

VOICES

David Hostler, DTM • District Governor 2003 – 2004

Go for the Gold!

by David Himmelstein, DTM

A swimmer must swim 1200 laps every day if she hopes to reach the Olympics. While she is swimming 1200 laps day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year, she is **not** thinking of the bronze medal, nor of the silver medal.

She is only thinking of one thing: Win the GOLD medal and be crowned a champion!

In Toastmasters, we hold an Olympic style competition every year. Our Olympic Games are the Distinguished Club Plan, and our gold medal is the President Distinguished Club ribbon. The great thing about Toastmasters is that we are competing not against each other, but only to accomplish ten goals.

This means that every single club can win a gold medal every single year!

I urge you and the members of your club to earn a President's Distinguished Club ribbon every single year. Doing so is not an easy task. The odds are against us. We are a volunteer organi-



zation, people are pressed for time, and constant change sabotages the most carefully

prepared plans.

Nevertheless, your club should aspire to be a President's Distinguished Club year after year after year. Why? To become a President's Distinguished Club, you must unleash the power of excellence, the power of teamwork, and the power of leadership. These three powers are beneficial to every single member of your club.

The Power of Excellence

A swimmer willing to swim 1200 laps a day teaches us the power of excellence. Just as swimming 1200 laps every single day can be difficult and demanding, so, too, can the act of writing, practicing, preparing, and delivering speeches.

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Sky's the Limit Assistance Dog Helps Toastmaster Catch Dream

by Jodi Lee Ryan

After several years of strange symptoms, I was diagnosed in 1980 with Multiple Sclerosis. MS is a chronic, often disabling, disease that attacks the central nervous system. The diagnosis was a life-altering event.

I still struggle with my emotions when it comes to dealing with the disabilities I have faced and will face in the future. It has been challenging to accept new symptoms. From one day to the next I have no idea how MS will alter my life. Many times I feel overwhelmed.

Fatigue takes a toll on my abil-

ity to participate in the activities I love.

The cognitive problems are a challenge, because speaking, educating, and training people are part of my life. However, I have learned to take each setback as a reason to learn something new. Because MS can affect many areas of the body, the challenge is overwhelming at times.

I have gone through different stages over the years: the "why me?" phase, depression, anger, frustration, and tears.

But at each juncture came a

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Sky and Jodi Lee Ryan with her DTM award.

The District awarded Sky an honorary DTM, which she proudly wears around her neck.

State of the District

District Grows in Leaps & Bounds

by David Hostler, DTM

Everything seems to be so new and fresh as a New Year begins! It is as if everyone is given a clean slate, new hope, and extra energy to continue working toward our dreams and goals.

As we welcome in 2004, District 25 is in the midst of an unprecedented run of success. As we learn in Toastmasters, success almost always means careful planning and hard work. I commend the members of District 25 for planning their work and working their plan so well over the past several years. The members of District 25 have truly seen much personal growth and have provided many opportunities for new people to enter the Toastmasters movement and share in the progress.

As Graham Nash said, "We can change the world, rearrange the world," or as Dr. Ralph Smedley, the founder of Toastmasters, put it, we CAN "make communication a world-wide reality."

What power and abilities we are gaining — power and abilities that can change people's lives for better! My late mother was a product of the Great Depression. To her, material possessions did not mean much; if you could create something out of nothing, that was the true test of your worth to society. Isn't that what we do in Toastmasters? We take people with limited skills and make them communications powerhouses and uncommon leaders. I am sure you can think of several examples from your own club.

Does the world need more

communicators or leaders? Heellllloo! Anyone, not living under a rock understands the terrible dearth of both skills. Toastmasters has cornered the market on two highly prized commodities. Toastmasters is an organization we can be proud to promote.

Come on, David. Change the world? While I was in the hospital, I received a call from Major Karen Chambers, who instructs nurses in the Armed Forces and is a member of North Arlington Toastmasters.

Her club does not even know where she is. We believe she is deployed in the Middle East somewhere. Yet she took the trouble to call me, to wish me well, and to tell me how much our clubs' emails and other information means to her.

We are changing the world — we can never know who we might touch and in what way

and how much that helping hand is needed and appreciated.

Every time we mentor or just do our best at a meeting role, we are likely influencing someone.

Did you know that in many ways, the entire Toastmasters world looks up to District 25? They want to beg, borrow, or steal the secret of our success. There is no secret to the success of District 25. District 25 is successful because of members in their clubs working the program. District 25 is successful thanks to members working to make their clubs the best. District 25 is successful because of District leaders who support where necessary and possible, but who understand that without the member, we are nothing.

See, it really isn't that hard. So many times we humans try to make things more difficult.

The truth is so simple — not easy, but not complicated.

So what is our task, as members of this great Toastmasters program and this outstanding District 25 now and until June 30th?

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**We are
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Southlake Club Revels in Ties to District's Past

John King Myrick, former District 25 Governor (1964-65), knows what it takes to make a Toastmasters club successful. He should, since he's been a member off and on for almost 50 years and has held just about every office there is, including club president, which he was for Southlake (club 4987) — a club he helped sponsor.

Myrick is an unusual Toastmaster, as he can recount

the changes that took place in Toastmasters history that many of the newer 21st century members may have taken for granted.

Looking back, John King Myrick, decided that joining the new Toastmasters club on Perrin Air Force Base in Sherman, Texas during 1959 would be a smart move. Not only would he there learn the basic communication skills necessary to bolster his busi-

ness career after leaving the military, but it would also enable him to learn from an admired and respected friend, Sgt. Maj. William Scarborough.

