

District 57 Dispatch

The District 57 PR team hopes you enjoy the November edition of the Dispatch. There is a lot of great content in this issue. And remember, contest season is fast approaching. Make it a great month!

Lee Vaughan, Editor

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November 2024 Event Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
					All Saints Day	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Forming a New Club for Creatives and Artists 6:00—7:00 PM				District Executive Committee Meeting 9:00 AM—12:00 PM
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	Veterans Day	Forming a Club for Creatives and Artists 6:00—7:00 PM			Contest Training Part 1 6:00—8:00 PM	Train the Trainer (Hybrid) 2:30 PM—5:30 PM
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
		Forming a Club for Creatives and Artists 6:00 PM—7:00 PM				
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
		Forming a Club for Creatives and Artists 6:00 PM—7:00 PM				

CHALLENGES FOR 2024-2025 AND BEYOND BY SALLY PHILBIN, DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Keeping District 57 a District

Toastmasters International has changed the criteria for the number of clubs that a District must have to remain a District. To remain a District there must be 100 clubs in good standing. District 57 is losing clubs as we speak. The result is that the number of clubs in our District is heading towards less than 100. We have got to act now if we are to save our District.

1. If you are a member of a struggling club that wants to be saved, contact your Area Director as soon as possible.
2. If you have a lead for a new club contact Club Growth Director Jeff Young as soon as possible.

Our District desperately needs your help to maintain our status as a District.

Adjusting to the New Pathways

Look for news and training as soon as we get it from Toastmasters International. We are all about change, particularly when the change coming will be a vast improvement to the platform we have been working with most recently. Stay tuned.

Earning Distinguished Status for Your Club

Club Members love earning Distinguished Status for their clubs. There is a real sense of comradery amongst the members as they work together and personal pride as they accomplish their personal goals. I encourage all of you to share in this feeling as you work with the other members of your club(s) to attain Distinguished Status for your club(s). Get ready, set, go! I can't wait to see how many clubs we have this year accomplishing their DCP Goals!

HONORING SREE GUDREDDI AND HER TEAM FOR REVITALIZING DISTRICT 57's MEETUP PRESENCE

We are thrilled to commend Sree Gudreddi and her incredible team for their outstanding work in redesigning and managing our District's Meetup platform. Through their efforts, 42 clubs have been successfully registered, saving the District a significant amount of money while revitalizing our online presence. Sree's innovative incentive program has breathed new life into District 57, offering clubs an invaluable tool for outreach and member growth.

This achievement is a testament to her leadership, and it's not too late for other clubs to join this fantastic initiative! Let's continue to leverage this opportunity to grow and strengthen our District—let's get at least 50 clubs registered with Meetup!

Visit our [website](#) to explore more about this award and how you can get involved!

WHAT'S NEW AND COMING UP FOR PROGRAM QUALITY TRAINING BY LINDA PATTEN, PROGRAM QUALITY DIRECTOR

It's the 11th hour before your big event and you don't have your keynote speaker. You advertised it as a "mystery" guest speaker as it was a mystery to you too!

How would you like a list of some of the best speakers in the District speaking on topics that would bring in new members, enliven current members and just help the club in its goal of being outstanding?

Well, that is what Table of Content is all about. Bringing speakers and clubs together for amazing results. You decide – do you want a 5-7 minute speech or a 20 minute workshop? What would suit your needs? You get to choose!

Are you asking yourself – how do I get this fabulous list? Actually, it will be part of the Open House kit being prepared by Jeff Young, our Club Growth Director. Can't wait? Then send me an email at linda@d57tm.org and I will get it to you quickly. **(Continued on page 6)**



SPOTLIGHT ON ALISON HARRIS-ABBOTT: THE CREATIVE VISIONARY BEHIND D57's PR TEAM BY LEESA THOMPSON, PRM

Meet Alison, an accomplished graphic designer with over 15 years of experience. As the founder of Data Revamped and an active member of the Benicia Chamber of Commerce, Alison brings her expertise to a variety of industries. Currently, she serves as the Vice President of Public Relations (VP PR) for her Toastmasters club, Capitol Speakers, using her talents to enhance communication and engagement within District 57. Alison joined the District 57 PR Team in September to help with flyers, where she quickly made her mark with her design skills.

Alison began her Toastmasters journey in March 2023 to improve her self-confidence, leadership abilities, and public speaking skills. She viewed the PR role as an exciting opportunity to combine her graphic design expertise with her passion for helping others. "What excites me most is being able to implement my skills in different ways, whether it's through designing flyers, newsletters, logos, or posters," Alison says.

