

The District 57 Dispatch

Season’s greetings, everyone! Before you know it, the New Year will be upon us—don’t say we didn’t warn you. And you know what the New Year brings? Contest season! (Don’t say we didn’t warn you about that either.)

There are myriad needs for contest season. Simply put, your area, division, and district leadership need you to run speech contests. It takes roughly 20 Toastmasters to host a contest at the area level and up, so please consider lending a hand, whether as a judge, a ballot counter, a sergeant-at-arms, or several other important positions!

Happy Holidays! Lee Vaughan, Editor

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Tuesday, December 3	Forming a New Club for Creatives and Artists, 6:00 - 7:00 PM
Saturday, December 7	Toastmasters leadership Institute Training, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Tuesday December 10	Forming a New Club for Creatives and Artists, 6:00 - 7:00 PM
Saturday, December 14	Speakers Forum Club Open House & Showcase for Advanced Speakers, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Saturday, December 14	District Executive Committee (DECM), 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Tuesday, December 17	Forming a New Club for Creatives and Artists, 6:00 - 7:00 PM
Monday, December 23	Forming a New Club for Creatives and Artists, 6:00 - 7:00 PM
Tuesday and Wednesday, December 24 and 25	Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
Thursday, December 26	Kwanzaa
Monday, December 30	Forming a New Club for Creatives and Artists, 6:00 - 7:00 PM
Tuesday, December 31	New Year's Eve



OFF THE TOP, BY SALLY PHILBIN, DISTRICT DIRECTOR



Off the Top...Time just keeps marching on...My vision for this year is for our first concern to be the growth of our members, both in numbers and in their (our) personal growth. When we work the educational program and jump into leadership roles we grow. We grow our skills to be great orators and great leaders. I see it happening every day and in every way.

So far this year 140 of our members have completed 212 Path levels. Another 91 Path levels have been completed by individuals who preferred not to be identified and therefore cannot be rewarded or recognized for their accomplishments. That's a total of 303 Path levels completed in just 5 months. CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR MEMBERS

WHO ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE TOASTMASTERS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.

Currently we have 669 Club Officer positions filled, 36 District Council positions filled (not counting here the Club Officers on the Council), and approximately another 50 District Committee positions filled. That's a total of approximately 775 leadership positions currently filled within our District and there are more positions available. CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR MEMBERS WHO ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE TOASTMASTERS LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES MADE AVAILABLE RIGHT HERE IN DISTRICT 57.

This is just a quick example of the growth opportunities afforded our members within District 57. I am so proud of the many members learning and growing everyday though



DISTRICT BUCKS FOR THE HOLIDAYS!! BY LINDA PATTEN, PROGRAM QUALITY DIRECTOR

As the holiday season is beginning to ramp up, I wanted to remind you of a District Bucks offer that expires in December.

You have taken the time and effort to complete both the Club's Moments of Truth and the Mini-Success Plan and for that you have received District Bucks for each of them. Now, let's wrap this up into a bundle.

Want to earn \$75 District Bucks? Well, with the Moments of Truth and Club Success Plan completed by their deadlines, you only need to complete 5 DCP points by December 31, 2024.

Did you get Membership Renewal dues in on time? Did you submit your Club officer list on time? If so, you got 1 point for administration.

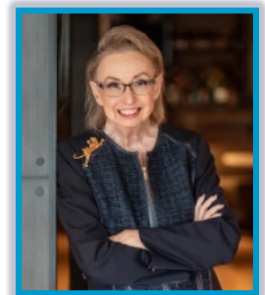
Have your members been giving Pathways speeches and completing levels, giving you 1 point for each level?



Have you been on fire and brought in 8 new members to give you another point?

You still have 5+ weeks to make this happen. What would your club do with an extra \$75?

Happy Holidays to you all!



SPOTLIGHT ON KIDNEY STORIES: A TOASTMASTERS CLUB ADVOCATING FOR KIDNEY HEALTH, BY SHOBA RAO, DTM PRESIDENT, KIDNEY STORIES TOASTMASTERS

Kidney Stories, founded on March 7, 2022, is a unique and impactful Toastmasters club that serves as a voice for kidney patients and advocates. Focused on raising awareness, educating, and empowering individuals, this club has already achieved incredible milestones, including Distinguished status in its first three months and consecutive years as a Presidential Distinguished club.

