



DISTRICT 84 TOASTMASTERS

SERVING CENTRAL AND NORTHERN FLORIDA

Volume 2, Issue 8 (February, 2022)

Synergy



Beyond the Expected: **A BOBBY BLACKMON LOVE STORY**

Story by Debby Kerr-Henry | Page 5

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District Mission

We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence.

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Synergy is a publication of Toastmasters District 84. Published once a month, the newsletter aims to inform our audience through relevant information and tools to help members and clubs to think and work creatively to achieve goals, inspire through ideas and stories that can be applied to our personal and professional lives and finally, entertain through content that is interesting and presented in a way that is fun to read.



**TOASTMASTERS
DISTRICT 84**
Serving Central & North Florida

**Empowering
individuals
through personal
and professional
development**



Carpooling Enriches the Toastmasters Journey

by District Director Debi Jo Londono, DTM; PQD Paula Summa, DTM; CGD Vickie Goodman, DTM

The District 84 Trio has been traveling the Toastmaster Highway for many years, discovering many incredible things to love along the way. We all agree that our journeys have brought immense improvement as we developed our own leadership and communication styles, became better listeners, better mentors and better people. We love that Toastmasters has pushed us to learn and improve our skills and talents, but we are especially thankful for the people we have met along the way.

Making friends, sharing stories, planning and working together with people from all walks of life is what brings joy to our hearts. Creating bonds with other Toastmasters and exchanging those friendly and caring hugs when we get together, enjoying those face to face “Post Toasties” dinners after a DEC meeting, or staying late to discuss how great an earlier event was, then talking about what we may do differently next time, give us great pleasure. It’s the people you meet while on this amazing Toastmaster journey, that make you smile, that become your “family” and that touch your heart – they are the real gifts of Toastmasters.

We love the many opportunities Toastmasters provides to be a part of something bigger than ourselves. This requires learning to work together as a team towards a common goal. All teams must take time to identify individual member responsibilities and overall team structure; we must be able to stay in our own lanes to avoid running over each other’s toes. This is particularly true in District leadership – each officer has a specific focus area and is accountable for certain goals. A leader can quickly feel overwhelmed with the stress of learning a new job and trying to get things done at the same time. While it may be important to know which lane you should travel in, we love that Toastmasters has prepared us to recognize the importance of “carpooling”- sharing ideas, experiences, laughter and working together to get the job done. Teamwork definitely makes the dream work!

We find special joy in being on a committee and working on a project together. The brainstorming sessions



From left to right: Paula Summa, Debi Jo Londono, and Vickie Goodman

help us forge a creative bond that results in creation of a mission and vision statement for our project. Along the way we learn each other’s strengths and opportunities for improvement. We get to mentor and be mentored within a safe environment.

After a few days, or maybe a few weeks... sometimes even months of planning, we enjoy the excitement of executing our plan! Watching the magic unfold is almost as much fun as all the planning. When the project is complete, we get together to discuss what went well and what could be done better the next time.

Your District Trio wants you to enjoy the high-powered, energy-filled excitement of team leadership, and there are many opportunities available:

- Chair a Contest or an Open House
- Present a Youth Leadership Project or Lead a Speechcraft
- Become an Area or Division Director
- Sponsor or Mentor a new club or Coach an existing club to success
- Be on the Annual Conference planning team
- Become a Chair for one of approximately 30 District committees or serve as committee members.

No matter what YOU love about Toastmasters, we promise that bigger adventures await, and the possibilities are endless. Join our carpool. Join the fun! ■

International President Inspired District 84 to Reach For The Stars

by Maria Martinez, DTM, Public Relations Manager



Maria Martinez

This month's focus is perfect, for everywhere I look, I find talent, wisdom, kindness and greatness in people who are also willing to share.

I was recently exposed to the January 1995 edition of The Toastmaster- the official publication of our organization. During this time, Toastmaster's very own founder, Ralph C. Smedley, acted as Editor-in-Chief. In this publication Smedley tells the story of a wise mariner who takes time to plan in order to succeed in his endeavor. In his editorial column Smedley invited us to set goals, make plans and decide the best way to get there.

Similarly, our District recently had the distinct pleasure of welcoming to our virtual stage Toastmasters International President Margaret Page. In her presentation **Reaching for the Stars: Goal Setting for Success** District 84 members and guests had the privilege of learning some goal setting strategies from this tenured leader, an entrepreneur with more than 30 years of business experience who is on a mission to build back stronger.

The action-packed presentation, which was followed by an exclusive Q&A segment, was simply inspiring and insightful. We got to hear from IP Page as she reflected on some personal and professional victories and how goal setting had helped her achieve her objectives. There was much to absorb, but some of the areas that stood out for me, as captured in several note pages, were:

- The difference of goals vs. standards
- The cause-and-effect relationship in goal setting
- The importance of teamwork
- Her 6-step process to goal setting and finally,
- The relevance of action, recognition and celebrating success.

Reaching out to others to compare notes I realized something completely unexpected. Although we all agreed it was an unforgettable presentation, I also discovered that it impacted us all differently! Here's what stood out to three District 84 Toastmasters:

★ *"She made goal setting so much more realistic by breaking down how to do it. I loved her SMARTER acronym. I was like 'why did I not think of that?' She was captivating."* — Kim Dombroski

★ *"My biggest takeaway was when she realized she was taking things (as in classes) for the sake of taking them after receiving advice from her mentor, who also encouraged her to join Toastmasters."* — Fred Bergeron

★ *"Tough question, because there were several takeaways. For personal goals, the idea of setting 100 goals and putting them in a recipe box, divided by time (short/long term) was a revelation. I would have never thought of writing out that many goals."* — Marjane Taylor



Toastmaster International President, Margaret Page, DTM, shared goal setting strategies with District 84.

