

Synergy

DISTRICT 84 TOASTMASTERS
SERVING CENTRAL AND NORTHERN FLORIDA
Volume 2, Issue 9 (March 2022)



ACHIEVING CLUB EXCELLENCE

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Dr. Ed Jackson of 5 Star Toastmasters Club at the lectern during a hybrid meeting.
Photo by Cessy Meacham, PM5

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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**



Keep The Momentum Rolling Into The Final Quarter

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

"Momentum is the strength or force gained by motion or by a series of events." Miriam Webster Dictionary

We are on the downhill side of our Toastmasters year, hoping that the efforts we have taken to build club strength will pay off with enough momentum to finish the year strong. But why not give that momentum some additional pushes to really get the ball rolling? Here are some thoughts from our D84 Trio.

District Director Debi Jo Londono: For me, momentum is a result of consistency. Tony Robbins said, "It is not what we do once in a while that shapes our lives, it is what we do consistently."

Creating momentum starts by taking one small step at a time.

1. Decide the outcome you want.
2. Make a to-do list of actions needed to get there.
3. Schedule time to take those actions.

Small steps allow us to become more comfortable with the activities, while we feel more productive checking off accomplishments. Just by taking a single step down the path towards our goal, we begin building momentum. And taking more small steps builds more momentum. Consistency is the key to getting results.

My favorite way of building momentum is to work with a team. Once the desired outcome is identified, each team member can assume a specific responsibility. Working with a team creates accountability and makes reaching goals so much easier.

As a Toastmaster, you are part of an experienced and talented family that helps you through all of these steps. Find your team and have fun.

Program Quality Director Paula Summa: When I think of building momentum, I think of building up our energy; renewing the vigor that we initially started with for that last "push" we need to get the job done during these last few months of the current TM year. Our goals are in sight and we are willing to work harder to accomplish them before July 1.

We are all on this Toastmasters journey together, and the District 84 leadership and committee chairs are here to help you find the route that works best for you.



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

Membership committees offer regular workshops and are available to answer your questions. Our Club Extension Chair can help if you want to start a new club, and the Speechcraft/Youth Leadership programs can help build club membership. And don't forget all of the resources available on our Toastmastersd84.org website, the TI website and our Synergy newsletter. Reach out to any member of our leadership team to help provide you with that extra little push to get you across the finish line!

Club Growth Director Vickie Goodman: Momentum is a great example of the saying, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Momentum requires specific, measurable action that builds on another action in such a way that we can feel the excitement of our progress and our victory is within sight. When we all work together, with specific goals in mind, we begin to feel the momentum in our club experience, the excitement and fun of seeing success bloom all around us.

At this time of the Toastmasters year, some of our original goals may seem out of sight. Out of sight is not the same as unachievable. Gather your team to ensure that you are all working towards the same goals. Celebrate your successes. Focus your energy on creating purposeful actions to achieve the ultimate success of great meetings, fulfilled and valued members, and attracting guests. Although individually great, these actions combined create incredible momentum, excitement and a clear vision of those goals that are well within your sight. ■

Building Momentum Through Communication

by Maria Martinez, DTM, Public Relations Manager



Maria Martinez

As we enter the final quarter of the Toastmasters year, I have to pause to reflect: How are we doing in the pursuit of the goals we set for ourselves last July?

Tony Robbins said, *"The most important thing you can do to achieve your goals is to make sure that as soon as you set them, you immediately begin to create momentum."*

Mo.men.tum – the impetus gained by a moving object or quantity of motion of a moving body, measured as a product of its mass and velocity.

If there was ever a time to build (or to rebuild) momentum, it is now. With only a few months left this Toastmasters year, it's imperative we all jump aboard to ensure we reach the goals we set for ourselves, our Clubs, and our District. Are you one of the many, blaming your lack of motivation or enthusiasm on external circumstances created by the pandemic? "We're tired," "We're 'Zoomed' out," "We've lost our venue," are just a few examples. Rather than be a victim of circumstance, why not create new circumstances by helping your team focus on the advantages of your club and creating an exciting club atmosphere where members are valued and meetings are irresistible, so fellow members want to STAY and prospective members want to JOIN.

We cannot afford to remain the best kept secret and we certainly don't want our existing members to lose their connection to the value our clubs can provide. The secret to preventing this? Communication. I suggest a solid, two-prong communication strategy to get the results we want:

1 Internal Communications – This is the dynamic, fluid interaction that is needed within your Club; the regular practices and activities to prepare for meetings, ensuring people sign up for roles; the communication of last minute changes and more.

Look at your club's primary method of communication.

Is it still working for your members? Many clubs still rely heavily on email communications as well as Free Toast Host and Easy-Speak. More clubs, including my own, utilize SMS (texts) and instant messaging applications like Signal and WhatsApp.

Best Practice: Poll your group to identify and honor their communication preferences and you'll have better success at getting their attention, engagement, and buy-in.

2 External Communications or Outreach– These are the efforts we make to reach our non-Toastmasters audience. Although marketing and public relations tasks may fall primarily on the VPPR, every member should be inviting others to every meeting.

Best Practice: Get all members to take ownership of some aspect or way to get the word out. For example: As the VPPR or PR committee creates social events or other collateral material, members must support the efforts with the typical "like, comment, and share." Why? Social media works best when it is meaningful and shared. If we all take the lead in sharing freely what our clubs create and post, not only do we see it, but our friends, family and colleagues do as well.

