

Happy New Toastmasters Year!

by **Lindy Sinclair, DTM4, District
Director**



Dear District 57 Members,
YOU are the **District**. The District does not exist without **YOU**.

As your new District Director, I am here to support you in your Toastmasters journey. Let me know what I can do to support you. I mean it. Please be in touch throughout the year to let me know what you need to make your Path, your Club, your Area, your Division happier and better.

As I mentioned above, the District does not exist without YOU. There are both benefits and responsibilities to that. You already know the benefits are trainings,

events, workshops, incentives and more. The responsibilities are :

- (1) that everyone can provide leads for new clubs*,
- (2) that every club officer, District chair and director can make sure they are trained to do their role and
- (3) that everyone can provide positive suggestions for ways we as a District can improve.

I've joked about having a huge suggestion box and a teeny-tiny complaints box. If you have a complaint, please take a moment to think what would make it better and submit that instead of the complaint.

For those of you who don't know me: I've been a Toastmaster in this District for 35 years, I have four DTMs and I have covered pretty much every role available at Toastmasters. Professionally, I am a Financial Coach and I live in El Sobrante.

You can reach me at

lindy@d57tm.org

*A little bit more about leads for new clubs: Anywhere there is a McDonalds, has sufficient population to support a new club. If you happen to know someone at the company/organization/facility you are suggesting that would be a big plus. Give your leads to Dennis Dawson, Club Growth Director at

dennis@d57tm.org

Wishing you a successful, enjoyable and enriching Toastmasters year,

-Lindy Sinclair



July, 2025

Volume 2, Issue 1

Dear Readers,

I am honored to be the District 57 newsletter editor for 2025-2026. Lee Vaughan is a tough act to follow, but I will try my best! The design of this newsletter may change and evolve over the course of the next Toastmasters year, as I am constantly learning and trying new things. In my former career. I was a magazine publisher and editor, and I have just recently embarked on a new marketing and PR business. Thank you Leesa Thompson, for including me in the PR team, as I am brand new to Toastmasters, and I am excited to take this journey with you all!

Sincerely,
Sonia Lee Garber



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July 4th

Independence Day

July 12

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

**District Executive
Committee Meeting (DECM)**

August 2nd

Year-End Party

11:30am-1:30pm

Please enjoy some photos from the D57 Conference





Looking Back at the Event Horizon

by Jeffrey Young, DTM, District 57 Program Quality Director



As the incoming **Program Quality Director**, my goal is to bring more ideas on how to make Toastmasters more engaging and interesting to people.

The content we create is original; the context is '*whatever the heck someone wants.*' Such is the nature of a self-guided, self-paced program.

But what if it didn't have to be that way? If the whole point of an Open House is to get people curious, how do you reach people who aren't interested specifically in public speaking?

Last month, Top of the Hill Toastmasters ran one of my experiments; an Open House Event whereby we picked a theme that was relevant -and- useful - Job Hunting in Today's Environment. We advertised using differently designed flyers with less emphasis on public Speaking and language more relevant to career seekers for that specific event.

We found two excellent panelists (Linda Patten and Kat Paz) who brought their experiences from storied careers and they showcased their storytelling skills. More significantly, the whole audience was challenged to participate in the discussion; we asked our questions to the audience first and then had the panelists support and respond to their answers. This was certainly the closest you can get to a hands-on workshop while still being virtual. We wound up with more guests than club members that evening - and there were still more people who RSVP'd but ran into technical difficulties getting on. The other new thing we tried was modifying the guestbook so it wasn't just 'sign the guestbook'. We asked the audience what they would like to see as future events, and we got the following intriguing answers back:

***Leadership Skills**
***More job hunting topics**
*** Marketing Yourself**

So this is where you come in.

Because Top of the Hill's next Event is already decided - we're running a workshop on Time Management and Organization, and so those ideas are up for grabs. Interested? Watch the District calendar and Meetup towards the middle of July.

If you're not thrilled with the idea of running an Open House, consider running an Event instead. Someone can get credit for the level 4 Q&A Session as the facilitator, BYOE (Bring Your Own Experts) and run something different that you can get excited about.

This year, we're planning on adding a new Incentive that specifically covers running Events as a Program Quality incentive, different from the traditional Open House (which will continue to be its own incentive, but Club Growth is Dennis Dawson's domain)

To paraphrase a famous movie: "If you build an event, they will come."