In short, we all took away something different, something valuable, something relevant to ourselves and where we are in life. Maybe we are reassessing, contemplating a next phase or stage in life, business, career or in our Toastmasters journey. Maybe we just needed a little reminder that our goals are there for us to reach. Yes, we might need to get uncomfortable as we explore what is possible. Yet IP Page inspired us to reach for the stars and after her presentation we are all better equipped to succeed.

International President Page's presentation is one of numerous opportunities your District leadership is creating on our quest to enhance your Toastmasters experience. Please consider attending and sharing any of the upcoming sessions.

Which brings me back to my original statement: *Everywhere I look, I find talent, wisdom, kindness and greatness in people who are also willing to share. Thank you for being there, every time I look.* ■

A full-page photograph of Bobby Blackmon, a Black man, smiling and standing in front of a vibrant, multi-colored mural on a wooden wall. He is wearing a black cowboy hat, a bright yellow short-sleeved button-down shirt, blue jeans, a brown belt with a large silver buckle, and black cowboy boots. He has his hands in his pockets, holding a black and red marker. The mural behind him features bold, abstract shapes in yellow, red, blue, and green.

Beyond the Expected:

A BOBBY BLACKMON LOVE STORY

**Story and Photography by
Debby Kerr-Henry**

One might not guess that Bobby Blackmon owns three pairs of cowboy boots, and now a hat; but that's part of Bobby's story. To live so fully, one must love that which goes beyond the expected. Bobby loves all kinds of music, including jazz, rap, rock n' roll, and even country western.

Later, coincidentally, Bobby sat across from me at dinner, but we had little opportunity to talk. Regardless, I knew I wanted to get to know this Toastmaster. So, a few months later, I reached out and asked if I could interview him for a project I was working on. Since then, Bobby ranks as one of my all-time favorite people.

Bobby suddenly lost his sight at age five from cataracts and glaucoma, treatable conditions today, but not so much in the late '70s. His life changed in an instant, setting him on an unexpected path from the one his young mind had imagined while riding his Big Wheel around the grounds of Morning Star Baptist Church near his grandmother's home. Undoubtedly, he would grow up to be a professional football player, a Marine, and make a lasting contribution to his world. But all that faded overnight.

Bobby used to be angry over the unwelcome hand he had been dealt. At age 7 he wondered, "How am I going to accomplish my goals and dreams when I can't see?" But the more pressing question he asked was, "Why?"

Why did I have to lose my eyesight?"

Bobby is a reflective soul, seeking clarity to questions such as How? and Why?, and so, by young adulthood, he had already landed in a place of peace and acceptance. Growing up in a domestic violent home, Bobby believes that losing his sight helped him to find his way.

"How am I going to accomplish my goals and dreams when I can't see?"

Bobby Blackmon, DTM



Bobby loves to be outdoors, and often creates uplifting content with nature as the backdrop. Bobby believes in trying, knowing that sometimes things work out and sometimes they don't. But the important thing lies in the trying.

Beyond the Expected

Continued from Page 6

**Struggle has a way
of bringing forth
new strength.**

Bobby Blackmon, DTM

Mind Vision

"Do you ever get mad at God?" someone once asked Bobby while riding on a bus. "No," Bobby said. "When I was younger I did, but when I got older, I understood that it kept me from a life that wouldn't have been good for me. I was prone to violence. I loved to fight. It was my way of proving I was as good as everyone else. Because I couldn't see, I (instead) got lost in books and my imagination. It saved me."

In addition to his faith, Bobby believes in the power of choice and lives by what he has coined as "mind vision," a philosophy that doesn't need eyesight to view life positively.

"It is our choice how we see ourselves," Bobby said. "It is our choice how we decide to take our life as it is. You have to play the hand that you're dealt. We all have to do that. And whether it's a bad hand or good hand, really depends on how we think about it. It depends on our mind vision."

"Walking this path of understanding has not been and still is not always easy, but over time and many experiences, I have come to know that with the right attitude, struggle has a way of bringing forth new strength, and therefore should not always immediately be shied away from." *Mind Vision*, page 5

The Gambler

These days, in addition to Toastmasters, Bobby loves to read, write, and work out; and he loves most kinds of music, including country western. The first album he owned was Kenny Rogers'

1978 *The Gambler*, with his favorite song being the title song. We both laughed at that admission. But it's kind of suiting. "The Gambler" tells of a man on a train bound for nowhere who meets a gambler who senses the man is down on his luck by the look in his eyes. The gambler proceeds to give the man advice about how to play the hand he's dealt.

He said, "Son, I've made a life
Out of readin' people's faces
Knowin' what the cards were
By the way they held their eyes

And his face lost all expression
Said, "If you're gonna play the game, boy
You gotta learn to play it right

You've got to know when to hold 'em
Know when to fold 'em
Know when to walk away
And know when to run

Continued on Page 8, Beyond the Expected

Bobby resides in Tallahassee where he is an active member of four clubs: Early Bird, We Can Speak-Podemos Hablar, Uptown, and Transformation. Bobby proudly displays his three DTM plaques on the steps of our state capitol.



Beyond the Expected

Continued from Page 7



Bobby presenting “Turning your passion into your power” at a demonstration meeting at the City of Tallahassee. Photo by Ramdeo Seepaul.

And that’s just what Bobby has done. He has run the good race despite being visually impaired. And in the process, he has lived a life much deeper than even Kenny Rogers’ baritone voice. In addition to being the author of *Seeds to Unfolding* and *Mind Vision*, Bobby is also a songwriter, singer, choreographer, poet, and motivational and inspirational speaker. “A man who is blind can be blessed with clear vision that sees not only far and wide but also at great depth,” Bobby says in *Mind Vision*. You can learn more about Bobby at: wcblackmon.com.