Finally, the most secret ingredient to successful outreach: *Personal Invitation*. Do not underestimate the power of this ingredient. People are more likely to attend a meeting or learn more about our organization if someone they know invites them, is there to welcome them, and introduces them to other people who, they discover, are just like them.

We still have time to achieve those goals. We may have lost a little speed over the past couple of years, but the value of Toastmasters remains clear. It's time to pick up speed as we move forward to the end of this year. Let's be assertive and proactive as we share our stories in compelling ways. Let's rethink our *internal* and *external communication*, building momentum and excitement for the clubs we love. ■

Club Excellence — The Only Way to Succeed!

by Vickie Goodman, DTM, Club Growth Director

Highlights from the Achieving Club Excellence Panel Discussion, conducted by International President-Elect Matt

“High club quality is demonstrated by clubs that encourage and celebrate member achievement, provide a supportive and fun environment, and offer a professionally organized meeting with variety. In those clubs, officers are trained in all aspects of club quality to ensure that members have access to a formal mentoring program, are provided evaluations that help them grow, and are motivated to achieve their goals.”

What a mouthful! However, when I take time to dissect this definition of club excellence, I can't help but wonder how many of these attributes are demonstrated at my club meetings. How about your club(s)?

In the recent TI sponsored presentation, “Achieving Club Excellence,” Toastmasters International President-Elect Matt Kinsey used this definition as a launching pad for the discussion. I found myself amazed by many of the insights and inspired by the creative ideas of the panelists, who came from all around the world. Some of the highlights may inspire you, as well.

MENTORSHIP is the lifeblood of every club. If you don't agree, it's probable that your club does not have an active mentorship program. Early assignment of a mentor makes a new member feel valued, particularly if it follows a discussion about the member's goals. It is important for members to feel important, to feel they are engaged and helping others. This helps all members become a part of the mission.

Mentoring must be community-focused, helping members build their skills to meet their needs outside of the club – in their personal, professional, and social community.

Active mentorship requires a periodic health check. Someone, maybe the Immediate Past President or VPE, must be assigned to reach out to see how mentor-mentee relationships are going. It is important that clubs establish a Mentor Program with accountabil-

ity. When you see a mentor-mentee program not working, you can take action and change the assignment. It's ok to change mentors to get the best relationship possible.

How many times do we assign mentors and hope it works out, or plan things and hope they will become a reality? **Hope is not a strategy.** Accountability allows you to take mitigating actions along the way; to make course corrections to ensure our goals are met. Have mentors follow up at least monthly and encourage active participation to engage everyone. In fact, have every member assigned to work with a mentor and change it up on a quarterly basis.

MAKE MEETINGS EVENTS! Is your club meeting a venue for fun and interest? Is it impactful, allowing members to take away tools that will enable them to remove boring meetings from their lives both inside and outside the club? If your members are declaring burnout, work together to enhance whatever medium you are using – virtual, in-person, or hybrid. Toastmasters should use their skills, or practice new skills, to change the game, change the mindset, and change the culture!

The landscape in business has changed and we must respond to this changing environment. Rather than complain, capitalize on the virtual format. Use it as an avenue to elevate your members' professional game. Many people are called upon to facilitate a meeting, to provide an impromptu report or a reaction to something throughout their workday. Create valuable content for people to follow on social media, based on public speaking, leadership, or organizations, to help people grow.

BRING IN NEW MEMBERS: Without change, we all stagnate and get stale. New members bring new energy, create new interest, and challenge all of us to teach and mentor, leading to success for everyone involved.

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Club Excellence

Continued from Page 5

How do you make guests feel welcome so they feel they fit in with the group? Think of your meeting as a party. Many of us have received generic invitations to parties or events. Perhaps a party at work, or something you heard about through the grapevine or online. You could go, but most of us do not feel compelled to do so. After all, who will miss us if we don't show?

Now think about that personal invitation you received. "Please come. I know you'll enjoy it and I'm really looking forward to seeing you there." Suddenly your presence has value. You might even be missed if you don't show. That personal touch makes you feel that you are going to meet a particular person, not just to attend an event with a group you do not know. Inviting guests to your club meeting is exactly the same. Invite them personally, assure them they will enjoy the meeting, tell them you are looking forward to seeing them, and welcome them when they arrive!

After the meeting, ask guests to sit with you or join you in a breakout room to provide additional information, answer questions and ASK THEM TO JOIN – "Would you like to be a part of our group?" Remember, they come because they have a need, but if nobody offers them the option, they will never join. Someone needs to say, "Let's get you started!"

Toastmasters clubs are not one size fits all. Club excellence requires us to find the best ways to communicate with all members; to show with our actions that we are developing our skills in all avenues of communication in order to become better leaders and better people. ■

On February 16, 2022, Toastmasters leaders hosted a webinar to discuss what club excellence looks like in our current environment and shared strategies to help your club add and retain members. Click below to watch the webinar.

Introducing
Panel of Experts

Achieving Club Excellence:
A candid conversation about achieving excellence in clubs

Panel of Experts:
Matt Kinsey, Gianna Abao, Darryle Brown, Bhakisisa Ngomane

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

Tips for Quality Club Meetings

- 1 Always have several speeches, exciting Table Topics, and a theme
- 2 Whether online or in-person, arrive 5-20 minutes early and have a banner or customized virtual background visible so those coming in know they are in the right place. Appropriate music for members can set the tone or create an atmosphere.
- 3 Greet everyone as they arrive.
- 4 Virtual mediums challenge those speaking to be more engaging and animated so everyone stays "tuned in." Accept that challenge.
- 5 Hold games incentivized with prizes to engage members during the meeting
- 6 Follow up with those missed: Phone to check up and tell them they were missed to truly connect to members. Members will want to renew if they feel like they are important and their fellow members notice when they are not present.
- 7 Visit other clubs and bring back ideas to boost club energy and interest: "I visited another club and this is what they did and it worked...."



