? A supportive and nurturing environment to help ourselves by helping others. Isn’t this the core value of Toastmasters?

Now in a few seconds I want each of you to look into your Kaleidoscope and notice your first image. Then gently rotate the viewfinder. Tap on it if you have to. Did the image change? Is it getting clearer for you?



**The mission of a Toastmasters Club is to provide a mutually supportive and positive learning environment in which every individual member has the opportunity to develop oral communication and leadership skills, which in turn foster self-confidence and personal growth.**



**Maybe we kant spel gud but we shur kan speak!**

If you missed the Toastmasters District 83 Fall Conference on November 14th, maybe it was because you couldn't find the "Registration" table? Well, probably not! Events were well organized and easy to find. It was like an early Thanksgiving to see the District 83 Toastmasters "family" gathered around the table. In our case, a big, BIG, B-I-G table! Every Toastmaster should attend a District Conference at least once - how can you know what you're missing until you try? C'mon! Give it a try! Spring Conference is on May 15th & 16th. Send in your "registration" form now!

<http://www.toastmasters83.org/district-conference/2010-spring-registration-form.html>



**We Need Your Input!**



Do you have a photo of a recent Toastmasters event or meeting? Will your club be celebrating an important milestone? Your District wants to know!

Please send me pictures and articles for inclusion in upcoming newsletters. You don't have to be a literary genius or a professional photographer. Just a Toastmaster willing to share with the rest of us what your club already knows – and that is just how special you are!

Please send your submissions to your editor, Joanne Callahan, at [greenbriar206@yahoo.com](mailto:greenbriar206@yahoo.com)