As a visual learner, Alison understands the power of imagery in communication. "People have always learned by visuals—since the time of heliographics in caves. It's a primal way of being," she explains. Through her deep knowledge of color, typography, and design elements, Alison crafts visuals that simplify complex ideas and make learning engaging for everyone.

Since joining the PR team, Alison has embraced a variety of projects that have allowed her to expand her impact within Toastmasters. "I'm really proud of creating newsletters and web designs that represent the district. My involvement with Toastmasters has only escalated from here," she shares. Her dedication to the craft has not only sharpened her graphic design skills but also boosted her participation in other aspects of the organization.

Despite her successes, Alison has faced challenges, particularly when it comes to gathering information from various members. "Contacting people and getting the right information for our club can be difficult," she admits, but she has found ways to navigate this by staying organized and proactive in her communication efforts.

For those considering a leadership role or involvement in PR, Alison's advice is simple: "Try to say 'YES' to every opportunity if you have the bandwidth." She credits this mindset with her own success, balancing PR responsibilities alongside other commitments by using planners and clear communication with her manager. **(Continued on page 6)**



Alison and Sally
Philbin

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW— AN AFTER ACTION REPORT ON THE D57 OFFICIAL VISIT FROM REGION 1 ADVISOR ROSE KIRLAND, DTM BY JEFF YOUNG, CLUB GROWTH DIRECTOR

An unexpected part (well, for me, anyway) of the Club Growth Director's duties included leading the charge to set up meaningful events for the Region 1 Advisor for District 57, Rose Kirland, DTM. Think of it as being very similar to an Area Director Club Visit, only much bigger - Region 1 includes six districts.

The District put on a very good show of representing themselves in clubs both big and small.

Personally, I really liked meeting Rose in person. If you made it to one of her in person gatherings, you got to sample snacks from Hawaii. She's a presence on a virtual screen, but a powerhouse in the room.



The five top takeaways from her trip are as follows:

1. You don't know what you don't know - One of her catchphrases, it was a call to action for each of us in leadership positions to remember to be curious, ask questions, and don't assume.

I like to say there are no stupid questions except the ones we never ask. And so I ask; 'how are things?' as often as I can. I am not representing people very well when I don't know what they want - so you'll be seeing more of the Trio dropping into your clubs in the days and months ahead.

2. If nobody knows who and where you are, you're hiding.

Rose's suggestion for the Clubs in District 57 is to market themselves better. To rethink their approach to being more visible - some clubs aren't doing any marketing. They are relying on the Find a Club website to drive most of their foot traffic.

Challenge yourselves to come up with new ways of marketing your club - what sort of active marketing can you do? I've asked how to get ads up on the big screens in my company building, for example. There's probably a Facebook group for your local area. When the new website gets rolled out, there's a spot for you to put in Club level events. (P.S. Do we all have our Meetup page set up yet?)

3. Work together as a team.

I'm verrrrry guilty of trying to do everything myself. When I do that, I become the bottleneck for things moving forward. I've already learned that I can trust people on my team to do things on their own. I am learning to embrace the ideas that everyone brings to the table.

Rose said: "As club officers, anyone can do anyone else's job." Not just from a cross-training perspective, but also from the perspective that your officers are a team. The best officers can cover for each other as needed. 8 together are stronger than one alone.

4. Reach out more to your 'neighbors'.

There are about 105 Toastmasters clubs out there in District 57. Sometimes we only see other club members at TLI Trainings and contests. I know of at least two clubs whose nearest neighbor is within walking distance! Why not go on a field trip to visit another club more often? Rose and the Trio visited 8 clubs in a single week, so what's stopping us from doing that every so often?

The Pizza Party we held Tuesday evening was a rousing success - we even had a new guest attend, get top flight mentoring from Toastmasters of all levels and experiences, AND join a club that night! Rose's keynote speech was her longest of the trip, and I encourage everyone to catch it on YouTube. We're also planning to do more of those, because it was definitely worth it to just talk shop and meet old friends and new ones.

5. Educate Before You Leap

If you're reading this newsletter, you're better informed than the average Toastmaster. But you're in the minority - why not encourage your club to check out some of the articles that you found interesting? **(Continued on page 5)**

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW (CONTINUED)

Although DECM (the monthly District Executive Committee Meeting) is our primary information portal for our District Leaders, The Weekly Digest (the d57 event focal point) and The Dispatch (the d57 newsletter, contained within the Weekly Digest once a month) are our primary ways of reaching all of our members.

The other highlight of the trip was the debut of the *Table of Content” meeting - 14 people giving sneak pre-views of their curated 'content' speeches, workshops, and presentations for any of you who want to spice up your club meetings with an outside speaker. We're pushing 40 speech topics pre-loaded and prepared for clubs. All you need to do is reach out to Linda or me to get a copy of the topics list.

