

# THE DISTRICT 57 DISPATCH

## Newsletter of District 57, Toastmasters International

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### A Reintroduction

The newsletter for District 57 is back! We are pleased to bring you a member-focused publication, dedicated to highlighting the events, accomplishments, and insights of District 57 members.

Your active involvement in this publication is not only necessary, it is this newsletter’s first priority. Please read and respond to the call for submissions later in this edition.

I’m looking forward to great things in store for the district in this new term and to serving as documentarian for the great things you’ll make happen!—Lee Vaughan, Editor

### Meet New Club Growth Director, Jeff Young

Dispatch editor Lee Vaughan recently interviewed Jeff Young, newly elected Club Growth Director for District 57, about his plans for the district’s clubs. Here is what Jeff had to share.



LV: Jeff, congratulations on your new position as Club Growth Director. What Toastmasters experience do you plan to bring to bear to grow District 57 clubs?

JY: Thanks! The initial shock has worn off and it’s time to put on the hard hat and get some construction work done. I say I don’t bring experience so much as experiences; my skillset is about being present and finding the great ideas that are out there and mashing them all together. I did a lot of traveling around through multiple clubs for Open Houses this past year as Division A Director, and I got to meet a lot of great people who might be getting a call from me to get their ideas brought to life.

In short, I’m learning while doing – and asking lots of questions to my mentors and advisors. Growing clubs is about finding out what people want to meet about and around – I’ve heard interest in an AI club and a comedy improv club, for example.

LV: Tell us a bit about yourself: job, hobbies outside of Toastmasters, or anything else you’d like to share.

JY: I’m originally from New York, which is why I don’t know how to slow down when I’m talking half the time. I moved out to California so I could skip suits, subways, and shoveling snow. I work as a technical writer for Siemens, documenting stuff that much smarter people are inventing.

In my spare time, I write novels, craft driving puzzles, and play video and board games. Games are great teambuilding activities, as long as it’s not too competitive.

**“...every club has a raison d’etre that is uniquely theirs.”**

LV: What is your vision for club or member involvement in growth initiatives?

JY: I’m planning on working with the Program Quality Director, Linda Patten – we’re going to mobilize the clubs to run Speechcrafts and source mentors and club coaches. By doing so, we engage existing club members and give newly minted members a crash course in Toastmasters.

I’m also supposed to find chairs and committees, but I’m having a hard time doing so. So if members want to be involved, they should contact me at [jeffrey@d57tm.org](mailto:jeffrey@d57tm.org). I have things that they can do!

LV: Ideally, what should an existing club do to grow its membership? What are some activities and optimal ways clubs can execute the mission in this area?

JY: If I had that answer, we wouldn’t have struggling clubs. *{laughs}* But seriously, every club has a raison d’etre that is uniquely theirs. So I can’t just say ‘do this thing and you’ll have 20 members before you can say President’s Distinguished,’ because we can’t just make guests appear out of thin air. I think the best thing any club can do is find new ways to increase their visibility. Like one of the Division A clubs, *San Leandro Toastmasters*, actually got a booth at the recent Cherry Festival, and I thought, ‘now that’s thinking outside the box!’ (continued on page 3)

## From Trailblazer to DTM By Leesa Thompson, DTM, PRM

Dorothy Shy-King, affectionately known to Toastmasters as D'Marie, is a global advocate and trailblazer for survivors of domestic violence through her non-profit, Victory Over Violence.

D'Marie Shy-King has achieved a very impressive milestone in Toastmasters International by becoming a Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) in just two years and two months! She also earned the title of Select Distinguished Area Director, underscoring her dedication and forward thinking leadership skills.

This year D'Marie further distinguished herself by earning the Elite Triple Crown from District 57, as well as two additional Triple Crown awards from two other districts in clubs where she is a member. She also earned the OATM award from District 57 for outstanding service within the district.

### From Novel to Advocacy

D'Marie's global advocacy is deeply personal and powerfully resonates with her global audience. She wrote her first novel from the inspiration of clients that she served during her 25 years as a mental health professional and legislative lobbyist. Her written endeavor is much more than just a generic story of trauma and pain, it serves as a beacon of hope and a call to action for the many survivors who suffer in silence.

### Leadership and Influence

As a past board member of Leaders WorldWide Toastmasters Club, D'Marie now serves as district 57's Podcast Chair on the Public Relations team, using her platform and her voice to amplify the stories and needs of others in District 57, as they, too, share the stories of their phenomenal Toastmasters' journey.

D'Marie's influence extends globally, as she delivers keynote speeches, panel discussions, and human-interest insights and experiences of the members of District 57, as well as the daunting experiences of the survivors of domestic violence.