Vickie Goodman, DTM

District 84 Club Growth Director. Connect with Vickie on [LinkedIn](#).

New Normal, New Challenges: Strengthening Club Membership While Transitioning from Virtual to Hybrid Meetings

by Kristine Totanes



Kristine Totanes

Bringing new members into your Toastmasters club and maintaining your membership base isn't easy by any stretch, but doing so in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic (and maybe even the post-pandemic future) comes with its own set of challenges.

If your club is like other Toastmasters clubs, it has probably seen a drop in membership and attendance since the pandemic started.

Either members, especially long-term ones used to in-person meetings, have refused (or been unable) to shift to virtual meetings, or members have faced pandemic-related challenges, e.g. job loss, death in the family, health issues.

As unfortunate as this is however, know that your club is not alone. In fact, many clubs around the world, not just in District 84, have experienced similar challenges. This is why this list of tried-and-tested ways was compiled for your club to bring in new members and maintain membership.

WAYS TO ENTICE NEW MEMBERS

- 1 Hold events that can potentially attract new members.** An obvious example would be hosting an [open house meeting](#), which can be an excellent way to bring new people on board. Other options include conducting [Speechcraft](#), which, in a nutshell, is a public speaking crash course taught by experienced Toastmasters, and participating in [membership-building contests](#).
- 2 Use every opportunity to promote your club.** The Toastmasters experience doesn't end when you exit the door (or sign out of Zoom). Once you become a member, you take on a significant amount of responsibility that includes spreading the word about your club wherever you go. You can do this by, for example, distributing promotional materials at community

events or giving short presentations about Toastmasters at company seminars.

- 3 Take advantage of social media.** Your Vice President of Public Relations may be the one in charge of all your club's social media campaigns, but that doesn't mean you can't help expand your club's online presence. Easy ways to achieve this include liking, commenting on, and sharing your club's social media posts.

WAYS TO MAINTAIN MEMBERSHIP

- 1 Assign mentors to new members.** Not only do mentors guide new members in their journey as Toastmasters, but they also help make them feel important and welcome in the club. This is important for any member, but it's especially important for new members who usually are not as familiar with the ins and outs of the organization and their specific club as more seasoned members.
- 2 Get all members involved.** After all, the more involved members are—both veterans and beginners, the more they'll value their club and their role within it. So, make them feel valuable as an integral part of your club and Toastmasters as a whole.
- 3 Forge a strong sense of community.** This point ties in with the previous two. Guide new members along the way and make them feel welcome and needed. Whenever a member achieves a new feat (whether Toastmasters related or not), congratulate and celebrate with them. On the other hand, if someone, for whatever reason, is feeling nervous or discouraged, lift them up and reassure them.

As you can see, it's entirely possible to turn your once-fledgling Toastmasters club into a busy, thriving one. Just follow the above tips, and your club will be well on its way to achieving excellence. ■

Correctional Facility Club Used Creativity to Navigate Pathways

by **K. Copeland, President, Driven by Destiny**

Driven by Destiny Toastmasters is located within a correctional facility; members are incarcerated women, not staff.

Did you catch that? A correctional facility. Hosting an official Toastmasters club in a correctional facility makes some things easier and some things harder. Communication is often easier through word of mouth. If we need to hold an executive committee meeting, for example, I can pass our VPE on the way to lunch and ask her to spread the word.

Some of the Challenges

During the COVID-19 lockdown, however, everything was more difficult. We were trying to finish our projects to receive awards under the "old system" (the Legacy program was phased out on June 30 2020), with no idea if we could participate in the new Pathways Educational Program. Pathways relies on digital projects through the internet, and we don't have access — how would we obtain printed paths, and how would our progress/awards become recorded in the Toastmasters system? While options were being pursued, we were determined to remain a strong club and work toward our Pathways participation goal. For safety during the pandemic, at first, we were "meeting" in our dorms, *if* there were enough members to have a meeting. Then we were allowed to meet in a classroom, but no more than nine people were allowed in a room. As VPE, it was challenging to organize four meetings simultaneously to accommodate all

members. Thank goodness we had strong, experienced members who stepped forward to take leadership roles for our mini-meetings. Finally, we were able to go back to our beloved "Big Group," where we would all meet together in the library. And at last, through the joint efforts of Toastmasters International, Management and Training Corporation (our management company at Gadsden), and Ms. Patty, our Club Liaison, the "path" was cleared for us to remain a full-fledged Toastmasters Club, participating in Pathways!