Myrick was only able to attend this burgeoning club for a few short months before leaving the air force and moving to Dallas, where he married his wife, Patricia. In Dallas, he joined the Industrial

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Sky Helps Catch the Dream (Cont'd)

realization that what doesn't kill me only makes me stronger. It also makes me look at life a little differently. I have been in a wheelchair several times over the years. I have learned to push myself physically to walk again. At times, I am able to walk without support, and at other times, I need help just to stand up. I know I must continue to exercise, which is a

The bond Sky and I have formed has become a lifeline for me. She knows before I do that I am going to have tremors ...

challenge in itself. Heat exacerbates MS. Staying cool when exercising is important. I swim as often as I can during the spring, summer, and fall. In the winter I walk very slowly on a treadmill in the garage. If the temperature outside is above 50°, I can't use the treadmill because I get too warm. Public swimming pools are usually too warm, also. I try to keep a sense of humor about all this, and I have found that when I get desperate, I find ways around the problem. I have worn wet clothes to the garage and put a fan near me to stay cool on warm days! About six years ago, I read an article in the MS magazine about a woman with MS and her assistance dog. I instantly

decided I wanted a dog to help me. I did some research and called several agencies that train dogs for the disabled. I was shocked by the length of time I would be on the waiting list. If I applied right away, it would be four to six years before I would get a dog.

I am not a patient person, so I did a really stupid thing: I went out and bought Sky, a Harlequin Great Dane puppy. She had some physical problems — she was an albino and blind in one eye. I thought, "So what? She has to stay by my side to help me walk. I will just be her seeing-eye person."

She would eventually weigh 105 pounds. My husband, Patrick, had never had a dog live in the house and was away when I bought Sky. It is a good thing he is a patient person. He came home from a business trip to find Sky chewing on everything in sight. He was not happy, but I told him I would train Sky. I don't think he believed me.

After five months of failing miserably at training her, I met a woman from an assistance dog organization in Dallas. She began helping me learn to train Sky in exchange for my help with publicity and educational presentations. This is where the stupidity came in: I didn't do a very good job training my children, what made me think I could train a dog to help me — and a disabled dog at that? The woman introduced me to Cindy Roberts, a wonderful person and, in my opinion, one of the best dog trainers in the United States.

Cindy started going places with Sky and me, coaching us on proper assistance-dog training. I worked hard learning and training Sky to do

over one-hundred tasks for me. She can open and shut doors; get food, water, and medicine out of the refrigerator for me; help me get clothes on and off; and other tasks. This way I could conserve my energy for things I want to do, such as Toastmasters.

One thing I learned is never train a dog to do something until you think it all the way through. I wanted Sky to turn lights on and off for me. She learned to flip the light switch with her nose. It sounds like a great trick, but I hadn't thought it through to the logical conclusion. I like to sleep late. One morning I decided to stay in bed past ten a.m., which is Sky's feeding time. Suddenly, the overhead light was shining right in my eyes. There was Sky with a bag of dog food giving me a dirty look. Anytime she wanted attention the light came on. I had to train her to wait for a command to touch light switches, but every once in a while, she still turns it on by herself, just out of contrariness!

When I received my DTM the first of November, Sky was by my side. Many of you know her, but don't understand why she is with me. David Hostler understood, and that is why Sky received recognition at the ceremony. Without Sky, there would be no DTM for me.

The bond Sky and I have formed has become a lifeline for me. She has learned to tell me when I am having problems. No one taught her this; she did it on her own. She is with me 24 hours a day, and her intuition is unbelievable. Sky tells me when I am tired by taking me to a chair or leading me to a wall where she will hold me up to rest. If I don't listen to her,

she will sit down on the floor, and because she is my "animated cane," I end up sitting on the floor to rest.

She knows before I do that I am going to have tremors and signals me to take medication. She also tells me when it is time to go home. If my right foot is dragging or I am staggering when I walk, she puts her foot on my foot to tell me to be careful. Several times at the Toastmasters conference in Killeen last year I got weak and tired. Sky would not move until we were going toward the elevator and to the room to rest.

We did stay up on Friday night to "dance" with Ron Bland. Sky looked at us like we were nuts. I was sitting in a chair swaying to the music and Ron was dancing by my side.

My Toastmasters buddies can tell you of the things they have witnessed Sky doing for me. They rely on her judgment to keep me from overdoing. The MS has caused me problems with swallowing the past few years, but I can usually keep it under control by drinking something hot.

At a Pro A.M. Toastmasters meeting, I started having trouble swallowing and breathing. No one noticed because I was at the side of the room. Sky got up and went to my friend, Mary Roth. Mary knew something was wrong, because Sky would not leave my side unless it was important. Mary got me some hot coffee and helped me get my medicine. When I was OK again, Trish Perkins took me home.

Sky is a regular at Toastmasters. She has participated in many meetings. During one meeting, two Toastmasters were acting out "Ahab the Arab," the Ray Stevens song.

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From Terrorized to Energized: One Toastmaster's Journey to Competition

The winner of District 25's Humorous Speech competition, Brent Cole, almost missed it.

"I jogged off a college football field in southern Oklahoma, showered, threw my referee gear in my bag, and hit the road for the District 25 Humorous speech contest," said Cole. "Fortunately, I arrived just as dinner was finishing up and just in time for the contest!"

How did a college chemistry professor and Sunday School teacher evolve from a mass of quivering nerves to a top notch competitor in just two years?

"Those who know me know that I spent over twenty years as a PhD scientist and have a very logical, rational personality," Cole confessed, but "the idea of giving a speech scared me to death."

Fortunately for Brent, Toastmaster Walt Jordan persistently invited him to the Abbott Labs Dawn Patrol Toastmaster meetings for six months straight.

"I went to see what it was about and to get Walt 'off my back'," Cole admitted. "What I found when I went was a great group of people committed to helping each other grow personally by improving their speaking skills, so I went back."

After hearing about the Icebreaker speech, Cole said that the old terror began to swell up, "yet I realized that this was an area in which I needed to grow. At the end of my icebreaker speech, Walt (as the evaluator) told me that I could move from behind the lectern."

As many new Toastmasters can attest, the thought of moving out from behind the

lectern is a frightening one. Brent confessed that when giving his icebreaker, his knees "were physically vibrating so badly, that if I had taken one step I would have crashed and burned!"

With help from his club and taking advice given by each speech evaluator, Cole's terror of giving speeches began to change to an excitement. Then someone suggested that he enter the humorous speaking contest.

The terror came back with a vengeance!

"This was something way outside my comfort zone," said Cole. However, "with some gentle arm-twisting, I tried and won and then won again at the Area contest level, having only been in Toastmasters just a little over a year."

