

# NEWSLETTER



Volume 2, Issue 4, October 2025



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**Have some news to share?**

**Please send your articles by the 20th (250-600 words) to Newsletter Editor, Sonia Lee Garber at [news@d57tm.org](mailto:news@d57tm.org)**

**<https://d57tm.org>**

## Important Dates:

**October 1st**

7-8pm Club Coach Orientation

**October 11th**

10am-12pm District Executive Committee Meeting (DECM)

**October 25**

9am-12pm District 101 Humorous Speech Contest

**October 28th**

6-8pm From Selfie to Spotlight Workshop

**October 31<sup>st</sup>**

Halloween

# Leading Isn't a One Person Job - It's All Of Ours

By Jeff Young, District Director



Because I can't do everything; I'm not allowed to do everything. As District Director my job is more to be the fella behind the camera, with the fancy hat and the scripts of scenes that need to be blocked out, and it's my job to make the District look good. My role is to help other people shine, rather than take credit for the work that you're doing.

Is there a leader in your club? A mechanic who knows all the answers?

A person who you think is ready for the next level of visibility? Well, we have a spot for them. More spots than a cheetah, even.

Now that everything that World Headquarters requires of us is hopefully squared away (since the deadlines for everything under the sun were September 30th) it's time to be present and accounted for. Or perhaps accountable for.

District 57 needs your help.

We're looking for people who are willing to lead; today, tomorrow, and next year.

We're looking for folks who want to get over their fear of being responsible for something greater than their club officer position, and we need a lot of hands on deck in both short and long term positions.



- October's DECM is all about Contest Planning. We're doing it early this year because we want to be better prepared for pulling off excellent contests with a minimum of complications. If you're interested in learning how contests work, and want to train to be a judge, join us on October 11th at 10am on Zoom.
- The Toastmasters Leadership Institute is after that, sometime in early December. If you've got something you want to teach, or tips you want to share, we have panel slots available.
- Program Quality Director Maureen Filler is still looking for a Conference Chair. If you've got skill in event planning, we'd love to hear from you! And we definitely need a -lot- of help to pull off the Conference in general.
- Club Growth Director Dennis Dawson and Club Coach Chair Brendan Murphy need coaches for the clubs that exist, and mentors for the clubs that we'll be founding this year.
- And last but not least, we're looking for people with inspiring voices - one of our new initiatives for 2025-2026 is to try and do radio ads. Do you have a face for radio? We want to hear from you.





# Aspirations to Accomplishments

Dennis Dawson, DTM3, CGD, PDG



So, you've sent your Club Success Plan to Toastmasters World Headquarters.

Phew! Glad

that's done! Now reality might be setting in. It's one thing to say that you'll bring in 10 members this year, or that all of your members will complete at least one level in Pathways. But how will you get all of this done? When you look at the checklist of all you have to do to make these things happen, it can become overwhelming.

Here, I take a page from David Allen's book, *Getting Things Done*. Instead of making a to-do list of everything you have to do, create an action list - name the task that you are going to do next to move closer to your goal. That's a lot easier to figure out, and much easier to accomplish.

Instead of "Hold an Open House," your next action might be "Meet with the Executive

Committee to choose a date for our Open House." That's an important first step, and doable.

Finishing one action after another is a bite-sized way to move a project forward, and avoids stress.

The planning is done, it's time for action! Go forth and amaze your members with the wonders you can achieve this year, one step at a time.

## Book Recommendation from Dennis Dawson

Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress Free Productivity





# Exciting Enhancements Coming to Pathways This October!



By Maureen Filler – Program  
Quality Director

Starting in late October 2025, Pathways will include required meeting roles in every level and Education Series presentations in Levels 3–5. These updates, shaped by feedback from members and club officers worldwide, are designed to enrich the member experience and strengthen club excellence.

## What's New

- Meeting roles in every level → Members will complete specific roles as part of their path, gaining well-rounded practice in speaking, listening, and leadership.

- Education Series in higher levels → At Levels 3, 4, and 5, members will give presentations from the Toastmasters Education Series, building confidence as facilitators while sharing knowledge with their clubs. “With these enhancements, members won’t just adapt — they’ll thrive.”



## How Club Officers Can Help

- Stay informed by reviewing the Pathways Enhancements Club Officer Guide.
- Communicate clearly so members know what to expect.
- Provide opportunities by scheduling roles and projects thoughtfully.
- Celebrate milestones to keep motivation high.
- More information will be presented in November and December

Moving Forward Together  
Pathways is evolving to be more dynamic and rewarding than ever. With officer support, members will not only embrace these changes but grow through them. Together, let’s make the most of this exciting step in our learning journey!