Pathways with Aplomb

I don't think I've ever seen a group of women more excited than the day Ms. Patty (Pat Goodwin) made that announcement. It took us just three days to pass around the Pathways descriptions for all the ladies to choose a path and printed materials were ordered for us. It was interesting, to say the least, to have 30 Toastmasters all beginning with their Icebreakers at the same time! We had to get creative to make our paths work for us. I was a bit nervous that we might hear the same speech when we accidentally scheduled multiple leadership speeches on the same night, but I was proven wrong. One member used movie characters, like King Arthur and Coach Carter, to explain the various idiosyncrasies of

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Navigate Pathways**



Remembering Douglas Tambor

by **Becky McGilton**

It is hard to say goodbye. It is especially hard to say goodbye to someone you consider a dear friend. Toastmasters in District 84, Division B lost a great friend, mentor, leader, and all-around good guy when we lost Douglas Tambor, better known as Doug, a few weeks ago. Doug had been fighting health issues for quite a while, but he never seemed to let those health issues get him down. One might say that he chose to live, rather than dwell on the fact that his heart had a mind of its own.

When I asked Doug five years ago if he wanted to work with me to get a morning club up and running in Division B, he jumped at the opportunity. It took us about 18 months and in June of 2018, 5-Star Toastmasters Club chartered. Since that time Doug had become a valued member of the club. He was a great leader, a mentor to many, a friend to all. He will be missed. I asked the members of 5-Star Toastmasters Club to give me a word or phrase that epitomized the essence of Doug for them. I received many kind words and phrases, but two of them

really hit home. Doug was not just a gentleman; he was a gentle man. My favorite, however, was a nickname given to him by one of the members, it suited him perfectly. We never considered him Doug(less), to us he was Doug(more).

On February 19, our entire club meeting served as a tribute to Doug. Many memories and stories were shared. Many tears were shed as we said goodbye to our dear friend and fellow club member.

Doug, rest assured, you will be missed by all who knew you, but most of all, rest in peace my friend... ■



Navigate Pathways

Continued from Page 8

each leadership style, while another used historical figures. Another member made it personal and spoke of her leadership style and how it affects her. Lively and fascinating!

So far, we've seen myriad projects where our unique personalities shine through the presentations. One member has walked us through a guided Disney vacation and is planning a "Eulogy Night." Another member planned a mock trial where Cupid was charged with various misdeeds. Another member is planning a debate, and our club's 8th anniversary was a spectacular evening of recognition and honoring diverse cultures. Our VPPR was recently an integral part of planning our facility's Black History Program and our upcoming Hair Show.

In short, our members have taken to Pathways with aplomb. The project assignments opened up opportunities that we never realized we could pursue. We have

members now speaking to the new arrivals about Toastmasters, while others are using their Toastmasters experience to plan the weekly dog training for our service dog teams. We are currently working with staff members to assist with future job fairs and the reentry program. Toastmasters is indeed where leaders are made.

I have been a member of this club for five years, and I have watched the growth rate rise exponentially, both for individuals and for our club, particularly since we began our Pathways journey together. Every member of this club has contributed to this rise, and there is no better feeling in the world than seeing someone master a speech after they had trouble with their Icebreaker, except seeing the look on their faces when you tell them how proud you are of them.

Driven by Destiny, I could not be prouder of us!!! ■

Toastmaster Confronts Adversity by Reinventing Himself

by **Randall Crosby, DTM**

I have been in Toastmasters for over three years and am now a member of four clubs and an Area Director. I enjoy all things Toastmasters and I appreciate the opportunities that Toastmasters provides to myself and others. Because I am blind, there have been some challenges along the way, but there has also been lots of support from my fellow Toastmasters to help overcome those hurdles. Actually, in my experience, it seems like we all have something that we must conquer if we expect to succeed.

I recently met Dennis Tomlin, a new member of my Toastmasters of St. Augustine Club, who takes the idea of 'rising to a challenge' to an entirely new level. Dennis is on a mission, as he likes to say, to "reinvent himself - one more time", and he's doing it with the help of Toastmasters and his club mentor, who is also an accomplished public speaker. Let me tell you a bit of Dennis' story.

When Dennis was 15 years old, a diving accident left him a quadriplegic. An overwhelming situation for anyone, we can only imagine the life-changing heartache of this young boy as he looked into his future. But Dennis refused to accept what so many others viewed as a nearly impossible situation. He changed his perspective.

The many obstacles Dennis encountered simply became opportunities for him to prove to the doubters that they had underestimated the power of his perseverance, courage, and pure determination. Over the years, his laundry list of "can't do's" has become a colossal list of "can do's".

Dennis Tomlin has been delivering highly customized motivational and educational presentations, along with keynote speeches, since 1991. His inspiring story has been shared with students from middle school to graduate school. As the DJ on Wheels, he spent 25 years successfully performing as a mobile DJ for thousands of listeners.

Ultimately finding what he refers to as "the career of a lifetime," Dennis spent the next 15 years with the US Air Force. As part of his work, he led annual workshops teaching resiliency skills to military members and federal employees at Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base.

Dennis' unique perspective on life allows him to leave audiences scratching their heads and asking themselves, "What is my excuse?"

Due to a bone infection, Dennis is reinventing himself one more time. His love of learning combined with his incredible perseverance to propel him into a holistic, mind-body medicine way of life. As a Functional Medicine Certified Health and Wellness Coach, he guides others to help them transform from who they are into who they want to be. He coaches groups, and workshops both in-person and online where he works from his bed via phone, chats, and HIPAA-compliant applications. Dennis connects with his audience in a way that empowers them. He equips listeners to adopt a mind shift that enables them to face challenges and change their lives with renewed self-confidence and a determination to succeed.