Cole had defeated the terror and realized that giving a humorous speech was nothing more than sharing some

ideas that were funny to him with a group of friends, who just happened to be Toastmasters, using the skills learned through giving the speeches in the CTM manual. Cole said, "Anybody can do that ... anybody. Toastmasters presents each of us with an incredible growth environment. Yet each one of us much choose to move out of our own personal comfort zones to step into that opportunity to grow. With each step you take, your skills and your confidence increase."

As Cole began to prepare a humorous speech this year, he saw one of the "Terry Tate, Office Linebacker" commercials and thought to himself, "If they have players, they gotta have officials!"

Cole let the idea percolate in his imagination then put his "Office Official" speech together, practicing it at two different clubs.

"I received some great critique," Cole said, "and re-

vised the speech and my presentation of it. As I sat in the audience at the Area contest, I watched four great speeches and realized that I had to 'turn up the volume' right then if I wanted to have any chance of winning."

Cole thought at the time that his presentation was a little over the top, as well as out of his normal comfort zone, but the audience responded by laughing and shouting out responses.

"One of the great benefits of competing is that other veteran Toastmasters see your presentation and share their golden nuggets of wisdom with you," Cole admonished. "I was able to implement each of those as I progressed through the contest levels: They made a difference."

In the spring of 2003, Cole competed in the Inspirational speech contest at the Division level.

"It was ugly," Cole stated. "I let my nerves get the best of me. I probably learned more about developing self-control and poise in that debacle than in any of these contests. Yet it was not a negative experience. It was a growth experience. It helped prepare me for this [humorous] speech."

As Bret advanced to the Divisional contest, the thought of a larger crowd didn't make him as nervous as the attendance of his wife.

"Goofing up in front of strangers is not as bad as goofing up in front of your family!" Brent confessed. "It was the first time ever that she had seen me give a speech in Toastmasters, but she was surprised, yet laughed throughout the speech."

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Winner of the District Humorous contest, Brent Cole, with International Director Jana Barnhill DTM and District Governor, David Hostler, DTM.

Toastmaster Remembers 30 Years in the District

According to Bert Markardt, DTM, PDG, "The Toastmasters International Convention of August 1973 was one of the most important turning points in the history of the organization, which was first founded on August 22, 1924."

Why this meeting over any other? During the 1973 business session, it was moved, voted on, and approved to allow clubs to decide for themselves the option of allowing women into their membership.

Bert Markardt was the first woman admitted into Richardson Evening Toastmasters — the club to which she belongs to this day.

"I joined on February 20, 1974, and I have to say some of the men were not happy about it," admitted Markardt. "After a while, however, they accepted me, and I think most men today couldn't imagine Toastmasters without women. I also think that when women joined a club that it improved the language."

Bert's husband, Al, had been a member of Toastmasters since 1961, and had heard him talk about it for years. Al's first club was in Midland, Texas, where he was a charter member of Pop-up Toastmasters. After they moved to Dallas, he joined Richardson Evening Toastmasters.

The dress code back then was quite different. Men wore a shirt, coat, and tie, and women wore dresses. "It's amazing to me today how many men do not do that, even when giving prepared speeches," Bert said.

Another difference she remembers is that it took 15 speeches to complete the C&L Manual. Later it was

lowered to 12 then ten.

"When I first joined Toastmasters," Bert said, "the only ranks were CTM, ATM, and DTM. Now there are a half dozen it seems!"

Like most new Toastmasters, Bert was made an officer right away. "I began serving as secretary the evening I joined Richardson Evening Toastmasters," she said.

"I was also the first female to [advance] in the Leadership track," Bert admitted. "I was Lt. Governor of Education when future district governors and future International presidents Pauline Shirley and Jo Anna McWilliams joined TNT Toastmasters."

Bert served as District 25 Governor from 1981 to 1982 and recalls when the district split, becoming District 25 and District 50.

"I still attend both district conferences," Bert stated, "and I thought it was ironic that the District 50 Conference in November was in the same hotel where we had our Region III Conference when I was District Governor. I will never forget that conference because about a week before, I stepped off a curb coming out [from work] and broke my ankle in three places!"

Fortunately, the dentist Bert worked for was very understanding about her career in Toastmasters. "I let him know in no uncertain terms that while I was a district officer, I wasn't always going to be there," confessed Bert, "and he was always very good about it."

At that time, Bert had a job, a family of five, including her son David and his wife, and a new baby, and was already 58 years old.

"I was age 53 when I joined Toastmasters, and I was always very active in Toastmasters. At one point I belonged to five clubs and went to every meeting, and I loved it," Bert said.

"My husband died on March 7, 1997," said Bert, "and I don't think he was as proud

of anything as much as he was of being a member of Toastmasters for 35 years. It will be 30 years for me this February, and I feel the same way. Toastmasters will always be a part of me for all the things they have done, not only for me, but for millions of other people."



David "Hawaii 5-0" Hostler and the second place winner of the Evaluation Contest, Donna Evalgelous, take a quick breather from the festivities of the Fall Conference.

Spring 2004 Conference

This year's conference will be held on May 21 and 22 at the La Quinta Conference Center at 825 N. Watson Rd., Arlington, TX 76011 (817-640-4142).

We will be having a Luau on Friday Night and the Table Topics Contest.

Saturday morning we will have the Area and Division Governors reports. Education Sessions will include Leadership & Motivational Track, Communication Track, and Personal Growth Track.

Lunch will have a DTM Ceremony, and awards from our District Governor David Hostler, Lee Alviar, and David Himmelstien. There will be a business meeting starting at 3:30 PM — all Presidents & VP Education need to be there.

The Banquet and International Speech Contest will be Saturday night. For more information, visit www.d25toastmasters.org/Miscellaneous/DistrictNewsletter.htm

Second Placer in Area Takes First in District

At the District 25 Toastmasters Fall Conference, Past District Governor, Ron Bland (2001-2002) walked off the stage with the first place trophy in the evaluation contest.

How could this be? He did not win his area contest! How could he be the District 25 champion evaluator?

PDG Bland gained his motivation for always being prepared when he listened to an informative and interesting CD presentation on public speaking featuring one of the World Champions of Public Speaking.