# DTM: The Badge of Dedication (and a Spotlight Moment!)



submitted by Leesa Thompson,  
DTM2,PRM

What's a Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM)? It's not a superhero cape (that honor belongs to our District Directors). Instead, it's a shiny plaque that says: "This Toastmaster stuck with it, worked hard, lifted others up, and kept growing." It's a milestone of persistence, service, and determination—not an end point, but a powerful launchpad.

Earning a DTM doesn't mean you've magically become the best speaker in the world. What it proves is that you're committed to becoming one. And that takes grit, patience, and the kind of humor that helps you juggle speeches, leadership roles, and real life—sometimes all in the same hour.

So what does it take? Exactly two completed educational paths, plus four completed leadership roles: 1) A club officer for a total of 12 months, 2) A district officer for one year, 3) A club coach or mentor, and 4) A club sponsor, Speechcraft coordinator, or Youth Leadership Program coordinator. And finally, a capstone project that benefits your club, district, or community. (Full details are on the [DTM Requirements page](#)



Leesa Thompson

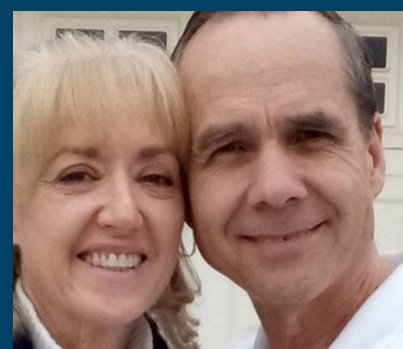


Sree Gudreddi

Since July 1, 2025, District 57 has proudly welcomed three new DTMs: Sree Gudreddi, Mike Pruett, and Leesa Thompson (earning her second). Their success proves that with persistence and determination, anyone can achieve this milestone.

One place to find that elusive DTM project is the Public Relations Team. We are a place to sharpen leadership skills, collaborate on meaningful initiatives, and make a visible difference for the district. For many members, PR can be the perfect home for their final project while gaining real-world leadership experience.

The DTM is more than a plaque. It's proof that you've invested in yourself, inspired others, and said "yes" to growth. So why not take that step? District 57 is ready to cheer you on!



Mike Pruett

# VPPR Incentives Announcement

submitted by Leesa Thompson, DTM, PRM

We are excited to welcome Shalini Suravarjjala, our new VPPR Ambassador, and Somdutta Ray, our VPPR Incentives Chair! Together, they will play a key role in enhancing clubs' visibility, both internally and externally, helping us better market our clubs and engage our members.

## Meet Shalini Suravarjjala – VPPR Ambassador



Shalini will focus on building strong internal communications and creating meaningful engagement within our clubs. Her responsibilities include:

- Providing training opportunities for VPPRs, enabling them to create short-form videos, design flyers, send out agendas using Free Toast Host, and use social media to share the joy and achievements of their clubs.
- Acting as a liaison between club leadership and members to ensure clear, consistent messaging.
- Coordinating VPPR ambassadors across clubs to share best practices and success stories.
- Supporting internal campaigns that drive participation, recognition, and member involvement.





# Meet Somdutta Ray – VPPR Incentives Chair

Somdutta Ray will lead initiatives to motivate clubs to showcase their achievements externally. Her responsibilities include:

- Developing incentives for club visibility and awarding district bucks to clubs for their efforts.
- Collaborating with Shalini to amplify club accomplishments in newsletters, social media, and other platforms.
- Helping clubs develop strategies to increase awareness in their communities and networks.

Together, Shalini Suravarjjala and Somy Ray will work to ensure that our clubs are recognized for their hard work and achievements, both within our organization and to the wider community. Please join us in welcoming them and supporting their efforts to strengthen our clubs' presence and engagement.



# Help Us Be Seen: Volunteer Ad Campaign Managers Needed

by Hans Eugene Thoma



- Research the price/cost
- Compose/design the ads
- Select the appropriate geographic, demographic, and behavioral targets
- Launch the ads and analyze the results

If you've always been interested in advertising, or you're working towards your DTM and need a project, contact us at [prm@d57tm.org](mailto:prm@d57tm.org) to express your interest. Thank you!!

