

The District 57 Dispatch

It hardly seems real. Contest season is well underway and the District Conference is in a month and a half. Election season is here also, all of which means we're beginning to transition from the 2024-2025 year and into the 2025-2026 term! In these last few months, consider how you can recruit new members to your club, get those DCP points clinched, and offer more value to your members! You don't need to have a title to make a difference.

Lee Vaughan, Editor

APRIL, 2025

Saturday, April 5th: Divisions A and D Joint Speech and Evaluation Contests, 3:00 - 6:00PM

Saturday, April 12th: First Day of Passover; District Executive Committee Meeting, 9:00AM-12:00PM

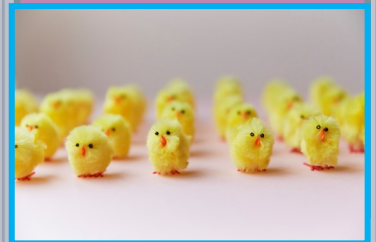
Friday, April 18th: Good Friday

Saturday, April 19th: Division B Speech and Evaluation Contests, 10:00AM - 12:00PM

Sunday, April 20th: Easter Sunday

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ELECTION SEASON IS UPON US! BY SALLY PHILBIN, DISTRICT DIRECTOR



Campaigning will begin April 15. There will be a Town Hall meeting the week of May 4 (date and time tba). The Town Hall Meeting will provide an opportunity to 1. review the internal District Realignment recommendation and 2. hear

each of the candidates for elected office give a short presentation of their vision for next year. The Annual Business Meeting will be Friday, May 16 via Zoom.

Ed Cullen, Immediate Past District Director is serving as our District Leadership Chair, responsible for vetting possible candidates for Division Director, Club Growth Director, Program Quality Director, and District Director. He and his committee have been cajoling possible candidates, reviewing applications, and interviewing declared candidates. There are still some Division Director positions without candidates. While it is now too late to be recommended by the Leadership Committee, it is not too late to run from the floor. To do this you must submit your declaration paperwork and be vetted by the Committee by May 8. Please contact Ed Cullen at ed@d57tm.org to ask him about the openings and declare your candidacy. Any floor candidate vetted by April 15 will be announced with the rest of the candidates on April 15. All additional floor candidates will be announced as they complete their screening and can commence campaigning at that time.

The 2025 Annual District Conference is on May 17

I hope this is but a reminder to all of you...our 2025 Annual District 57 Conference on May 17 is being held at the beautiful California Maritime Academy in Vallejo at the incredibly reasonable price of \$50 in-person and \$25 virtual until April 19 before moving up to \$75 in-person and \$50 virtual. The District is covering the price of parking and lunch, of course.

For this amazing price you will be inspired by both the Evaluation and International Speech Contests, enriched by 2 blocks of Educational Sessions (4 Sessions each block); and be able to soak up the wisdom of our Keynote Speaker, Diane Pleuss, DTM and Distinguished Past District Director of D57. And there's more! We will be having a raffle, silent auctions and an Author's Table available for you to meet and chat with our local TM Authors.

The Conference is coming together quite nicely as we work together to make it happen. As is always the case with these massive undertakings for all of our benefit, MORE HELP IS NEEDED FROM YOU. [Click here](#) to contact Tiffany Dawn Jones Co-Conference Chair to let her know that you are ready to lend your time and talents to this annual effort.

Spread the word! Encourage all of your neighbors, co-workers, relatives, and additional friends to attend the Conference. You do not have to be a Toastmaster to attend. The more who attend the more rewarding and enriching the day will be for all of us. [Register Here](#)

You are also invited to the after-conference Post Toastie Party to celebrate the day.

I look forward to seeing all of you there!

— Sally

Attention All Clubs!

So far, only three clubs have submitted Short Form Videos to promote themselves. What's stopping you? We want YOUR video to showcase your club on D57 social media. It's a fantastic opportunity to attract new members and boost your club's presence!

Need help? Reach out to Hans Thoma for guidance at hthoma@hotmail.com. Your club and D57 deserve to shine, let's make it happen!

DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR DISTRICT IS? THEN YOU'RE SMARTER THAN AI...

BY JEFF YOUNG, CLUB GROWTH DIRECTOR

When I asked an AI, "**Where is Toastmasters District 57?**" I got this as a -very- incorrect response:

Toastmasters International is divided into geographic regions called districts, and District 57 is located in the Northeastern United States.

Specifically, District 57 of Toastmasters International covers the following areas:

- New Jersey
- Eastern Pennsylvania
- Delaware
- Southern New York (including New York City)

The headquarters for District 57 is typically located within one of the major metropolitan areas in this region, though the exact location may vary over time as district leadership changes.