We're here to help you be more than you ever dreamed.

A SPOTLIGHT ON CLUBS THAT HOSTED ROSE KIRLAND BY JEFF YOUNG

A hearty THANK YOU to the clubs that invited Rose and the Trio into their meetings during the official visit. Showing your living space to someone who has a 'leadership' title behind their name can be pretty daunting, but all of you came through with eager enthusiasm and energy. You put on a show that she was highly complimentary of.



If you want to meet a group of D57 Clubs that just said yes when asked to host our guest, check out these clubs!

- Esteemed Oakland 88 – Experienced is an understatement. Home of many current and past District Leaders. One of the oldest clubs on the block. Rose visited this club at 4am her time before her Official Visit even began! 7am Mondays. (Hybrid)
- A Cut Above - Motivational; Friendly, encouraging, "Mighty Mite." First, Third & Fifth Mondays at 7:30 pm. (Hybrid)
- Oakland City Center - Business oriented; Oakland City Center has a long track record of enabling professionals to bring clarity and impact to their communication skills. Tuesdays at noon. (Hybrid)
- Toastmasters Leadership Club (TLC) - Business/educational. Focus on Leadership, communication, and support. Wednesdays at 7pm. (Virtual)
- Sunrise Business Leaders - Business oriented. Engaging, encouraging, and educational. Thursday mornings at 7am. (Hybrid)
- Swift Plaza - High-tech club with fun tech toys. Check out their AI-powered Table Topics generator! Thursdays at noon. (Hybrid)
- Trident Toastmasters – Motivational/Inspirational community club with a focus on encouraging new members to expand language skills. Thursday evenings at 8pm. (Virtual)
- Diablo Champagne Breakfast Club - Creative club with a focus on storytelling and style. Friday mornings at 7am. (Hybrid)

SPOTLIGHT ON ALISON HARRIS- ABBOTT (CONTINUED)

What she enjoys most about her role on the PR team is the chance to collaborate with others. “I love getting to know my team members better while exchanging ideas and expanding my network,” Alison says.

Looking ahead, Alison’s goal is to continue opening doors by creating at her best. She believes that the PR team plays a critical role in the district’s success by keeping members informed and engaged. A particularly memorable moment in her journey was when District Director Sally Philbin presented her with the coveted “100 Years of Toastmasters” pin during a pizza party with Rose Kirland, Region 1 Advisor—an event that further solidified her dedication to the team.

Alison’s dedication and creative flair make her an invaluable asset to the PR team. As she continues to shine in her role, District 57 is sure to benefit from her innovative approach to visual communication and design.

In response to Sally’s plea for new clubs Alison is determined to start a creativity club which had its first meeting on 10/29. Continue to watch the Disyriect 57 Weekly Digest to visit this club.

JOIN A TOASTMASTERS CLUB FOR ARTISTS AND CREATIVES

Are you an artist or someone looking to tap into your creative side? Imagine a Toastmasters club where each week focuses on a different art form—visual arts, film, improv, poetry, and more. Members would present, discuss, and share their creative works while honing public speaking skills.

Whether you’re a seasoned artist or simply curious, this club offers a space for inspiration, collaboration, and growth. Each meeting would offer artistic themes, creative exercises, and a community to help you express yourself confidently. Interested in exploring your creativity with like-minded individuals? Let us know! Sign up for our event here:



PROGRAM QUALITY TRAINING (CONTINUED)

What else is going on with the Program Quality team? Here is what is being planned and scheduled for now until the end of the year:

1. In November, the contest team will be doing 3 workshops on running in-person contests. What equipment does it take? What kind of location should we be looking for? Don’t forget judges, ballot counters, contest toast master, contestants, audience (both in-person and virtual) and more. Our contest team is very experienced in all things contest and are here to make this the best contest season ever. Just remember: a) club contests can be in-person, hybrid or virtual; 2) Area and Division contests are in-person only with all functionaries in person as well. Only the audience can be virtual. This training is a must if you want a successful set of contests.
2. Train the Trainer – We are reprising this training in-person at the Dublin Library on November 16 from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Ashley Harkness will be leading this event with a wealth of knowledge about turning from a stellar speaker into an amazing trainer. Believe me, training requires a different skill set from speaking. Individuals who take part in this training will have the opportunity to be on the list to teach at the Toastmasters’ Leadership Institute and/or Club Officer Training to be held in December and January.
3. Toastmasters Leadership Institute kicks off the second round of leader training on December 7th. This will begin at 9:00 a.m. and end around 1:00 p.m. It will be totally virtual. There will be a section on the new Pathways program – the who, what, where, when and extent of the curriculum. You definitely won’t want to miss this nor will your VP Pathways / Education. The Division Directors will be scheduling their Club Officer Trainings (COT) in January.