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Dennis Tomlin

Know Your Area Director – A Deep Dive into Area Director Responsibilities

by Sowjanya Athmakuri Ramini, LD5, DL5, Area 93 Director



Sowjanya Ramini

Area Directors play a crucial role in the success of clubs within their Area. Although the primary task of the Area Director is to keep club leaders motivated and informed, much more hands-on work goes on behind the scenes.

Area Directors (ADs) visit the clubs within their Areas to understand the clubs' overall health. In these visits, the AD closely monitors various aspects of the club meetings. The AD takes notes of the club's protocol on welcoming new members, the club's preparedness in running the meetings and the club's overall energy in engaging its members. The AD meets with club leaders to go over his or her observations along with constructive feedback on areas of improvement. The AD files a consolidated report and sends it to Toastmasters International via the Toastmasters.org web portal.

Although the expectation is to conduct these club visits twice a year, ADs should visit all the clubs in their areas as frequently as possible.

Another responsibility of ADs is to keep the clubs apprised of Division and District events such as Toastmasters Leadership Institute (club officer training), District Executive Committee meetings and District Conferences. ADs may also provide guidance for officer elections and preside over officer installations.

Additionally, every year, Area Directors take upon the herculean task of conducting Area contests such as the International Speech contest, Table Topics contest and Evaluation contest. These contests involve gathering over two dozen volunteers to take up various roles such as Contest Master, Contest Chair, Chief Judge, functionaries and Sergeant-at-Arms. ADs meet with club leaders to secure club level winners who will be competing against each other in Area level contests. ADs secure a venue, decide on the contest date and time, and put all the piec-

es of the puzzle together. Finally, on the day of the contests, the AD ensures a smooth and fair session, after which ADs submit the names of winners who will advance to Division contests.

The Area Director keeps an eye on clubs that need a helping hand. The AD suggests events such as Open Houses, seasonal themed meetings, team building activities and outreach programs to attract new members.

The AD serves as a mentor for club presidents and VPs, helping them achieve their individual leadership goals as well as collective club goals. In summary, an Area Director is a first level people leader who serves as the binding agent that keeps the clubs connected to the Division and the District. ■



Confronting Adversity

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"If you are being held captive due to the emotional or physical pain stemming from abuse, financial insecurity, an illness, or other tragedies consuming your life, you can flip the script! You are not broken, so stop trying to fix yourself and concentrate on improving your life."

Always looking to improve himself, Dennis saw Toastmasters as an opportunity to maximize his own potential. Participating in our online meeting from the confines of his bed, using only his facial expression and the power of his words, it is apparent that Dennis is very aware of the benefits gained through practice and constructive feedback. There is no doubt that his ever-growing communication and leadership skills will help Dennis achieve his goals and dreams to help others realize that they can do it too! Links to [Dennis Tomlin's website](#) and [Facebook](#) ■



Randall Crosby

SAA and Treasurer, Uptown Club 6304

Peace Talkers Toastmasters Promote Peace Conversations

by Ron Parpart, DTM, PDG



Ron Parpart

Friends, I have belonged to many Toastmasters clubs in my 20+ years in our organization. However, of all those clubs, none are quite as unique, or special, as the one I'll tell you about today.

The Peace Talkers Club meets at the Melbourne Buddhist Temple. To our knowledge, we are the only club in all of Toast

masters that meets at a Buddhist temple. During our five years as a club, we have had several of the Buddhist monks, including the current Head Monk, become members of our club. They did so to improve their English, so they could better serve their community. However, for the rest of our club members, we have been continually enriched by the knowledge they share with us about their beliefs and practices.

Our Peace Talkers motto is: "We Talk Peace!" We ask our members to remember this motto when crafting the speeches they will present to our club and, as a result, we have attracted quite a diverse group of members; members who want to share their experiences as well as their desire to help others find peace in their lives. Over time we have attracted many members who came to learn about the club that meets at the temple. To our surprise, we also attracted others who came to the temple to practice meditation or to learn about Buddhism and accidentally found us, discovering that we were a great way to help them learn even more. We're good at promoting our club at temple events, like the weekly Sunday Thai food court!

Our club's founder, and chief promoter at the temple, is my wife Pim Parpart, DTM, IPDD, who founded the club
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as an outreach to the local Thai community. Her goal was to bring together Toastmasters and fellow Thais as a way to improve their English and communication skills, providing them opportunities that they could never dream of, just as it did for her. Surprisingly, our club attracted many native English speakers as well, people who wanted to learn more about the temple, Buddhism, and Thai culture. Susan Schulz, DTM was the other Club Sponsor who helped us charter Peace Talkers Club.

There is so much more I could tell you about Peace Talkers, but it is better to just invite you to come and see for yourself. We meet at the Melbourne Buddhist temple on Aurora Road on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month at 4:00 P.M. EST. We are also a hybrid club, so if you can't make it in person, you can join us on Zoom!

We believe that learning to talk peace is what the world needs. Now more than ever, we need Peace Talkers. Come and talk peace with us! [Peace Talkers Toastmasters Club 6059821 Website](#) ■



Monk Mahaniwat

Nonagenarian Celebrates Diamond Jubilee as Toastmaster

by Barbara Bess, ACG, SAA and Treasurer, Uptown Club 6304

Emmett Clary, Jr., one of the newest members of Uptown Toastmasters Club in Orlando, is the personification of diligence. He is celebrating his 60th Toastmasters anniversary this year. That is *not* a typo!