During the CD presentation, this World Champion speaker took his audience on an audio journey of his trip to the much coveted championship of Public Speaking by sharing details of what he had to do to win this prestigious award.

The World Champion Speaker confessed that he had fin-

ished second in his own club speech contest. Due to a rarely used Toastmaster speech contest rule, the world championship speaker was able to begin his "fairy tale journey to the championship" by advancing to the area level of competition without winning his own club contest.

Toastmasters International allows undersized areas with a small number of clubs to invite the two top finishers to compete in the area contest. This rule is in place to not only make the area contest more competitive and interesting, but also to allow for a larger audience for the speakers.

The World Champion of Public Speaking, having taken advantage of this seldom used rule, went on to win that area contest, then the division contest, the district contest, the Region Contest, and ultimately the International

contest.

PDG Bland stated that "many of us have had the opportunity to create a similar story, which seems like a fairy tale." Ron went on to tell his own story of finishing second in the Area 23 contest and then being the champion evaluator at the District 25 Fall Evaluation Contest. Is this another fairy tale? Might be!

"The second place winner and the person who will represent Area 23 at the Division B contest, *if the first place winner is unable to compete*, is Ron Bland" said the announcer at the conclusion of the Area 23 contest. Toastmaster Bland accepted this statement as being the end of his competitive evaluation career — at least for the fall 2003 season.

After that announcement, Ron was presented with the runner-up trophy.

While Bland was disappointed to not place first, he could feel honored for representing his own club at the Area 23 Evaluation Contest.

"I had a great time as a contestant," Bland admitted. When the Toastmaster pounded the gavel on the lectern at the end of the contest, the "time to go home" message resonated through out the room.

As Ron greeted friends after the contest and extended them a good bye, the Chief Judge reminded him that he "should remain prepared to compete at the next level, just in case the first place winner could not compete." Ron agreed but thought to himself, "Well that's unlikely."

However, the first place winner was indeed unable to compete, so on October 10, 2003, Past District Governor

Ron Bland found himself representing Area 23 in the Division B contest.

"What a golden opportunity this was for me," Ron said. "I placed first in the Division B Evaluation contest. Wow, what a feeling!"

This was quite an accomplishment for a runner-up area level evaluator, but a fairy tale in the making? "Not likely!" Ron kept telling himself.

The final stage for this potential fairy tale ending was the District 25 Evaluation contest held at the Fall Conference during the last weekend of October 2003. Is Halloween weekend a time for fairy tales to come true? Ron Bland was beginning to believe.

"Not likely" gradually changed to "possibly." As the contest approached, the "possibly" changed to "maybe."

Ron Bland's performance at the evaluation contest was exceptional. He showed by his "stage presence" and his "attention to detail," why, during his term as District Governor, District 25 was the number one district in North America and number two in the world!

"At the conclusion of the contest," remembered Ron, "I heard these exciting words 'the first place winner of the District 25 Evaluation contest is Ron Bland.'"

Ron said he looked about the room as if there might be another Ron Bland in that contest. "That sentence sounded so sweet," Ron admitted.

"As I accepted the trophy, my thoughts traveled back to that Area 23 contest in September. Why?"

Toastmaster Bland went on to expound on why this might



Consuelo Samarripa, DTM, engages the crowd in a story telling session during the Fall Conference.

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Go for the Gold (Cont'd)

There are days when working on speeches is no fun at all! But consider the feeling you get when everything clicks, and you deliver an incredible speech. Is there a better feeling than knowing you have done something you thought you never could do?

I urge every single member of every single club to strive for excellence and to carefully prepare and deliver speeches that meet the objectives of the projects in the Communication and Leadership manual and in the Advanced Communication manuals.

In the process of striving for excellence, you will become a better you!

The swimmer swimming 1200 laps a day may not ever win a gold medal, the speaker diligently preparing a speech may never become the World Champion of Public Speaking, but in the process of striving for the gold medal, each gains the tools needed to achieve success in life.

The Power of Teamwork

Olympic level swimming also teaches us the power of teamwork. The world record for the 400-meter freestyle is three minutes, 40 seconds, but the record for the 400-meter relay is three minutes, 13 seconds.

Four swimmers swimming as a team can swim faster than one swimmer swimming alone. The same principle applies to your club: Twenty people working together will accomplish more than twenty people pursuing their own agendas.

In the world of Toastmasters, I am my brother's keeper! I want every single member of my club to succeed. Because when they succeed, I succeed; when they grow, I grow. Dr. Jeff Johnson says that at

every single club meeting, we should take inventory of every single person in attendance.

How is he doing today? Is our club meeting his needs?

Let's go one step further: Let's take inventory of the members who are **not** at the meeting. Let's find out what's going on.

Let's tell them we miss them.

Let's find out what they need from us. Always look for ways to make your fellow club members better. Lift them up when they feel down.

Someone will do the same for you when you really need it!

The Power of Leadership

Olympic rowing teaches us the third ingredient for achieving the gold medal — the power of leadership. I

n many Olympic rowing events, the coxswain sits at the back of the boat, urging his or her teammates forward. The coxswain is the only one in the boat who can see the finish line.

Everyone else is looking backwards. The coxswain is held to a higher standard.

It is his or her responsibility to make everyone on the team see the goal.

It is his or her responsibility to make everyone on the team believe that they can achieve the goal.

The coxswain, or leader, must win the trust of the team; and when he or she wins their trust, they will reach the goal!

To our club leaders I say: Keep your eye on the goal. Share with your club members the plan for earning the President's Distinguished Club ribbon.

Show each member how he or she fits into the plan. Express your appreciation to each of your members wher-

ever and whenever possible.

To our club members I say: Encourage your club leaders whenever possible.

Leadership is a difficult challenge. Your leaders are making sacrifices to help you and your club achieve success. Tell them what's on your mind.

Do what you can to help your leaders become better leaders.

Toastmasters gives us a chance to go for the gold every single year, and 2003-

Don't Forget!

TLI Deluxe

January 24th

@ Mayfield Rd Baptist Church

To pre-register, send an e-mail containing your meal preference (beef/chicken) to:

LGET@d25toastmasters.org.