### Upcoming Projects

D'Marie is not one to rest on her laurels. She is already hard at work on her second book. She is determined to have the book debut as a pre-release or pre-sale, in time for her non-profit, Victory Over Violence's 2nd Annual Domestic Violence Survivors Empowerment Summit, in October of this year. With the inaugural event receiving a letter from the mayor of Nashville, everyone is excited about this year's summit, as it promises to be a pivotal event, bringing together survivors, advocates, and industry experts to discuss and shed light on the anomaly known as domestic violence and culminating in the recognition of an "Outstanding Survivor."

### Listening With a Compassionate Heart

With some 25 plus years experience as a Mental Health Professional/Psychiatric Registered Nurse, D'Marie offers more than just her professional expertise. As a caring and compassionate individual, she listens with discernment and empathy as she carries out a plan of care designed as evidence-based care for each client using a holistic approach.

### Reach Out

For anyone in need of a passionate, impactful speaker or consultant, D'Marie is always available to render assistance. Her friendly, professional demeanor ensures that everyone she interacts with has been heard and their input is valued. She stands as a testament to what can be achieved with determination, empathy, and relentless passion to make a difference in the lives of others.

D'Marie Shy-King is an inspiration to all who connect with her. Her work in the realm of global advocacy for survivors of domestic violence continues to make significant inroads into the malady of domestic violence, as the eradication of DV is the clear objective of this combined effort.

D'Marie's achievements in Toastmasters, combined with her literary contributions; her global advocacy to combat domestic violence and her international speaking engagements, highlight her as a servant leader who is dedicated to the implementation of a significant paradigm shift in the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

## A Message from the District Director

Welcome District 57 Toastmasters and most honored guests to the 2024-2025 Program Year. All I can say is "Get ready for the ride of your life!" Each and every one of us joined Toastmasters with a personal goal in mind. This year we will be focusing on helping you achieve your Communication and Leadership Goals. We have a tool to help us do this, but it is only a tool. OK, it's called the Distinguished Club Program, but these points are not the goal, your growth, development, and ultimately your self-confidence and satisfaction are the goals.



You are partnering with each member of your club and each member of District 57 to achieve your goals as are we to achieve our goals. We've got your back; I've got your back. Together We Can! Soar!

*Sally J. Gibbons Philbin, DTM  
2024-25 D57 District Director  
Together We Can! Soar!*



**District 57 Toastmasters PR Team: From Survive to Thrive,  
by Leesa Thompson, DTM, Public Relations Manager**



We are thrilled to introduce the best PR team ever assembled for District 57! Our enthusiastic team members are eager to share their passion for Toastmasters and leverage their valuable skills to help D57 attract and retain more members, taking us from "Survive to Thrive." Teamwork makes the dream work, and we're counting on your support and involvement to achieve our goals.

As you read about our upcoming projects and initiatives, consider how you'd like to contribute. Here's a glimpse of what we'll be working on:

- **Monthly Newsletter**—Regular updates and insights to keep everyone informed and engaged.
- **Meet-Up**—Organizing and promoting events to foster community and collaboration.
- **Press Releases**—Spreading the word about our achievements and activities.
- **Podcasts**—Sharing inspiring stories and valuable tips from our members.
- **Calendar**—Keeping track of all events and important dates.
- **Website**—Enhancing our online presence to attract new members and provide valuable resources.
- **Mailchimp**—Streamlining our communications for better outreach and engagement.

We currently have some exciting roles available:

- **\*\*Chief Ambassador for VP PRs\*\***: Lead and support VP PRs across the district.
- **\*\*Social Media Distribution\*\***: Manage our presence across multiple platforms.

Although the district team is primarily responsible for disseminating district information, we also plan to train VP PRs to use these same strategies for each individual club, area, and division. This comprehensive approach will ensure a cohesive and effective communication strategy across the board.

If you're interested in joining us on this exciting journey, please let us know as quickly as possible by completing this [Google Doc](#). Your participation is crucial to our success, and we can't wait to work together to make District 57 thrive!

Thank you for your dedication and enthusiasm.

Leesa

**Meet New Club Growth Director, Jeff Young (continued)**

LV: If a club were to come to you for help in growing, what advice would you give?

JY: One, tell me what you've already tried, so I don't tell you to try something that didn't work. Two, tell me how people find your club these days, and three, tell me what kind of new members do you want? I think each club had an idea of who they were when they chartered, but that focus might have shifted over the years. Like my own club- the South Bay Toastmasters – we were a corporate club, but now I'm the only active member from the company now, and we converted to a community club.



I like to start off any meeting with a club with the question, "How do you describe your club in two words, and are you a creative, humorous, motivational, or business-type club?"

To wit: If you don't know who you are and what you do, how do you expect to attract like-minded people? If I know who they are and what kind of people they want, I can try redirecting people their way.