Love of Toastmasters

As for Toastmasters, Bobby joined April 1, 2016, and has loved every bit of his accomplished journey. Even after just completing his third DTM award last month, he reflected on how he never dreamed he could even achieve one DTM, much less three. But his story truly has nothing to do with his list of accomplishments, but everything to do with living life to its absolute fullest by doing what he loves to do—empowering people through his love of speaking.

Thank you, Bobby Blackmon, for your “beyond the expected” service to District 84, but most importantly, for being who you are. Your stellar example continues to make a lasting contribution to your world. That piece of your young boy’s vision is still on target. ■

Bobby’s Accomplishments:

- 1 Only Toastmaster in District 84 to complete all 11 paths since the roll-out of Pathways. He accomplished this in 3 years 8 months.
- 2 Completed 2 DTMs in 2020 (one in the Legacy Program and one in Pathways).
- 3 Finished a third DTM in January of this year.
- 4 Completed the following educational awards: 2017–2018: 3; 2018–2019: 6; 2019–2020:22; 2020– 2021:22 and 2021–present: 19
- 5 Volunteers at Gavel Clubs (a Toastmaster community outreach often offered in prisons) and Driven by Destiny, a women’s club at Gadsden Correctional Facility. Bobby understands how a person can develop a mindset that lands them in prison, and thus he has a heart for taking Toastmasters to people behind bars, empowering them to find their voice and build life-applicable skills.
- 6 Served as Area and Division Director, and currently serving as Club Coach/Mentor Chair.
- 7 Served as Club Coach, Club Sponsor and Club Mentor numerous times.
- 8 Focused on community building by planning and leading Division H’s float in the Tallahassee Winter Parade and the inaugural Jeopardy events in Division H and District 84.
- 9 Semifinalist at the 2017 World Champion of Public Speaking held at Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.
- 10 Division H Mr. Inspiration



Debby Kerr-Henry, IP5

Immediate Past Area 90 Director | Creative nonfiction writer, speaker, author, and memoir coach | Connect with Debby on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/in/debbykerrhenry/).

Recognizing and Celebrating District 84 Successes

by Paula Summa, DTM, Program Quality Director

What a busy seven months we have had thus far! Let's take a moment to recognize some of our successes and accomplishments this Toastmaster year thus far:

1 Two highly successful Toastmasters Leadership Institutes (TLIs)

Listen to some of the rave reviews from attendees of this year's excellent club officer training and fantastic, interactive enrichment sessions:

- "It was well worth my time being in this excellent session."
- "This was one of the best trainings I have attended!"
- "Inspiring tips.... Great presentation!"
- "Clear, concise and useful...Easy to implement."

TLI Data Delivers Results:

- 74 clubs had 7 of 7 officers trained at our first TLI in July 2021. Congratulations to these dedicated club leaders!
- Over 70% of all club officers were trained during the first TLI round.
- 35 clubs have 7 of 7 officers trained since the 2nd TLI in January 2022 ... but we're still counting!!!
- 29 clubs have 6 officers trained since January and only need one more, and 17 clubs have 5 officers trained and only need 2 more.

Officers still have the opportunity to complete training before the Feb. 28 deadline because other districts are still offering training and are happy to have you attend. If you are one of those untrained officers, take advantage of this option to help your club excel!

District 84 needs 80% or more of our officers trained. Let's work together. WE CAN DO THIS!

2 Monthly New Member Orientations are a HIT!

Our D84 Trio and our Pathways Chair welcome new members (and seasoned members as well) to this informative session on the first Sunday of every month. Sessions explain what members can expect at club meetings, a little bit about how Toastmasters works and a guide to begin their Pathways journey. New mem-

bers are encouraged to attend, but ALL Toastmasters are invited to join this session at least once. Everyone takes home valuable information.

3 Incredible Educational Opportunities and Special Guest Speakers

Every officer can gain insight and help at the monthly *Club Coach/Mentor Forum*, and the monthly *Pathways Forum* will help members jump into the educational program. D84 has been proud of the exciting, world-class speakers and presentations brought to you by our Public Relations Team.

4 D84 Revamps our Website

An all-new **Toastmastersd84.org** was launched in July. Although it's still being enhanced, this site is chock full of important information, news blogs and so much more. We promise that this will become your hub for information!

5 Synergy Newsletter Extraordinaire!

As a reader, I know you appreciate this work of art, with beautiful photos and articles of interest, inspiration and humor from your fellow Toastmasters. Why not share the link when it's published on the 15th of each month, or point out inspirational articles to your fellow Toastmasters so they can see what they've been missing. There's always something for everyone!

Our Toastmasters year is not over yet...

Area and Division Contests are upon us. Offer to help out and be sure to attend contests, even if outside of your Area and Division. Take advantage of the Zoom platform and travel the district for contests, club visits, and more. Invite those you meet to your club.

And... don't forget to register for the **Annual D84 Conference: Time and Time Again.... Let's Travel Through Time Together**. How wonderful it will be to see one another in person again!

Let's continue to work together during these final five months. Let's share our achievements and our love for Toastmasters to finish our year stronger than ever. ■

Something Beautiful Blooms in my Toastmasters Garden

by R. Parkerson, Driven by Destiny, a women's club at Gadsden Correctional Facility

"Bottling things inside of you only causes more pain and suffering—find a release, find your freedom and liberate yourself. Release it and make way for something beautiful."