Do you have experience running online advertising campaigns? Specifically, Google Ads, Meta Ads, or LinkedIn Ads? Or have you always been interested in learning how? District 57 has dedicated a significant portion of this year's budget towards advertising, in our quest to grow membership. And we're looking for volunteers to lead that initiative. Specifically, here are the tasks this team would need to do:





# Lafayette Art, Wine & Music Festival was a big hit!



by Sally Philbin DTM, IPDD

Thanks to Karrie Keegan,DTM, who pitched the idea of having a Booth at the Festival through her connections we had an amazing opportunity to reach out to dozens upon dozens of people to spread the word about the opportunities in District 57 and Toastmasters in general. And thanks to those volunteers who stepped up to help, we did just that!

I have been asked what the return on investment was for having a Toastmasters Booth at the Lafayette Art & Wine Festival. What do the numbers say? Here's what I say:

Working together builds internal community. Toastmasters Members popped out of the woodwork with offers of time, chairs, a table, and a pop-up tent, and more. There were at least 26 who came to help over the 2+ days with others that did not put their names down on our list of volunteers. D57 rocks with support in more than words!



Our passion spread to those walking by. Not only did we touch those who wrote their names on our follow-up list, but also to the dozens and dozens of people who picked up our brochures, asked about our Youth Leadership Program, took pictures of our Club & prospective Club flyers and our [d57tm.org](http://d57tm.org) web address so they could "Find a Club" on their own. We talked to those who had never heard of Toastmasters, to those who had been members (in CA and in other States), oh so many years ago and after seeing us thought that maybe they would like to come back, and yes, current Toastmasters that enjoyed stopping by for a chat. Was it worth the money we spent? A resounding YES. We may never know the true impact on the lives we touched during those 2+ days/both Festival goers and Booth Workers. The energy generated by all of us working together was truly a lesson in the value of coming together for a common cause. A grand time was had by all. We just hope we can do it again.



# Congratulations District 57 Clubs!

In response to the new rule by Toastmasters International, that no club can attain any level of Distinguished status unless they submitted a Club Success Plan by Sept 30; 86 out of 106 clubs submitted plans.

This was all about options. Because of the actions of 86 club officers, 86 clubs now have the option to become Distinguished if they choose and District 57 now has the opportunity to become Distinguished.



*Congratulations!*

**District 57 Leadership**





## **“From Selfie to Spotlight: Easy Video for Your Club”**

by Steve Taddei



We’re living in the golden age of self-expression—thanks to the smartphone, anyone can share

ideas with the world in minutes. In this workshop, Steve Taddei, DTM, PDD, will show you how to create simple, engaging videos that highlight the exciting things happening in your Toastmasters club.

Please join us in this workshop where you’ll discover how video can help grow your club, enrich your Toastmasters experience, and build skills that serve you beyond Toastmasters. Come with an open mind and leave with practical tools to showcase your club’s story in fresh, creative ways.

Whether you speak, sing, sketch, or dance—there’s a platform to share your voice. We’re living in the golden age of self-expression.

Steve Taddei has been a Toastmaster since 2008 when he joined Island City Toastmasters in Alameda. He's currently a member of Alameda Tongue Twisters, Speakers Forum, and The Esteemed Oakland 88.

He joined Toastmasters with the goal of improving the way he communicated with his customers and after becoming intrigued with the leadership track. Steve served in several club and district officer roles, including District 57 Director during the 2016-2017 year.

Steve is currently an Account Executive with Ocean Breeze Healthcare, a Podcast Host, and a happy participant in the Golden Age of Self-Expression. On October 28, Steve is going to share ideas on how video can help grow your club, enrich your Toastmasters experience, and build skills that serve you beyond Toastmasters. Come with an open mind and leave with practical tools to showcase your club’s story in fresh, creative ways.