Now preparing to officially join District 57 by July 1, 2025, Kidney Stories is bringing its vital mission to our community. Meeting on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month at 7:00 PM Eastern Time, the club explores issues critical to kidney health and the kidney community, while also helping its members learn critical communication skills needed for Public Speaking. From chronic kidney disease awareness to the transplant process and post-transplant care, Kidney Stories creates a space for education, support, and advocacy.

A Recent Highlight

On Sunday, November 17, 2024, the club hosted an impactful presentation featuring Wendy Greenspan, Transplant Coordinator from the Kidney/Pancreas Program at Johns Hopkins. Wendy shared invaluable insights into the transplant waitlisting process and strategies for staying active on the list, answering attendees' questions and providing hope and clarity for many in the audience.

The Importance of Kidney Stories

The need for awareness and support is greater than ever:

- 37 million Americans have chronic kidney disease, yet 9 out of 10 are unaware of their condition until it's too late.
- 600,000 people are on dialysis, often starting treatment after a late diagnosis.

Kidney Stories provides a platform for learning, connection, and inspiration, giving members tools to navigate their kidney health journey and advocate for others in similar circumstances.

Stay Connected

As Kidney Stories transitions into District 57, we invite you to watch for their meeting announcements in the District 57 Facebook group. This is an opportunity to engage with a club making a real difference while honing your communication and leadership skills in a supportive environment.

Whether you are personally affected by kidney disease, know someone who is, or simply want to learn more, Kidney Stories welcomes you to their meetings. Join them to connect, learn, and make an impact on a community that needs our support.

Stay tuned for upcoming events and announcements—together, we can amplify their mission and extend the reach of this life-changing work.



JEFF'S SIDEBAR

Could you use some help putting together your club's Open House?

The D57 Open House Kit is available for evaluation and co-piloting. All you need to do is contact Jeff Young, Club Growth Director (jeffrey@d57tm.org) and set up an appointment so he can walk you through the kit.

If you dislike the idea of running Open Houses for all the organization that's required, this is guaranteed to be a step up from doing it all on your own.

The kit contains:

- * Flyer templates
- * An agenda generator
- * A list of Outside Speakers to invite
- * A schedule generator for planning

Plus,

- * Checklists for everything
- * Scripts for the Toastmaster
- * Email templates to mail guests
- * An expected cost breakdown
- * A list of starter Table Topics

By using the kit and providing feedback, you are also helping its co-creator, Pallavi Hedge, with her HPL project. We'd love to hear from you!

A PURPOSE FOR GATHERING BY JEFF YOUNG, CLUB GROWTH DIRECTOR

As we get into the holiday season, I had to think about what Toastmasters is to me. In my travels, I usually ask prospective new members this question. "What brings you to Toastmasters?" To existing Toastmasters, I ask, "What keeps you coming back?"



Usually the answer is 'the people.' We are encouraged to bring our friends, our family, and our coworkers to Open Houses. Some of them even join. But the big differentiator is whether or not they find their own purpose.

A number of years back, Bett Bollhoefer asked us to "Find our why." Ashley Harkness uses his speech, "Why am I still in Toastmasters?" to convince others into the program.

Everyone had their own reason to join Toastmasters. But for most of us, we don't think about it anymore. We choose to be here, to carve out that chunk of time every week or so, and sometimes we even get to speak. It's become a habit. Familiar. Comfortable.

But here's the real reason I'm talking about this. When we gather with non-Toastmasters, are we doing our club and our shared hobby/passion/social outlet justice? Do we do enough to raise awareness of it in such a way that people say more than 'oh yeah, that sounds cool' but then never show up?

Do we feel we have the right to?

I think that perhaps that therein lies the disconnect. Some of us have forgotten the reason we joined - to get over our fear of talking in front of strangers - and that extolling the virtues and benefits of being a Toastmaster is still something we are not fully onboard with sharing that part of ourselves with others.

I know this because I'm one of them.

I can talk about my writing habit, my video game habit, and my reading habit with ease. Talk about my sci fi nerdiness, my board game collection, or, more often than not, my cooking. Because I don't feel the need to try and make them do the thing that I like doing.

But my Toastmasters gig, the thing that takes up a larger-than-expected part of my free time? I don't really talk it up as much as a 'this is what I'm doing', because I expect most people I know don't -need- Toastmasters like I do. Because there's a boundary where if I want to get people to join Toastmasters, I have to bring them -to- a Toastmasters club, and while I can make the ask, I don't like pressuring them to do so.

