

The District 57 Dispatch

Greetings! Contest season is fully underway. Club contests are completed, Area contests are underway, and Division contests are now being scheduled. Check the D57TM.org calendar for links to the events below. Sign up and support your fellow club member as they compete at the Area level or higher!

Lee Vaughan, Editor

MARCH, 2025

Saturday, March 1st: Joint Area Speech Contests: D30/E4/E18; A13/A29, 3:00 - 6:00 PM

Monday, March 3rd: Joint Area Speech Contests: C10/C31, 6:00 - 8:30PM

Tuesday March 4th: Area C9 Speech Contest, 6:30 - 8:30PM

Saturday, March 8th: DECM, 9:00AM - 12:00PM

Wednesday, March 19th: Area B22 Speech Contest, 6:00 - 9:00PM

Saturday, March 22: Division E Speech Contest, 6:30 - 9:00PM

Saturday, March 29th: Division C Speech Contest, 9:30AM - 11:30AM

Sunday, March 30th: Division D Speech Contest, 2:00 - 5:00PM

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SALLY ALWAYS HAS MORE TO SAY! BY SALLY PHILBIN, DISTRICT DIRECTOR



I just hope that you find a nugget that will be of help to you. Here we go:

Contests: Division and Area Directors; I just sent out the Contest Script and Contest Rule Book on the off chance

that you don't already have them. Use them wisely!

All Members: I am so pleased to be able to tell you that our totally virtual clubs have been sending contestants to the Area Contests. Congratulations Data-bricks; both on your resurgence as a club and because you sent a contestant to be a part of Area E06's contest.

Area Directors: Don't forget that TI Store gift certificates are waiting for you if you visit and file reports on all of your clubs by Feb 28 (\$25) or if by March 31 (\$10). This is a vital contribution to the health of our clubs!

More All Members: Now is the time to check out where you are toward earning an Outstanding Toastmaster Award or one of the Triple Crown awards. Check out the D57 website at d57tm.org for all of the details.

Clubs: Keep earning those District Bucks! Again, check out our website at d57tm.org for important details.

Club Members: Don't forget that the mark of an excellent club is how committed club members are to their self-development as reflected in the work they do earning Path levels and participating in club meetings by taking roles and attending meetings. These activities are reflected in your DCP points. Clubs earning Distinguished status through the work of their members show the world which of our clubs run Excellent Club meetings (yes! supporting the goals of their members).

For Everyone: Keep-up the good work. I am sooo appreciative of the time and commitment that each of you has shown for your own personal development and by extension to the development of those around you and by further extension to your Clubs, Areas, Divisions, and District 57! THANK-YOU!!!

Sally Philbin, DTM, DD

Together We Can! Soar!

THE MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL CAMPAIGN

March 31, 2025, is the deadline for membership renewal, but if we're being honest, we've missed the ideal window to start this process. That doesn't mean it's too late, but it does mean we need to act now to ensure our clubs remain strong.

Why Renewing Matters

Toastmasters isn't just about attending meetings, it's about growth. Every member who renews is investing in their own speaking and leadership development, building on the progress they've made. It's also about relationships, the connections, friendships, and support systems formed in a club don't just happen anywhere.

The Reality: Clubs Need Renewals to Survive

Membership renewals are the lifeline of every club. Without enough renewals, some clubs simply won't make it. A dwindling membership means fewer opportunities for dynamic meetings, engaging speeches, and leadership roles. If you value your club, renewing your membership is one of the most important ways to contribute.

Expand Your Opportunities by Joining More Than One Club

Many of us are already part of multiple clubs, and renewal season is a great time to consider expanding your Toastmasters experience. Each club offers unique benefits—different meeting formats, new audiences, and fresh challenges. If you're looking for more opportunities to grow, consider joining an additional club to sharpen your skills even further.

Not sure where to start? Check out the Digest, Dispatch, and the District 57 website to find and visit other clubs that may complement your journey. Serving in multiple roles at prospective clubs, such as TalkTechAI and Time Travelers, is also a great way to help them charter while gaining valuable leadership and speaking experience.

Time is Running Out, Take Action Now

If you haven't renewed yet, do it today. Reach out to your club officers if you need help or have concerns. If you're an officer, now is the time for one-on-one outreach to members who haven't renewed.

Toastmasters is a journey, keep moving forward by making your renewal a priority before March 31.

DON'T GO CHASE THOSE WATERFALLS

BY JEFF YOUNG, CLUB GROWTH DIRECTOR

I grew up in New York and went to college in up-state New York, but I've never been to Niagara Falls. And I've never been interested in doing a whitewater rafting tour. The idea of rushing water towards an uncertain precipice with a very certain drop holds no thrill for me.

Well, for certain clubs, here comes that waterfall.