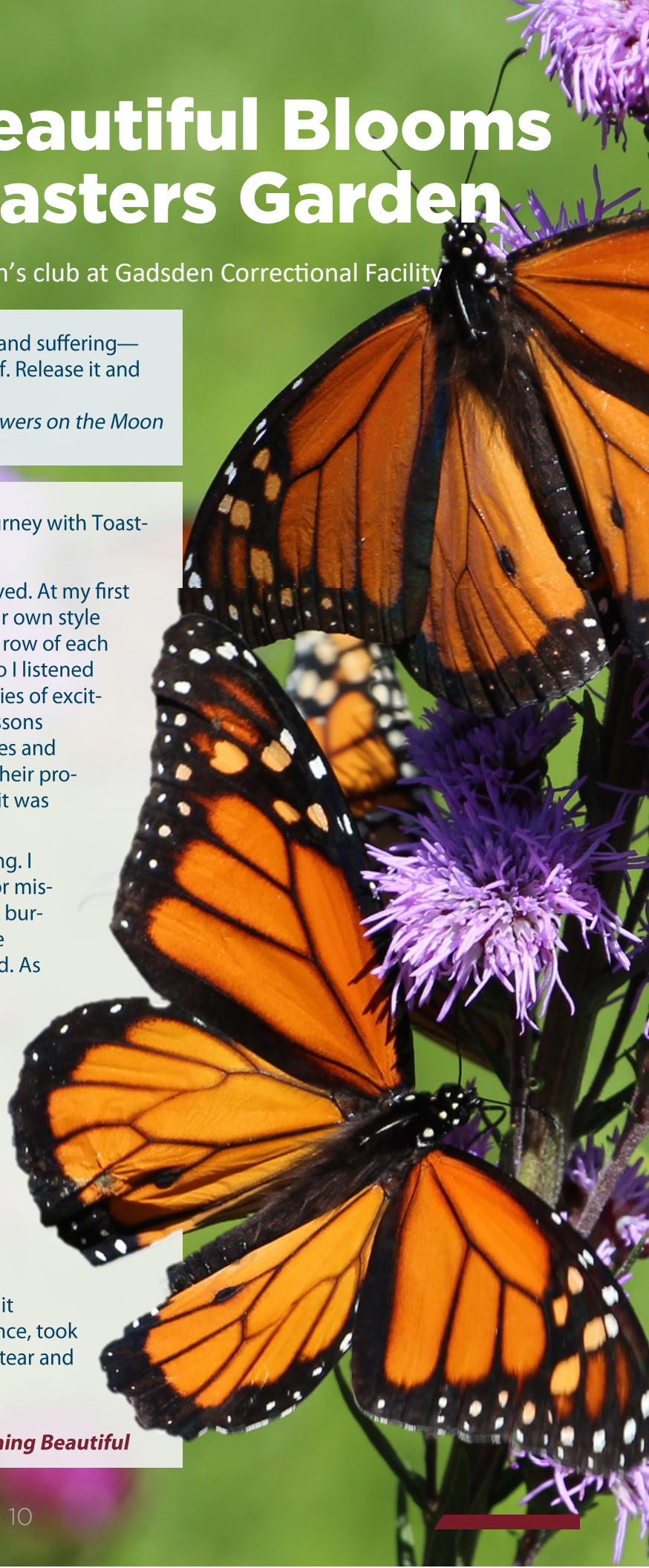
—Billy Chapata, *Flowers on the Moon*

Billy Chapata's words make me think of my journey with Toastmasters, how illuminating this has been.

I remember how I used to be quiet and reserved. At my first meetings in 2017 I noticed that everyone carried their own style with many different stories. As I sat safely in the back row of each meeting, I was surrounded by excellent speakers who I listened to and observed week after week. I absorbed life stories of exciting adventures, birthdays, holidays, tragedies and lessons learned. My club came to life right before my very eyes and ears as speeches cascaded around me. People used their projects in all manner of ways. The stage was theirs and it was amazing to watch.

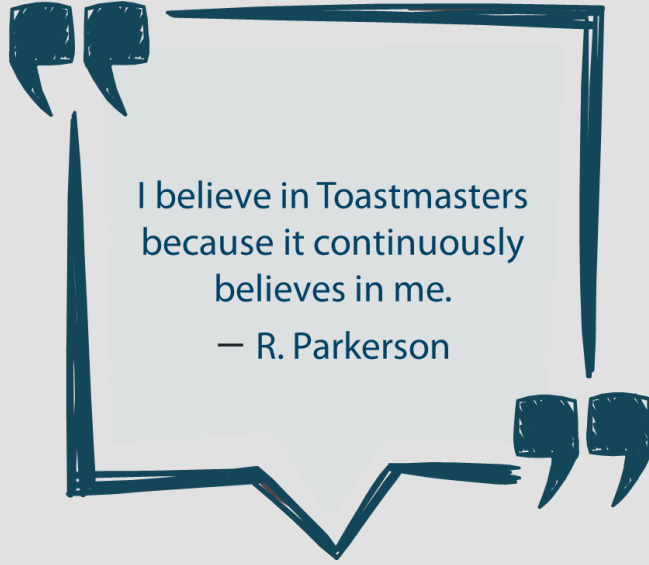
I told myself, "Just try it!" Try to do what they are doing. I rarely talked about myself or my life—not my fears or mistakes, not even my hopes or dreams. My stories were buried deep inside. However, Toastmasters ignited a fire somewhere within me that I didn't even know existed. As I began working through Toastmasters' educational program, I turned my life's challenges into speeches and a platform of my own. My fellow Toastmasters embraced me with love and compassion beyond my wildest dreams. My reservations and solitude melted away. Members nudged and pushed me to keep growing, to trust and be trusted, to keep reaching and expanding my mind. Toastmasters became my conduit. I had no choice but to let go of things bottled up inside of me. I knew if I were to grow, something inside of me had to go. We have to get rid of old things, so new ones have room of their own. Toastmasters and all of the good qualities it stands for, like respect, integrity, service, and excellence, took me in, dusted me off and clapped me through every tear and every laugh of my speeches.