For additional info, visit

www.d25toastmasters.org

Jim Key will present a special session from 3-5. The World Champion of Public Speaking will share the principles and secrets of preparing for speaking success. Key will also be the keynote luncheon speaker.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Any educational achievement (CTM and / or ATM S/B/G and / or CL and AL) posted on Toastmasters International website between November 1st and December 31st 2003 will entitle D25 Members to one free Advanced Manual at Winter TLI Sessions. Go to TLI Store for selection and distribution of Advanced Manuals.

Please visit the district web site for the posting of Area contest dates:

www.d25toastmasters.org/SpeechContests/Area.htm

Second Place (Cont'd)

just be a bigger fairy tale than he originally thought. Ron confessed that he "was the backup evaluation speaker" for his club at the Area 23 contest also. What a journey this past district governor had been on.

Ron Bland offered these concluding words, "Anything can happen in competition. *How many times have you witnessed a speech contest with a speaker or two missing?* If you're not selected as the winner in a speech contest, do not ignore that final sentence. Please make sure you attend the next level of competition. Who knows — you

may be sharing your success story one day."

Ron Bland was asked to share his thoughts about being second in the area and first in the district. There was no indication that Ron was second in his club as well as within his area. Bits and Pieces magazine in the October, 2000 issue states, "There is only one endeavor in which you can start at the top and that is digging a hole." Ron Bland is an example of someone with the confidence and perseverance to start at the bottom of the hole and emerge with a trophy marked "champion."

State of the District (Cont'd)

We are faced with three challenges for you and your club:

- Share the Dream
- Collective Success
- Take Care of Number One

Share the Dream

January is a prime time to get new members and clubs. People are looking for ways to improve themselves and complete their New Year's Resolutions.

Clubs always need new members for new excitement, mentoring opportunities, and to replace others that have fallen by the way.

February and March offer an opportunity for a banner ribbon. Get five new members total in your club in February and March, and your club will receive a "Talk Up, Toastmasters" ribbon from International. So, membership contests, open houses, and special events are the order of the day.

Sometimes I feel, we are too timid in just asking people to visit. Yes, the club benefits by getting new members; however, it is truly the new member who has everything to gain. Don't overwhelm your invitee with all the benefits of Toastmasters, just tell them that we grow, we have fun, come visit. Share the dream with the world.

Collective Success

The Distinguished Club program is not the whim of some sadistic individual at World Headquarters, but rather the program is carefully constructed to bring out those elements we need for long-term success in our clubs.

If your club does not have a written plan on how you will

be Distinguished by June 30th, please sit down and thoughtfully plan your trail to success as soon as possible.

Distinguished starts with only five simple goals, Select is seven goals, and President's is nine or more. Remember that there is a membership element to being Distinguished, also. There are few better ways to get a club excited than to achieve Distinguished or better year after year.

Take Care of Number One

I realize the members who have read this far are likely those elite members that seem to always be there when needed.

I ask you to do two things:

Next time something needs to be done in the club, ask a new member to do it. Mentor them if needed. The club grows the more you give away your skills and direct opportunities to those who will grow the most by them.

As you are in effect a caregiver to your club, you must realize that you can only do your magic in the club if you are excited and motivated. Avoid negative situations. Avoid burn out. You are the heart and soul of the Toastmasters program.

Bottom Line

The Toastmasters program always needs new members and clubs. The Toastmasters program needs successful (read, Distinguished) clubs, and Toastmasters needs you to be at your peak to continue this awesome work you have begun.

State of District 25

In your hands, doing the right thing, District 25 will be in great shape come June 30th.



Craig Calame, DeDe Rhodes, Lillian Pappos, and Tom Feret awake another day of District Conference to report dreams achieved in various areas.

Journey to Competition

As part of his preparation for competition, Cole mentally reviewed the key comments that have been shared with him in previous evaluations, such as using gestures with both hands, not clipping the ends of words, giving the audience time to laugh, and effective eye contact with the entire audience.

"I really believe that winning a contest is as much club recognition as it is individual recognition," said Cole.

Cole admitted that he was both excited and terrified to hear his name announced at the District competition.

"It was one more step out of my comfort zone, but one more big step along my Toastmaster journey," confided Cole. "As I walked to the front of the stage, I just reminded myself that this was a great chance to share some stuff that was funny to me with more Toastmaster friends! What a great way to spend an evening!"

After hearing the other presentations, Cole was thankful that he didn't have to judge the contest.

"When my name was called as the winner, I was almost overwhelmed," remembers Cole. "Everyone was so gra-

cious as they congratulated me. Honestly, I felt humbled, receiving such comments from distinguished peers and friends, yet it was a wonderful feeling to be acknowledged by those peers for all the effort that goes into putting together a contest speech."

Cole stated that winning the first place trophy was exciting and humbling, but asserted that the real treasure is in the experience and in watching other great competitors and learning from them.

Cole expanded, "It's in the internal satisfaction of knowing that I grew as a person. It's in the friendships made along the way. That's why I believe that every Toastmaster should take that first step out of their comfort zone and begin preparing their speech for the Spring 2004 contest!"

Cole's Area Governor, Iris Thompson, once told him, "I want you to experience competing from the District stage!"

"Now I know what she meant," said Cole. "Now I wish that for each of you. Take that first step. You only grow outside your comfort zone. It takes effort, but you are worth it!"

Southlake Club (Cont'd)

Management Toastmasters club, which met only three blocks from his apartment.

At that time, clubs met for two hours and had some type of meal associated with the meeting. Also, there weren't as many clubs with closed membership.

"District 25 stretched from Wichita Falls to Shreveport and from the Red River to Waco," said Myrick, "and there were only 75 clubs in the entire district."

There were no divisions within districts then, only about 13 areas, which had about five or six clubs in them. In the late 1970s or 80s, we added the division level.

Just then, there were only about 20 clubs in Dallas and ten in Ft. Worth. Most clubs were community or neighborhood clubs, and typically, community and business leaders were members.