Although he was born in Los Angeles, Emmett and his family moved to Haddonfield, New Jersey when he was four years old. He graduated from Lehigh University with a degree in Business Administration. He married Josephine who originally was from Cuba. After visiting his in-laws who had moved to St. Petersburg, Florida, the Clarys decided, during a 1959 snowstorm, to relocate to Florida, as well. Emmett took a marketing position with GT Florida, a telephone company. Within a few years he was tasked with making a presentation to a group of coworkers. He was so nervous that his hands were shaking as he was holding the papers to which he was referring. As a result, his supervisor ordered Emmett to join Toastmasters.

The rest is history. Since becoming a member, he has served in each officer role, first as a Treasurer in St. Petersburg Toastmasters (Club 2284). During his many years **he helped charter four new Toastmasters Clubs**, to increase the size of the District. In addition to earning Advanced Toastmaster status several times, Emmett holds the distinction of being Toastmasters International's 88th Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM).

One of his proudest moments occurred when, as district membership chair, all dues were submitted on time. In addition to Toastmasters-related activities in his community, Emmett made time to attend seven International Conventions, including one in Calgary, Alberta as well as numerous district conferences. He noted that – back then – **four district conferences were held each year!**

Thanks to his six decades as a Toastmaster, Emmett has a head full of memories. He recalled that it was a “big battle” to get women to join the organization. According to the TI website, the first female member was Helen Blanchard, enrolled in 1970 as Homer Blanchard. Women were officially admitted in 1973. Ms. Blanchard became Toastmasters' first female International President in 1985. How times have changed! In 2020, fifty-four percent of members were female and forty-six percent male. Emmett has also witnessed the overseas expansion of Toastmasters which now includes members in 149 countries.



Emmett Clary

When Emmett was in Mexico City on business and attended a local Toastmasters meeting, he was able to participate in Table Topics because of his knowledge of Spanish. “I’m very proud,” of finishing the basic manual in Spanish and being president of the Spanish Toastmasters Club,” he shared. Later, while traveling to Minneapolis, he ran into an individual from that Mexico City club who promptly hugged him, happy to see a familiar face while so far from home.

He admits that the Uptown Club differs from that of his former clubs, but he has adapted and quickly became a valued member, providing new energy and enthusiasm. He willingly shares his insights and observations - a loss for St. Petersburg Toastmasters, a blessing for Uptown Toastmasters in Orlando.

Why has he remained in Toastmasters for so many years? Emmett didn’t hesitate with his answer: confidence gained when dealing with any public speaking situation.

How long will Emmett remain in Toastmasters? “As long as I am physically able. Toastmasters has been a blessing to me.”

2024 will mark the 100th anniversary of Toastmasters International. Emmett plans to join the rest of us in celebrating that important milestone. Did I forget to mention a fact as remarkable as his sixty years behind a lectern? Emmett Clary, DTM is 91 years old! Congratulations, and thank you for your extraordinary service to Toastmasters. You, sir, truly are one of a kind. ■



Barbara Bess, ACG

SAA and Treasurer, Uptown Club 6304

Create High Impact Marketing Events

by Sandy DePrimo, DTM



Sandy DePrimo

Each year Toastmasters are faced with the task of maintaining and building membership. The question remains, “How do we get the word out?” Do we do an Open House or a special Table Topics session? How can we be creative enough to gain attention and attract new members?

Many of our guests come to our meetings for a reason, such as wanting to gain leadership skills or conquer a fear of public-speaking, and then become much more confident in themselves. They are looking for support and positivity so they can learn and grow without the fear of failure. Toastmasters is a safe zone where “failing forward” is celebrated as a sign of growth.

As the Division E Director from 2019-2020, I was faced with creating a way to maintain and grow membership on the verge of an incoming pandemic. I decided to get creative and arrange two division-wide Open Houses. Division E was many miles long, so I split into two “Program Showcases,” one in Orlando and one in Lakeland.

I enlisted my Area Directors to help build a presentation consisting of members from each club who would like to have time to shine. There would be a presentation of a humorous speech, an international speech, an evaluation, Table Topics, and talk about the benefits of Toastmasters, mentoring, and competition. In Lakeland, a local government official addressed the audience, citing how Toastmasters helped her achieve her position. It was a big hit and received a lot of attention.

Preparing the agenda, marketing, finding locations, choosing speakers, and working through the process of preparing the Program Showcase became such an awarding experience for me. I saw members and guests interacting. I saw growth in some of our members simply by presenting to a

new audience. I experienced friendships between clubs. I felt like our members really worked hard to bring a strong presentation to our guests. And I saw real leaders emerge fulfilling the vision and mission of Toastmasters International as people were empowered to move forward and achieve their dreams.

TOASTMASTERS VISION STATEMENT:

“Toastmasters International empowers people to achieve their full potential and achieve their dreams. Through our member clubs, people throughout the world can improve their communication and leadership skills and find the courage to change.”

TOASTMASTERS CLUB MISSION STATEMENT:

“We provide a supportive and positive learning experience in which members are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth.”

I challenge you to create a vision for your club that brings the Toastmasters vision and mission statements to life—one victory at a time. The bigger the dream, the better! Be the leader that Toastmasters has made you, and create specular events. Create events that would give a guest no reason to walk away. Make the guests want what you have and encourage the existing members to keep reaching for the stars. Provide an opportunity that allows you to grow with new members. After all, Toastmasters is where leaders are made. ■



Program Showcase

Timing is Everything... and it's time for Conference

by Barbara Amato, DTM, Conference Chair



Barbara Amato

In May 2014, I attended Clermont Toastmasters and I knew it was for me. I met uplifting mentors and lifelong friends. Toastmasters became both my social networking and community service opportunity. I believe that everyone wants to have some influence on their surroundings, but I know this is only possible when you step up and become involved.