Continued on Page 11, Something Beautiful



Something Beautiful

Continued from Page 10



I have learned that it is a beautiful thing to listen and learn from others.

I have learned to allow others to help me along my path.

I leave meetings feeling revived, motivated and encouraged to step towards something new and different. Nothing else in life challenges me like Toastmasters and my fellow club members.

For me personally, it is not as much “for the love of Toastmasters,” as it is “if *not* for the love of Toastmasters.”

I have developed positive characteristics and life-applicable qualities. I can listen to other people’s stories and trust them with my own. Without Toastmasters, I would never have opened up about my life and begun motivating others about how accepting life and people can be.

As I began speaking with more frequency, I began writing more and more. And who would have ever guessed: I love to write! We can express ourselves through words in endlessly creative ways.

Toastmasters has become a vital life-changing treasure. I continue to evolve with every single meeting. I believe in Toastmasters because it continuously believes in me. My life has improved beyond words and I strive to give back to our nurturing and uplifting club atmosphere. What a teachable experience this has been. Through Toastmasters I have learned it is a beautiful thing to focus on myself and grow with the help of others, and in the process I have learned to love myself. How awesome is that? ■

Share Your Love of Pathways

Four years after the introduction of Pathways in our District, we have seen an explosion of growth and development experienced by many of our members as a result. Through Pathways projects, members are developing key skills and putting them to work personally and professionally; not only building competencies but growing as confident communicators and leaders.

Has Pathways inspired you to grow? Get out of your comfort zone? If so, we want to hear from you about how Pathways has benefited you and those around you.

Share Your Love of Pathways! [Tell us your love story by clicking on this link.](#)

Terms and conditions:

- All entries are due no later than March 1, 2022.
- The first person to submit will win a \$10 Amazon gift card
- All entries* will be entered into a drawing for one of two \$25 Amazon gift cards
- The drawing will take place after March 1st – the winner will be notified via email.
- One entry per person

Disclaimer: Your information may be used for District 84 uses including but not limited to District 84’s promotional material, podcast, newsletter, social media, and website. You may be contacted to add information or to clarify your story for the betterment of our district Toastmasters. Our purpose is to support our members in the pursuit of personal and professional development. ■

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TOASTMASTERS
PATHWAYS
 — learning experience —

3 Things I Love About My Home Club

by Serena Piper



Serena Piper

My 3-year Toastmasters anniversary is coming up in a few months, and I've been reflecting on how I've grown since first joining. I realized that personal growth would not have been possible without first feeling comfortable enough to be vulnerable. My home club's supportive culture played an important role in my level of comfort, and in turn helped me achieve "greater self-

confidence and personal growth." Here are the three things that I love most about my club:

1 We Talk Outside of Toastmasters

Most of us are friends on Facebook, commenting with a friendly word or heart emoji when someone posts about a milestone or a challenging time.

We also make a point of taking time before and after meetings to check in with each other. Team building has never been my favorite thing, but a recent gathering at our VP's house for a backyard campfire with delicious s'mores and a hilarious game of cornhole has convinced me they don't have to be awful.

2 We Laugh Off the Mishaps

When I first joined Toastmasters, I was under the impression that it was a "serious" club and I needed to be on my most professional behavior. I worried that any and all of my mistakes would count against me. Over time I learned that our club was actually relaxed and encouraging, while still upholding high standards.

Whether we're commiserating over Zoom technical difficulties or it's one of those meetings where we mix up the agenda, we laugh it off. It's much easier to be myself and do my best when I know that fellow members will embrace the fun. But don't just take my word for it, [click here to check out my club's first 2022 meeting bloopers video](#). Needless to say, we kicked off the new year with a few mishaps.

3 We Have Officers Who Care

Our Vice President sends out the meeting agenda each Sunday as a heads up to who is doing what for the next meeting. She prefaced a recent email by including the email addresses of members who hadn't been at meetings recently because of personal hardships.

I'm proud to be part of a club whose members look out for each other. It's not a closeness I expected from Toastmasters, and yet it's a welcome and pleasant surprise.

As we move through the year, consider what three things you love about your club as well as what three things might make it better. What kind of "supportive and positive" environment, as our mission statement says, does your club project? And how do guests feel when visiting? Chances are the ambiance that makes you feel most comfortable is what you want your club to offer and what will help your club embrace other members. ■

So You've Joined Toastmasters.
Now What?

New Member Orientation with
the Trio and Pathways Chair

1st Sunday of Each Month
7:00pm ET on Zoom
Meeting ID: 962 7944 2148
Password: NewMembers

PUBLIC RELATIONS
Tips & Resources

With Toastmasters International
Public Relations Strategist:
Dennis Olson

March 3rd at 7 pm EST <https://zoom.us/j/3381333813>

Letter of Gratitude to Toastmasters

by Sandy DePrimo, DTM



Sandy DePrimo

It was 6:45 pm on a Tuesday night when I joined the Toast of Celebration Toastmasters Zoom meeting. I was assigned the Table Topics Master role. Members began to join the meeting and I noticed that there were two guests in attendance. I thought, "What can I do to help these two guests understand the impact that Toastmasters could have on a member's life and/or

career?" We gaveled down, the speeches were delivered, and the time came for Table Topics. I asked the group, one by one, "If you were to write a letter to Toastmasters, what would it say?" The responses I received were positively beautiful.

Eric responded: "Dear Toastmasters, thank you for giving me the courage to stand up and speak with confidence. You've given me the ability to attend meetings and conferences around the world, and offered evaluations with positive learning tips."

Jeff followed: "Dear Toastmasters, you have been the driving factor in defining my purpose. You helped me find the need to inspire and uplift others. I am grateful for the leadership training and the ability to speak in front of an audience."