Every year, a club statistically loses 40% of its members; this is why there are two DCP points dedicated to recruiting 4 members, because 8/20 members is 40%. And 8 is the minimum for a club to remain in good standing - this year. It might go up to 12 at some point in the not-too-distant future. Which means that even if you are feeling safe today at 9 or 10 members, you might want to work on finding more members during March Membership Madness Month anyway!

From the chair of the Club Growth Director, I keep a closer eye on who needs help; my team and I have been reaching out to clubs over the past few months and assisting where we can.

We're getting down to the wire here. March 31st is the end of this month, and any clubs that start April 1 as Low (first time less than 8) become Ineligible (Ineligible clubs cannot vote as members of the District Council and their members cannot compete in speech contests), and any clubs that were Ineligible are officially Suspended, and will have a hard time continuing as a club.

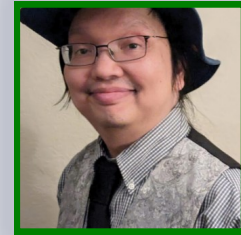
Let's not let that happen to you.

The best time to have been recruiting for new members was two months ago; the next best time is today.

Remember that what sells a Toastmasters club is not the -idea- of Toastmasters, it's the -connections- that you make. Instead of just making passive ads and hoping they'll do your work for you, don't hesitate to bring up Toastmasters in your social circles this month - invite a coworker to lunch (even if it's virtual.)

Think about what makes your club the best club to join, no matter how small it might be.

The answer? Is you. When you stand out in a club, when you speak, or when you look astute, new guests will look at you and say, "I want to do that too." We attract kindred spirits.



Even if you don't think it's you, and you also think your club lacks purpose, don't forget to check out the Specialty Club survey ([Club Crowdsourcing Ideas - Week 4](#)) - sometimes it's a matter of starting fresh with a new idea and a new direction. We're still taking ideas for new clubs at this time, and if your club likes the idea of becoming a Specialty club, sometimes what's old can become new..

-Jeff

P.S. **Final Dispatch Reminder** to renew as early as you can - there's still money in the pot for you if you do. The first 20 clubs to get to 8 and 20 members renewed get District Bucks, so get the bonus cash while it's still available.

TURN YOUR CLUB MEETINGS INTO ENGAGING NEWSLETTERS

Is your club already publishing agendas before your meetings? It's easy to turn those into newsletter articles after your meeting! Share highlights, recognize members, and celebrate achievements, because everyone deserves a shoutout for a meeting well done.

What to include in your club's newsletter?

- Member achievements: Has anyone completed a Path or Path level?
- Special recognitions: Who won Best Table Topic or Best Speech?
- Milestone projects: Has anyone completed an HPL or DTM project?

Share Your Club's Success!

Send your newsletters to Lee Vaughan, Dispatch Newsletter Editor, and let the entire district celebrate your club's accomplishments!

Newsletter Incentives (February–May 31):

🏆 Best Newsletter: \$25

📅 Most Improved Newsletter: \$25

📧 Most Newsletters Submitted: \$25

Start writing and sharing your club's news today!

MARCH: THE MONTH OF MADNESS, LUCK, AND STORYTELLING (OH, AND CONTESTS!) BY LEESA THOMPSON, PR MANAGER

March is that weird time of year when we're not sure if we need an umbrella, a parka, or sunscreen. It's the month where winter and spring battle it out, clocks spring forward just to mess with our sleep schedules, and suddenly everyone claims to be at least a little Irish. But beyond the weather whiplash and excessive green outfits, March is packed with holidays, speech contests, and membership renewals, because nothing says "springtime fun" like remembering to pay your dues.

Holidays Worth Talking About (Or at Least Using as an Excuse for Cake)

- March 1 – World Compliment Day

Start the month by making people feel good about themselves. "That speech was amazing! Almost as amazing as your ability to show up on time."

- March 3 – I Want You to Be Happy Day

A perfect day to deliver a motivational speech. Or just buy someone a cupcake. Cupcakes = happiness.

- March 8 – International Women's Day

Celebrate the incredible women in your life. Or, if you're a woman, remind people why they should be celebrating you every day.

- March 10 – Daylight Saving Time Begins (U.S.)

Also known as "Why am I so tired?" day. A great meeting theme: "How to Give a Speech While Half-Asleep."

- March 14 – Pi Day (3.14)

A day for math lovers and pie lovers alike. Bonus points if you deliver a speech with 3.14 main points instead of 3.

- March 17 – St. Patrick's Day

Wear green or risk getting pinched. Perfect day for a speech on luck, persistence, or how to give an impromptu toast with a shamrock shake in hand.

- March 19 – First Day of Spring

Time to clean out your speech closet and refresh your speaking skills. Also, a great time to practice avoiding seasonal allergies mid-sentence.