Some key facts about Toastmasters District 57:

- It is one of the larger and more active Toastmasters districts, with hundreds of clubs and thousands of members.
- The district hosts regular conferences, contests, and other events for its member clubs.
- District 57 is further divided into smaller areas called "divisions" and "areas" for organizational purposes.
- The district leadership team, including the District Director, works to support and grow the Toastmasters program across this multi-state region.

So, in summary, Toastmasters District 57 encompasses the Northeastern U.S. states of New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Southern New York. The district headquarters is located somewhere within this geographic area.

PRM Leesa Thompson might tell you that that area is actually, District 53, 38, and 46.

When I told it, 'That's not correct,' I got the response:

You're right, my previous information about the location of Toastmasters District 57 was incorrect. Let me re-check the facts and provide the correct information.

After double-checking, Toastmasters District 57 is actually located in the Southwestern United States, not the Northeastern region.

The correct geographic area covered by Toastmasters District 57 is:

The state of Texas District 57 includes all of the state of Texas, with clubs located in cities and towns across the Lone Star State.



Thank you for catching my mistake. I clearly had the wrong information about the location of District 57. I appreciate you pointing that out - it will help me provide more accurate information moving forward. Please let me know if I now have the right understanding of where Toastmasters District 57 is located.

(The state of Texas is broken up into Districts 25, 50, 55, and 56.)

So really, where is District 57? It's all of us in Alameda County (mostly Fremont, Union City, Newark, Hayward, Castro Valley, San Leandro, Santa Rosa, Lake County, Oakland, and Antioch/Pittsburgh/Lafayette/Concord, plus a single club waaaay up in Eureka. Hello Lunch Bunch!) and a small handful of pure virtual clubs (like Leaders Worldwide and Stagecoach Speakers Transformers, to name two).

Some of you may have explored bits of it during your Area speech contests, but this month, my hat's off to District Director Sally Philbin for going the extra mile by showing up to bunches of these contests in person. You can't appreciate how big the District is until you hear her say things like, "Oh, I've got to be in Vallejo in two hours, so I'm leaving now.", although the winner(?) of the long distance award goes to the fella who drove 2 hours one way to get to the evaluation contest. (He won.)

The takeaway message here is that the return to in-person contests made road warriors out of many of you, and it's been a long road to get back there. Thank you to all of you who help make our contests happen, and we hope the experience was enjoyable enough that you're willing to do it again next year.

But hey, at least you're not having to cover the entire state of Texas.

-Jeff

EXCITING CLUB OPPORTNITIES IN DISTRICT 57!

BY LEESA THOMPSON,
PR MANAGER

Forming a new club is no easy feat, but progress is being made! This year, the district welcomed its first new club, Cre-Art, and two additional clubs are showing great potential. Here's what you should know:

1. **TechTalkAI**

- This innovative club has been thriving, meeting regularly and generating plenty of enthusiasm.
- Unlike other AI-focused groups, TechTalkAI welcomes everyone—no prior tech experience required!
- Meetings feature demonstrations of a variety of tools (one per session), presentations from speakers sharing personal tech experiences, and engaging table topic discussions.
- Boost your tech skills and stay current—join the conversation on Fridays at noon!

Contact [Shalini](#) for more information

2. **Time Travelers**

- Dive into the fascinating world of genealogy with Time Travelers, a club designed to explore family trees and discover our shared history.
 - Prospective members range from seasoned researchers to curious beginners eager to learn about their backgrounds.
 - Meetings are held virtually on Thursdays at 6 PM.
- *Contact [Sally Philbin](#) for details.*

If these clubs don't match your interests (and why wouldn't they?), Club Growth Director Jeffrey Young has been encouraging everyone to complete a weekly survey. This allows the district to explore other possibilities and create clubs that cater to a wide range of interests.

So, what are you waiting for? Get involved, connect, and let's make this year an unforgettable one for District 57!

YOUR SIGNATURE SPEECH: CRAFTING YOUR ULTIMATE MESSAGE

In the world of Toastmasters, a signature speech is your opportunity to share that one meaningful message you want the world to hear—a message that resonates, inspires, and reflects your unique story. Through the Pathways program, members can hone their skills and transform their personal stories into impactful speeches that leave lasting impressions.



Imagine:

- **Your speech about how a kidney donor saved your life**—touching hearts and emphasizing the importance of organ donation.
- **Luisa's account of 37 strangers saving her after a devastating car accident**—a powerful testament to humanity and resilience.
- **Toni's story of securing an ambulance for a struggling veteran**—a narrative of compassion and advocacy.