Grace stated: "Toastmasters has made me more articulate and confident. It has given me the ability to approach other people in social settings. A year ago that would not have been possible."

Caiden talked about how Toastmasters brought her out of her shell and gave her the ability to socialize. It taught her how "not" to be shy.

Margaret has had opportunities to attend in-person Toastmaster meetings around the world. Her latest was in Budapest. Toastmasters has helped her leave her comfort zone and try new things such as using her own photography as part of a speech.

Before Toastmasters, **George** was afraid to speak in meetings. He would sit in the back and stay silent. Since joining Toastmasters, he has become a Distinguished Toastmaster, taken on district roles, and is working on a podcast series.

When it was time for our two guests to speak, I posed a different question. I asked, "How do you think Toastmasters can help you?" Once again, I was pleasantly surprised by the answers.

Deborah told us that she loved the confidence in the speakers, the diversity in the club, and the ability to learn in a positive environment. Here she feels welcome and at home with the club.

Lawrence wants to improve his leadership skills and gain the confidence to speak in front of others. He feels that Toastmasters is the forum to help him obtain his goals. He is already on the journey to learn and grow.

If I had to answer the question, it would read like this:

Dear Toastmasters,

Thank you for the continued support in my learning process. I am grateful for the continuous growth opportunities with the club and the district. Thank you for picking me up when I fall and creating endless memories along the way. Without you, I would have never been an Area Director, Division Director of the Year, Education Chair, and Conference Chair. You continue to provide growth and improvement with positivity and care."

We all have a reason for joining Toastmasters. We all have a journey ahead of us. There are times when we forget that part of our journey, to take stock of what we are grateful for and how far we have traveled. When the time comes to stop and look back, remember one question, "If you were to write a letter to Toastmasters, what would it say?" ■

Toastmasters/Rotary Alliance Reignited

by Cathy and Richard Hoar, DTM, Rotary Alliance Co-Chairs



C. and R. Hoar

Have you ever felt discouraged because you've taken on a task and it seems like you're not gaining any momentum? Have you ever been disappointed because you are not reaching a desired goal? Or have you ever felt defeated because you don't seem to know where to go for help?

Cathy and I were feeling this way until Maria Martinez, District Public Relations Manager, put us in contact with Nicole Hamm, a Rotaract and Toastmaster. She helped reignite our enthusiasm for the Toastmasters/Rotary Alliance by showing us that one person (or in our case two) can make a difference. She reminded us that District 84's resources are at our disposal. All we needed to do is ask. So, we're asking. **Will you help us make a difference?**

- If you are a Toastmaster and a Rotarian, we would love to have a conversation with you about Rotary. It is such a wonderful organization, and we want to learn how it has impacted your life.
- If you know a Rotarian, we would love to speak to

them. A personalized introduction could open a door of opportunity that could impact other people's lives because you helped make that connection.

- Visit a Rotary club and let us know about the experience. We would love to share your experience with the District and create enthusiasm and education for the alliance.

According to Rotary International, the goal of Rotaracts (18-30 years old) and Rotarians (older than 30) is to make a difference in their communities. To assist with this community to impact goals, Rotary International is working with Toastmasters to provide opportunities to grow networks while developing leadership and communication skills by enhancing the membership experience through personal and professional development opportunities.

The Toastmasters/Rotary Alliance is a grassroots effort which has the potential of spreading across District 84. We want to finish this Toastmasters' year feeling excited, energized and elated because we did all we could do to make a difference in the lives of our fellow Toastmasters and Rotarians. We welcome your help.

For more information about Toastmasters' alliance with Rotary or to share your Rotarian stories, please contact Richard at richard.hoar@oarelectric.com ■



A Strong Strategic Alliance

In May 2019, two long-standing organizations, Toastmasters International and Rotary International, formed a unique strategic alliance, drawing from the strength of their many similarities and complementary differences. The opportunity for Toastmasters members is primarily to establish fellowship and make new connections, contribute more to communities, and potentially elevate clubs.

Rotary members have the opportunity to develop new skills and may ask to visit Toastmasters clubs or receive evaluations. Toastmasters also developed eight educational courses for Rotarians and Rotaractors, available on Rotary International's Learning Center, which can be accessed by their members in nine languages.

A Few of My Favorite Toastmasters Things

by Julie Salgo, Retired Learning and Development Consultant



Julie Salgo

I love to learn but my memory is finite, which is why I created a “Lessons Learned” document when I started to visit different clubs or attended various training sessions. I now have several pages and the list continues to multiply. Here are a few of my favorites, collected while ZOOMING around the world:

- Scripps Teasers Club in San Diego, celebrating their Members at their January meeting, gave out **unique awards** like “Most Notable Newcomer”, “Mentor of the Year”, “Rising Star”, and “Motivational Champion”, followed by two-minute presentations from all members to share their growth in 2021 and how they plan to win in 2022.
 - It is not enough to develop the courage to talk. We also must **learn when to stop talking** - a skill that also comes with practice. Remain within the allotted time limits, and when you are Table Topics Master, talk as little as possible.
 - Only those who used the Word of the Day and stayed within the time limit can be voted for Best Speaker, Best Evaluator, or Best Table Topics winner.
 - **Send out the agenda before the meeting and include the Word of the Day** and its definition to enrich member vocabulary and help prepare for the meeting.
 - Another cheeky new acronym: We must conquer HQC (Home Quarantine Challenges).
 - **Have a theme for each meeting** (e.g., “Life is a balancing act”; “Pearls of Wisdom”), and when it is your turn to speak as a functionary, share your idea about that theme.
 - **A quiz master** checks at the end of the meeting if attendees paid enough attention by asking questions about phrases or facts shared during the meeting.
 - Find Your Funny Club calls on the **Wizard of Ahs** to report those naughty filler words.
 - We are kidding with this terminology: Evil Grammarian – who pays attention and recites most of the good and not-so-good use of grammar.
 - **Test your memory:** Quote speech titles from past meetings, and ask members to guess whose speech it was. If it was your speech, throw everyone off by naming somebody else or say nothing. The member with the most correct answers wins.
 - **Use book titles for Table Topics** for a variety of subjects.
 - **Use Table Topics questions around TM experience:** 1st visit, 1st Icebreaker speech, 1st Timer role, 1st Evaluation, 1st Grammarian role, etc.
 - **Pay attention to the importance of your breath and posture** in delivering a strong speech. As your breath weakens, so does your speech. According to guest speaker Ruff-Kiss Agnes, who teaches speaking skills for performers at Budapest University, you can improve your breathing by using the simple exercise: counting as high as possible on a single breath.
 - **“Speaking is easy, speaking well is a challenge.”**
 - **Assign meeting roles using <https://wheelofnames.com/>**
 - **“The 5 Pillars of Public Speaking”** was written by Toastmaster **Kyle Murtagh**, EU speech winner from Scotland.
 - **Time everyone who speaks**, including General Evaluator, Toastmaster of the Day, etc.
 - The General Evaluator can evaluate all the functionaries plus the whole meeting.
 - **Organize joined meetings with another club.**
 - **Remember: We never have to struggle alone. When we are stuck, we should call for help. We are wasting time if we don’t.**
- I wonder which idea you will be able to adapt to your club meetings. ■

From Toastmasters Meetings to Date Nights

by Pim Parpart, DTM, Immediate Past District Director

It started at the Collins Toastmasters Club in Division B. Who would have thought it would turn into a regular Date Night?

Pim and Ron worked for the same company that supported a Toastmasters Club onsite.

Pim says, "I joined Toastmasters because the company was paying for it." The real reason was that her boss told her to, (her English was that bad), and not to mention that she got an extra half-hour off for lunch (with pay) one day a week.

Ron says, "I joined Toastmasters because nobody can say no to Pim."

Soon, Pim went straight to being the Club President without having ever served in any other officer roles. You can blame Lisa Rider for that.

She later served as Area Governor three times. (What was she thinking?) She also served as a Division B Governor.

Ron started serving our District as an Area Governor when the Division Governor (Loretta Sandy) needed a replacement two weeks into the term one year. Since he had missed the district training, the District Governor (Margaret Wan) trained him one-on-one in an afternoon. Ron said: "My brain hurt...for days, but I could recite the training manual in my sleep!"

He wasn't really very good at it, so he served as Area Governor again. (What was he thinking?)

There was a need to start a new club, (Isn't there always?), and Loretta Sandy chartered South Beach Toastmasters Club, "The Most Fun Club on the Beach" with Pim and Ron as charter members. The club met at a library in Melbourne Beach, until they got kicked out when the library started closing at night due to budget cuts.

We ended up moving our meetings to a family restaurant nearby. Ron got to take Pim out to dinner and attend a Toastmasters club meeting at the same time. Pim's love of the "Food Club" was born!

After that restaurant went defunct, the club moved to a small pizza place on the beach. Dinner dates just got cheaper.

Soon, we moved again, this time to Beef O' Brady's where the South Beach Club has been thriving for over ten years now. Dinner date food got so much better!

Meanwhile, Ron became District 47's Sergeant at Arms (and A/V guy). He thought he was a hot shot hanging out with the District Governor (Loretta Sandy) and being on the DEC. It was then that he was asked to run for the District Trio as the Lt. Governor of Marketing (now CGD). Dinner dates got much better (and more frequent).

Then District 47 split and we became District 84 on July 1, 2008 (D84 is the better half), with Dave Hollingshead as the first District 84 Governor. Ron became Lt. Governor of Education and Training that year (now PQD), and Pim was the Conference Chair of the first D84 Conference. Aloha! (More great food and the head table!)

The following year Ron became the second District 84 Governor. Dinner dates just kept getting better...and more frequent!

Pim waited until she retired to follow Ron's leap onto the District Trio and became District 84 Director in 2020-2021.

Today, at least 90% of our friends are Toastmasters and the rest are sick and tired of hearing about it.

Together we formed two more clubs, Florida International Talkers, which meets at MeeMaw's BBQ, (Food Rules) and Peace Talkers Club which doesn't have food (yet).

As most District Directors do, we both gained at least 20 pounds during our years on the TRIO.

Today we belong to three clubs together, two of which are at restaurants. Toastmasters' nights are still Date Nights! No cooking required! ■



Past District Governor Ron Parpart (2009 – 2010) and Past District Director Pim Parpart (2020 – 2021) experienced another date night at the 2019 District Conference.

Congratulations

All seven Club Officers were trained during both rounds of TLI in 30 clubs, meeting one of the requirements for the Golden Gavel Award. Current as of 2/10/2022.

1. 5-Star Toastmasters
2. Accelerated Pacesetters
3. ACE Advanced Toastmasters Club
4. Articulators Club
5. Bartow Toastmasters Club
6. Central Florida Facilitators
7. Driven by Destiny Toastmasters
8. Early Bird Ocala
9. Find Your Funny Toastmasters
10. Florida International Talkers
11. Garnet & Gold Toastmasters Club
12. Girl Talk Toastmasters Club
13. Heartland Talk of the Town
14. Lakeland Toastmasters
15. Leadership Toastmasters
16. Let's Talk Toastmasters Club
17. Metro Palm Bay Toastmasters
18. Oviedo Toastmasters
19. Plant City Toastmasters
20. Sensational Saturday Speakers
21. South Beach Toastmasters Club
22. Speak Up America Club
23. The Talking Mocs (Fl. Southern College)
24. Titusville Toastmasters
25. Toastmasters of St Augustine
26. Toast-Stars Club
27. Trailblazers Toastmasters Club
28. Twilite Club
29. Winter Park Toastmasters Club
30. Wyndham Easy Speakers

Additional Training Opportunities

You may attend another District's training to receive the training credit, but you must ensure the other District's PQD contacts [Paula Summa](#) to confirm your attendance by March 15, 2022.