- March 20 – World Storytelling Day

The perfect excuse to tell your wildest, most exaggerated story and call it "creative license."

- March 21 – World Poetry Day

Roses are red,

Violets are blue,

If your speech rhymes,

We'll be impressed with you!



- March 22 – Kidney Stories Toastmasters' 3rd Birthday!

Celebrate three years of speaking, learning, and maybe even a kidney joke or two.

- March 23 – National Puppy Day

If your speech doesn't include an adorable dog story, you're missing an easy win.

- March 31 – Easter Sunday

A day of renewal, reflection, and chocolate consumption. Maybe give a speech on "How to Sound Inspirational Without Sounding Like a Greeting Card."

March Meeting Themes to Keep Things Fun

1. "Spring Into Speaking" – Shake off the winter blahs and freshen up those speeches.
2. "Luck, Leadership, and Leprechauns" – Explore how success is a mix of preparation, opportunity, and a little magic.
3. "The Art of Storytelling" – Tell a tall tale, a personal story, or just make up something completely ridiculous.
4. "The Sleep-Deprived Speaker" – Because we all know Daylight Saving Time is going to hit hard.
5. "Pie Charts & Pi Puns" – A meeting filled with numbers, logic, and maybe a little baked goodness.
6. "Spring Cleaning Your Speech" – Cut the clutter from your content and get to the point (finally).
7. "Women Who Wow" – Highlight famous speeches by or about inspiring women.
8. "Poetry & Public Speaking" – Challenge yourself to add rhythm, rhyme, or a little Shakespearean flair.

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STEPPING UP, STANDING OUT: HIGHLIGHTS FROM A CUT ABOVE'S OPEN HOUSE, BY TIFFANY DAWN JONES

On Monday, February 10, 2025, A Cut Above Toastmasters Club hosted its second Open House of the year, and I couldn't be prouder of how the evening unfolded. Our hybrid meeting, held both on Zoom and in person at the Pentecostals of Hayward, located across from Cal State East Bay, brought together members and guests to explore our theme "*Step Up, Stand Out: Transform with Toastmasters.*" The evening encouraged everyone to embrace personal growth, enhance their communication skills, and take their leadership abilities to the next level.

A Night of Inspiration and Growth

Our Toastmaster of the Day, Merci Del Rosario, DTM, guided the meeting with poise and professionalism, ensuring everything ran smoothly from start to finish.

One of the evening's highlights was our guest speaker, Jana Lannen, Area Director for District 57, Area 13. In her powerful speech, "*A Secret to Success,*" she emphasized that strong communication skills are one of the most essential tools for success, whether in leadership, career advancement, or personal relationships. Through compelling real-world examples, she demonstrated how mastering communication can open doors, strengthen leadership, and create new opportunities that might otherwise be missed.

I also had the privilege of delivering a speech as part of my Persuasive Influence Pathway Level 3 project on Understanding Conflict Resolution. In "*Embracing Conflict: From Avoidance to Growth,*" I reflected on my personal journey from avoiding conflict to recognizing it as an opportunity for growth. I shared how learning to navigate difficult conversations has strengthened my leadership skills, and I encouraged others to reframe conflict as a tool for building deeper relationships rather than something to fear.

I was grateful for the insightful feedback from our evaluators:

- Kris Chokalingam, DTM, provided a thoughtful evaluation of Jana's speech, highlighting its strengths and areas for refinement.
- David Lazcano offered me constructive feedback on my speech, sharing valuable suggestions that I plan to incorporate to continue improving my delivery and message.

This is what Toastmasters is all about—growth, learning, and supporting each other as we refine our public speaking and leadership skills.

A Fun and Engaging Table Topics Session

No Open House would be complete without an interactive and engaging Table Topics session. Guests and members alike had the chance to think on their feet, responding to impromptu prompts that sparked laughter, thoughtful insights, and plenty of energy. Whether attending in person or online, participants embraced the challenge, making for an exciting and memorable experience.

General Evaluation and Valuable Insights

At the end of the meeting, General Evaluator Sally Philbin, DTM, led our evaluation segment, providing valuable insights to help us improve future meetings.

- Rajat Agrawal, in his role as Ah Counter and Grammarian, shared thoughtful observations on our speech patterns and language use.
- Merci Del Rosario delivered the Timer's Report, helping us remain mindful of our pacing, an essential skill for any great speaker.

Sally's feedback reinforced what makes A Cut Above special, our commitment to growth, our welcoming atmosphere, and our dedication to improving as speakers and leaders.

Overcoming Technical Challenges and Growing as a Hybrid Club

No event is without its challenges, and our Open House was no exception! Early in the meeting, we faced technical difficulties; getting in-person attendees connected to Wi-Fi and troubleshooting an unexpected microphone echo.