There are lots of exciting trainings coming along for the end of the year. You don’t want to miss them. Check the District Calendar and put them into your calendar too.

MINI CLUB SUCCESS PLAN TECH WORK COMPLETE— PROGRESS IS NOW UP TO THE CLUBS BY P. VENKAT RAMAN, MCSP TECH CHAIR

Congratulations to all the 38 clubs that submitted their MCSP forms on time by Sept 30! The MCSP Tech team is done setting them all up for digital signatures.

Of these, 21 clubs have even completed their signature process at the time of this writing! Congratulations to all of them. The remaining 17 clubs should strive to make the same progress this month.

But there is another chance at District Bucks! The MCSP form is again accepting submissions.

The form is [here](#).

You can no longer earn the district bucks for the Sept 30 deadline, but if you had missed the first deadline you can still complete the MCSP and qualify for the incentive Completion of Club Success Activities by 12-31-2024. The process for completing the MCSP will still be the same.

For tips and strategies about MCSP, go here: [Mini Club Success Plan \(MCSP\) – District 57 Toastmasters](#)

Some things to keep in mind:

- If you have a draft submission where you have marked it to be not final, remember to fix whatever needs to be fixed and resubmit while marking it final.
- If you are filling the form for more than one club and you see the first club's data populated in the fields, don't change the entries. Rather, load the form in an incognito window to get a clean copy of it. Or, have another officer fill the form.
- When you fill the form, make sure all email addresses are well formed (with the @ sign in the right place) and are accurate. When you copy-and-paste the area director email, in particular, it is known to lose the at-sign in the process. Malformed and inaccurate email addresses cause confusion and add delays to the process.
- Remember to save the link to edit your draft entry. Edit your entries as appropriate and resubmit. Otherwise you'll need to enter everything again and it will cause a duplicate entry for your club.
- Don't lose the confirmation page after your submission until you receive the confirmation email. Save it as a pdf file on your desktop or email the contents to yourself. If no confirmation email comes through within a few minutes, use the link on the confirmation page to edit the form again and see if your email address as entered there is accurate.
- If you submit an MCSP, alert your officers right away to expect emails to come from [eversign.com](#), using XodoSign in the description. We've had members delete these emails, thinking they are spam. Alert your officers to monitor their spam folders for these emails too, as needed.
- If your signature process is complete, don't forget to enter it in the incentive tracker!



THE IMPORTANCE OF WATCHING THE SHOP

PART 2: THE MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL CAMPAIGN

BY LEE VAUGHAN



Times have changed. It's harder than in previous times for Toastmasters clubs to get and keep members. Maybe there was a time when most members just renewed without much management (or even encouragement) from the club. I don't know about you, but I think the epoch of membership renewal as some sort of cake walk – to the extent it ever existed – now lies in the dust of antiquity. We now live in the age of clubs having to work smarter to retain members. One approach to retaining members is a paradigm shift from membership renewal deadline...to membership renewal campaign.

“[The] deadline attitude where everyone is assumed to be re-upping unless they say otherwise only yields lost opportunities and lapsed memberships.”

“Oh yeah, before everyone leaves, remember to renew your membership by this time next week!”

This is no longer good enough if it ever was good enough. This deadline attitude where everyone is assumed to be re-upping unless they say otherwise only yields lost opportunities and lapsed memberships. Even when the most diligent of clubs manages renewal to the best of its ability, some members will not renew. This indicates that if membership renewal is not planned for at all, clubs will invariably lose more people than they can afford to lose.

What might a renewal campaign look like? Glad you asked. Try starting the campaign a full two months before the deadline, with the following activities:

- The VPP drafts a simple plan of how to reach out to members.
- The plan starts with all club officers renewing early.
- Then, gung-ho members are identified, and officers are selected to reach out to those individuals for early renewal.
- Casual members who do not attend regularly are identified and officers or passionate members are assigned to reach out to each of these members and follow up with them.

- The President supports the plan and talks up renewal at all meetings during the two-month campaign period.
- The status of membership renewals is reviewed and discussed at an appropriately-timed club officers meeting.

Concerns expressed about the club from members undecided about renewal or who are not renewing are discussed in a solutions-oriented manner.



Although your club's plan for a membership renewal campaign does not need to look exactly like the example provided here, there should be some sort of plan with concerted outreach as the focus.

The good news is that, with support from club officers and members (I refer to us all as shopkeepers), these campaigns can be a light lift for each person contributing. Results are absolutely obtainable.