"Big D Toastmasters, the oldest club in Dallas as well as the district and a club that continues strong today has met continually and weekly for over 50 years!" Myrick exclaimed.

In those days, the club was filled with CPAs, lawyers, ministers, bankers, and an array of other business professionals. "We didn't know what 'networking' was," admitted Myrick, "but the Toastmaster club was a good personal and business network" then and today.

Myrick also noted that club member dress during those days were the same as typical business dress — suit, white shirt, and tie. We've come a long way since then, and while some members prefer to dress in business or business casual, others tend to be more relaxed for run-of-the-mill meetings, reserving more staid dress for confer-

ences and other more formal meetings.

Within the context of a two-hour meeting, clubs could have five speakers, five evaluators, and five or six table topics, which left 15 minutes or so for the business session.

"The business session [of a club meeting] was not only important to handle the business of the club, but was used as the vehicle for learning and practicing Parliamentary procedure," said Myrick, "which the average Toastmaster knew well, as we learned about it and practiced it each week during our meetings. This was an educational and fun meeting segment."

One reason Parliamentary procedure was such an important facet of a typical Toastmasters meeting was because "Robert's Rules of Order was used to guide the meetings of churches, board meetings, and service and civic clubs," Myrick postulated, "and Toastmasters were known as masters of Parliamentary law."

One of the striking similarities Myrick noted between clubs then and now is the fact that there are some "strong clubs and some weak clubs." Both Dallas and Ft. Worth had [several] clubs each which were extremely strong in membership, attendance, and quality in meetings.

Myrick noted, "The Plus Two club was a strong club in Ft. Worth, and in Dallas, Big D and Daybreakers were among the continually stronger clubs in that area."

Of the differences between clubs back then and those now, John noted that clubs had an all male membership — Toastmasters didn't go co-ed until the mid 1970s; al-

though, there was a Toastmistress organization, unaffiliated with International, for women prior to then.

It caused quite a stir when the International Board of Directors issued the mandate in the mid 70s that women would be allowed to join Toastmasters.

"There was much discussion and deliberation in some clubs about whether or not to allow women into membership," admitted Myrick. "At that time, [feminism] was gaining momentum; therefore, the early women Toastmasters were those who were pushing the 'women's rights' issues," which led to their classification by some as "feminoids."

This hotbed of political debate enabled "extremely interesting meetings," according to Myrick. Some of those clubs that fought the longest to exclude women later "became very glad and delighted" to allow women within the membership. Clubs would be hard-pressed to have any membership if they were relegated to enlisting only one gender.

Back in the 1960s and 70s, there were only the Basic manual and two or three advanced manuals. The CTM, ATM, and DTM designations were added later.

As a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Myrick has always been able to "take pride" in the CPA label, as it "describes my business life and indicates what my business skills are."

Myrick expressed hesitancy in bandying about other designations, however, even those he's earned, such as "Past District Governor" or "DTM."

Actually, Myrick has been qualified to be a DTM ever

since that honorary was created.

"I was active when Toastmasters added the ATM and DTM labels," admitted Myrick, but titles have "never been important to me, and those levels have never meant very much to me. Neither do I consider it important that anyone knows that I am a past district governor," continued Myrick. "We are all Toastmasters, and we are all students of public speaking and presentation. We are all on the same basic journey, and I see no reason to [emphasize] classes or levels of membership."

Over the past several years, Myrick has been quite active at the club level, both in Big D, prior to his move to Grapevine, where he became active in Southlake Toastmasters.

"I have chosen to be extremely active in the club levels, which is what I enjoy and consider to be the most important to me and to Toastmasters, while being inactive in area and district," Myrick said. "I have already done my time and served the area and the district very well over a period of four or five years."

Myrick explained that neither he nor Toastmasters needed his participation above the club level. "Toastmasters is organized in a way that allows for sharing the duties, responsibilities, and the work load, and allows for sharing the opportunities to serve in the district offices and to gain that tremendous experience," Myrick went on to explain. "I had my time, and now it is someone else's time to do the work and to gain the benefits of being an officer in a Toastmasters club, or area, or district."

There is a saying that "there is no one less respected than

Continued on Page 10

Southlake Club (Cont'd)

a past district governor," Myrick clarified, which "is primarily true and as it should be. Toastmasters does not need some old district officers hanging around getting in the way of present officers doing their job. I am a strong believer in the immediate past holder of any office staying active to mentor and support the next in line, which is a part of strong and successful management."

Myrick was District Governor when he was 28 years old. "I didn't know much at that point," he admitted, "but I didn't know that I didn't know much!"

Back then, there were only three district officer positions: District Governor, Educational Lt. District Governor, and Administrative District Governor. Then, as now,

there had been an understanding that before anyone could become District Governor, he or she should have previously served the district as Educational Lt. District Governor.

"A District Governor who has not served as a membership or administrative officer in the district and in the top educational position is just not adequately prepared for the role and work of District Governor," Myrick opined.

Part of the experience that enabled John to become District Governor were the many club and area offices he held, such as Sgt.-at-Arms, Educational Vice President, and District Public Relations Officer.

"I had some pretty definite ideas about how to manage the district and help it grow,"

Myrick said, "and I had already had some successful experience as club president, area governor, and District Educational Lt. Governor. I was ready for the job, plus my educational background is in management. We had a successful term as district governor because of several important reasons: Total support from the District Governor and Educational Lt. District Governor before me."

Leadership included area governors that were key players in "keeping clubs and membership strong and growing." These leaders were "actively involved in working with the presidents and other officers of the five or six clubs in their area. Since the district was so large geographically, we had no choice but to rely on a strong but decentralized district organization," said Myrick.

Another key component to the district's success at that time was a closely-knit group of about ten members spread throughout the district who influenced the management and activities within the district.

"I think we made it work pretty well," admitted Myrick. "If I had to do it over again, I would be more progressive and aggressive in adding clubs. We had much emphasis on keeping the clubs we had strong, but I wish we had added more clubs than we did, because obviously, the need, demand, and desire were there, and available. Also, I would take advantage of the need and receptivity to having closed or captive clubs within the many large companies throughout the district."