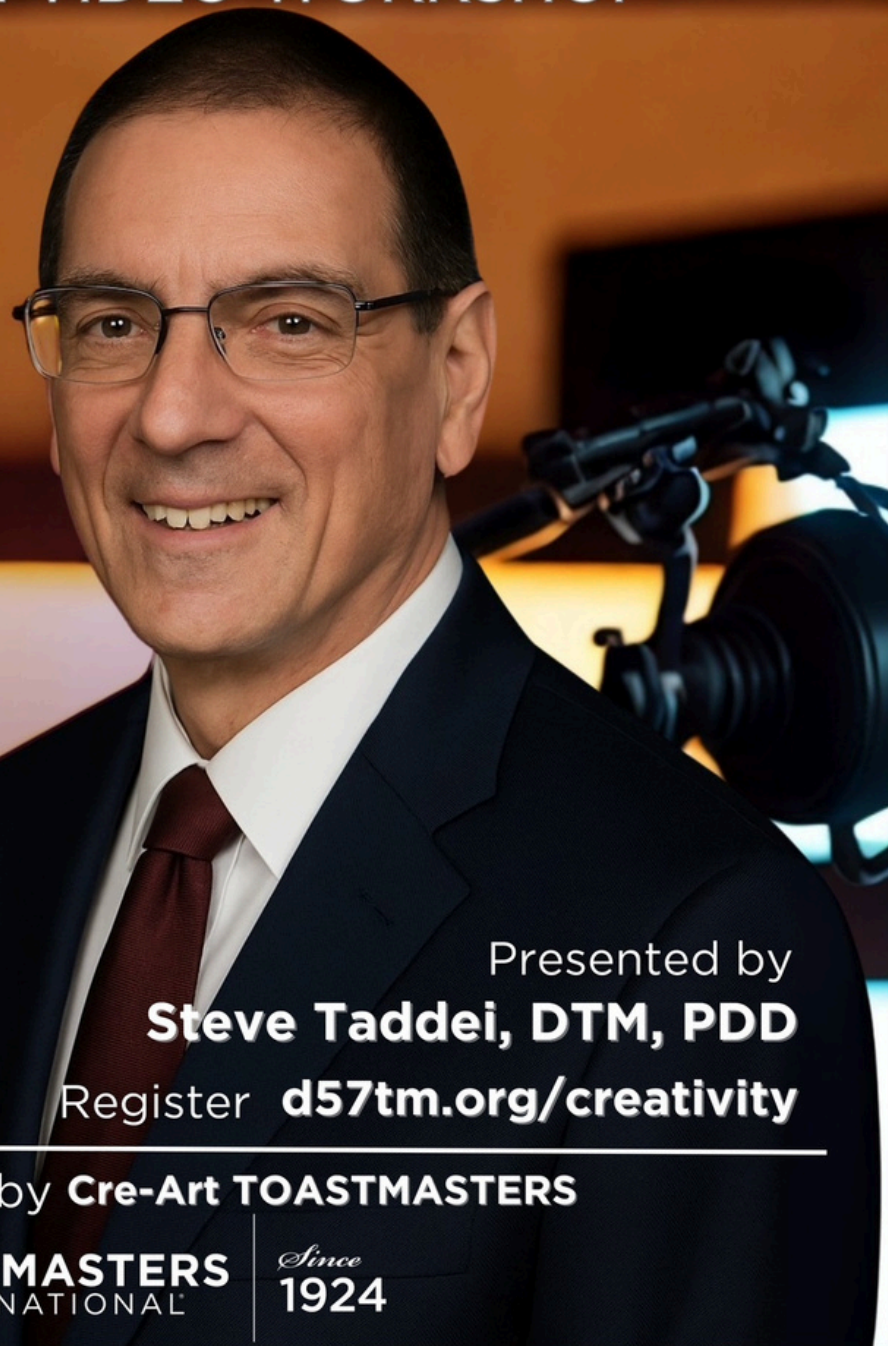


# FROM SELFIE TO SPOTLIGHT

## SHORT FORM VIDEO WORKSHOP

**Ready to Boost  
your Club's  
Visibility?**  
Join us for an  
inspiring session on  
mastering short-  
form video

**28**  
OCTOBER  
**6-8PM**  
(PACIFIC TIME)



Presented by  
**Steve Taddei, DTM, PDD**

Register [d57tm.org/creativity](https://d57tm.org/creativity)

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**1924**



# Contest Corner

submitted by Kate Mills

District 57 will be holding two contest series this year: The International Speech Contest, and the Table Topics Contest. We haven't done Table Topics in many years, so we're excited to “change things up” and have some fun! Both contests will advance in sequence from the Club, Area, Division, and District levels. And both of them will be conducted in-person (all contestants and officials must appear in-person).

Clubs can choose to hold one or both of these contests. If a club decides not to do so, they can choose a member in good standing to represent them at the Area Contest. The same member, or a different one, can be sent to each contest.