Jeff has a wealth of ideas centered on club growth, and the district is sure to benefit from his leadership. Again, Jeff can be reached at [jeffrev@d57tm.org](mailto:jeffrev@d57tm.org).

**Club Presidents, VPEs, ADs, DDs!**

**Hybrid DECM!**

**Second Saturday of Each Month 9AM-12PM**

Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83627796549?pwd=uTQzrnItEUNJOtF508dXl6KVBOF2S5.1>

Other Events from  
[D57TM.org](http://D57TM.org)—  
Saturday, July 13

Area and Division  
Director Training,  
3:00 – 5:00 pm

Saturday, July 27

D57 End of Year  
Gala Celebration  
and Officer  
Inductions – Hybrid  
Meeting



## From Club and Club Coach: A take on club coaching from both sides

Swift Plaza Toastmasters Club recently experienced a lull in its membership. Unwilling to accept a club decline, club leadership took proactive measures and asked for a club coach to help them overcome the situation. Below is the experience relayed from both club president Larry Osorio and club coach Duane Leem.



To turn a club around takes two things, perseverance and outside help. When a club's situation becomes dire, as in our case, continuing to push forward to resolve the issues facing the club is a must. The club must want to survive. But this is not enough. Outside help from the District, Area, and other Toastmasters is essential. There are resources, knowledge, and experience that persons outside of the club can bring to bear. This also provides the empathy that lets the club's members know they are not alone in their struggles.

The club was assigned Duane Leem as our Club Coach. The first problem was low meeting attendance of three-five persons. It's very difficult and nearly impossible to sustain a club when so few attend meetings. Duane initiated change by inviting others from his current club to our meetings. He also brought on speakers from the District's Speakers Bureau. It took many months of scratching and clawing our way to increased attendance but we persevered. The number of attendees who attended regularly grew slowly over the year. (Yes, the year.) Finally members began giving speeches and we began to rely less on the Speakers Bureau or another club.

Our club coach helped plan our Open House with others helping and we had a good turn-out with three attendees joining. Our club coach has also worked to improve our online presence working with two other members in creating a website and a social media presence. This work continues today. Finally, the club has successfully completed a hybrid approach to our meetings. Our in-person meetings work very well with some members attending virtually.

Now that we are out of survival mode, the club's vision is to get back to the education of our members. That is to focus on mentoring, speeches, and measuring progress on individual Pathways. Of course, we will also be looking to expand our membership. For this, we are building our public relations capabilities. Our club coach has been instrumental on this aspect.

Ideally, a club coach should work with one or two members who are leading the efforts to work through the issues facing the club, to work in completing a Club Success report, and to put together the plan to move the club forward toward self-sufficiency. Focus to the goal is the main point.

Swift Plaza was in need of a Club Coach, and I was thrilled to step into the role. Additionally, my mentor, Joe Amaro, DTM (Creating Communicators) was already assisting in enhancing the club experience.

At that time, Swift Plaza had only three or four active members and was at risk of folding. The club, chartered in 2006, was filled with passionate leaders determined to see it thrive. Their dedication fueled my motivation to help.

I began by analyzing the club's operations and identified several key areas for improvement:

- There was a noticeable decline in motivation.
- Most meetings consisted only of Table Topics sessions.
- Members were hesitant to give speeches, especially Pathway speeches.
- Individual achievements were not being celebrated.
- Agendas were developed only a week in advance.

As Club Coach, my goal was to revitalize the club and inspire members to deliver speeches. More importantly, I aimed to help them rediscover their "why." I set several goals to ensure the club's success:

- End meetings by confirming roles for the next week.
- Notify speakers in advance and assign speakers for upcoming weeks.
- Celebrate new members with induction ceremonies.
- Recognize and celebrate Pathway level completions.
- Send newsletters every 1-2 weeks.
- Reach out to guests and highlight the benefits of becoming a Toastmaster.

These small steps laid the groundwork for bigger changes initiated by the club:

- Appointing Rameez, a new member, as webmaster, resulting in a new website: <https://swiftplazatm.org/>.
- Increased excitement and motivation among club officers.
- Enhanced club meetings with:
  - Agendas planned weeks in advance.
  - A large conference room.
  - Impressive tech setup with dual large monitors.
  - Transition to a hybrid club model.

Thanks to the collective efforts of everyone involved, Swift Plaza has become a Distinguished Club. This achievement once seemed impossible, but the dedication and teamwork of the club members made it a reality.