And yet I've gotten people to join. But to me, they have to have expressed a need or an interest in the first place, and my introverted (yes, I am an introvert, if you can believe it) self says, 'Just because I find Toastmasters a life-changing skills supercharger experience, doesn't mean you will too.'

"Most people," I think, don't feel the need to be better at public speaking. When they actually do. They think because they have no problems -talking-, they don't think they need help -speaking.- But the two are very different skills, and it often takes hearing a really good speaker to make you realize you have a long way to go to becoming an accomplished speaker.

Normally, someone else whose opinion they trust is the one that informs them that they need Toastmasters. For me it was my manager. For many others, it is friends or family or just looking up 'public speaking classes' online.

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*"I become the thing
I want to show
others is possible."*



A PURPOSE FOR GATHERING (CONTINUED)

I had to be convinced to join Toastmasters. I was told by my manager that I needed it. I was skeptical for a bit, but then I actually started to like it. And then I started noticing the difference. That is why I stayed at first. Over time, I became people's mentor, guide, and friend, and I didn't want to let people down. But that's only good for people who know they need to be in Toastmasters.

I'm bad at telling people what I think they need, because I think everyone has to discover that it's important for themselves. I'm bad at telling people what to do, because that's that "Leadership Skill" I'm in Toastmasters to develop, and I'm not there yet. But Toastmasters is about finding our strengths - and mine is to spark imagination, curiosity, and occasionally, enthusiasm.

So how do I get someone enthusiastic about Toastmasters? I become the thing I want to show others is possible. I strive to be a better speaker than they remember me being. And when and if they say, 'You're better than I expected', I tell them why.

I have to remember to teach people how to imagine themselves as better speakers instead of just being good talkers, and pique curiosity when I pitch Toastmasters.

I just have to get over my fear of being in front of strangers all over again.

It's easy to convince people who walk in our doors that they want to be there, because they've already made that choice themselves.

It's harder to convince people wandering around nearby, or who are nowhere near the club to join up. Because we have to get out of our comfort zone, invade someone else's comfort zone, and convince them to come 'home' with us.

I have an aunt who will invite anyone and everyone who she thinks needs a place to go for Thanksgiving and Christmas to come eat.

We just have to find that same spot within us - and invite people who we think need it to come speak.

And if you know of a bunch of people (...or 20...) who need convincing, but don't feel up to doing it alone? That's my job, now. Send me leads and ideas, and I'm here to help you make the sale. There's a club Sponsor and/or Mentor title in it for you.

I just need to know who and where they are.

WORLD CHAMPION OF PUBLIC SPEAKING WORKSHOP COMING TO OUR DISTRICT!

District 57 Toastmasters is honored to welcome Luisa Montalvo, the 2024 Toastmasters International World Champion of Public Speaking, for an exclusive virtual workshop, titled New Year, New You on Saturday, January 18th, 2025, from 1PM to 3PM PST. Watch the Digest and D57 Website for registration details!



HOW TO HOST A SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSE: LESSONS FROM A REMARKABLE CLUB MEETING,

BY KATE MILLS

Hosting an open house is a fantastic way to showcase the value of Toastmasters to potential members while strengthening connections within your club and district. Recently, a club in District 57 demonstrated how adaptability, creativity, and teamwork can turn an open house into an unforgettable event—even with unexpected challenges.

Here's what made this open house exceptional:

1. Adaptability in the Face of Challenges

When the planned in-person venue became unavailable at the last minute, the club quickly shifted the event to an online open house. Its ability to adapt ensured the event proceeded smoothly. A venue change notice was sent via all-member chat and email. The in-person venue was given the link, and online agenda, guest speaker, invited guests, and meeting functionaries were updated. The club's ability to adapt ensured the event proceeded smoothly. Using D57 PR tools, they effectively communicated the change, drawing a strong turnout, including District Director Sally Philbin, Club Growth Director Jeffrey Young, and Public Relations Manager (PRM) Leesa Thompson.

2. Prepared Agenda and a Strong Start

Roles were filled and attendance confirmed before the meeting began, including "Techies" operating seamlessly. Being prepared allowed members and guests to enjoy a little social time waiting for the meeting to start. The meeting started on time with a warm welcome and guidelines for attendees. Guest were asked to introduce themselves. The Theme and Word of the Day raised enthusiasm. Finally, the Jokemaster, got everyone laughing and relaxed. Let the meeting begin!