Date/Time	District	Registration	PQD
Tue, Feb 15, 5:00 - 9:00pm CST	District 35	Register here	Jennifer Kibicho
Sat, Feb 19, 9:00 - 12:00pm CST	District 77	Register here	Rontario Hicks
Sat, Feb 19, 9:00 - 1:00pm CST	District 106	Register here	Gopu Shrestha
Mon, Feb 28, 5:30 - 8:30pm CST	District 106	Register here	Gopu Shrestha
Mon, Feb 28, 7:00 - 10:15pm CST	District 55	Register here	Livya Mitchell

Seven of Seven Training Incentives

Seven of seven club officers trained during the first and second round TLI – receive a \$10 Toastmasters gift certificate from District 84. [Click here for the complete list of Clubs eligible for the training credit.](#)

Notes: All seven club officers must be trained at the TLIs or primary Division Make-up Training. Training beyond the division will not count for the incentive.

Time and Time Again...

District 84 Annual Conference May 13-14, 2022

Embassy Suites by Hilton
Kyngs Heath Road Kissimmee

REGISTER HERE



Word Search Puzzle

by Julie Salgo, Enigmatologist

To qualify for **District 84 Golden Gavel Award**, each club must achieve the following:

1. President's Distinguished by April renewal
2. All seven Club Officers trained at both TLI rounds
3. Two members complete Moment of Truth training at TLI
4. Three members earn Triple Crown Award
5. Two members earn Club Ambassador Award
6. Smedley Award or Talk Up Toastmasters Award
7. Conduct two "Moments of Truth" programs at your club

How many words will you find for the following 10 Quarterly Club Goals?



E	B	O	E	H	U	T	K	L	G	T	C	G	G	B
X	L	M	F	C	C	Z	R	A	N	S	X	N	Y	E
E	O	E	R	F	N	E	V	A	L	E	I	D	F	S
C	E	Y	C	M	I	E	E	M	I	T	D	X	U	U
U	T	L	B	T	L	C	R	P	E	N	T	L	W	O
T	E	S	V	C	I	M	E	E	S	O	I	U	O	H
I	S	L	A	O	G	O	M	R	F	C	L	N	G	G
V	T	M	S	Y	I	H	N	T	Q	N	U	X	G	L
E	R	E	Y	E	D	U	C	A	T	I	O	N	A	L
O	U	M	O	M	E	N	T	S	U	E	N	C	B	D
D	T	Y	P	O	L	A	W	E	N	E	R	Q	K	P
V	H	L	E	C	Y	E	E	T	T	I	M	M	O	C
H	A	S	N	S	U	C	C	E	S	S	I	K	L	X
N	S	C	N	R	Y	L	R	A	E	Y	S	N	T	C
S	A	R	F	B	K	U	A	G	Z	O	R	N	Y	Y

Committee
Conference
Contest
Dues
Educational
Election

Executive
Gavel
Goals
Golden
House
Meeting

Moments
Officer
Open
Plan
Renewal
Speech

Success
Training
Truth
Yearly

What's Happening in District 84?

Talk Up Toastmasters Membership Building Program

Program Dates: February 1 – March 31



add five new, dual or reinstated members to your roster within the contest dates to qualify.

Earn a recognition ribbon for your banner and special discount code for your club

District 84 Club Coach & Mentor Forum

With: WC "Bobby" Blackmon

March 7th

8:00 PM

This month's highlights:

"How to Strengthen Your Club"

Let's talk about ways to elevate your club, reestablish structure, and other proven ways to strengthen membership.



TOASTMASTERSD84.ORG

Meeting ID 847 0417 6502
Passcode 318989

Share Your Love of Pathways

Has Pathways inspired you to grow?
Get out of your comfort zone?

If so, we want to hear from you!



Tell us your story! We are looking for stories to help members in their pursuit of personal and professional growth. The first person to participate will receive a \$10 gift card. All participants will be entered to win one of two \$25 gift cards to Amazon. Entries due by 3/1
Submit your entry today: <https://bit.ly/3IPzOSB>

For more info please contact Pathways Chair, Rachael Assignon

toastmastersd84.org

Monthly Sessions

Learn how PATHWAYS is the companion on your Toastmasters journey!

Zoom ID: 853 1202 4512
Passcode: 448672

17th of every month at 7 pm ET

February focus:

Base Camp Managers

March focus:

Assisting new members

April focus:

Open Mic Night:
Bring your questions

TOASTMASTERS
PATHWAYS
— learning experience —



Toastmasters D84

New Episodes & Series:

- The Birth of a Conference
- The Value of Toastmasters

Coming soon:
"It's Contest Season" &
"Find Your Mojo"

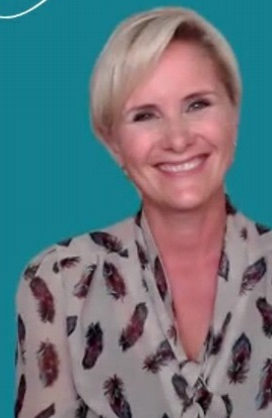


Your Hosts:
John, Leslie & DeeJae

Pick up your pen and

write
a winning story

Verity Price, 2022 World Champion of Public Speaking shared stories, anecdotes, and tips and tricks on how to write your own story...and winning speech. If you missed it, [click here to subscribe to our YouTube channel](#) to watch the recording.





<https://www.toastmastersd84.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/toastmastersd84/>

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