**The Growing PR Team!**



Leesa Thompson,  
PR Manager



Ananda Sen,  
FB PR Media Producer



D'Marie Shy King,  
Podcast Manager



Gerlando Termini,  
Webmaster



Alex Balish,  
Podcast Tech Host



Eric Brucia,  
Calendar Master



Derrick Ho,  
Mailchimp



Katie Pitts,  
Flyer Designer

Not pictured are: Sree Gudreddi, Meetup Chair; Kat King, Zoom Manager;  
Wing Lok, PR Consultant; Hans Thoma, YouTube Channel Producer;  
and Lee Vaughan, Newsletter Editor

**We Need  
You!**

**Submit Content for the  
District 57 Dispatch**

Send us your contributions:

- Articles
- Upcoming Club Events
- Club and Member Spotlights

The Dispatch is dedicated to featuring events, articles, and other submissions that showcase members' knowledge, offerings, and accomplishments.

Have an idea for an article? Is a club event coming up? Contact us!

[news@d57tm.org](mailto:news@d57tm.org)



## On Navigating “The In-Betweens,” by Lee Vaughan

“Don’t let what’s between get the best of you.” So goes the song, “The In-Betweens” by Sierra Hull. And yet, when it comes to performing the meeting role of Toastmaster, often what’s between does, in fact, get the best of us. Without adequate preparation, it can be unclear how to keep a Toastmasters meeting moving, how to comment on the activity that just transpired or how to introduce what happens next. But the Toastmaster role is all about managing transitions between activities. These “in-betweens” ought to be the Toastmaster’s stock-in-trade.

Have you ever seen a Toastmaster run a meeting in a somewhat halting manner? Maybe there was a good speaker, followed by an engaging round of Table Topics, but the transition between activities was awkward and did not cut the most professional image. Have you observed something like this?

“Thank you, Bill, that was a...good message. And now for...let’s see what’s next. Is Monica here tonight? She’s the Table Topics master, right? No, it’s Janine? Alright Janine, please take us through a round of table topics, as tonight’s theme is, um...what’s the theme tonight?”

Simply put, the Toastmaster should be as prepared as the featured speaker, the Table Topics Master, or anyone else with a meeting role. Moreover, the Toastmaster role, properly considered, is the owner of the meeting, entrusted with upholding the dignity and professionalism of the proceedings. What comes between activities can make or break the perception of a meeting or even that of a club. Guests especially are looking for friendliness, fun, impactful speaking, and *organization*; and a guest’s perception of a Toastmasters meeting probably matters most.

But to be fair, a meeting can have a lot of moving parts, making for a lot to manage. The following tips can help manage transitions for a more efficient meeting.

- **If there are roles that are not yet filled, call for volunteers to fill roles before the meeting is called to order.**
  - ◇ And do not wait for all roles to be filled to get the agenda out. Instead, include a note that a role is currently vacant and release the agenda on time to promote awareness that certain roles need to be filled.
- **Review the agenda with members after opening the meeting.**
  - ◇ This can help the Toastmaster get their bearings on the meeting and ensure members know their roles and when they will be called upon to contribute.
- **Be confident that this is your meeting and own it.**
  - ◇ Experienced Toastmasters should not be timid, they should drive the meeting. If you make a mistake, you make a mistake. Own it, accept correction, maybe have a little joke about it, then keep it moving. You got this.
- **Be time aware.**
  - ◇ As Toastmaster, please do not leave it all on the timer for general awareness of whether the meeting is on track. Instead, be proactive about asking the timer to tell you how much more time you have for a given activity.
- **Consider who is speaking and performing other meeting roles and tailor your introductions accordingly.**
  - ◇ Can you recall memories of previous meetings that you can work into a brief introduction? Perhaps you’ve heard the speaker before and want to highlight how they’ve progressed or how their previous speech resonated with you.
- **Feel free to comment on the activity that has just concluded.**
  - ◇ It’s also fine to offer a bit of positive feedback, just don’t steal an evaluator’s thunder.
- **On the other hand, you do not always need to have something pithy to say.**
  - ◇ A simple thank-you or “great job” is perfectly fine. Feel free to say so and move on to the next activity with gusto!

Employing these tips will yield better transitions or “in-betweens” that look more like this:

- **[After previous activity]** “Bill, great job. My takeaway from your speech is that time is precious, and we should seize the day. Thank you for that reminder. I look forward to your next piece.
- **[Before next activity]** Now we have a veteran Toastmaster leading us in Table Topics on our theme of ‘celebration.’ Janine started in Toastmasters five years ago, earned her DTM, and has actively competed in speech competitions for the past three years. Please welcome Janine back as Table Topics Master!”

Running a professional and efficient Toastmasters meeting is not difficult, but it does take a bit of preparation. As you can see, anyone can implement the tips above with a little practice. But frequent failure to do so results in poor club representation. The good news is that with a little planning, a club meeting can really hum and not get lost in between activities.

As the wisdom of the Sierra Hull refrain goes, “I don’t know much, but this much I do - don’t let what’s between get the best of you.”