This year's district theme of "Catch the Dream" coupled with last year's theme of "Exceeding Expectations"

underscore a strong, progressive tone. Themes are a means of focusing direction and bringing unity of effort and work.

"I think our theme when I was District Governor was 'Our Search for Better Ways,'" Myrick remembered. "It has been my experience that even though the theme is vitally important for an administration, it is usually forgotten a day or two after a new regime takes office, and that is how it should be."

All things pass by the wayside in due time. What hasn't proven to pass away is Myrick's membership. Although he hasn't been a continuous member, his membership does span almost 50 years with periods of activity followed by periods of no activity.

"I do it this way because I am learning, growing, and having fun" admitted Myrick, "and Toastmasters is a prime source of motivation and inspiration for me. Plus, it gives me an outlet of expression for my thoughts and feelings."

Furthermore, Myrick believes that Toastmasters is and can be a primary source of education in presentation, personal communication, management, and leadership.

"Even though I have a college degree in business and graduate level advanced training, I consider that membership in Toastmasters and having my paper route in Shreveport as a teenager to be my best sources for business training," said Myrick.

John Myrick's experiences with Toastmasters throughout the years clearly indicates that much has changed, but the best has and will continue to remain the same.

Become One of the Elite!

Earn your Elite Membership pin by going the extra mile in Education, Membership, and Service achievements. Complete two tasks from each of the following categories and mail documentation to:

Lee Alviar, DTM, Lt. Gov Education & Training
2206 Sharpshire Ln.
Arlington, TX 76014-3526

Education — Attend TLI; Be a Club Officer; Give a Better Speaker, Leadership Excellence, or Better Club Series Module; Achieve an Educational Level (CTM, ATM-B, ATM-S, ATM-G, CL, AL, DTM).

Membership — Sponsor One New Member; Sponsor or Mentor a New Club; Be a Club Coach, Help a Club Reach Distinguished; Mentor a New Member.

Service — Serve on a Committee Outside Your Club; Serve as a Judge; Serve as a Chief Judge; Complete a Youth Leadership; Attend a District Conference.

Toastmaster Learning Institute Schedule

TLI Deluxe — January 24 at Mayfield Rd. Baptist Church from 8:30 am to 5 pm. Registration starts at 8 am. Cost: \$10
Please pre-register with meal choice (bee/chicken) by emailing LGET@d25toastmasters.org.

Regular TLI — Wichita Falls — January 31, Location TBD from 8:30 am to 12:45 pm. Registration starts at 8 am. Cost: \$5

Regular TLI — Waco — February 7, 2004, Location TBD from 8:30 am to 12:45 pm. Registration starts at 8 am. Cost: \$5

Sky Helps Catch the Dream (cont'd)

Sky was Clyde the Camel — she even had the hump! When Ahab (Dee Davey) came to the part where she “jumped on his camel named Clyde” and rode across the desert, Dee took Sky by the harness and pulled back on it. Dee didn't know this meant “pull me” to Sky. The dog promptly started pulling Dee around the room.

Sky has also been a participant in Table Topics, the subject of many speeches, and is a fixture of our club. Without her, I would not have been able to attend all the meetings or be part of the conferences and the District. She has been by my side for the past five years helping me up on stages, keeping me from falling, and sitting under tables for endless hours, never complaining.

Traveling with a giant white dog tends to call attention to us everywhere we go.

Sky has educated people about assistance dogs. Most people know about seeing-eye dogs, but they have no idea that dogs are used for a great number of disabilities.

Sky is also a celebrity at Southwest Airlines where we help train the airline personnel about assistance dogs. Sky's picture is all over the United States in Southwest training rooms. A training video starring Sky helps SW employees understand the Air Carrier Access Act and the laws about assistance animals. When we travel, we are greeted by people in airports around the country. No one remembers my name, of course, but they all know Sky. Herb Kelleher, the founder of Southwest Airlines, has personally written Sky two letters to thank her for her volunteer services.

With the bond Sky and I have, this past few months has been very hard. It is getting time to think about Sky's

retirement.

Emotionally, I am not ready for this. Sky is getting older and Great Danes only live about seven or eight years. I don't want Sky to have to work all her life, so I needed to think about a “successor dog.” I really don't want to think about this eventuality. Sky was given to me for a reason, though, so I am trying to accept the idea that I would find another dog when the time was right. I just didn't think it is the right time yet.

I am President of Assistance Dogs of Texas, Inc., and we have a client who needs a Great Dane to help her. I had been looking in the paper and calling several places trying to find a suitable adult dog for the woman. I spotted an ad for Great Dane puppies and saw the ad daily for several weeks. Finally, I called. They had several black Dane puppies and one Harlequin female.

The puppies were eight weeks old and ready to leave their mother. I asked Mary Roth to go look at the puppy with me. I had already thought of a name, Cinder, before we left. It fit her perfectly. Sky sniffed the puppy and seemed to approve. Mary and I felt my guardian angel had kept this puppy

from being sold just so I could have her. Now my poor husband, Patrick, has two large dogs roaming the house and eating everything in sight!

I will slowly transfer responsibilities from Sky to Cinder. Sky has already taught her to open doors and is teaching her to bring me things. Patrick is helping with the training this time, too.

Cinder is different from Sky. She will weigh close to 200 pounds when she finishes growing. (Sky is 105 pounds.) Sky fits entirely under an airline seat when I travel. Cinder will have to travel in the bulkhead or take up an extra seat.

The thought of transferring my trust to another dog leaves me with mixed feelings: There is no guarantee that Cinder will be able to alert me to my MS exacerbations or my tremors. I can only hope Sky will be a good teacher and communicate like any good Toastmaster all the things Cinder needs to know. For another year or so, Sky will continue her job. When she retires, I will keep her, but she will stay home and Cinder will be doing the work.

In the next few months, Toastmasters will be seeing another very special dog,

Cinder, who will need everyone's help in learning her job. Trish and Rey Perkins, Mary Roth, and Becky Rounds will be escorting Cinder to events as she starts her role as an Assistance Dog in Training. ADOT will take Cinder for several weeks at a time to fine-tune her skills and train her to do the complicated things she needs to know.