Thankfully, with the quick thinking of our team, including acting Tech Host Jerrid Matthews, we worked through the issues in real time. While these challenges weren't ideal, they turned into valuable learning experiences that will make our next hybrid Open House even better.

This is what Toastmasters is all about: continuous learning, adapting, and growing. Every challenge we face is an opportunity to improve, and we'll take these lessons forward as we continue to refine our hybrid meeting experience.

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MARCH: THE MONTH OF MADNESS...CONTINUED

9. “Water You Waiting For?” – A speech on environmental issues, personal growth, or just an excuse to drink more water.

10. “Dogs, Dreams, and Delicious Desserts” – Because every good story either involves a dog, a life lesson, or a snack.

It’s Contest Season: Time to Bring Your A-Game!

March isn’t just about fun themes and questionable weather, it’s contest season in Toastmasters! Whether you’re competing in International Speech or D57 Evaluation Contests now’s the time to put those speaking skills to the test. Expect the competition to be fierce, the timekeepers to be strict, and at least one contestant to go way over time because they “just had one more thing to say.”

Not competing? No problem! Support your fellow members, cheer them on, and maybe even take notes for next year, because once you see the trophies, you’ll be tempted.

Membership Renewal: Pay Up Before We Chase You Down

Ah, yes. The semi-annual moment of truth: Have you renewed your membership? Toastmasters is a steal compared to most public speaking courses, but that doesn’t stop us from forgetting to pay on time. If you love your club (or just don’t want to get passive-aggressive emails from your treasurer), make sure to renew by March 31.

Reasons to renew:

- ✓ Keep improving your speaking and leadership skills
- ✓ Stay part of an awesome, supportive community
- ✓ Continue your journey toward DTM (Distinguished Toastmaster status, aka “Toastmasters Royalty”)
- ✓ Avoid that awkward “Can I still come to meetings?” moment

Final Thoughts

March may be unpredictable, but one thing’s for sure, there’s no shortage of reasons to celebrate, speak, and have fun with your meetings. Whether you’re competing in a contest, embracing the luck of the Irish, or just trying to stay awake after losing an hour of sleep, there’s a theme for you.

Now, who’s bringing the pie?

MY TOASTMASTERS JOURNEY, BY SABRINA MAHAJAN

I joined Toastmasters during Covid times when everything was online, and everyone was cooped up indoors and mustered the courage to attend one of the Zoom meetings.

In my life so far, I have obtained a master’s degree, fearlessly delivered two babies without pain medications, and bravely climbed up to 17,000 ft in a scarce oxygen atmosphere in the Himalayas. However, when it came to public speaking, I was a nervous wreck. I would panic talking in public. Maybe this is because I came from a family/culture where girls were encouraged to be soft spoken. No matter what the reason was, I didn’t like the result of being unassertive in public.

Finally, when I shipped my youngest child to college, I decided to do something about this fear of public speaking and joined Toastmasters.

Today, I’m the President of my club. I take this job seriously; I significantly increased the enrollment of members in my club. I told them my story that not a few years ago I was this person sitting at the back swallowing my words for fear of speaking in public, for the fear of freezing up and embarrassing myself.

However, public speaking is an acquired skill. Just like swimming or bicycling, it can be developed and honed by practice. The little amygdala– the part of the brain that controls fear - goes into hyperdrive at public speaking events. Some people are born swimmers and have great athletic skills. However, we all know that these skills can be acquired and perfected by practice. When it comes to public speaking, Toastmasters offers this platform to hone these skills.

At a recent visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, I was that person asking the most questions of our tour guide among a group of fifty people. I no longer had to stay in the back swallowing my questions and insights about Asian art.

Toastmaster not only made me a good public speaker, but a better listener and an effective communicator. I feel liberated as I’m able to express my ideas without the ums and other filler words. The tools offered through Pathways helped me organize my thoughts. The support offered at the club helped me deliver my thoughts confidently. The evaluations provide a great way for me to reflect on my speeches.

I started this journey because one day I wanted to deliver a toast at my son’s wedding. The day has not come yet, but the journey has turned into a destination.

STEPPING UP, STANDING OUT (CONTINUED)

Looking Ahead to Our Next Open House

With this Open House behind us, we’re already looking forward to our next Open House on Monday, March 17, 2025.

If you missed this one, I encourage you to join us for another evening of inspiration, learning, and fun! Whether you’re looking to build confidence, improve communication, or develop leadership skills, Toastmasters offers a supportive and encouraging space to grow.

As Club President, I’m incredibly proud of our A Cut Above family. Each meeting is a testament to the power of support, transformation, and personal development, and I can’t wait to see what we accomplish next.