If your club would like to run an Event instead of an Open House, drop me a line at jeffrey@d57tm.org and we'll set up a 15 minute consulting session to brainstorm the kinds of Event your club can put on.



Fellow Toastmasters of District 57; Thank you!

by Sally Philbin, DTM
2024-25 D57 District Director



Fellow Toastmasters of District 57: Thank-you!

It seems like just yesterday that I embarked on my year as Club Growth Director for District 57. The year flew by. Our Club Excellence Team was led by **Lindy Sinclair, DTM, (now DD)**. The accomplishments of that team were many. **Merci del Rosario** presented 4 Club Coach Readiness Trainings and assigned 6 Club Coaches. **Pankaj Vij** assigned 1 Club Ambassador. Thanks to Maureen Filler, our Open House Chair, 77 Open Houses were conducted that year, resulting in 59 new members being signed up. Our Club Coach Liaisons visited 41 clubs talking about becoming a Club Coach or a Club Ambassador and asking clubs if they needed help. **Chris Hallacy, Curt Hayashida** and **Sherry Hsu** visited 16, 10 and 9 clubs respectively. **Merideth White, Lola Pratt** and **Cynthia de Leon** also visited clubs in their assigned Divisions. The Club Extension Team was also busy that year. With **Cynthia Yeh** in the lead as Corporate Club Extension Chair, we chartered 5 newclubs and handed 4 prospective clubs to the next year's CGD. Next, on to serving as Program Quality Director.

This was both an exciting year and a frustrating one. Being a Distinguished District was high on the list of our stated goals, but I was not able to foster enough momentum to deliver enough distinguished clubs. As a District we completed 838 Path Levels, and we had 44 clubs with 9 or more Path Level completions and another 17 clubs with between 5 and 8 Path Level Completions. This is a fabulous indication that our members were receiving and providing a wonderful educational experience within District 57. On another front, in the first half of the year 520 out of a total of 768 officers were trained. In the second half of the year, we had 456 District Club Officers trained; 73 clubs were recognized by TI with having 4 or more officers trained and 19 clubs had 7 out of 8 or 8 out of 8 officers trained. **Officers rocked this year!** This was a year of monthly trainings being put on for our members by our members.



100% of our Div Directors were trained twice during the year. Not counting Club Officer/DivD/AD training we put on approximately 34 monthly training sessions. We put on a great District Conference, with only a few hybrid hiccups.

Now to this past year and becoming your District Director for District 57. This was a singular honor. With you by my side, I have made it to the end of this year. It has been rewarding, frustrating, fun, challenging, and so much more. I am sorry it is ending and ready for it to be behind me. PQD, **Linda Patten, DTM**, put together the Table of Content that included some of the best presenters across the District that stood at the ready to present when needed for club Open Houses, speech contests and more. Speaking of Open Houses, CGD, **Jeffrey Young** spearheaded the development of the Open House Kit that provided each club with a step-by-step plan, complete with a full set of tools for putting on successful Open Houses. Our **PRM, Leesa Thompson**, with her team of amazingly creative/talented Toastmasters revolutionized Public Relations and everything that goes with it in District 57. Somehow **Winnie Ma** is still speaking to me after a year of cajoling me into meeting critical deadlines for financial reporting. Thank-you Winnie! We had Area Directors that met the challenge and conducted and submitted 100% of their Club Visit reports the first half of the year and 97% of their Club Visit reports the second half of the year. We made it through two Business meetings.

Thank-you Parliamentarian, Jennifer Perry-Ruzic. Thank-you Gemma Rieser for stepping up to add Facilities Manager to your list of duties this year. Those of us who attended the in-person DECM meetings appreciated the bagels/fruit and coffee. We adapted to the in-person contests by approving an internal District realignment based on geographic proximity, reducing our number of Divisions from 6 to 5. Wow! While we did not make Distinguished, this was a year of great achievements, but they weren't my achievements. I sat on the sidelines and cheered, guided and cheered as everyone in the District found their way. And Yes! All of the plaques earned to date have been mailed out or delivered in-person.