3. Engaging Featured Speaker

The Club VP of Education worked well in advance to find guest speakers that provide attendees with different perspectives about Toastmasters. The keynote speaker for this meeting, Deborah Weiner, DTM, captivated the audience with her speech on "*How to Be a Great Audience Member.*" Her insightful tips emphasized the importance of active listening, supportive body language, and thoughtful feedback, leaving the audience with actionable takeaways. Her Q&A session further deepened the engagement.

4. Value-Packed Member Speech

Prasad Bodas, DTM, delivered a speech entitled "*Three Odd Things*" with practical holiday tips:

- Avoid using plastic water bottles to help the environment.
- Get your taxes done early for year-end benefits.
- Engage in new activities and habits, like gardening, reading, and even dual membership in a second Toastmasters club.

5. Creative Table Topics

The Table Topics Master introduced a unique activity where participants worked in pairs. One person told a story while the other performed complementary gestures and expressions. This approach highlighted the importance of body language in impromptu communication. The winners, Jeff and Todd, brought energy and creativity to the exercise, demonstrating how teamwork enhances storytelling.

6. Comprehensive Feedback

The agenda included detailed speech evaluations from experienced club members. The Timer, Ah Counter, and Grammarian gave their reports and the General Evaluator wrapped up the feedback section. Emphasis was placed on the importance of constructive feedback in fostering improvement.

7. Effective PR and Call to Action

Guests were encouraged to share their impressions, and the PRM reminded everyone of the importance of using district tools to promote future open houses. Ensuring your open house is listed on Meetup, the district website, and social media platforms increases visibility and attendance.

8. Positive Atmosphere and Engagement

The word of the day, "sharing," reflected the spirit of the meeting. Guests and members alike contributed to a warm, welcoming environment that showcased the unique benefits of joining Toastmasters.

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HOW TO HOST A SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSE (CONTINUED)

Takeaways for *Your* Open House

- Assign an Event Chair: Rally and prepare members, practice team management, discover TI protocols for event flyers and banners...*and* complete a Pathways project.
- Feature Dynamic Speakers: Include keynote speeches and practical presentations that resonate with guests.
- Communication is Key: Keep your member lists updated and use them regularly.
- Be Flexible: Have a backup plan and be ready to adapt.
- Engage the District: Invite district leaders to boost credibility and draw interest.
- Think Outside the Box: Incorporate creative activities that engage participants and highlight the club's uniqueness.
- Promote Widely: Use district PR tools, social media, and member ambassadors to ensure your open house gets noticed.
- Create a Welcoming Environment: Foster a supportive and positive atmosphere to leave a lasting impression on guests.^[1]_{[5][7]}

This club's open house not only inspired guests to consider membership but also set an example for others to follow. By integrating these elements into your next open house, your club can make a lasting impact and grow its membership.

Let's continue to make District 57 a beacon of public speaking and leadership excellence!

PROTECT YOUR ZOOM MEETINGS AND BOOST YOUR OPEN HOUSE ATTENDANCE, BY LEESA THOMPSON, PR MANAGER

Hosting a successful and secure Zoom meeting requires thoughtful preparation, especially to avoid disruptions like "Zoom bombing." Our club recently experienced such an incident due to missed precautions, but with a few simple steps, you can prevent this from happening in your meetings:

1. Enable Registration for Access: Require attendees to register before receiving the Zoom link. This ensures that only verified participants can join your meeting.
2. Admit Participants Manually: Use the "Waiting Room" feature to admit attendees individually, keeping unwanted visitors out.
3. Assign a Host and Co-Host: Always have at least one host and a co-host to monitor security settings, manage participants, and address any disruptions quickly.

In addition to securing your meetings, it's equally important to promote your club's events effectively—especially open houses.

To increase attendance at your open house:

- Submit Your Flyers: Send your flyer to the District 57 Digest before noon the Friday prior to your event.
- Update Your Calendars: Add your open house to the District website calendar, your club calendar, and post it in the District 57 Facebook group.
- Leverage Meetup: Share your flyer and event details on your Meetup group for additional visibility.

By combining effective security practices with strategic promotion, your club can ensure safe, well-attended, and impactful events. Let's work together to create memorable experiences!