Never being one to be still, I got involved in my club right away. I became a club officer, then an Area Director. I moved on to Division Director, Education Chair and this year... CONFERENCE CHAIR (I think I heard spooky music as I stepped into the unknown...) Conference Chair - a role that I swore I would *never* take on. *Never say never!*

I experienced my first conference in my 2nd year as a Toastmaster. *TV Flashback* was the theme. I went with my dear friend, Regina. We shared a room with three others, stayed up late and got up early. I participated in as many educational sessions as possible and made significant use of the program.

Sounds great, right? It was, however, that was just the beginning. Let me take you back in time.

I arrived nervous and excited. My husband and I were in the process of paying off an unsuccessful investment and every penny counted. I'd lost my mojo and my self-confidence was failing. Would this investment be fruitful or was I wasting money?

At the *First Timer's* registration (a medic tent from MASH) things looked fun. Yet, everyone seemed to be such confident and polished professionals and business owners, I wondered if I could fit in. Then I met Beth Ramsay and her effervescent personality set the tone for my conference experience. I received my packet and made a beeline to a table to review everything.

That evening I was late for dinner, and the only seat left was in the back of the room. I felt utterly alone, and then

this big, gregarious man, with his nametag on upside down, sat down and ordered a vodka gimlet. Bob chatted and, in his joyful way, put us all at ease and soon everyone began talking. What a blast!

At the hospitality suite later that night, I was tired, but as I stood on the sidelines and observed, my spirits rose. People were dancing, singing, chatting, and laughing. I needed that.

On Saturday I went to every workshop, followed by the District business meeting. Two people sat down next to me. Mike and Julie McLean explained the business meeting, what to expect and why it was part of the conference agenda. Once again, leaders stepped up and made me feel welcome, happy, and now, informed.

Since then, I make it a point to attend every conference. My club gave me my initial Toastmasters kick-start, but the Conference experience demonstrated Toastmasters at a higher level.

Although successful at work and in my personal life, those failed investments and resulting financial restrictions were a difficult blow to my sense of well-being, self-worth and my confidence. That all changed, thanks to my club experience and the beautiful people I met and befriended at the Conference who brought so many unforeseen gifts to my table. They are still a wonderful part of my life. My sense of community, leadership and service is stronger, and my life is more fulfilled. Toastmasters helped me through that difficult time.

Conferences are an important part of the opportunities that Toastmasters has to offer. Here we grow our skills and, through service, we gain personal fulfillment.

I attended my first conference just when I needed to. It was one of the best investments I've made and the payoff has been priceless. In my case, the timing was perfect.

Now it is your time! Go back in time or move ahead to the future with our conference theme, ***Time and Time Again... Let's travel through time together.*** See you there! ■

It's Learning Time...at D84 Conference

by Edith Tiencken, Education Chair

"It's Learning Time," the theme for this year's conference educational sessions sets the tone for an enhanced learning experience in different ways:

- 40-45-minute presentations are now a full hour to give presenters and participants additional time to dive deeper into their topics.
- 10-minute breaks between sessions will provide a more relaxed environment to stimulate exchange between presenters and participants.
- Sessions fall into two tracks:
 - 1 **Timeless Classics**—skill enhancement, applicable at any stage of the Toastmasters journey.
 - 2 **Time of Enlightenment**—inspirational, geared toward developing leadership and personal growth

through unique experiential learning.

- **SPOILER:** There will be one plenary to enjoy our key-note speaker as he facilitates an exciting educational session.

Education Sessions Go Hybrid

Per Toastmasters International guidelines, educational sessions will be hybrid this year, both in-person and virtual. This challenges presenters to up their skills by simultaneously facing two audiences while still providing an engaging experience to both. We are excited to provide more learning time to our virtual audience this year!

Presenters will be notified on March 21. Be on the lookout for April's Synergy edition where we will preview all selected presenters and sessions. It's learning time! ■



Time and Time Again...

District 84
ANNUAL CONFERENCE
May 13-14, 2022

Embassy Suites by Hilton
Kyns Heath Road Kissimmee FL

REGISTER HERE



The Rocky Balboa Method of Building Your Club's Strength

by Marjane Taylor, DTM

Are your club meetings beginning to feel as tired and old as Rocky Balboa after his final boxing match? What you need is...Sylvester Stallone as the ORIGINAL Rocky Balboa! Or better yet, a club that is working to build momentum by building the strength of individual members. If your club is an underdog in the fight to become Distinguished, some lessons from Rocky can give us all hope.

How do we build strength in our members? Punch sides of beef? Chug raw eggs? Run up stairs in Philadelphia while blasting the song, "Gonna Fly Now?" Although sometimes club meetings can start to feel like a grueling "Rocky-style" workout, there's an easier way.

Ask Adrian and her brother Paulie for help! (If you don't have club members named Adrian or Paulie, that's okay. Ask some other club members.) Mentoring works. Rocky didn't become a heavyweight champion on his own, and your club won't become a champion club without a team. Members can develop the "eye of the tiger" and become more focused and confident with help from a mentor.