Through it all, our Region Advisor, **Rose Kirland** has been just a phone call/text away with advice and support that was key to keeping me grounded. **Thank-you Rose.** Thank-you District 57. We will be facing new challenges this coming year with the TI District realignment. It has been almost 70 years since our District has been realigned in this way. We faced that challenge and Soared! I know we will continue to thrive. Under the leadership of the new Trio; **Lindy Sinclair, DTM, District Director; Jeffrey Young, Program Quality Director; & Dennis Dawson, DTM, Club Growth Director**, we can't fail.

Thank-you again for your support! So many of you listened and gave me wisdom to help me along the way. I know how special that is. Did I mention how often **Ed Cullen**, our IPDD, was bombarded by my calls and text messages? He always responded. Thank-you Ed.

**Thank-you All,
Sally**

Embracing Change: Welcoming Our New PR Team

By Leesa Thompson, Public Relations Manager, DTM,
District 57



As another Toastmasters year begins, I find myself reflecting with deep gratitude on the incredible Public Relations team we've had this past year. They were responsive, creative, and passionate—bringing their best to every email, graphic, podcast, and post. Many have moved on to new roles, taken on fresh challenges, or taken a well-earned break. Their legacy is one of excellence, and I offer them my sincere thanks. Change, as we all know, is part of the Toastmasters journey. And while change can feel uncertain, it also brings new energy, ideas, and voices to the table. I'm thrilled to welcome our new PR team—some familiar faces continuing with us, and some brand new members stepping up for the first time. Already, I feel that spark of excitement as we begin to build momentum for the year ahead.

Our goals remain ambitious: clearer communication, stronger visual branding, and deeper outreach to clubs and members across the District. With fresh leadership in key areas like the Weekly Digest, Newsletter, Graphics, Calendar, and YouTube, we're already seeing strong collaboration and creative thinking.

If you've ever wanted to flex your skills in design, writing, editing, social media, or coordination — we still have a few open spots and would love to welcome you aboard. The PR Team isn't just about promotion—it's about connection.

Here's to another meaningful year of storytelling, service, and shared success.

From Concept to President's Distinguished: How Cre-Art Toastmasters Became a Model for New Clubs

By Leesa Thompson, DTM

(l-r) Hans Thoma, Cania Kwan,
Lindy Sinclair, DTM District Director
Sree Gudreddi, Anjana Pillai,
Ananda Sen



On May 17, 2025, at the District 57 Annual Conference, Cre-Art Toastmasters proudly debuted our dazzling new club banner! Our enthusiastic members gathered to celebrate the launch of our vibrant, newly chartered club -where creativity and leadership take center stage!

In the world of Toastmasters, specialty clubs often begin with a dream—a shared passion, a unique community, a creative spark. But sadly, too many never make it past the planning phase. The road to chartering is steep, and it's easy for momentum to fade.

That's what makes *Cre-Art Toastmasters* so special. Founded on the idea of creating a virtual space *where Artists, Creatives, and Expressive thinkers could grow their Communication and Leadership skills.*

Cre-Art moved from concept to charter in just three months—and within six months, achieved *President's Distinguished status*. So, what made the difference?

A Clear and Compelling Vision

From the start, Cre-Art wasn't "just another club." It was designed to be a home for people who think visually, expressively, and from the heart. That clarity helped attract members who immediately felt a sense of belonging.

Culture Built on Creativity

Each meeting featured a fresh and relevant theme—like Color Outside the Lines, Improv and Inspiration, or Tell Your Story—that sparked imagination and made every gathering feel unique and intentional.

Strategic Use of District PR Resources

Instead of starting from scratch, Cre-Art leaned into the support already available. The club took full advantage of the District 57 PR team's promotional tools—including visibility on the district website, features in the weekly digest, and highlights in the district newsletter. These platforms helped spread the word, boost credibility, and bring in guests consistently.

Relentless and Personal Follow-Up

We didn't sit back and wait for people to join. Every guest and potential member received personal calls and messages. We invited, reminded, encouraged—and yes, sometimes begged. And it worked. People joined because they felt genuinely wanted and welcomed.

Every Meeting Delivered Value

Agendas were sent out on time, and every role was filled. Guests experienced the energy of a club that was already thriving—even before chartering. That level of organization built trust and enthusiasm.