One coping mechanism that helps as I struggle with the almost daily changes of MS is to allow myself to cry, be mad, or depressed for a short time. Then I remember all the great things that have happened to me *because* I was diagnosed with MS. Some Toastmasters would have never known about assistance animals and how great they are if I didn't have Sky. Plus, I wouldn't have Sky if I didn't have MS.

It gets easier as time goes on to be more optimistic. It's the bright side that keeps me going.

Cindy Roberts, Leanne Brindle, and I started ADOT to train dogs for the disabled. I used this program as my High Performance Leadership project. Since it is an all-volunteer organization, we realized that there is a great need for assistance dogs and trainers. We have placed five assistance dogs since we began three years ago. Little did I know then how good it would make me feel to see other people benefit from a dog trained specifically for them.

I am privileged to know the many people who have helped me along the way. I hope someday there will be a cure for MS, but in the meantime, I will count my blessings *and* my friends. The way I look at MS now is so different than in 1980. I don't like what it has done to my body, but I know that regardless, I can still “Catch the Dream!”



Cinder leans on Sky, her teacher and mentor in Assistance Dog training.

Calendar of Dreams

January, 2004

- 1 New Year's Day – Are you at least ½ way to your goals?
- 1-31 Hold Division Council Meetings
 - Hold Area Council Meetings
 - Encourage Clubs to review Club Success Plans
- 9-10 Mid-year Training for Top 3 Officers, Albuquerque, NM
- 10 Letter of Intent Deadline for those seeking Elective office for 2004-2005. Send to Linda Richardson
- 11-17 Club Open House Week – Feed them and they will come – Get their Contact Info and Follow up
- 19 Martin Luther King Day
- 24 TLI Deluxe
- 26 District Executive Committee
- 31 TLI Wichita Falls

February, 2004

- 1-29 Hold Division Council Meetings
 - Hold Area Council Meetings
 - Club Table Topics and International Speech Contests

February, Cont'd

- 7 TLI Waco
- 14 Valentine's Day – I love that your goals are almost complete!
- 14 Area Governor and Division Governor Follow-Up Training - Includes District Executive Committee Meeting
- 16 President's Day
- 29 Bonus Day for us to make our Goals!

March, 2004

- 1-31 Hold Division Council Meetings
 - Hold Area Council Meetings
 - Area Table Topics and International Speech Contests
- 15 District Executive Committee Meeting
- 17 St. Patrick's Day
- 20 Send in Semi Annual Report to International with a copy to:
Dave Himmelstein DTM LGM,
4504 Crowley, Plano TX 75093
- 31 Last Day to get Area Visits to David Hostler

Spring Conference Registration

The District's spring conference, World of Dreams, will be held May 21 and 22, 2004 at the La Quinta Conference Center in Arlington.

The registration form for the conference is available at www.d25toastmasters.org/SpeechContests/District.

Early Bird Registration before 4/30/2004 is \$80.00.

After 4/30/2004, regular registration is \$95.00.

Contact: Donna Fossmeier, ATM-S/CL, Spring Conference Chair at (817) 297-7587 or email:

SpringConference@d25toastmasters.org

La Quinta Conference Center

(Hwy 360 and Six Flags Rd)

825 N. Watson Rd.

Arlington TX 76011

(817) 640-4142

Special Toastmasters' rate: \$69.00 / night (For reservations before April 30, 2004).

What Do I Wear?

The Spring Conference will start with a Luau on Friday Night. Saturday, dress comfortably in business casual attire for the educational sessions, award luncheon, and business meeting. At the Saturday night banquet, dress will range from cocktail to formal wear.



Find a World of Dreams at the Spring Conference

What better way to kick off our District 25 Spring Conference than with a cruise around the world? This year's spring conference will be at La Quinta in Arlington Texas. The theme is World of Dreams. Fascinating educational sessions will be available, as well as breathtaking presentations, amazing awards, and recognitions to the District Leadership Elections during the District 25 Business meeting. Join us and Catch The Dream May 21 & 22, 2004.

Come on board and join us as we cruise to our first destination – Hawaii – Friday Night for a Luau and a Night of Comedy featuring Darren LaCroix, 2001 World Champion of Public Speaking. District 25 Table Topics Contest will showcase District 25's quick thinking, quick witted Champions in impromptu speaking.

Saturday morning we dock in Acapulco ready to receive Area and Division Governor reports where Club Officers are invited to attend. Opening Keynote features Darren LaCroix with his speech, "From Chump to Champ."

Education Sessions follow where you may select sessions from the Leadership & Motivational Track, Communication Track, and Personal Growth Track:

Nancy Starr, Candidate for Region III International Director, will provide training in "Building Membership."

Ola Joseph, Speaker and Training at Toastmasters' International Convention, will provide us with "Presentation Skills."

Michael Goforth, Alternate Winner of 2002 and 2003 International Speech Contest in District 50, will present "Personality Types: How to

Communicate With Them."

Lunch is scheduled in Italy where we will witness the Distinguished Toastmaster Ceremony, Communication and Leadership Award, Outstanding Officer Awards, as well as Special Awards and Notes of Appreciation from our District 25 leadership. General Session will feature Lark Doley, International Director for Region III. Her session is titled "Dreams Are Your Possibilities."

Closing Keynote will feature District 25's very own Sarfaraz Nazir, DTM – Alternate Contestant 2000 World Champion of Public Speaking – with his speech "If Only I Had A Dream."

There will be a business meeting starting at 3:30 PM. All Presidents and VPs Education must attend to ensure your Clubs' voice is heard. There is no fee if you plan to

attend the business meeting only. Please prepare to sign in at Credentials desk no later than 3 PM that afternoon, May 22, 2004 for voting privileges in the business meeting.

Saturday Night we port in New York wearing our finest ranging from cocktail to formal wear. Come see the cream of the crop compete as District 25's 2004 International Speech Champion. You are also invited to witness the induction of new District Leaders for the 2004-2005 Toastmaster year.

Come travel the world with us! Register today to receive the Early Bird Special of \$80 and take advantage of all the events on Friday and Saturday. Registration forms will be available soon on our District Website at www.d25toastmasters.org/SpeechContests/District.