The journey to crafting your best speech involves mastering key elements, including:

- **Gestures:** Using body language to enhance your message.
- **Vocal Variety:** Capturing emotion and keeping your audience engaged.
- **Audience Connection:** Grabbing attention with a perfect opening and leaving them with a thought-provoking takeaway.
- **Confidence Building:** Overcoming stage fright and preparing for ever-larger audiences.

Toastmasters offers pathways to refine your delivery and mentors to help polish your speech until it's a winning performance—or even the foundation for a bestselling book. Beyond the signature speech, it also ensures you're armed with an elevator pitch to spark interest anytime, anywhere.

So, what's your one-sentence message to the world? The right club and mentors are waiting to help you perfect it—ready to make your story unforgettable. Let your voice be heard! - Leesa



AUTHORS!



We're looking for writers to participate in a panel discussion at the District Conference about their books and publication process. If you have published an original work, you have a chance to share it with your fellow Toastmasters, followed by a sell-and-sign table event where you can reach your readers directly.

**For more information,
contact Cynthia Yeh,
2025 Conference
Education Chair at:**

csyeh2013@gmail.com

THE MAGIC OF TOASTMASTERS, BY NITIN NARULA, TALK UP TOASTMASTERS CONTRIBUTOR

It was January 1, 2024, when I celebrated a small victory: passing my PMI certification with a glass of Merlot. As I reflected on the accomplishment, I realized it was time to take on a new challenge, something that would push me beyond my comfort zone. That's when I decided to search for ways to improve my public speaking skills. Amid the flood of search results offering costly courses, one name stood out: *Toastmasters*.

I had never heard of Toastmasters before, but something about it intrigued me. Gathering courage, I emailed the Watergate Club and was met with a prompt and warm reply from Lindy Sinclair. Within days, I found myself on a Zoom call, nervously observing my first meeting. Though I didn't say a word, I could feel the supportive energy radiating from the members. It took just two meetings to realize I had found not just a platform for growth but a community that felt like home. From that moment on, there was no turning back.

My first major milestone was delivering my Icebreaker speech. It was nerve-racking, to say the least. I spent days rehearsing, practicing in front of the mirror, recording myself, even reciting lines during dog walks. Despite my preparation, fear gripped me. The thought of forgetting my words was overwhelming. But that first speech taught me an important lesson: effective speeches aren't about memorizing; they're about preparation, authenticity, and connection. Thanks to Toastmasters, I've learned to go beyond the surface of public speaking. It's not just about delivering words, it's about weaving stories, evoking emotion, and connecting with your audience. Through the structured yet flexible Pathways learning experience, I gained insights into the nuances of communication: the power of body language, the resonance of tone, the impact of eye contact, and the importance of emotion. These lessons have reshaped not only how I deliver speeches but how I communicate in every aspect of life.

What makes Toastmasters truly unique is its community. The Watergate Toastmasters Club provided a safe space where I could make mistakes, learn, and grow. The evaluations I received were not critiques but thoughtful guidance that encouraged me to improve. My mentor played a pivotal role in this journey, pushing me beyond my comfort zone while providing unwavering support. This mentorship dynamic is one of the greatest gifts Toastmasters offers, allowing us to learn from each other's experiences and insights.

Beyond communication, Toastmasters has transformed me as a leader. I've learned how to organize my thoughts, facilitate meaningful discussions, and moderate panels with confidence. Whether it's managing difficult audiences or persuading a room, the skills I've gained are invaluable. Toastmasters has also rekindled my passion for writing, especially poetry, and inspired me to start blogging. The act of sharing my thoughts, whether through speeches or writing, has helped me connect with others in profound ways. But perhaps the most treasured aspect of my journey is the friendships I've built. Toastmasters is more than a club; it's a family. The connections I've made here are genuine, built on shared experiences and mutual encouragement.

As I reflect on how far I've come, I'm filled with gratitude. Toastmasters has been more than a platform for skill-building; it has been a life-changing experience. It has taught me to embrace challenges, value vulnerability, and see every interaction as an opportunity for growth. This journey is just beginning. I look forward to delivering more speeches, taking on new leadership roles, and continuing to grow alongside this incredible community. Toastmasters has given me the courage to dream bigger, the tools to achieve those dreams, and the support to enjoy the process.

To conclude, I leave you with a few lines I've written to honor what Toastmasters represents:

*One Toastmasters meeting can challenge the mind,
Where stories are shared in voices of every kind.
One speech can spark an insight, a moment pure and bright,
And one evaluation guides us, lifting each to greater height.
One Table Topic sharpens our impromptu flair,
The word of the day enriches our vocabulary with care.
One mentor can inspire with wisdom so clear,
At Toastmasters, we grow, year after year.
With each meeting, we sharpen skill and mind,
Leaving our fears and doubts far behind.*

Here's to Toastmasters! A place where we not only become better communicators and leaders but also better versions of ourselves.