Guest Speakers Who Inspired and Modeled Excellence

Each week, we featured guest speakers who demonstrated the power of expressive communication and leadership. These moments added spark to meetings and gave guests something unforgettable.

Chartering Was a Mission—Not a Maybe

We didn't just “hope” to charter. We were determined. And once chartered, we didn't stop. We pushed forward with purpose, structure, and momentum—achieving President's Distinguished in just six months.

A Message to District 57

Cre-Art Toastmasters is proud of what we've accomplished—but more importantly, we hope our journey serves as inspiration for the many new clubs forming across District 57 in the months ahead.

With a clear concept, strong mentoring, strategic use of district resources, and consistent follow-through, success is absolutely within reach. To all new and forming clubs: You've got this. Let Cre-Art be your roadmap—and your reminder that specialty clubs can do more than survive. They can thrive.



Club meets every Tuesday, 6:00-7:00 pm (PT)



WHAT DOES A DISTRICT CONCISENESS MANAGER DO?

By Joy Montgomery



If speaking beyond the comfort of your club is holding you back from accepting Area or Division Director roles, there's a benefit you might not be aware of. For presentations to the District Executive Committee Meeting (**DECM**), you have access to personal communication coaching.

The District Conciseness Manager is a communication coach for DECM presenters. I've been a technical communicator, written and verbal communication judge, and a pitch coach for decades.

I've taught transitioning Veterans how to sell themselves to civilian employers for more than 30 years. One of my first Veterans was a newlywed in my Amador Valley Toastmasters club when I helped him. He recently shared a photo of his grandson. What?! How'd that happen? It's always "What's in it for me?" from the audience's point of view, whoever the audience is. Spoiler Alert!

The picture here does not represent a good presentation. Pretty screen, attractive presenter with the look of a technical expert?



She researched. Formatted. Included graphics. Checked all the boxes. She can tell you everything about forsanin sptotss.

Are you asleep yet? What if she just had graphics and turned around to talk to us?

Of course, being a developmental editor, I did some heavy editing, partly for you, the audience, and partly to insert my voice. I had one Toastmaster who asked me to come to her office and preview every speech when I was her Mentor. We covered everything on this list each time.

When you have a DECM presentation, I can help you:

Highlight key points, cut fluff, and make sure you're clear, concise, and compelling.

- *Maximize your tone, pace, gestures, facial expressions, and overall confidence.*
- *Frame your pitch to align with your audience's perspectives.*
- *Organize content for maximum retention—problem, solution, impact, call to action.*
- *Format your topic for any time frame or purpose, while retaining your main message.*
- *Fine-tune and grow, with your personal, realistic, constructive sounding board.*
- *Bring out your authenticity — your voice, your passion, your knowledge, and your credibility.*

And, as with every Toastmasters evaluation, it will be a friendly and supportive partnership. For the best results, we can preview a video of you in a “dress rehearsal” together.



The Relationship Between Club Status and Club Standards

by Lee Vaughan



You had an awesome year as club president or as some other officer.

People engaged Pathways, you held great meetings, and you hit that distinguished status you were aiming at with such focus. Along the way, your team championed attendance at officer training and you pushed – *you pushed hard* – for new members. It was a Toastmasters term to remember, and you and your team made it happen. Then elections for the new term happened, some roles were shuffled around, some new folks were driving the ship...but then, months later it all just...kind of fell apart. The new term didn't pan out like the previous one, the club might have weakened a bit, and now you're left wondering why.

Were there some people who just weren't right for their roles?

Did they not care as much?

Was it just a bad year?

Probably it wasn't any of these things. Rather, what likely happened is that, with all the great work that came before, there were no standards put into place for the new mix of officers to use to lead the club. The past term's president moved things and shook them, and they moved and shook them well. But the know-how of what worked and what didn't wasn't transferred. The other officers contributed in ways that made the club run like a well-oiled machine, but then the machine became rusty, its gears

grinding with a disturbing clank as people looked at each other in hopes someone else knew how to fix what was wrong. With the adoption of standards, people have a template for what to do and when. Look at these two Club Success Plan examples:

Our club plans to recruit 10 new members in the new term.