Our district had the option of offering a third contest, and had hoped to be able to support the newer Online Speech Contest. This would have been an online-only event (all contestants and officials would need to participate remotely). However, it would have needed to be scheduled on a different day, complicating the logistics. After careful consideration, the District Trio found that we did not have enough support for this contest.

The [Speech Contest Rulebook](#) is a must-read for anyone involved with contests this year --contestants, officials, and functionaries. Keep an eye on the D57 Calendar for upcoming Contest Training! Reach out to D57 Speech Contest Chair Kate Mills with questions and suggestions. [katemillstoast@gmail.com](mailto:katemillstoast@gmail.com)



# Step Up as Area Director for B-7 in Toastmasters D57



submitted by Darya Hoover

As an Area Director, you'll mentor club officers, support member growth, organize area speech contests, and help clubs achieve excellence. This role is a fantastic opportunity to enhance your leadership skills, expand your network, and make a meaningful impact in Toastmasters D57.

If you're ready to grow as a leader and make a difference, reach out to Division B Director Darya to learn more and get involved!

Our Area B-7 Director is stepping down in October, and we're looking for a passionate leader to oversee these clubs:

- Argonauts
- Confidence Builders Club
- Swift Plaza Toastmasters
- Sunrise Business Leaders Toastmasters



# Prepare Less, Grow More

by Lee Vaughan

Have you been in Toastmasters for a while? Do you have a lot of experience in public speaking? Does it sometimes feel like you've plateaued in your speaking craft? If you answered yes to these questions, do you wonder if there's anything more you need to learn? If you regard yourself as a skilled speaker, have you ever had to prepare less for a speech and reflected on the results?

The experience gained when you must prepare less for a speech could be invaluable, provided you're mindful in how you go about it.

I think a speaking assignment on short notice is an opportunity a lot of speakers miss. And it's an important opportunity because, out there in the big, wide world of speaking engagements, reality will demand you speak with less preparation. That big presentation for the meeting, that eulogy, that toast, that best man or maid of honor speech, and that unclassifiable speech you'll need to give for that special event – you may not have all the time you'd like to prepare for a magnum opus. And good speakers make the most of these situations. In fact, good speakers thrive in these situations.

What if you had to pare down speech preparation to something like this...

- You wrote an outline instead of the whole speech verbatim (if the latter had been your practice).
- You thought through speech development carefully, including the transitions, but left the delivery to the moment?
- You sensed the type of humor that would land with your audience, held a few joke options in reserve, but chose just one based on the energy in the room?
- You rehearsed your delivery, but only to cut what was not necessary?
- You thought about what your audience would like more than the types of deliveries you know you're good at?

As you can probably tell, this takes some practice and some guts. The first time you do this may not result in your best work. And here's the kicker: You need to okay with it.

I stumbled across my method for preparing when I have less time to prepare. My club needed me to speak to get DCP credit. Begrudgingly, I obliged with a speech I hadn't prepared as much for, and to be honest, the results were mediocre that first time. The speech was certainly not my best work and thank God for that. Because, by approaching having this sort of experience, I learned a whole lot that I've since added to my skillset. Among the many things I learned and now remind myself of are:



- Be careful with listing items in a speech, any items whatsoever. The audience will have trouble recalling items in a list if they're not treated as key to your main point.
- Along these lines, be careful with dates. The audience can only process so much and even just two different dates (or timeframes) can be difficult for an audience to retain.
- Keep it simple enough so your audience can track with you. There's a place for novelty, but relatability and cogency are far more important.
- Building suspense or anticipation is great. A satisfying payoff is even better. Both in the same speech is golden.
- Feedback you receive will relate to delivery more than content. But if results were less than stellar and there's no satisfying way to improve the speech as written, it could mean your content (topic selection or general approach to the topic) is what requires development more than your delivery. As I now often say, dynamics are in the writing.

What you learn from a speaking engagement on short notice may be entirely different and that's great. The key to learning from these experiences is reflection, both on the feedback you receive and your own impressions about how you could improve. Feedback from others will tell you what they observed and how they felt, but only you can give yourself feedback from your own gut. Both are valid.

I've put these lessons to use since my first time preparing less for a speech, and I think my game has improved markedly since then. In the little time I had to prepare, I considered the method and lessons above and then applied it to my more prepared game. If you've never done this before, what more perfect environment is there for it than your club?

Are you willing to try it? Next time your club (or any other venue) asks if you can give a speech in a couple of days, or maybe a few hours, consider taking the assignment. You may be surprised by what you learn.