District 84's Find Your Funny Toastmasters Club was formed to help members learn how to add humor to the speeches they are already giving. One unique program at Find Your Funny Toastmasters is the "Humor Buddy" program. All members are paired up for two months at a time to help each other by providing one-to-one member support. Our "Humor Buddies" work on personal goals regarding humor, but this concept could easily be applied to your club. Members could help each other with speeches, leadership projects, or meeting roles.

Where's Mickey?

No, not Mickey Mouse. I'm talking about Burgess Mere-

dith's character, Mickey—Rocky's first trainer. How do you bring "Mickey" to *your* club? Look for an outside expert. Does your club need someone to teach them how to use Pathways? Find a Pathways expert. Do they need speakers? Many contest speakers are now looking for places to practice. How do you get expert help? You'd be surprised who might respond if you just ask. "Yo, Adrian! Wanna give a speech?"



Marjane, inspired by Rocky, is keeping up the momentum as we enter the fourth quarter.

What is the goal?

I'm sure you've heard this before. If you don't know where you're going, how will you know when you get there? Start by finding out what your members' individual goals are.

"If you help enough people get what they want, you will get what you want." —Zig Ziglar

Hold quality meetings. Help your members to achieve *their* goals, and the club will be successful. Lead by example. What is *your* goal? Are you still training like Rocky to reach your goal? Most of us did not join Toastmasters to become lifelong Toastmasters. Some of us are, and that's wonderful, but that's not the real goal. Find out what it is. Work toward that.

Even Rocky Balboa didn't stay in the gym all the time. Eventually, he got into the boxing ring. So get in there! Whether that "ring" is advocating for your favorite charity, leading a meeting in a boardroom, or being on the main stage at a convention, keep your eye on the prize.

This Toastmasters year isn't over. Take a lesson from Rocky Balboa and train your members to take on greater challenges. Hold quality meetings, assign mentors, and bring in experts. I can almost guarantee those actions will build club strength better than chasing poultry, tossing rocks, or hitting a speed bag. ■

Speakers Bureau Accepting Applications for Presenters

by **Debby Kerr-Henry, IP5**

Would you like to step up your Toastmasters game?

Expand your voice out into the community?

Further develop a message with bigger and different audiences in mind?

If so, then D84's Speakers Bureau might be your next calling.

The two-step selection process is simple:

- 1 [Fill out and submit your application for review.](#)
- 2 If the application is approved, schedule a 5-10-minute presentation with the RISE selection committee. Scoring will be based on [International](#) or [Humorous Contest Judging Criteria](#).

Applicants must score an average of 80, 85, or 90 to be accepted into the Speakers Bureau and be placed into one of three categories: Blue Badge, Yellow Badge, or Red Badge.

Purpose of Categories:

- welcomes Toastmasters of varying stages to engage in the Speakers Bureau
- provides guidelines to best align the needs of the community with presenters
- maintains standards of excellence for speakers serving as Toastmasters ambassadors
- empowers continued development of communication and leadership skills
- encourages progression of greater self-confidence and personal growth

The selection process will begin in March and continue throughout the year.

Speakers Bureau Vision

D84 Speakers Bureau (SB) serves as a Community Choice Hub that provides the best-in-class Toastmasters who deliver inspiring, educational, and edifying messages to meet audience needs. The Bureau will enhance members' professional and public speaking status by promoting their expertise and creating a sense of belonging in an exclusive forum.



Respect | Integrity | Service | Excellence

Congratulations to the following Distinguished Toastmasters who will be serving as D84's RISE Selection Committee and assisting in the process of taking the Speakers Bureau to its next level of excellence.

Sunil Ancha
Nancy Ford
Dr. Kyrin Hall
Gail Hill Smith

Jerry Smith
Gina Tyckoson
Jeremy Udell

Questions? Email [Edith Tiencken](#) or [Debby Kerr-Henry](#)

Word Search Puzzle

by Julie Salgo, Enigmatologist

How many roles have you volunteered for during this Toastmasters' year?

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

Ah Counter
Ballot Counter
Chief Judge
Contestant
Contest Chair
Contest Master
Evaluator

General Evaluator
Grammarian
Invocator
Jokemaster
Judge
Listen Master
President

Presiding Officer
Secretary
Sergeant at Arms
Speaker
Table Topics Master
Test Speaker
Tie Breaker Judge

Timer
Toastmaster
Tongue Twister
Treasurer
Word Master

What's Happening in District 84?

Let others know about your club, add new members and take advantage of our new D84 exclusive incentives*

Visit our website www.ToastmastersD84.org for full details as restrictions apply to these incentives

TALK UP TOASTMASTERS ● ●



District 84 Club Coach & Mentor Forum

With: WC "Bobby" Blackmon

📅 April 4th

🕒 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

FORGET EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT TOASTMASTERS

Toastmasters D84 is proud to present:

with Past International President
PAT JOHNSON

MARCH 24TH
7:30 PM EST



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

March focus:

Assisting new members

April focus:

Open Mic Night:
Bring your questions

**TOASTMASTERS
PATHWAYS**
— learning experience —



new Synergy Podcast

Episode 18

The TRIO + ONE

In this episode, John interviews our District's leadership comprised of our District Director, Program Quality Director, Club Growth Director + Public Relations Manager.

Hosted by: John Morrow

<https://toastmastersd84.org/the-d84-synergy-podcast/>



Toastmasters District 84 is proud to present:

MAXIMIZE YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

with Mike Carr

2020 World Champion of Public Speaking



April 14th at 7 PM EDT



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

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