Our club plans to recruit 10 new members in the new term with the following supporting goals:

1. Develop a social media presence on Facebook and Instagram – VP of PR
2. Manage club communications; reply to prospective member inquiries with invitation to attend the club within 48 hours – VP of Membership, Sergeant at Arms (with President supporting)
3. Greet club guests within five minutes of arrival – Sergeant at Arms
4. Thank guests for attending before club meeting adjourns – President
5. Ask guests if they would like to join the club at the conclusion of the second [or whenever your club decides] meeting they've attended – VP of Membership
6. Assign new member a mentor in their third club meeting – VP of Education

The first example is just the what, not the how. The second example not only explains the how, but it also assigns specific goals to various club leaders. This second example is a club standard – how the club does things and when it does them – in service of obtaining new members. It works because it removes the doubt of what should be done and when.

Moreover, the status of these goals can be reviewed in officer meetings. If the club is off course, or perhaps the goals need to be recalibrated, then officers can choose to reassess and amend the goals accordingly.

How do you go about creating this type of standard?

One suggestion is to meet as a team of new officers and draft the Club Success Plan with the club meeting experience as your guide.

Ask yourself, if I were a guest, how should my prospective club operate each meeting, and how would I want the club to interact with me? Once a member, how do I want the club to keep on adding value to my Toastmasters journey?

Standardize these ambitions for your club experience into measurable goals. Make them known to prospective club officers when it's time to pass the baton for consideration in future Club Success Plans.

You may find there's more consistency in your club and, better still, that your club gets results more consistently.

Finding Your Motivation

by Betty Guo



Have you ever had great intentions about doing something,

like cleaning out the garage or exercising more, but months or years later have made no progress on those goals? It's not uncommon for our goals to get tossed aside due to lack of motivation. So, what makes a person feel highly motivated to some things, but completely unmotivated to do other things?

The key may be connecting that goal with a value or idea that you cherish deeply. I have a friend named Kent, who 20 years ago was drinking too much and working a part-time job he hated at a bank. He wasn't happy with his life, but he also wasn't motivated to do anything about it.

One day, he went to the emergency room with a splitting headache. The tests showed a large brain tumor. He was told that without health insurance, no further care could be offered to him; he was given a handful of extra-strength Tylenol for the pain and sent home. He understood that he was being sent home to die.

As he exited the building, someone tapped him on the shoulder and told him to be at a certain building, on a certain day, at a specific time, and make sure to enter from a specific door. When he arrived at the specified place on the specified day and time, he was let in through a back door where a medical team proceeded to prep him for and perform brain surgery, free of charge and possibly putting their jobs on the line. This is a true story. And today, 20 years later, Kent is still cancer-free.

Through his recovery and the years since, it didn't escape him that he had been given a tremendous gift. The idea that he had to do something meaningful with his life was what motivated him to start taking better care of himself and, despite financial hardship, to go back to school. He eventually got his bachelor's degree and became a recreational therapist, helping individuals overcome trauma. This is a job that he describes as the best job he could ever imagine. The motivation for Kent to change his life was connected to his deep desire to show gratitude to those who saved him, and to make his life one that was worth saving.

Fortunately, you don't have to undergo brain surgery or experience a near-death event to find your motivation. And what you're trying to motivate yourself to do doesn't have to be life changing.

The principle of connecting the action you want to motivate to a deeply cherished value or idea is a mental reframe that can be applied at any time to goals big or small. Take the woman who had tried unsuccessfully to quit smoking for years. One day, her 5-year-old, who

had just learned about the hazards of smoking, looked her in the eye and said, *"Mommy, I want you to stop smoking. I love you and I want you to live a long time."* Wow. She never picked up a cigarette again. Quitting smoking went from being something she "should" do, to something she was motivated to do because it became connected to her deeply cherished idea of living a long time and being there for her child.

I've used this principle of connecting the action you want to motivate to a deeply cherished value or idea to force myself to speak up more in meetings. Because being a good employee is a value that I pride myself on, I told myself that if I have a thought that could help someone else, I'm being a bad employee if I keep it to myself. And it worked, because I dislike the idea of being a bad employee more than I dislike speaking up in meetings. Whether you're looking to make a big life change or break a small habit, motivation is key to get the ball rolling and accomplish that goal. Is there anything you've been wanting to accomplish, but haven't yet found your motivation? **Think about how you can create a mental reframe that motivates you to get it done!**